

Knowing what I know now

Black Women talk about violence inside and outside of the home

By

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ABSTRACT

There is a notable gap in empirical studies on Black women's lived experiences in the UK in general and of violence in particular. This thesis explores lived experiences of violence and abuse for nine African and Caribbean heritage women, including seeking help and receiving support, legacies for the body and encounters in public spaces that leave feelings of discomfort.

Fifteen participants were interviewed in total: six formed a sample of experts who work in violence support services, research and health services; and nine victim-survivors participated in a two or three stage life history interview process. The expert participants were given three case studies prior to taking part in semi-structured interviews to explore issues for African and Caribbean heritage women. During life history interviews research participants were invited to bring along personal photographs to assist with speaking about past experiences of violence and abuse, drew maps of their routes to seeking help, annotated diagrams of how they have related to their bodies over the years and produced photographs of spaces, places and objects of current importance to them.

The thesis mapped ways in women's potential for participation in social life was delimited by violence and abuse, how their survival was premised on their skill in managing embodied burdens and through daily acts of self-renewal. The contribution to knowledge of this thesis are through the conceptual terms: 'felt intensities'; 'a continuum of oppression'; 'liminal displacement'; 'a nugatory self'; 'racialised gendered shame'; and 'exhausting liminal rumination' that describe the embodied burdens carried by African and Caribbean heritage women as knowers and to suggest meeting their needs within the everyday spaces they inhabit.

Further explorations are required into the intersectional features of women's lives to explore whether African and Caribbean heritage women have voice and visibility in policy, whether and how their needs are met and for this to influence the commissioning of services.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores lived experiences of violence and abuse for nine African and Caribbean heritage women, including seeking help and receiving support, legacies for the body and encounters in public spaces that leave feelings of discomfort. There is a notable gap in empirical studies on Black women's lived experiences in the UK in general and of violence in particular. Previous research, carried out in both the UK and the USA has found that internalised discourses positioning Black women as hypersexual, unrapeable, strong and resilient, can act as barriers to seeking help for violence and abuse (see Kanyeredzi, 2013 for an overview).

Historically, Black women's willingness to be part of empirical studies has been with cautious suspicion (Henry-Waring, 2004) because of the potential for research to repeat 'dysfunction' findings: a focus on single parent households (see Phoenix, 1991; Thornton-Dill, 1998) that allegedly emasculate Black men (Moynihan, 1965), result in poorer educational outcomes for Black children (Swann Report, 1985) or in more contemporary discourses, produce young Black male criminals (see Mama, 1995; Phoenix and Hussain, 2007; Reynolds, 2005). Ann Phoenix (1987) conceptualised this as both a 'normalised absence' and 'pathologised presence'.

However, there is a growing body of respectful work on mothering and Caribbean heritage families (Phoenix, 1991; Reynolds, 2005) and Black female educational desire and achievements (Mirza, 1997; 2009; Mirza and Reay, 2007; Rollock, 2007). Studies have also explored how Black women construct identities in resistance to negative cultural discourses (Ahmed, 2004; 2010; Mirza, 1997; Noble, 2008; Tate, 2005; 2009; Weeks, 1997; 2002). Others have explored how Black women may be marginalised in employment, yet perceived as outperforming their male counterparts (Bradshaw, et al., 2003; Moosa and Woodruffe, 2009; Reynolds, 1997). Research on Black women's lived experiences of violence and abuse from partners has also identified racism from statutory agencies and concern that their Black male partners might be subjected to police racism, to have compounded efforts to escape (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004; Mama, 1989; Rai and Thiara, 1997; Thiara, 2013; Wilson, 1993). However, studies have tended to focus on South Asian women and violence from partners and/or families, with few empirical explorations of African and Caribbean heritage women's experiences of sexual violence. This thesis contributes closing this knowledge gap.

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the thesis, defines the key terms and concepts used, describes the legal and policy framework on violence and abuse, presents the background to the thesis, and a brief outline of the coming chapters.

Knowing what I know now...research

Fifteen participants were interviewed in total: six formed a sample of experts who work in violence support services, research and health services; and nine victim-survivors participated in a two or three stage life history interview process. The expert participants were given three case studies prior to taking part in semi-structured interviews to explore issues for African and Caribbean heritage women. During life history interviews research participants were invited to bring along personal photographs to assist with speaking about past experiences of violence and abuse, drew maps of their routes to seeking help, annotated diagrams of how they have related to their bodies over the years and produced photographs of spaces, places and objects of current importance to them.

Of the nine women: six had been sexually abused as children; one was malnourished and severely beaten as a child; and five had had experiences of violence in the context of intimate partner relationships. Women sexually abused as children described experiencing severe neglect and feelings of abandonment. One woman had experienced multiple forms of violence and abuse across her life course and seven of the nine women also recounted experiences of racism.

Language and Black Women in the UK

The terms Black, Black women, African and Caribbean heritage women, African heritage, Caribbean heritage, Black British, and where a parent is from another racial background such as White English or Asian, dual heritage, are used here to reflect the variety of ways women self-identify and are identified, geographically, socially and politically. African American is used when referring specifically to literature from the USA. Self-identifying as Black for individual women may be nuanced, complex and related to particular contexts (Hall, 1991). For example the term 'Black women' is descriptive of skin colour (Fernando, 2009), post-colonial legacies of slavery, racist treatment, political activism and migration histories (Boyce-Davies, 1994; Brice-Baker, 1994; Phoenix, 2009; Reynolds, 2005). Yet a racial category may not be the most salient aspect of individual women's identities (Fernando, 2009).

Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie (2009) writes about the danger telling 'a single story' as the only point of reference whenever we are making accounts of lived experiences. In social science research in the UK, the narratives of African and Caribbean heritage women are so few that those that do exist inadvertently represent a limited repertoire of voices despite rich and polyvocal experiences (Henry-Waring, 2004). Black women have a longer history of residence in the UK than their counterparts in the USA, yet there is little historical or any other research on their presence and lived experiences (Dabydeen, Gilmore and Jones, 2010; Henry-Waring, 2004; Reynolds, 2005).

This is not to say that there are no positive representations of Black women in the media or in other social and cultural spaces, nor that some Black women are not professionally successful in the UK. It is to say that in social science the range of representations is somewhat restricted (Haaken, 1999; Phoenix and Hussain, 2007).

Key Concepts

This section defines the terms and concepts commonly used in the thesis.

Racialised/Racialisation

Racialised/Racialisation describes knowledge associated with members of assumed racial groups (Banton, 2009). To racialise an individual is to make an assumption and then treat him/her in a manner befitting that assumption based on their observed racial category. These assumptions may be based on long-held stereotypes that for example, all Black men are violent to their partners, are rapists and abandon their children (see also Amos and Parmar, 2006/1986; Soothill and Walby, 1991) and all Black women who have children are single mothers (see Reynolds, 2005; Phoenix, 1991).

Minoritised/Minoritisation

Minoritised/Minoritisation describes processes and practices experienced by people from non-White or 'minority' groups relative in population ratio to the majority of White UK citizens (Burman, et al., 2004). However minority is not only in reference to the racial population ratios (Brah, 1996). Individuals whose racial and ethnic backgrounds are in the minority, are assumed to have associated behaviours, characteristics, and social status based on stereotypes and may be regarded and treated not as individuals, but as representative members of their minority groups where their needs are presumed to be already known. For example, when women approach agencies for assistance: South Asian women are often perceived as passive and need interpreters, Black women as aggressive and Jewish women as dependent on their husbands (Ahmed, Reavey and Majumdar, 2009; Amos and Parmar, 2006/1986; Burman, et al., 2004; Mama, 2000). Minoritisation homogenises members of assumed racial minorities and majorities.

Violence and abuse

Violence and abuse are terms used throughout the thesis to reflect experiences women define as violent and those described as abusive. However, these terms may not be clearly demarcated in

women's lived experiences. Violence and abuse includes the United Nations General Assembly (1993) definition of violence against women and girls (VAWG) outlined below:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation *of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life...* occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse ... marital rape, female genital mutilation ... non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation ... within the general community, including rape ... sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions. (UN, 1993, Article 48/104, emphasis in original)

The World Health Organization defines child sexual abuse as:

All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. (Butchart, et al., 2006, cited in Radford, et al., 2011, p.21)

Child sexual abuse has also been included within the term child maltreatment that encompasses a wider range of abusive behaviours that may not always be of a sexual nature such as hitting, letting children know they are unloved or unwanted, inappropriate expectations, such as caring for younger siblings and neglect (Radford, et al., 2011). In this thesis women situated experiences of child sexual abuse in wider contexts of child maltreatment.

Continuum of violence

Feminist academic Liz Kelly (1988) analysed violence by men towards women on a continuum of behaviours that range in forms: sexual harassment; name calling; sexual banter; non-consensual sexual touching; rape and physical assault. These behaviours can occur to the same woman over her lifetime, or to different women and are defined variously as everyday annoyances to life-threatening: some women, for example, might minimise an offensive and or abusive behaviour by saying 'nothing really happened' (Kelly and Radford, 1990). The sexual violence continuum also reflects women's descriptions of the way that forms of violence and abuse shade into one another whereby being sexually harassed on the street may make women fear being raped and thus alter their use of, and behaviour in, public spaces (Kelly, 1988). Violence and abuse are not limited to the specific domains of the home or public spaces and are viewed as part of women's everyday relationships with men they know and those they do not, albeit that violence and abuse is most often committed by men they know (Kelly, 1988; Stanko, 1988).

Violence is gendered behaviour located within everyday human relations and occurs through processes of devaluation and justification for unequal treatment through indifference and desensitisation to human suffering occurring during peacetime, augmented and reformulated as barbaric, in times of war and conflict (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). Thus there exists material inequalities between men and women inflected by the marginalisation that may also result from racism and poverty. Locating experiences of violence and abuse in women's everyday life contexts enables an understanding not only of the forms, but the meaning of these behaviours for individual women (Briere and Jordan, 2009; Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005) and the complex terrain of choices, opportunities and limitations women negotiate. The concept of a continuum as used here foregrounds normative practices of heterosexual masculinity by men within women's lives (Gavey, 2005; Kelly, 1988) and beyond this more systematic and less visible behaviours such as racism, sexism, ableism (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004).

Victim-Survivors

This term refers to women's experiences of both surviving and of being victimised by perpetrators of violence and abuse. Processes of victimisation and survival are not a linear progression from the former to the latter, but for many women, a vacillation between the two (Brown, et al., 2010; Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1996). This chapter opened with previous research finding Black women may be denied recognition of their victimisation. Thus this term opens a space to consider and recognise the messiness, conflicting shifts in insight, identification and disavowal that may reflect living with past experiences of violence and abuse.

Intersectionality

Kimberle Williams Crenshaw (1991) used the term intersectionality to illustrate how women's social characteristics – race, gender, class – may combine in complex ways to limit or privilege access to help and support for violence and abuse. For example poor African American women who have limited access to suitable housing and social support, and are underemployed remain with partners who are violent. Further, decisions made by Black women (or those which they are encouraged to make) to not report violence and abuse from minoritised men because of fears of police racism, privileges race over gender. Black feminist theoretical insights have historically attempted to make visible the many ways in which Black women may experience oppression (see for example Brah and Phoenix, 2004). However, Black women may not be equally marginalised because of differences in socioeconomic status (Cramer and Plummer, 2009; Hill Collins, 1990; hooks, 1984; Nash, 2008). There is limited scholarship on the intersections between race, class, sexuality, sexual identity and disability (Taylor, 2009).

Help seeking

Seeking help is defined as the point where an individual reaches out and asks for assistance either from people they know (their informal network), or more formal sources such as the police, a general medical practitioner (GP), voluntary sector, or specialised services (Foster, 2000; Nadler, 1997; Ullman, 2007). Help seeking is one of the many strategies women use to end violence and abuse within their intimate relationships (Dutton, Orloff and Hass, 2000) or to move on with their lives after having had experiences of violence and abuse as children or as adults.

Background to the current study

Narratives of women's lives are intricately woven into the socio-political fabric of the historical context where experiences occur and those where they are recollected (Haaken, 2010). For example narratives of African and Caribbean heritage women living in the UK during the 1970s/1980s who experienced violence and abuse could contain many accounts of overt racist abuse, awareness of anti-racist struggles and police brutality especially to Black men and boys. If women were politically active in Black women's organisations they may find resonances within the tensions and social issues documented in *Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, (Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, 1985), or they may not.

The dismissive responses to female victim-survivors of violence and abuse was one of the reasons prompting many to separate from Black male anti-racist and liberation movements in the late 1970's and early 1980's (Bogle, 1988). Grewal, et al. (1988) documented Black women's experiences of violence and abuse emanating from such initiatives. Julia Sudbury (1998) argues White feminist organisations dominated the political landscape of feminism in the 1970s/1980s in the UK and most did not incorporate Black women's experiences of racism, or that of their male partners and family members. However: 'it would be misleading to imply that the majority of Black women were involved in these early Black women's organisations' (op cit, p.10; see also Quarshie, 1990). In the current study, participants' experiences of violence and abuse occurred across the socio-political period introduced above with few references to either feminism or political organisations. This raises the issue of whose narrative accounts of abuse and violence are empirically available, and indicates that there may be many hidden narratives yet to be shared.

Research has consistently found a wide prevalence of violence against women and girls across historical and socio-economic contexts and countries (Walby, 2009). However, low socioeconomic status, less citizenship rights, living with disabilities and health challenges may intersect to mean minoritised, non-White or impoverished White working class women and children are

disproportionately represented as victims (Finkelhor, et al., 1990; Moosa and Woodruffe, 2009; Radford et al., 2011; Richie, 2012; Thiara and Gill, 2010; Walby, 2004).

In the UK, public attention to cases of child maltreatment occur periodically (Rush, 1980; Radford, et al., 2011). Some of the most high profile cases of child maltreatment and infanticide that have come to public attention have also been those involving African and Caribbean heritage children (Barn, 2007; Bernard and Gupta, 2008). This creates a complex political terrain for speaking, seeking support and legal sanctions. Criming of allegations of violence and abuse may also be racially specific, with Black and White men less likely to be charged than Asian men (Stanko, 2007) and minoritised women more likely to retract allegations of violence and abuse (Smee, 2009). When women report sexual violence, they are often not believed (Kelly, 1988; 2012; Jordan, 2008; 2012; Stern, 2010), and can be left with the impression that they do not fit the typical profile of a 'victim' (Haaken, 2003; Levett, 2003; Reavey, 2003; Walklate, 2008). Institutional scrutiny remains gendered and loaded with stereotypical myths about who gets raped and or abused (Baillot, Cowan and Munroe, 2009; Haaken, 2003; Kennedy, 1992; Lamb, 1999; Reavey, 2003).

In the morass of prejudice, black women have the hardest time being heard and securing prosecution in the courts. Black victims face both the rape myths that confront all women, and stereotypes of black women as more likely to have consented to sex, more sexually experienced and less likely to be psychologically damaged. (Kennedy, 1992, p.141)

The influences of such constructions on African and Caribbean heritage women's sense making processes during and after experiencing violence and abuse are key issues within the thesis.

Legal and policy framework

The UK has been described by John Yates, a previous Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan police and a rape lead as 'policy rich and implementation poor' (cited in Brown, et al., 2010, p.5). There are many legal and policy initiatives and services in place for women who experience violence and abuse, but they are inconsistently implemented and under-resourced (Brown, et al., 2010). This results in a postcode lottery of services, and interventions which focus on criminal justice responses to violence from intimate partners, less on prevention (Coy, Kelly and Foord, 2009). Statutory services come into contact with a minority of women who experience violence and abuse (Coy, et al., 2009) and there are fewer service provisions for women who have experienced forced marriage, FGM (female genital mutilation), or with insecure immigration status (Coy, et al., 2009; Brown, et al., 2010).

Becoming victimised is also associated with stigma and shame (Enander, 2010; Kelly, 2012), thus many women do not seek legal sanctions. A society-wide lack of challenge to men's practices of violence and abuse prevails (Brown and Walklate, 2012; Walby, 2009). Women observe, and are silenced by, how they are responded to by the criminal justice system (Stern, 2010) or simply by policy initiatives such as the 2011 UK government budgetary cuts in funding for specialised support services (Brown and Walklate, 2012; Jordan, 2012).

This process has also resulted in a loss of the specialised gender focus of such services and many smaller, especially BME (Black Minority Ethnic), services that work with a sensitivity to women's ethnicity, cultural heritage, religious practices and racism, as well as violence and abuse, have disappeared (Coy, et al, 2009; Towers and Walby, 2012). One study suggested that minoritised women make 17 contacts with agencies before accessing support whereas White women make 11 (Brittain, 2005). However, figures for London show the opposite (Smee, 2013).

Perhaps more significantly, while there may be statutory, voluntary and specialised support services, this may reveal little about their use by African and Caribbean heritage women. As explained above, this study was carried out in London and of the nine women only two accessed specialised support services, despite London having a higher population of African and Caribbean heritage people and more specialised services for BME women (see Coy, et al., 2009).

This section has presented the background to the study, detailing the high prevalence of violence and abuse experienced by women, with the related low reporting rate to statutory agencies and the under-funding and closure of specialised agencies, especially those serving African and Caribbean heritage women. The thesis addresses lived body experiences of negotiating life, spaces, violence and abuse, help and support for nine African and Caribbean heritage women.

Thesis outline

This section outlines the thesis as it unfolds in the following chapters. Chapter 2 introduces and reviews the literature on help seeking and support for African and Caribbean heritage women, drawing on empirical studies that have been carried out in the USA, the UK and first person literary narratives of child sexual abuse and neglect from female Black British perspectives. It then outlines the theoretical framework for the thesis, concluding with the overarching research questions. Chapter 3 outlines the epistemological and methodological decisions made during the PhD. It presents an overview of the theoretical assumptions guiding the methodology, describes the methods of enquiry, analytic processes and organisation of the findings. Chapter 4 'The continuum of oppression in Black women's lives' presents an analysis of how women described the contexts of

their lives and the spaces and places where abuse and violence occurred, to argue that forms of violence and abuse are mostly invisible, yet felt, and influence who women think they can speak to or approach for help.

Chapter 5 'Audacious speech: coming from a place where I come from' presents an analysis of the decisions made by women to talk about experiences of violence and abuse and how they were responded to by individuals within their families, friendship networks and institutions and documents how they live with the consequences of speaking. Chapter 6 'What's race got to do with it? Felt intensities of a nugatory self' builds on the analyses presented in Chapters 4 and 5, and focuses on how women experienced comments about their bodies in home spaces and uncomfortable feelings of being judged in public spaces as projections of a less-than-self that intersects with legacies of violence and abuse. Chapter 7 '(Re)assembling the self in everyday spaces' begins with an overview of where women sought help, presents an analysis of receiving support and the role of faith within this process. The chapter ends with an analysis of how women used photographs to depict how they have rebuilt their lives. Chapter 8 draws together the analyses presented in the four empirical chapters to conclude by discussing the implications of findings for policy and service provision for African and Caribbean heritage women, their communities and families.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The few empirical studies based in the UK that explore African and Caribbean heritage women's experiences of violence and abuse prompted excavation work to unearth studies about Black women. Most hail from the USA. The literature review as a consequence also spans a range of disciplines that seek to explore and critique Black women's lived experiences. Throughout attention is drawn to how studies or theories may be relevant to African and Caribbean heritage women who experience violence and abuse and areas where the thesis contributes to closing the gaps in knowledge.

The chapter begins with a background and prevalence of violence and abuse paying attention to contextual factors. The sociocultural contexts of Black women's lives are routed through literature on stereotypes or 'controlling images' of Black women's sexuality and bodies and how Black women have resisted these images by adopting a 'strong Black woman' persona. Controlling images are an aspect of how race, racism, culture and migration intersect within Black women's lives to present opportunities and limitations when they seek help for violence and abuse. The intersections of poverty, gender and bodily devaluation are also reviewed for how they may present Black women with a series of dilemmas when they attempt to report or seek help for violence and abuse. There then follows a review of the role of social support in seeking and receiving help. There are minimal empirical studies on Black women's experiences of sexual violence in the UK and thus Black British literary narratives of abuse were also reviewed.

A discussion of the theories framing the thesis and the conceptual framework is also included that reviews theories of knowledge, shame, embodiment and how they relate to women's experiences of violence and abuse. The chapter closes by briefly exploring how Black women may be able to live with multiple adversities, and in the aftermath of experiences of violence and abuse, ending with the overarching research questions for the thesis.

Background and prevalence of violence and abuse

Violence and abuse are hidden and underreported as crimes (Radford, et al., 2011). The annual Crime Survey of England and Wales (ONS) estimated just under 1 in 4 women (25%) and just over 1 in 6 men (13%) experience violence from a partner, with 1 in 5 women (20%), and just over 1 in 33 (3%) men have experienced sexual assault or rape and this figure includes attempts. 90% of those who report rape are female and over a third of rapes are committed against children under the age

of sixteen. Women are more likely to experience violence in the home than are men and while men are more likely to be killed by another male acquaintance or stranger, women are more likely to be killed by a partner or ex-partner and this is the case for over half of the female homicides (ONS, 2013). Women between the ages of 16 - 34 are more likely to experience stalking and physical violence from a partner or ex-partner (ONS, 2013). Violence tends to increase post separation, where women are more likely to be murdered (ONS, 2013; Thiara, 2013). If a woman or a man has a disability or long term illness, he/she is more likely to be a victim of violence and abuse from a partner (ONS, 2013; Nixon and Humphries, 2010). Few studies explore how living at the intersections of range of social locations which include being racialised as Black, presents opportunities and limitations for women who experience violence and abuse. This thesis will contribute to the knowledge base.

Child sexual abuse and the umbrella term child maltreatment, is also an underreported and estimated widespread phenomena. It may be impossible to know the full prevalence of child sexual abuse as definitions of abuse vary by country and statistical measurement and individuals rarely disclose abuse experiences (Lalor and McElvaney, 2009), and when they do, wait between 10 to 20 years (Lamb and Edgar-Smith, 1994). In the USA between 1 in 4 (25%) and just over a third of women and between 1 in 10 (10%) and 1 in 4 (25%) men report sexual abuse. Between 1 in 10 (10%) and 1 in 4 (25%) men and women report physical abuse in childhood (Briere and Elliott, 2009; Finkelhor, et al., 1990). These statistics reveal similar prevalence rates of child sexual abuse across racial groups (Bolen, 2001; London, et al., 2006).

However subsequent research has found African American women are more likely to be estranged from their children's fathers increasing the risk of abuse from mothers' boyfriends and stepfathers, especially for African American girls (Abney and Priest, 1995; Amodeo, et al., 2006; Finkelhor et al., 1990). Amodeo, et al. (2006), found when compared with White American women, African American women had more incidences and multiple perpetrators of child sexual abuse and this was associated with family structure; they are more likely to live in the same household with uncles, cousins and parents' friends. Bolen (2001) in a review of studies on child sexual abuse found that abuse from peers is far more prevalent than abuse from fathers or carers. Children live with increasing forms of violence and abuse both inside and outside of the home (Finkelhor, Omerod and Hamby, 2009) and more exposure to multiple care-givers, increases the risk of maltreatment and being 'polyvictims' of violence and abuse (Finkelhor, 2008). Bentovim, et al. (2009) found that delinquency and 'acting out' or disruptive behaviour to be associated with witnessing violence between parents.

In the UK, there are no comparable representative statistics by race for violence and abuse. The Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) report (McGee, et al. 2002) and the ONS (2013) for England and Wales have found similar prevalence rates as in the USA (see also Lalor and McElvaney, 2009 for a systematic review). The Cawson Report (Cawson et al, 2000) was a random probability sample of 2869 18-24 year olds exploring their experiences of childhood maltreatment with 92% White and 8% minority, (mostly Asian) respondents. While 77% of those surveyed described coming from warm loving families with people to support them, between 21 - 59% reported physical discipline, being infrequently slapped on the arm, hand or bottom. Physical abuse was associated with lower socioeconomic status with 6% of the sample reporting going without food and wearing dirty clothes. 34% of the respondents described being sometimes terrified by their father or stepfathers.

Parents who tell their children that they wish the child was dead or had never been born, for example, may be reacting to stress or an immediate family crisis rather than expressing a genuinely held long term view, but it is hard to imagine a more hurtful thing to say to a child. (Cawson, et al., 2000, p.15)

Girls were slightly more likely to be physically abused than boys and women were also involved in physical and emotional maltreatment of children. Most of the sexual abuse was carried out by siblings, peers and non-relatives. The updated study (Radford, et al., 2011) also found between 12 and 23.7% of respondents reporting exposure to, or witnessing violence mostly from males to their mothers. Radford, et al. (2011) also found a section of their respondents could be classified as polyvictims. This was associated with being within the lowest socio economic groups, or a parent who lives with mental distress or learning difficulties, physical violence by peers or siblings, witnessing family and community violence and scoring higher on measurements for mental distress.

Violence and abuse in childhood and adulthood is common and widespread with higher reported rates for women and girls. The following section reviews literature on the sociocultural contexts of Black women's lives to discuss help seeking and receiving and decisions to seek or delay seeking help.

Controlling images of Black women

How wider cultural messages about Black women play a role in decisions to seek help is explored in the literature on Black women's experiences of violence and abuse where feelings of shame and impression management become key influences (see later sections). Violence and abuse have been

intricately stitched through the sociocultural contexts of Black women's lives in historical and contemporary western societies (Davis, 1985; West and Johnson, 2013). In tandem with this, are discourses from colonial, racial, biological, pseudo-scientific endeavours in Europe, measuring Black women's presumed lesser bodily value (Fausto-Sterling, 2002; Gilman, 1985; Roberts, 1992; Scheibinger, 1999; Spillers, 2000) and animalistic sexuality (Collins, 2002; hooks, 1992; Kapsalis, 2002; Roberts, 1992). These discourses served to justify the institutionalised rape of Black women during the slave era (Hill Collins, 1990) and the control of their reproduction (Kapsalis, 2002) after slavery and in postcolonial USA and UK (Amos and Parmar, 2006; Hammonds, 2002). They extend to contemporary representations of Black women in popular culture, the arts (Collins, 2002) and pornography (hooks, 1992; Hill Collins, 1990; Miller-Young, 2010).

Hill Collins (1990) describes 'controlling images' as discourses whose power lie in the way they regulate marginalised people's lives and reinforce existing relationships of dominance and domination. Controlling images of African American women that have survived the slave era include: the 'Mammy', a woman who is primarily a caretaker of others, overweight and overeats to cope with the stresses of life. 'Sapphire', a dark-skinned woman who is angry, aggressive and emasculates Black men and 'Jezebel', a light-skinned woman who is easily sexually aroused and promiscuous (see also Wallace, 1990/1979). The controlling image of 'Sapphire' (see Moynihan, 1965) obscured the role of poverty, lack of resources and racism in the lives of poor African American women in the 1960's (Hill Collins, 1990). After resistance to this stereotype, contemporary media stories and popular culture have reformulated Sapphire as the angry Black woman, 'gold-digga', benefit cheat (Hill Collins, 2005; West, 1995; 2006). Hill Collins (2009) argues that these controlling images fashion a socially entrenched fixity for Black women in western societies, which remains under theorised and under explored empirically.

In their focus group study on mental distress among African American women Everett, Hall and Hamilton-Mason (2010) found racism, sexism, socioeconomic status, and the role strain on Black women juggling employment, finances and demands on their time intersected to contribute to poor mental wellbeing. Education and socio-economic status did not protect the women from some of the stressors; most were privileged, middle-aged and middle class. Everett, et al. (2010) explored this discomfort in perceived race based associations of being a Black woman and having particular character traits. One woman said that there are so many negative constructions of Black women she resists as part of her everyday survival activities, that eventually '... it starts to wear on your psyche ... Am I really hostile?'. She began to question whether underlying her own self-perception is this really hostile and aggressive Black woman (p.39). These discourses have been theorised to be both internalised and resisted by Black women and may influence their decisions to speak about and seek help for violence and abuse (Donovan and Williams, 2002). Controlling

images may also restrict spaces for Black women to express their sexuality (Hammonds, 1997; 2002). Relatedly, Black women are rarely pictured as 'victims' of sexual violence in the media (Moorti, 2002; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008).

In the UK Black families have been formulated in policy discourses as dysfunctional where violence from intimate partners (Agozino, 1997; Amos and Parmar, 2006/1986; Mama, 2000), child sexual abuse (Bogle, 1988) and absentee fathers (Bryan, et al., 1985; Reynolds, 1997; 2005) are considered normative. Media discourses can perpetuate such stereotypes by the portrayal of severe cases of child abuse where Black family dysfunction resumes the focus (Barn, 2007; Bernard and Gupta, 2008). This thesis will contribute to closing the gap in knowledge for whether in the UK context avoiding being associated with pathology, plays a role in African and Caribbean heritage women's decisions to (not) seek help for violence and abuse.

Racialised and sexualised discursive constructs that describe archetypal behaviour and physical characteristics of Black women in such a derogatory manner may lead some to distance themselves from their experiences of violence and abuse to resist being further stigmatised (Bell and Mattis, 2000; Brice-Baker, 1994). Arguably, those who view themselves through these discursive constructs could be subjected to deleterious consequences. For example, when African American women internalise the 'Jezebel' construct, they are more likely to blame themselves for being raped and may suffer more mental distress (West, 1995; see also Hill Collins, 2005). Gail Wyatt (1992) in her study on the aftermath of child sexual abuse for African American, Hispanic and White women noted African American women drew on racialised stereotypes and the stories of rape handed down from family members and internalised the meaning of these cultural constructions as part of the embodied experience of being Black and female. This was also a theme in Patricia Washington's (2001) study. Both suggest there are possible explanations for why the women took longer to seek help (this will be further discussed in Chapter 4). Neville, et al. (2004) in their study with African American and White American university students who were victim-survivors of rape, found that among the African American participants more cultural rationalisations were offered, most presumed they were raped because they were perceived as Jezebels and were thus deemed blameworthy. Experiencing racism and having awareness of sexual stereotypes may be distressing for Black women, who then experience violence and abuse (Bryant-Davis and Ocampo, 2005). The intersections of race and racism with experiences of violence and abuse have received limited attention within the UK.

Internalisation is a complex process and reflects 'feelings about the world that are neither easy to speak about, nor understand' (Blackman, 2008, p.76) and few studies investigate how racialised discourses are experienced or whether there are moderating factors (Thomas, et al., 2004). For

example Thompson and Keith (2001) explored associations between skin complexion and attributions of personal worth with African American women. They found that among the darker skinned women, the more educational and employment success they achieved, the fewer associations they made between skin complexion and personal ability or potential. Therefore women's social capital or material circumstances may weaken the hold of controlling images. Conversely, however, feeling inferior as Black women because of hair and skin tone may also extend across socioeconomic differences (Nelson, 1997; Tate, 2009; Williams, 2013). How women evaluate their skin and hair is both complex and nuanced and in their choice of hairstyles women could both be reflecting resistance to discourses or simply engaging in cultural aesthetics and therapeutic encounters with hairdressers that bear little or no outward reflection to inner psychological states (Mercer, 1987). Black women's hairstyles could also reflect a process of concealment of a legacy of slavery and colonial associations of Black hair with being wild and untamed (Dickerson, 2011). Dickerson (2011) found the women in her study were more concerned about how other Black women would appraise their hairstyles.

In the UK, Amina Mama (1995) in her study of Black women in political organisations, noted the women made sense of their differential treatment in British society through practices of finding a 'home' in Black history and Black social life, attending house parties and clubbing. Others chose to assimilate into British culture, which meant not cooking foods from their countries of origin, or living in areas with fewer Black people. Women also encountered tensions around notions of Blackness, skin tone, hair texture and sexual desirability. Mama (1995) suggests widening definitions of what it means to be a Black woman (see also Tate, 2005; 2009). Once the construction of a stereotype is laid bare, it may lose its emotional intensity (Ahmed, 2004). It may be in the aftermath of experiencing violence and abuse that women re-evaluate cultural discourses about Black women. This thesis will add to the knowledge base in exploring how experiences of race, through hair/hairstyles, skin tone, intersect with violence and abuse in Black women's lives.

Discourses about Black women and about rape may also influence who they speak to about experiences of violence and abuse. Rape myths are defined as '... attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but widely and persistently held, and serve to deny and justify male aggression against women...' (Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994, p.134). Women make complex negotiations about sharing experiences of violence and abuse for fear of being blamed (Ahrens, 2006), but African American women historically and in contemporary times may not have their allegations taken seriously (Donovan and Williams, 2002; Wyatt, 1992) because they are deemed less truthful and less credible (Varelas and Foley, 1998; Willis, 1992). In Melba Wilson's (1993) study on child sexual abuse with African American and Black British women she found Black women and girls were commonly perceived to be more sexually experienced, which she tied to sociocultural discourses. Overall, the

literature shows some support for the claim that discourses about Black women's sexuality may influence their experience of violence and abuse and seeking help.

In summary, studies have found that there are many cultural discourses about Black women's bodies and sexuality that may present dilemmas for African American women, when they experience violence and abuse because they position them as blameworthy and undeserving of help. These perceptions might be shared by helping professionals. Feeling undeserving and blameworthy, may be exacerbated when experiences of poverty intersect with violence and abuse. As a result, women have been found to stay silent especially about experiences of sexual violence. This has been associated with the internalisation of cultural discourses, however this process remains under-theorised and largely under-explored within the UK context.

Adopting a strong Black woman persona

Some African American women embrace a resilient or strong Black woman persona (Donovan and Williams, 2002; Hill-Collins, 1990). This is a conflicting positionality where women both claim independence, yet are oppressed by family expectations and racism (Thornton-Dill, 1998). The apparent resilience might reflect the normalisation of coping with extraordinary burdens and a sense of personal achievement for this skill, whilst masking distress and harm. Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2008; 2009) carried out interviews with African American women experiencing mental distress and over-eating, finding they referred to themselves using this construct, which she linked to Black female exploitation in domestic work during and after slavery. She also argues that many women coped with sexual violence, the pressures of the emotion work (Hochschild, 1983) looking after other women's children in rich White households in the Southern states in America for limited financial rewards, by a 'self-imposed invisibility', or a closing down of the self for protection (Clark-Hine, 1989). For Beauboeuf-Lafontant, the strong Black woman is another 'controlling image'.

Self-identifying as a 'strong Black woman' holds at bay recognition of the desperation an individual may feel about her situation (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2008). The more a woman self-identifies as a strong Black woman, the less likely she is to ask for help (Hill Collins, 1990). Patricia Washington (2001) posits a connection between the strong Black woman construct and delayed disclosure and help seeking. The double bind of being expected to be strong and resilient while experiencing distress, results in no space to express feelings as exemplified by the participant below.

There are these strange coping skills that help you sort of get through your life, and then all of a sudden, one day, you just can't do it anymore. You can't get out of bed. You can't look at

anything without crying. The whole world's falling apart ... and you just think you're losing your mind. (Washington, 2001, p.1271)

Hillary Potter (2008), in her life history study with 40 African American victim-survivors, found that all the women identified as strong Black women and this was taught, observed and internalised through watching their mothers and female caregivers or 'othermothers' (Hill-Collins, 1990; Joseph, 1993) resist abuse and violence from their fathers or father-figures while growing up. Strength was also associated with the expectation that African American women cannot rely on their male partners for childcare (see also Beubeouf-Lafontant, 2007). Becoming a strong Black woman enabled the women to manage these demands and expectations. Potter (2008) concluded that the strong Black woman construct is both a lived reality and a controlling image for African American women across socioeconomic and educational differences.

Washington (2001) found this construct also meant that practitioners perceived Black women as more resilient, a finding echoed in later studies (Garfield, 2005; Gillum, 2008; 2009; Potter, 2008), with one making connections between experiences of violence, mental distress and notions of inner strength (Nicolaidis, et al., 2010). In the UK, Dawn Edge (2005; 2007; 2008; 2010) has consistently found Black women of Caribbean heritage score highest on measurements for perinatal and postnatal depression. However, the women felt unable to admit to feeling distressed, here the discourse of strong Black woman makes it appear that to do so would be a threat to their identity (see also Brown, et al., 2011).

Whilst we lack the depth of research in the UK on the intersection of violence and abuse in Black women's mental distress, there are some important studies. In Kalathil, et al.'s (2011) study of mental distress with South Asian and African and Caribbean heritage women, violence and abuse was present in all of the women's narratives and as in Beubeouf-Lafontant (2008; 2009) and Potter (2008), women discussed inter-generational handing down of epithets of strength and this was, in turn, associated with taking longer to seek help. Additionally, some women highlighted the contradiction between being expected to be strong enough to cope with the stresses of life, childcare, employment, violence and abuse, whilst subservient in relation to the men in their lives.

Oh yeah, women of colour, African Caribbean, African ... there is a stigma attached. They are not supposed to have breakdowns. We are supposed to be strong Black women. Put up an appearance and take care of the house ... How are you going to do those things? (Kalathil, et al., 2011, p.36)

The contemporary construction of the strong Black woman may enable some African American women to cope with little support while simultaneously creating the illusion that the multiple social injustices they contend with can be overcome through individual resolve. The construct of the strong Black woman, therefore, is relevant to the experiences of African and Caribbean heritage women in the UK. It may form part of the explanation for why they delay seeking help and as a consequence may suffer violence or abuse, or its aftermath for longer. This may also explain some of the elevated levels of mental distress elucidated by the research cited previously.

Race, distress and seeking help

Race although a defunct scientific category, still plays a role not only as a part of individuals' self-identities, but in how they are identified and responded to by others (Ahmed, 2007; Howarth, 2011; Song, 2011). Phoenix and Bhavnani (1994) pluralise identities and racisms as shifting with the socio-political climate, such that for example post-9/11, women wearing the Hijab, have become more under surveillance in public spaces.

In studies on help seeking carried out in the USA, comparisons are often made between women from different racial categories such as White, Hispanic, Asian and African American or simply, White and Minority. The large quantitative studies on help seeking show that although African American women do seek help from a range of services they stay longer in relationships with partners who are violent to them (Bell, et al., 2009; Fugate, et al., 2005; Lipsky, et al., 2006). Women from all racial backgrounds with experience of sexual assault find medical and legal professionals the least helpful especially when asked about previous sexual history (Campbell, et al., 2001; Campbell, 2005) or during court proceedings when it is suggested that women are to blame for experiencing rape because of their attire at the time. African American women have been also found to stay silent for longer about experiences of sexual violence because of internalised concepts of female strength: since disclosing or showing distress runs counter to this discourse, some women choose self-help, including using substances, to cope (Campbell, et al., 2001; Nicolaidis, et al., 2010; Ullman, 2007). African American women are thus found to be less likely to seek help from counselling or mental health services in the aftermath of sexual violence, unless they are severely distressed (Amstadter, et al., 2008; Nicolaidis, et al., 2010). Women from all racial backgrounds are less likely to report rape to the police if they know the person (Kaukinen, 2004) or if they have consumed alcohol (Horvath and Brown, 2009) and people who are marginalised or victimised are generally distrustful of the police (Kaukinen, 2004).

However, African American women seek help, particularly from the police for violence from partners as much as, or even more, than White women, but less than women from Hispanic backgrounds

(Bachman and Coker, 1995; Few, 2005; Lipsky, et al., 2006). The explanation offered for this pattern is twofold: African American women seek less help from all services and are more likely to return to partners who are violent or abusive to them. Thus calling the police when in crisis may be the only option. Secondly, the intersection between violence and abuse, poverty and racial category: African American women are heavily concentrated in the lower socioeconomic strata, which often results in the over surveillance of social services and women fearing that their children will be taken from them, thus they delay seeking support and rely more on police intervention when violence is especially dangerous (Bent-Goodley, 2004; Fugate, et al., 2005; Nicoliadis, et al., 2010; Richie, 1996; Taft, et al., 2009).

In her ground-breaking study of violence and abuse with 113 women of African, Caribbean, South and far East Asian heritage living in the UK, Mama (1989) found that African and Caribbean heritage women were often criminalised by police when enquiries about immigration issues were prioritised over the investigation of the violence. If women had insecure immigration status their partners may collude with the police to get them deported (Mama, 1989). Subsequent research, primarily with South Asian women (Thiara and Gill, 2010), has noted how men who are abusive to their partners use immigration status as a form of control (see also Burman, et al., 2004). Reflecting on the findings of her 1989 study Mama (2000) argued that Black women's experiences of violence are compounded by poor treatment by statutory agency staff who prioritise child protection issues and/or bounce the women from agency to agency for a number of years. Because many Black women are suspicious of social service involvement in their lives (Barn, 2007; Bernard and Gupta, 2008), they are more likely to opt to manage child contact out of court (Thiara, 2013).

Thus race may intersect with Black women's decisions to seek help for violence and abuse because they fear racist statutory service responses. This study will explore how far this is the case among research participants almost two decades after Mama (1989) and Wilson's (1993) studies.

Racism, culture, migration and belonging

Racism is defined as treating someone inequitably on the basis of their assumed race, imparting a lesser social value based on their physical characteristics (Miles, 1989); skin tone, hair texture, body shape. Ethnicity is defined as an individuals' heritage, location of birth and culture meaning both aesthetic and historical practices associated with groups of individuals (Fernando, 2009). Suman Fernando (2009) argues that racism, culture and ethnicity are often conflated to associate groups of individuals with types of discourses differentiating 'them' from 'us'. Culture and ethnicity or cultural relativism can be used to both hide and justify practices of abuse (Ahmed, et al., 2009; Gupta, 2003). Ethnicity and culture are also associated with the meaning women may give to experiences of

abuse, discourses surrounding coping, which may intersect with structural barriers such as being a recent migrant into a country and not being aware of citizenship or legal rights and experiencing racism (Crenshaw, 1991; Dasgupta, 2005; Fontes and Plummer, 2010). For example, Smirta Tiyagi (2001) explored child sexual abuse with 12 mostly Caribbean heritage women in Canada, culture or religion were used as justifications for abuse and to convince women when they were girls that abuse was an acceptable and natural practice (see also Browne and Bassuk, 1997, Wilson, 1993).

Interestingly, Tiyagi (2001) also found that many of the perpetrators remained in close proximity to the women and their families throughout their lives and in some cases continued to harass them. Loyalty to family to protect them from shame, community wide silences around the issues of sexual abuse and wanting to prevent news about incest getting back to 'the islands', were also common themes. This links with Avtar Brah's (1996) analysis that Black British concepts of home are located somewhere between historical countries of origin and the UK, which she terms 'diaspora space'. Diaspora space can also be thought of as the space wherein African and Caribbean heritage women experience violence and abuse; both 'back home' and in the UK. It is also the imaginary space where women negotiate how speaking about their experiences of abuse/violence will impact on their family relationships in the UK and 'back home'.

Notions of home and belonging are contextual and spatially related. In their decisions to seek help, women can be restricted by cultural expectations from families tied into racialised notions of respectability from their countries of origin. In their study of violence with 15 African heritage women living in America, Ting and Panchanadeswaran (2009) found women recalled cultural and homophobic discourses that associated women who marry later in life with being prostitutes or lesbians, and being divorced or single reduced their status. Marriage was constructed as 'suffering' for women, with abuse/violence preferable to the stigma attached to being single. Similar to studies with middleclass African American women (Garfield, 2005; Nash, 2005; Nash and Hesterberg, 2009; Potter, 2008) women's families had encouraged them to stay in their marriages despite abuse, sometimes drawing on religious doctrine. Interestingly the women deferred to cultural privacy to resist negative discourses about African American men, making clear distinctions between African and African American men.

They did not want U.S. police or judges to think that immigrant African men are abusive like the stereotypical African American men, despite their own clear acknowledgement that abuse of women is commonplace and accepted in African cultures. (ibid, p.824)

The complex conjunctions of culture, migration and respectability and how this may restrict women's choices in leaving an abusive spouse is evident in the above extract. This thesis will

contribute the knowledge base on how racism, migration and culture intersect with African and Caribbean heritage women's experiences of violence and abuse in the UK.

Intersections of poverty, help seeking race and gender

Perpetrators of sexual violence often target individuals who lack power in the larger society ... [And] deliberately target individuals who will be less likely to report or when they do tell someone, less likely to be believed or deemed credible. People living in poverty are often ignored or penalised by the larger society. Therefore, poverty serves to silence and discredit victims/survivors, especially when it is compounded by other forms of oppression and isolation. (Greco and Dawgert, 2007, p.7)

African Americans are disproportionately represented as residents of poor communities with high rates of all forms of violence (Jenkins, 2002) and this has been associated with experiencing multiple forms of violence and abuse (Bryant-Davis, et al., 2010, Lewin, et al., 2010). In a study on victim-survivors of rape with African American and White American women, Wyatt (1992) found that African American women attributed experiences of rape to having to walk in poorly lit and unsafe neighbourhoods at night, because they could not afford transportation. Community exposure to violence and the proliferation of illicit substances, such as crack and cocaine increases the probability of African American women experiencing violence (Hampton, Oliver and Magarian, 2003). Experiencing abuse and violence in the home, could prompt women to escape making them effectively homeless and men who perpetrate violence and abuse may be especially sensitised to fear of homelessness as a vulnerability that can be exploited (Bryant-Davis, et al., 2010; Greco and Dawgert, 2007; West and Johnson, 2013).

In a literature review examining the relationship between poverty, gender, violence, mental distress and welfare policies, Belle and Doucet (2003) found that poor and often African American women were treated with contempt by service professionals and policy initiatives individualised women's poverty. The outcome of this was that African American women could not afford counselling and lacked access to many support services that could offer them help. One of the examples used by Crenshaw (1991) in her explication of intersectionality, was of poor African American women seeking help for violence in the context of intimate relationships. She cites many structural barriers – being unemployed, not having a refuge in the neighbourhood, facing the prospect of losing housing if resident in a refuge – as factors specific to poor African American women's social locations. These barriers are also experienced by poor non-White Hispanic and Native American women (Dasgupta, 2005). Crenshaw (1991) also contends that White victim-survivors had comparatively more financial and emotional support from their family and friends.

Using case histories from incarcerated women, Richie (2012) found that extreme poverty intersects with violence and abuse in the home and in public spaces, and racist police responses, such that African American women have fewer options for protection. This coupled with being restricted in geographical space, means when compared to their male counterparts, they are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated for retaliatory violence than are White American women.

African and Caribbean heritage men's comparatively low socioeconomic status within the UK means that African and Caribbean heritage women are less likely to be dependent on their partners financially, however partners still do attempt to control Black women's finances (Burman, et al., 2004; Thiara, 2013). These abusive practices act as barriers to seeking help, lengthening the number of years women spend in relationships with intimate partners who are violent (Mama, 1989). African and Caribbean heritage women's lived experiences of poverty and the intersections with violence and abuse is under-explored in the UK. Some statistics (Moosa and Woodruffe, 2009) indicate that Bengali and Pakistani women are among the poorest in UK society, while Caribbean heritage women are disproportionately represented within the working poor, that is individuals who do not earn enough to meet their basic needs. Caribbean heritage women are also more likely to be caring for children on a single income, while African heritage women might form part of the population of women on state benefits. Not having citizenship status and the associated dependency this may create on partners, has been cited as a reason why some African and Caribbean heritage women become trapped in relationships with men who are violent to them (Mama, 1989; Thiara, 2013). Even less is known about African and Caribbean heritage women's experiences of homelessness, violence and abuse. The thesis will contribute to the knowledge base on how race and poverty may intersect with experiences of violence and abuse.

Research on health inequalities has found that African and Caribbean heritage people are overrepresented in mental health detention facilities, where they are disproportionately prescribed higher doses of medication (Bhui, et al., 2002; Modood, et al., 1997). This has been linked to delayed help seeking because of fear of racist treatment and social exclusion. This literature makes little mention of gender differences and the psychosocial issues precipitating mental distress and hospital admission or referral, prompting the conclusion that findings could be mostly about Black men's experiences of social exclusion and distress (Edge and McKian, 2010). More may be known within mental health facilities and counselling services about Black women's experiences of violence and abuse than is documented in current research. This thesis will contribute to the knowledge base on how race and experiences of violence and abuse intersect in seeking and receiving help for mental distress.

Racial loyalty, body devaluation and decisions to stay silent

The socialisation of Black women within their families of origin can contribute to how they respond to violence from partners. Beth Richie (1996) conducted life history interviews with 37 African American and White American women at Rikers Island Prison in New York. Richie identified a process of 'gender entrapment' for African American women that begins with socialisation into a femininity in which women are expected to service the men and boys in their homes, accentuated through a sensitivity to the location of Black men in USA society. Women who become gender entrapped, aspire to middle class status in the form of a partner and children. The antithesis to this was to be a 'battered single mother', or single woman, 'a poor woman, an unsuccessful woman, and a bad mother' (Richie, 1996, p.139). Being in a committed relationship elevated their own status within their families of origin, gained them admiration from peers, which in turn meant they were more likely to excuse their abusers, which in some cases led to them serving prison sentences for crimes committed by their partners.

In contrast although the White and Black women who were not gender entrapped felt loyalty to their families and communities, they did not share a philosophical alignment with their male partners. Gender entrapment devalues Black girlhood/womanhood and overvalues Black boyhood/manhood (see also Wallace 1990/1979 for an early version of this thesis). One direct consequence was to limit Black women's disclosure of violence and abuse, which contributed to remaining longer in violent relationships. Internal barriers such as gender entrapment (Richie, 1996) and racial loyalty (Crenshaw, 1994; Hill Collins, 1990) – the belief that protecting Black men from police racism supersedes their own protection – may also be shaming for African American women who experience violence (West and Johnson, 2013).

Help seeking may be further complicated if a systematic bodily/self-devaluation forms part of Black women's lived experience. Gail Garfield (2005), in her study with nine Black women, found that the devaluation of Black women begins in early childhood and may be reinforced in peer groups, school and later on in employment. Black girls may be socialised to feel 'less than' because of the texture of their hair, the tone of their skin, the shape of their bodies and gradually the devaluation of these putative characteristics may have an enduring impact on women's sense of self-worth. If violence is a part of their lived experience, it may be appraised as confirming existing bodily/self-devaluation. Hence the women in Garfield's study felt that they must continue to fight metaphorically, politically and physically to resist violence and to re-establish their self-worth as women. Hillary Potter (2008) conceptualised this fight as 'dynamic resistance' to describe the multiple battles which include, but are not restricted to, violence and abuse in the home or by someone they know.

Charlotte Pierce-Baker (2000) in her study of the aftermath of rape for seven Black women and their male partners also found an internalised acceptance of devalued girlhood/womanhood. Even counsellors seemed to hold the view that Black girls are used to being sexually assaulted and Black women live in loveless families. This leads her to argue that some Black women may unwittingly 'sacrifice their own souls' on the altar of racial pride (Pierce-Baker, 2000, p.84; see also Crenshaw, 1991; Few and Bell-Scott, 2002; Taylor, 2002).

Long and Ullman (2013) carried out narrative case studies with nine African American women from very impoverished communities, who had experienced multiple forms of abuse and violence in childhood and as adults. Most of the women used substances to manage their distress and some had lengthy stays in psychiatric institutions. While the authors note that this was a particularly marginalised group of Black women, they argue for research to focus on the sociocultural contexts of Black women's lives. This thesis will explore the sociocultural contexts of African and Caribbean heritage victim-survivors living in the UK.

Devalued womanhood may not be restricted to Black women, but may intersect with experiencing multiple forms of violence and abuse in childhood and as adults. Thomas and Hall (2008) carried out three-stage life history interviews with mostly White American women who had experienced multiple forms of abuse/violence in childhood and as adults. The women reported growing up in 'houses of horror' (Thomas and Hall, 2008, p.153), with most identifying their mothers as neglectful. Consistent with narratives of adult victim-survivors of child sexual abuse (Herman and Hirschman, 2005; Wilson, 1993), some thought they played the mother role and that their mothers knew or contributed to their abuse. Others were made 'the family scape goat' performing the lion's share of the household chores, and often called 'whore' (Thomas and Hall, 2008, p.154). Some received little support from within or outside of families and most experienced negative repercussions from speaking about abuse. The women shared 'redemption narratives' gaining access to counselling, finding loving relationships, educational success, or through self-determination and helping other women and girls within their families. The experiences of child sexual abuse from this study, demonstrate how forms of violence can shade into each other (Kelly, 1988) whilst the bodily devaluation was not racialised, the accounts shared many similarities with bodily devaluation described in the studies with African American women.

The association between devalued girlhood/womanhood and help seeking and how that may intersect with Black women's decision-making in the aftermath of sexual violence requires exploration in the UK context, as it has implications not only for how organisations might seek to encourage help seeking, but also the issues women might be struggling with in its aftermath. Studies in the UK show some support for the finding that Black women protect their minoritised

Black partners by not reporting them to the police, to counter discourses of pathology among Black people (Humphries and Thiara, 2003; Mama, 1989; Parmar, Sampson and Diamond, 2005; Wilson, 1993) or in the words of a Jamaican victim-survivor of violence from her husband 'I did not want to perpetuate stereotypes of being a Black single mother' (Parmar, et al., 2005, p.4). However, Jane Mooney (1999) found Black women to be more likely to report intimate partner violence to the police than White women. Sue Lees (1999) found Black female students were more likely to call the police for violence from a partner, because they believed the police would take action against Black men. This finding possibly reflects a strategic use of police racism (Grewal, et al., 1998; Mama, 1989; Rai and Thiara, 1997) by some to escape men who are violent to them.

Research suggests middleclass African American women who experience violence and abuse from their partners may be encouraged to stay to counter the image of Black families in crisis and also to maintain their middle class status (Nash, 2005; Nash and Hesterberg, 2009; Potter, 2007; 2008). Overvaluing of Black boyhood/manhood may influence some Black women's decisions to report violence in the UK. Little research has been carried out on how Black women, whose partners are not Black, or male, disclose and seek help (see also Nixon and Humphreys, 2010).

Social support and seeking help

As noted throughout this chapter, much of the empirical research on violence and seeking help and support has been carried out in the USA. Disclosure, as the first step to seeking help, has been defined as telling family and friends about personal experiences of violence and abuse or telling more formal support providers (Tillman, et al., 2010). Some researchers make a distinction between disclosure as speaking about violence and abuse, and help seeking as asking for assistance from formal sources. The intimate nature of the violence and abuse as assault on women's personhood most usually by someone she knows (WHO, 2002) can act as a barrier to disclosure regardless of ethnicity, or socio-economic status (Kaukinen and DeMaris 2009). Social support is defined as assistance provided by family and friends or formal services that could be emotional, tangible, or informational (Thomson, et al., 2000). Emotional support (such as non-judgmental listening) tangible support (offering assistance with childcare, temporary accommodation or money) and informational (a referral to more formal support services) have all been found to be beneficial to victim-survivors (Thompson, et al., 2000).

White, Hispanic and African American women most commonly disclose violence from partners to their informal network of family and friends (Kaukinen, 2004; Lipsky, et al., 2006), this is even more the case for sexual violence (Kaukinen, 2002) especially for African American women (Kaukinen and DeMaris, 2009). White American women are more likely to access more formal and informal help

than African American or Hispanic women (Amstadter, et al., 2008; Lipsky, et al., 2006; Kaukinen, 2004; Kaukinen and DeMaris, 2009). Although most women find friends and family supportive, the way in which friends respond to disclosures, especially of sexual violence, can influence further disclosure and help seeking (Ahrens, 2006; Ahrens, et al., 2007). If friends are supportive and non-judgemental women are more likely to pursue allegations further, while if friends blame or become distressed by the disclosure, victim-survivors may also bear the responsibility for burdening friends, or disclosures alter relationships, thus women may seek no further help (Ahrens and Campbell, 2000). A neutral and supportive response is preferable to having the listener verbalise thoughts of revenge (Ahrens, 2006; Campbell, et al., 2001; Starszynski, et al., 2005; Ullman and Filipas, 2001). Listed in order of preference, female friends, family, male friends and intimate partners are those women speak to about experiences of rape, and if they are not supportive, women may choose to stop speaking (Ahrens, 2006; Ullman and Filipas, 2001). Additionally friends and counsellors, but not intimate partners, have been found to provide good emotional support for women after a rape (Ahrens, et al., 2009).

Long, et al. (2007) examined social support, experiences of rape and blame among 497 African American women. While most of the women in Long, et al.'s (2007) study attributed most of the blame to the rapist, women with less education were more likely to blame themselves and less likely to have spoken. Ullman and Filipas (2001) found in their study of 323 women who had experienced sexual assault that among the women from minoritised backgrounds, they had received more negative social reactions from family and friends than White women and these reactions impacted on their mental wellbeing. This was in contrast to the findings by Abney and Priest (1995) who concluded Black girls disclosed to their families more readily because they felt they would not be rejected. In their study of violence and abuse across the life course, Hood and Carter (2008) theorise that marginalised African American women could develop concepts of an unjust world as a matter of course because of the violence in their everyday lives. What may also enable them to cope is living within tight-knit or more socially cohesive communities with multiple sources of support. The findings on Black women's disclosures and responses to them are therefore mixed, and focused almost entirely in the context of the USA.

Informal support may give women the confidence to access more formal support (Kaukinen, 2002; Kaukinen and DeMaris, 2009). Once women tell their informal network about, for example, a violent partner it might become difficult to justify his/her behaviour after subsequent assaults (Kaukinen 2002; Kearney, 2001; Towns and Adams, 2000). For women with experience of child sexual abuse, a supportive carer, e.g. the non-abusing parent (usually the mother) may lessen the emotional impact (Elliott and Briere, 1994). In a review of studies on disclosure, London, et al. (2005) found child sexual abuse is mostly disclosed in adulthood, and children do not tell about sexual abuse unless

that are certain they will be supported; in addition adults often choose not to ask children whether they have been sexually abused. Harvey and Herman (1994) note that memories of child sexual abuse may be discontinuous, linked to both the encoding of traumatic memory and efforts to suppress trauma in order to get on with their lives. Focal life events, such as the death of the abuser, the birth of a child, start of a new sexual relationship or the child reaching the age the woman was when she was abused can call past experiences into present reflection (Harvey and Herman, 1994). Adult survivors of child sexual abuse are the most poorly served in the UK by especially statutory services (Sen and Kelly, 2007).

African American women rely more on informal support (West and Johnson, 2013) because many experience community service agencies as hostile and racist. Because of the many barriers faced in accessing support, African American victim-survivors may self-manage via talking to informal networks, engaging in social activism and spirituality (Bryant-Davis, 2005; Garfield, 2005). For example middleclass African American women may use 'sister-circles' to cope with mental distress (Neal-Barnett and Crowther, 2000). However informal support may also be less available due to lack of resources among women of lower socioeconomic status (Goodman, et al., 2009; Thompson, et al., 2000). Limited empirical research has been carried out in the UK with African and Caribbean heritage women's on social support during and in the aftermath of violence and abuse. Again this thesis will contribute to the knowledge base.

Help Receiving

Several studies also suggest a perception that African American women will not be considered legitimate victims of sexual violence by service providers connected to historical stereotypes of Black women as promiscuous (Bell and Mattis, 2000; Kaukinen and DeMaris, 2009; Ullman, 2007; Wyatt, 1992). The level of trust in agencies such as the police and mental health services may also act as a barrier to women speaking about experiences of violence and abuse (Campbell, et al., 2001; Campbell and Raja, 1999; Kaukinen, 2004; Long and Ullman, 2013).

Campbell and Raja (1999) found that minority women were less believed than White women by mental health professionals when they disclosed sexual assault. African American women also report being treated less favourably during medical examinations after experiencing rape (Washington, 2001).

Although women from all racial backgrounds find rape crisis centres more supportive after experiencing rape, African American women are less likely to access these services, because of

perceptions they will not be supported (Washington, 2001) or they associate seeking help from these services with middleclass White women (Long, et al., 2007; Long and Ullman, 2013).

In the UK when receiving help for violence or abuse, Black women are often limited by the availability of specialised services and those that are culturally specific (Coy, et al., 2009; Kalathil, et al., 2011; Rai and Thiara, 1997). Culturally specific services support women from BAMER (Black Asian Minority Ethnic Refugee) communities around immigration status, racism, religious and cultural practices as well as violence and abuse (Brice-Baker, 1994; Gillum, 2007; 2009; Kalathil, et al., 2011; Rai and Thiara 1997; Vallandra, 2007). Receiving help from culturally specific services for some Black women enabled them to feel more comfortable and facilitates more trusting relationships with Black female staff (Batsleer, et al., 2002; Rai and Thiara, 1997). In Kalathil, et al.'s (2011) study, such services relieved Black women of the burden of having to explain and differentiate the minutiae of their culture/heritage whilst disclosing their experience of abuse and distress.

My care co-ordinator was an African woman. [This] made a big difference because suddenly my job of trying to explain where I was coming from, I did not have to explain that part of it to her, you know ... about being a Black woman, about being a Black mother, about Black culture ... and because she was a Black woman, she recognized certain things as well, about what I need, you know, what my anxieties might be as well. I did not have to spell them out. (Kalathil, et al., 2011, p.38)

Faith and receiving help

Religion has been defined as adhering 'to prescribed beliefs and practices' (Mattis, 2002, p. 310) whilst spirituality is a 'belief in the sacred and transcendent nature of life and being connected to others in a shared quest for goodness' (Mattis, 2002, p.210) or something bigger than self and immediate context. African Americans have been represented as deeply religious/spiritual with Black-led churches acting as safe spaces to worship and resist racist oppression or other adversity (Bell and Mattis, 2000; Hill Collins, 1990; hooks, 2003; Potter, 2007). For Neighbours, Musick and Williams (1998, cited in Bell and Mattis, 2000), Black-led churches in the USA have been places where Black women seek help, which would make churches useful places to challenge violence against women. Indeed, ElKoury, et al. (2004) found Black women disclose violence and abuse to pastors first, then to family or friends.

While this could be an opportunity for pastors to help women escape violence and abuse, research suggests that a more common response is to encourage women to go home and work on their marriages (Gillum, Sullivan and Bybee, 2006; Potter, 2007; Taft, et al., 2009). In the UK part of the

reason some Black women turn to Black-led churches for help with mental distress, is because they perceive mental health services as secular and unable to appreciate the spiritual dimension to their distress (Cinnerella and Lowenthal, 1999).

Having a religious belief has been found to provide women who have experienced violence and abuse with a sense of comfort, but not necessarily one safe enough to disclose or seek help for these experiences (Bryant-Davis, 2005; Fyfe, 2007; Postmus, et al., 2009; Rai and Thiara, 1997; Wilson, 1993). Yick (2008) carried out a meta-synthesis of studies on women's use of faith or religion to cope with violence and abuse, key themes were the role of prayer, a gradual loss of faith for some or a process of renewal for others. Thomas and Hall (2008, see above) also describe variable experiences with faith/religion with some finding redemptive spaces, whilst others had lost faith.

Potter (2007) found that women used faith as a source of support alongside specialised violence support services. However, many attributed their turning point for leaving, or their partner leaving, to God. The role of faith or religion in African and Caribbean heritage women's help seeking in the UK is underexplored and this thesis will contribute to the knowledge base.

Literary narratives from African and Caribbean heritage women

Janice Haaken (1999) notes that while the lived experiences of Black women are largely excluded from social science empirical studies, Black women writers have provided literary accounts of violence and abuse. Similarly, Carole Boyce-Davies (1994) defines Black women's literature as challenging accepted and oppressive realities for Black women offering liberatory discourses for readers (see also Hill Collins, 1990).

Haaken, (1999) describes these narratives as 'richer and denser' than empirical accounts. For example in *The Bluest Eye* (Morrison, 1986), the protagonist Pecola is raped by her father and while he is held responsible, the wider social inequalities also play a role.

Incest emerges as an important but not singular source of Black women's pain ... sexual abuse is wounding, in part because other destructive forces are at work that undermine efforts at self-restoration. (Haaken, 1999, pp.33-34)

The literary/first person narratives *The Unbelonging* (Riley, 1985), *Borrowed Body* (Mason-John, 2005), *Ugly* (Briscoe, 2009), *Precious* (Williams, 2011) and the play *Born Bad* (Tucker Green, 2003) were selected for review because they deal with themes of child sexual abuse, largely absent in social science research in the UK, experienced by African and Caribbean heritage women.

In *The Unbelonging* (Riley, 1985) the protagonist Hyacinth arrives at age 13 to live with her father, stepmother and two brothers. She endures endless household chores and observes her father beating her step-mother, is beaten by her father for bedwetting, and observes him becoming sexually aroused during the beatings. He eventually attempts to rape her. Hyacinth also experiences racism as one of only eight Black children in her school.

Hyacinth is displaced through a series of foster placements where her hair is uncared for and unkempt, in every placement an incident or comment about her skin or hair further alienates her. Hyacinth gains a place at university and meets Perlene another Jamaican student. Hyacinth experiences Perlene's attempts at politicising her into Blackness, by explaining that racism also exists in Jamaica and that Hyacinth carries a romanticised picture of 'home', as alienating, frustrating and confusing. She eventually returns to Jamaica now estranged from her home after spending many years in the UK concluding 'her blackness ugly and rejected even among her own kind' (1985, p.142).

In *Borrowed Body* (Mason-John, 2005) the protagonist Pauline was born the result of a rape. Her mother had unsuccessfully attempted to abort her. Pauline shares with Hyacinth from *The Unbelonging*, a sense of becoming racialised via a range of encounters in public and home spaces as a Black foster child living in a largely White area where she experiences racial abuse. Similar to *Ugly* (Briscoe, 2009), Pauline also acquires a belated sense of Blackness through her Nigerian mother Wunmi who visits sporadically and eventually gets sole custody of Pauline aged thirteen where Wunmi proceeds to instil African values. This means absolute obedience to her mother, learning new methods of cooking food and bathing, harsh physical discipline and carrying out a lot of household chores. Pauline encounters urban Blackness at her new school where she is teased by the Black children because she is dark-skinned, self-identifies as 'coloured', not Black and because she is not of Caribbean heritage and speaks with a 'posh' English accent. Her notions of Blackness are further pluralised through her peers in the institutions where she is placed and builds alliances, not solely based on shared racial background, but on mutual experiences of abuse.

Ugly (Briscoe, 2009) shares with *Borrowed Body* (Mason-John, 2005) and *The Unbelonging* (Riley, 1985) themes of racism, a fragmented sense of belonging and physical abuse. Similar to *Borrowed Body*, the physical abuse in *Ugly*, is carried out by Connie's mother. Connie, like Pauline in *Borrowed Body* is an unwanted child, who is often reminded by her mother that had abortions been legal at the time of her conception, Connie would not exist (Briscoe, 2009, p.136). The theme of bedwetting in adolescence being attributed to the severe beatings is also shared between the two narratives. However in *Ugly*, Connie's stepfather, Eastman also subjects her to brutal beatings, on one occasion, pushing her head through a glass window.

A theme shared across the four narratives is the protagonists being made to feel 'ugly'. This is especially vivid in the titular *Ugly* where Connie or Clare/Clearie as she is called by her mother due to her apparent transparency, introduces herself and her siblings by virtue of their skin complexion and hair textures. Connie is often called 'ugly' and 'black bitch' by her mother because of her dark skin, the shape of her nose and the thickness of her lips. The physical abuse in *Ugly* is also sexualised in the way that Connie's mother pulls at her genitalia and twists her developing nipples to the extent that she develops cysts and gets Connie to repeat 'I am a dirty little whore' (2009, p.183). *Ugly* is a first person narrative of one of the few Black, female judges in the UK, Constance Briscoe. After publication, Briscoe's mother sued her, and the publishers, claiming the story was fabricated. All of her siblings sided with her mother despite social service records evidencing multiple beatings and of each being abandoned at the age of fourteen. The court ruled on behalf of Briscoe and her publishers, she reflected 'I did not believe for a split second that I owed my mother a bond of silence' (Briscoe, 2009, p.398).

Precious (Williams, 2011) contains similar themes of displacement through private fostering. The protagonist Precious, experiences racism, and physical abuse from her 'scarily beautiful' mother who would periodically return and take Precious. This formed the context where Precious was sexually abused and raped by her mother's male friends. Precious was also raped by a soldier in a public toilet who remarks 'I *know* what you Black girls are like: you love it' (2011, p.177, emphasis in original), making links with social discourses about Black women's sexuality discussed earlier in the chapter. Similar to Pauline in *Borrowed Body* (Mason-John, 2005), Precious is caught between being Africanised by her mother, being told she is 'coloured' and not Black by her foster carers, and 'You think you are White' (2011, p.34) by her half-sister Agnes who is also fostered for a brief period. As found in Ting and Panadacheswaran (2009), Precious is also cautioned against Jamaicans and her foster family by her mother because they are of lower social status.

Precious eventually accepts an offer to study English at Oxford University, going on to become a successful journalist. Precious' connective trajectory through educational attainment is a common theme throughout the four books. Precious' foster family also enabled her freedom of self-expression and movement at home and in public spaces without strict or harsh discipline. This was bolstered by her escape into literary, musical and cultural Blackness and by her educational desire encouraged by her mother. Thus, her relationship with her mother was never entirely over, yet remaining ambivalent. The narrative ends affirmatively with Precious being able to view herself as attractive and successful, yet still somewhat guarded emotionally.

In the play *Born Bad* Debbie Tucker Green (2003) dramatises the dynamics of talking about sexual abuse in a Black British family over the course of one day. The play reflects many of the themes

raised in Wilson (1993). No mention is made of seeking help and it can be assumed that neither the protagonist DAWTA nor BROTHER sought help based on the family's staccato and confrontational interaction and the theme of secrets in the play. Tucker Green (2003) in the character of DAWTA can be read as inviting a deconstruction of patriarchal notions of the family in Black communities. Part of this deconstruction is routed through the politically uncomfortable engagement with three stereotypes of Black women and girls as strong, overly sexual, and asexual, Black men as sexually predatory, abusive and abused, and Black mothers as emotionally restrained and complicit in abuse. It is an explicit critique of keeping family secrets.

Themes from the literary narratives

Common threads through the above narratives were racialised, sexualised abuse, domestic chores inappropriate for girls' age and threats of breaking up the family which encouraged them to be silent about abuse and violence. The fragmented sense of belonging for all protagonists is augmented by experiences of racism, minoritisation: being caught between the cultures of 'home' and here (Brah, 1996) and differences in social economic status between African heritage mothers and White foster parents. The themes of race and cultural differences in parental disciplinary styles between 'English' foster parents/teachers and 'West Indian' or African parents is also a recurring theme across the narratives (see also Barn, 2007; Bernard and Gupta, 2008). The protagonists then appear caught between apparent differences in cultures where in *Precious* for example, child abuse becomes associated with African culture or Black mothering (see also Bogle 1988; Phoenix, 1991; Reynolds, 2005).

Multiple foster placements are further exacerbated by the abuse and violence, leaving feelings of negation. Boyce-Davies (1994) cited the return of the dead Black girl in Toni Morrison's (1999) *Beloved* as a method to foreground the lived experiences of Black women and girls. The lived experiences of the girls in the above narratives can also be viewed as resurrecting the dead Black girl by illustrating the worthlessness of Black girlhood (Garfield, 2005; Potter, 2008; Richie, 1996) among members of their families of origin: how through abuse and violence, they were almost killed or attempted to take their own lives. The narratives also position Black girls as bearers of the public image of the family, where speaking about abuse and violence brings shame, thus silences these experiences. The gaps in the literature, themes from the literary narratives and early analysis of the original data encouraged engagement with theories of embodiment, belonging, migration, racism, the emotions as knowledge and how these factors intersected with seeking help for violence and abuse among the research participants.

Reading and reflecting on these narratives and their echoes in the lives of the research participants who were interviewed as victim-survivors, led to a series of concepts which are drawn on in later chapters and introduced at the end of this chapter.

Theoretical framework

The literature review highlighted how cultural discourses about Black women's bodies and sexuality may be internalised and resisted through staying silent, delayed help seeking and adopting a strong Black woman persona. Cultural discourses about Black families and Black men may also entrap women in relationships through the shame of the associated loss of social status in becoming a 'Black single mother' for working class women and also the loss of financial status for middle class women. The intersections of race, class and gender also featured in how poverty and migration restricted access to support. The literary narratives drew attention to Black women's embodied experiences of violence and abuse, how cultural discourses are both practiced inside and outside of the home and how educational attainment and professional intervention assisted the women. In this literature themes of negotiating multiple identities and expressions and practices of Blackness resonate. The theme of silence is also redolent within the narratives. The rest of this chapter outlines a theoretical framework, beginning with Michel Foucault's (1977; 1984) conception of discourses and the power/knowledge nexus, how individuals are subjected to and resist discourses. The section also discusses the dynamics of violence and abuse that intersect with women's socio-political locations to influence who women feel able to approach for help and support and how discourses of shame feature. How experiences are lived through bodies, or embodied practices and the emotions, is used to theorise how women gain knowledge and their possibilities for alternative modes of self-hood.

Discourse, power, knowledge and resistance

Michel Foucault's (1977; 1984; 1994) philosophical project was to place a critical eye on knowledge; how we come to know and the all that surrounds the creation and promulgation of knowledge and associated practices. He argued that knowledge is related to power through the control of bodies via discourses. Thus, the body becomes a site on which struggles for power and domination are waged (1977). Patricia Hill Collins (1990) drew on the work of Foucault (1977) in her concept of 'controlling images' about Black women which form part of a matrix of domination. Foucault (1977) developed a genealogy or a critical historical deconstruction of institutional texts and practices aimed at regulating individuals in the military, prisons and asylums. These bodies or subject categorisations formed the blueprint for industrialists to be able to control individual labour. Thus discourses developed about what it meant to be a good/bad worker, sane/insane,

criminal/law-abiding, soldier/civilian. These divisions of types of subjects or people act as regulatory power on the available choices, and associated consequences of the decisions individuals feel able to make.

Foucault (1984) examined eighteenth century origins of the quantification of births and deaths, finding women's bodies subjected to ways of thinking and talking about population, fertility, parity and productivity. His analysis develops through what he terms the 'biopolitics' or biopower of 'health, sanitation, birthrate, longevity, race' (p.73). Associated with biopower were discourses about sexuality tracing the origins of ways of speaking about sex and how ideas about sex and sexuality are influenced by historically specific discursive regimes. Absent in Foucault's genealogies are the discourses created during colonialism (Ramanzoglu, 1994) or Black female bodies and women's bodies in Europe beyond maternal productivity (McNay, 1992). However, discourses about sexuality are particularly relevant in explaining the internalisation of controlling images of Black women, Black men and Black families.

Foucault (1994) theorised that when regulation becomes visible as during the 1960s student uprisings in Paris and the Black liberation struggles in USA, individuals create counter-discourses and fashion alternative modes of living. Some argue that Foucault did not however specify exactly how discursive resistance occurs (McNay, 1992). The adoption of the strong Black woman persona has been theorised as a resistance discourse and practice by Black women (Hill Collins, 1990) and silence about violence and abuse can also be viewed as a resistance to the many discourses about Black women's bodies and sexuality, and Black families (Hammonds, 1997; 2002). Further, Black feminists have long argued that it was the subjugated knowledges from their everyday lives that enabled them to know differently and survive oppressive practices (Hill Collins, 1990; hooks, 1984). Black British women have also found ways of resisting negative discourses about their hair and skin by adopting counter discourses (Mama, 1995; Phoenix, 2009; Tate, 2005).

Foucault has been also criticised for representing the body as docile, because in his formulation of disciplinary bodies, it is through cognition or the mind that subject positions are considered, adopted or resisted (Shilling, 1993). His focus on the immanence of power and the equivalence of its forms, whereby state power might be equated with individual power has also been critiqued (Brown and Stenner, 2009; Hill Collins, 1998). However, Foucault's (1977; 1984) focus on the routinised aspects of daily living and the extent to which individual lives are controlled and regulated are powerful indictments on notions of freedom. Foucault (1994) also theorises 'caring for the self' through exercise, diet and restraint for longevity as forms of pleasure through self-surveillance. Feminist research has revealed that women experience pleasure in the routine and everyday aspects of their lives: diet, body aesthetics, housework (see also Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1993;

Young, 2005). There is less theorising on how Black women experience either their bodies or pleasures in the self.

Intersections of forms of violence and abuse

Feminist conceptions of violence and abuse are that they are everyday practices of masculinity through which men exercise dominance over women (Macleod and Saraga, 1988; McKinnon, 1983). The dynamics of the relationship between a woman and her intimate partner and how this contributes to her decisions after experiencing violence and abuse is well documented (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Stanko, 1988; Walker, 1979). Having feelings of love for someone who is violent or abusive can create a dangerous, emotionally confusing and distressing attachment for women who might be ambivalent about seeing intimate partners as adversaries (Kearney, 2001; Hoyle and Saunders, 2000; Towns and Adams, 2000). Controlling behaviours are nearly always a part of the dynamics within intimate relationships where men are violent (Hoyle and Saunders, 2000; Stark 2007). Women may be impacted by their partner's systematic and relentless controlling behaviour which can include, monitoring their whereabouts, who they have spoken to, accusing them of having sex with other men and isolating women from their friends and family and controlling their finances (Gill and Thiara, 2010; Kelly, 1988; Hoyle and Saunders, 2000; Stark 2007).

Raewyn Connell (2009) argues that gender is an organising structure and practice within societies, whereby a hierarchical gender order is a key feature of social relationships. At the institutional levels such as in schools, families, churches, employment which Connell (2009) terms 'gender regimes', men and women can experience power/privilege in some instances and oppression in others. For example a minoritised Black man may work in a semi-skilled job, but is a leader of a church and the head of his household which would make him both subordinated at work and dominant in his church and within his family. Connell's (2009) gender order formulates power, privilege and oppression as contextual and spatial relationships within gender regimes. If men are motivated by power and control and this control is threatened by its imminent loss, they may resort to violence after many other forms of control are no longer successful (Arendt, 1970; Stark, 2007).

Evan Stark (2007) mapped how individual men can use the gender regime of the family to regulate and monitor women and children's behaviour through forms of what he termed 'coercive control', making it difficult for women to seek help or leave. Gradually reducing women's sense of self either through physical, sexual, emotional violence and abuse, which takes the form of the micro-management of everyday life (see also Morris, 2009). However, when women present to the outside world, they may not necessarily appear 'battered' or controlled and might well be abrasive,

hostile and aggressive, but it is through listening to women's accounts and narratives of the nature of their intimate relationships, that coercive control can be made more visible (Stark, 2007).

Intersections of masculinities and internalised racism have also been theorised as endangering Black women's lives. Here, low self-esteem as a consequence of experiencing racism is seen to place Black men at an increased risk of perpetrating violence against Black women, where it is theorised that it is the self, turning against itself through self-hate (Bryant-Davis and Ocampo, 2006). Racism, trauma and stress created by marginalisation and limited access to education, creates anger which may be turned inwards and unleashed towards Black women and their children. Black men who are hindered from achieving masculinity through education or employment may vent their frustrations on female counterparts and children (Taft, et al., 2009).

In this theorisation violence against Black women is constructed as some Black men's individual response to the trauma and stress created by the wider violence of racism. Hampton, et al. (2003) support the notion that violence against Black women is an outcome of the pent up frustrations of Black men who are socialised similarly to White men to want power over women, violence happens because they do not have power in society. Thus some poor Black men seek alternative routes to performing masculinity, described as the ability to display violence in harsh and violent community environments. Within this context Black men construe Black women as masculine, unattractive, oversexed and able to withstand men's violent outbursts, and Black women construe Black men as violent and lazy and unable to provide for their families (Hampton, et al., 2003).

However, using poverty that is a consequence of racism, as an explanation for the causation of violence, does not explain why middle and upper class African American women experience violence from their Black partners (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). Richie (1996) argued that although racism does have a restrictive impact on the quality of life for many marginalised Black people in the USA, the traditional gender structure in some families elevate Black men's value over that of Black women where domestic spaces are constructed for Black girls and women to emotionally support and encourage men and boys in the face of racism. Writing from the UK Mama (2000) argues that violence is a form of male entitlement within the home, which has little to do with marginalisation as a result of race. A similar argument is made by Wilson (1993) in relation to child sexual abuse. There is tension in the theorising of how racial inequalities intersect with Black women's experiences of violence and abuse, both in the UK and the USA depending on whether the point of departure is Black men or Black women. Political engagement as racialised and gendered women has historically required alliances with Black men in anti-racist organisations, an uneasy space for the articulation of violence and abuse in Black women's lives (Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2000; hooks, 1981; 1984; Lorde, 1984; Wallace, 1990/1979).

It is in paying attention to Black women's negotiations in both racialised and gendered locations that reveals complex dilemmas for help seeking (Crenshaw, 1994). The realities of race and racism that structure Black women's lives have prompted theorisation about their available options of escape from violence or abuse. The intersections of gender, class, ethnicity, nationality and notions of identity are all implicated in the decisions women make to seek help for violence and how help is constructed by service providers (Brice-Baker, 1994). Black feminist standpoint theory has articulated that Black women have always theorised from their lives positioned at the margins of society and out of this marginal consciousness have fashioned possibilities of living (Boyce-Davies, 1994; Hill Collins, 1998; hooks, 1984). African American women's lives are characterised by many silences especially on sexuality, violence and abuse and there is a theoretical chasm between how Black women are represented in popular discourses and Black women's lived experiences (Hammonds, 1997; Hill Collins, 1990; Richie, 1996; 2012). Hill Collins (1990) argues that social institutions governed by elite and privileged groups present their sexuality and sexual practices as the norm which African American families do not fit. A similar argument has been made by Tracey Reynolds (2005) with respect to the UK. Black people's sexuality has been defined as depraved and animalistic, which Hill Collins (1990) routes from slavery to pornography and racism, citing the auction block examination of genitals as the beginnings of Black women's objectification (see also Miller-Young, 2010). This also fits into western dualist thinking mind/body, male/female, superior/inferior which extends to racial categories which postulate Black bodies as 'more animal-like, more body-like, less God-like' (Spelman, 1982; cited in Hill Collins, 1990, p.171).

Sexual violence has been an ongoing threat in the lives of African American women from both Black and White men (hooks, 1981). Sexual violence was a tool for economic domination during slavery where the myth of the Black rapist took a foothold and the 'mythical rapist, implies a mythical whore' (Davis, 1978; cited in Hill Collins, 1990, p.177-178). Black men also internalise controlling images of Black women, which can then serve as justification for perpetrating violence and abuse. Thus Black women experience 'daily assaults on the self' (p.186) exacerbated by the community silencing when they speak out about violence and abuse and unacknowledged racism experienced from both White men and women.

Black feminist standpoint theory has been critiqued by Tracey Reynolds (2001) (see also Hill Collins, 1998) for essentialising African American women's lives. Reynolds (2001) further discusses the commodification of Black women's pain in the form of first person and literary narratives of abuse and violence and questions the functions they serve (see also Hill Collins, 1998). Further, differences of class, socioeconomic status and ethnicity, nationality and region of origin, may mean less is shared between Black women than is assumed by common racial heritage (Brooks Higginbotham, 1997). Black women's standpoint theory is however a useful point of departure for this thesis to

examine African and Caribbean heritage women's lives contextualised to the UK, as it was the socio-political backdrop for intersectionality which is used as a tool here to explore help seeking for violence and abuse.

Embodiment: legacies of violence and abuse

This section examines how violence and abuse may impact the body, mental and physical wellbeing and how these legacies also influence women's decisions to seek help. Violence and abuse are bodily intrusions which can leave women with broken bones, bruises, gynaecological injuries, STIs, miscarriages and stillbirths (Bewley, Friend and Mezey, 1997; Humphreys and Thiara, 2003; Kelly, 1988; Richie, 1996; Stanko, 1988; Stark, 2007). Violence and abuse can also impact women's mental wellbeing, with many studies carried out in the USA and the UK showing women scoring higher on measurements for low mood, traumatic stress, intense worry, sleeplessness, and attempts on their own lives (Browne and Finkelhor, 1985; Cromby, et al., 2013; Herman, 1998; Kaukinen, 2004; Polusny and Folette, 1995; Scott, et al., 2013). Women's sense of safety and trust within intimate relationships can also be affected (Finkelhor and Browne; 1985; Stanko; 1988). In attempts to escape abuse and violence many women become homeless (Gill and Banga, 2008, see above) which, because of limited social and economic resources can elevate the likelihood of entering into prostitution especially for younger women (Herman and Hirschman 2005; Lees, 2002).

Women manage past experiences of violence and abuse using a range of strategies: forgetting; using substances; becoming estranged or withdrawn from their bodies, or they might (re)present what has been done to them by self-inflicting wounds on the body (Coy, 2009; Herman, 1998; Lamb, 1999; Warner, 2003). There is also empirical support for a relationship between overeating or bingeing and purging with violence and abuse (see Smolak and Levine, 2007 for a review). Women may experience shifts in how they view their relationships to others, political alignments and spiritual beliefs (Benton-Rushing, 1993; Brison, 1997). For example Andrea Benton-Rushing (1993) and Charlotte Pierce-Baker (2000) describe viewing especially Black men of lower socioeconomic status as no longer brothers in the struggle, but as menacing after experiencing stranger rapes.

Theories of race and embodiment

Embodiment or lived experience theorists begin from the perspective that there is no apriori self or private self, separate to the social self and that the self is experienced through the material body (Blackman, 2008). Historically, women and people of colour have been defined as limited by their bodies and as such a 'culture from the neck up' persists (Blackman, 2008, p.7). This has meant that female and non-White bodies have been associated with nature and 'unreason' (Grosz, 1994) as well as objects to be explored, quantified, measured and civilised (Gilman, 1985; Mohanram, 1999).

Within this conceptualisation of the body it is a docile machine rather than the means through which both thought and action occur (Blackman, 2008; Shapiro, 2011).

However, this dualist split between the body and the mind has been suggested as one of the ways women manage forms of violence and abuse. Research on victim-survivors of child sexual abuse has suggest women split between the body and the self to manage recollections of bodily intrusion (Coy, 2006; Young, 1992). This strategy is useful, yet problematic, as women attempt to separate what has happened to their bodies from their conceptions of 'self' yet still live with vivid recollections of experiences of violence and abuse (Coy, 2009).

Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962) posits that learning occurs through the perceptive capabilities of the body to form the boundaries between self and other bodies or objects, albeit without conscious awareness of every bodily process. Individuals develop habits or patterned ways of interacting with their environment. Bodies also open out and connect to each other and objects. In reaching out and touching another person, a 'double – sensation' (p.66) of touch and being touched is experienced. Thus being embodied is being affected by others and having the capacity to affect other bodies or objects (Merleau-Ponty, 2002/1962; Weiss, 1999). The notion of the 'lived-body' or 'being-in-the world' describes the way in which bodies inhabit space and time (p.161) thus gain knowledge through interacting with the surrounding environment. Past memories of being-in-the-world are retained by bodies as sediments or through habitual practice and become experience. Thus, bodies take past experiences into present action (p.279) and knowledge is achieved through experience theorised as peaceful coexistence opening out towards others and recognising the self or embodied practices in others. Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962) provides the example of his empathy towards his friend's bereavement, through visualising how he would feel if he were bereaved, how it would impact his body, his feelings: thus, we all have the potential to interconnect in mutually enriching relationships. A critique to Merleau-Ponty's body phenomenology is an incomplete theorisation of why all opening out is not mutually reciprocal (Mohanram, 1999; Staudigl, 2007), as is the case with violence and abuse.

Feminist and postcolonial embodiment theorists problematise notions of embodiment. They begin with questioning whether female and male capacities of action within their environments,, are equivalent (Grosz, 1994; Weiss, 1999; Young, 2005). Iris Marion Young (2005) contends that while girls may begin with equal capacity to act and be acted upon as boys, this capacity is gradually restricted with advancing age. From an early stage their body image may be controlled through societal norms of how to sit, how to dress and acceptable forms of exercise (Young, 2005). Philosopher Elizabeth Grosz (1994) furthers, 'being in the world' is therefore specific to the type of bodies individuals have: sexed, racialised; ability, thus bodies are socially inscribed. Inscription

occurs through bodily sensations, speeds, energies, flows and intensities. As bodies also have the capacity to act upon their worlds, interpretations of these inscriptions are projected back to the social sphere or reinscribed through comportment, dress, style. This marks the point where individuals may resist inscription (Grosz, 1994). Thus lived body experiences are intensities, sensations, energies and flows specific to an individual's, race, gender, social class, that are difficult to verbalise (Grosz, 1994).

Postcolonial theorists beginning with Frantz Fanon (2008/1986) theorise that our abilities to act and be acted upon may be blocked by bodies that are not open to us because of perceived ideas about race (see also Ahmed, 2000; 2004; 2007; Mohanram, 1999). Fanon described his experiences as a Black psychiatrist living in France during the 1950s and having an encounter with a White child on the streets of Paris. He realised despite his awareness of his capacity to act, in this case live out a life as a psychiatrist at a time when this was a rare occurrence for a Black man, he was still racially objectified. Fanon writes that the Black man may be limited by his racial epidermal schema or a set of negative associations with black skin. In order for Black men to survive they must hate that which gives them race and as such may live in envy and aspiration for the unmarked privilege that is seemingly achievable through having white skin.

In *Black Skins White Masks*, Fanon (2008/1952) provides a body schema analysis of a racist social encounter. This analysis is based on Jean-Paul Sartre's (1989/1956) 'being-for-others': that we exist and come to think about ourselves in the disarming light of how others regard us. Fanon theorises the experience of being pointed out as a racialised other in a postcolonial social space with the words, 'Look at the Negro ... Look Mama see the Negro, I am frightened!' (pp.111-115). Fanon describes a temporary theft or splitting of a sense of wholeness within his body. While aware of his lived body; he can reach out in space and hold his cigarette while he writes, at the point of this social encounter his body schema then becomes estranged from itself. He feels his body being objectified as a 'historico-racial-schema' the history of slavery and colonialism and racism of his ancestors, the 'racial epidermal-schema' or the associations of his skin colour with negative social stereotypes 'cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetichism [sic], social defects, slave ships' (pp. 84-85). This encounter leaves him contemplative and only by insulting a woman who compliments his handsomeness is he 'set free from my rumination' (p.86). Such ruminations on the self were conceptualised in this thesis as 'exhausting liminal rumination' for the way in which thoughts about past abuse relationally disconnected women from those around them (this is further developed in Chapter 5).

He thus becomes 'a kind of man' other to the man he knows himself to be. Similar encounters may not be felt among 'his own people', but in Europe he 'will feel different from other people' and

inferior (p.115). Thus Black men's body schema may be impacted by racism creating a dualist Black inferiority/White superiority awareness among Black and White men. In a preface to Fanon (1986/1952), Homi Bhaba notes the absence of reference to Black women 'I know nothing about her' (p.xxiv). Although Fanon remarks from his experience in Les Antilles in the Caribbean that Black women want lighter skinned Black men or White men as sexual partners because of a history of self-hate (see also Gordon, 2005). In Fanon's theory of mostly Black men Blackness is thus an embodiment of self-hate and negation.

Gail Weiss (1999) discusses Black women's epidermal schema in reference to Fanon. She hypothesises that Black women also feel a three-way split of the self when they experience racism. Weiss (1999) supposes that Black girls' body image must then be based on the body-image of White males. The problematic space here for notions of female embodiment is the restriction for modes of acceptance of Blackness or black/brown skin. Philosophical and literary focus on Black people passing as White (see for example Butler, 1993), are exemplars of a distancing from this racial epidermal schema (Weiss, 1999). In this theorisation, Black female embodiment is missing beyond the promise of skin envy and flight from Blackness. Black female bodies are rarely the subject of theorising on the body and there is a silence on what Black embodiment is, especially for Black women (Mohanram, 1999). In this thesis the term 'nugatory' is used to describe the racialised gendered taunting that participants experienced through comments about their hair, skin tone and feelings left after encounters in public spaces (this is further developed in Chapter 6).

Embodiment is also a social practice of boundary setting where all reaching out is not equivalent; there are some that are mutually satisfying such as a consenting caress and those that are violating, colonial and unwanted sexual touch (Ahmed, 2000). Sara Ahmed (2000) theorises that while bodies are in process to connect to other bodies, there are also ways in which bodies may become disconnected from each other: many theorists of embodiment fail to adequately analyse these disconnections and how race is felt during social encounters.

Bodies are not simply read as different to other bodies in social encounters, these encounters (re)create notions of difference and similarity. Reading bodies in social encounters is a process of misrecognition, a projection of, usually stereotypical and false, differences onto other bodies to distinguish the self from others (Ahmed, 2000). Building on the work of Fanon, Ahmed (2000) uses the advent in the UK, in the 1980's, of Neighbourhood Watch schemes to discuss the construction of racialised others and strangers. The social encounters between neighbours and strangers create racial, spatial and classed boundaries, where some neighbours can be construed as at home and belonging, while others, strangers pose a threat. Women are deemed to be safer in the home although they are most at risk from men who they know and men are the 'street-wise' protectors

(Stanko, 1988). The archetypal stranger and threat, is a dark-skinned or working class male. This creation of the archetypal stranger sets up a complex set of negotiations for Black women whose partners or children may also be dark-skinned and male (see also Lorde, 1995). Ahmed (2000) theorises social encounters as racialised and boundary setting through her description of Black feminist Audre Lorde's childhood encounter while seated next to a White woman on a public train. On seeing Lorde, the White woman recoils into her fur coat and Lorde notes her 'flared nostrils' (2000, p.38) thus misperceives the White woman must have seen a roach. Lorde then realises that she has been objectified as a roach, deemed untouchable, thus fear and uncertainty lingers after an encounter that occurs without words. For Ahmed (2000) every social encounter is 'played out *on* the body and is played out *with* the emotions' (p.38, emphasis in original). Lorde and the woman made eye contact, and her fur coat brushed against Lorde's face, but a distinct impression of disgust and disconnection is left where 'black bodies are expelled from the white social body' (2000, p.39). Using the analogy of the community as a body, White bodies equate with community and Black bodies signify strangers.

Racism is an interconnected body experience or body knowledge that can be transmitted without words such that Lorde becomes this object, 'the roach', by virtue of the stranger's bodily responses to her. The boundaries of the spatial relationship between Black bodies and White bodies may be redrawn in social encounters. Thus for Ahmed, the social encounter between the young Lorde and the White woman on the train, inculcates racial politics in America and Lorde's location within this system of value where Black bodies can become estranged when in public spaces at home.

These everyday micropractices can be categorised as 'oppression' and part of the continuum of forms of violence and abuse for Black women. Oppression is defined as externalising racist and sexist 'fears ... projecting them onto the bodies of women, Asians, gays, disabled folks whoever seems mostly other' (Moraga, 2000, p.31). To oppress is to 'flatten, mould, immobilise, reduce, to be trapped systematically in space or of occupying no space' (Frye, 2000, p.49). Women are spatially oppressed through unpaid labour in the home and limited expression in public spaces with the exception that as most African and Caribbean heritage women work outside of the home, they may be more oppressed in public spaces (Walby, 1997). Ahmed and Fanon's explorations of body phenomenology may enable a connection between how Black women experience their bodies in social and racialised spaces, where they become racialised others. This thesis also offers insights into how violence and abuse may contribute to lived body experiences, shifts in racisms (Phoenix and Bhavnani, 1994) within the lives of African and Caribbean heritage women and how they have experienced oppression, whether this is through poverty, verbal encounters (Fanon, 2008/1952) or embodied social encounters without words (Ahmed, 2000; 2004; 2007). In this thesis violence and

abuse as well as less visible forms such as racism is conceptualised as a 'continuum of oppression' (this is further developed in Chapter 4).

Shame as bodily felt intensities

Drawing on theories of emotions, affects and feelings, individuals can gain knowledge of embodied differences through social interactions (Ahmed, 2000; 2004; 2007, Cromby, 2007) and superficial judgements of visible differences; a process Linda Alcoff (2006) terms 'interpretive horizons'. This is a complex process of both verbal and non-verbal communication where individuals then corroborate traces of meanings from these multi-sensorial and immersive encounters (Cromby, 2007). Affects and feelings have been described as bodily sensations, that may not have a reflective component, whereas emotions have been described as cognitive understandings of bodily sensations and feelings (Brown and Stenner, 2009). Steven Brown and Paul Stenner (2009) argue that this is a bifurcated way of separating the body and the mind, feelings, from thoughts about feelings. Many feelings are half-felt, fleeting, ambivalent, or not loaded with emotions, such as the feeling of hunger or being tickled when compared to the feeling of shame or rejection (Cromby, 2007). Similar to the body, feelings and the emotions have been associated with irrationality, 'women and other purportedly non rational social groups' (Harding and Pribram, 2010, p.1). Theorising about feelings and emotions challenges what counts as knowledge, meaning we are not solely rational, 'gut feelings' also play a role in decision and meaning-making (Cromby, 2007).

We ought to say a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *by*, quite as readily as we say a feeling of *blue* or a feeling of *cold*. (James, 1892 cited in Cromby, 2007, p.101, emphasis in original)

These feelings may have an embodied register, a tacit understanding of the nuances when read, yet they remain difficult to express in language. How individuals come to know may also be through subtle feelings, inner speech or current thoughts about feelings based on past encounters (Cromby, 2007; Reavey and Brown, 2007). Feelings also create boundaries between bodies and objects: 'The recognition of a sensation as being painful ... also involves the reconstitution of bodily space, as the reorientation of the bodily relation to that which gets attributed as the cause of pain' (Ahmed, 2004, p.24).

These feelings are conceptualised in this thesis as 'felt intensities'¹. Feelings of shame are also forms of embodied knowledge. Shame is defined as humiliation, disgrace or feelings of discredit, that may be visible on the skin (for some) and in bodily postures, but more painfully experienced through alterations in behaviour, feeling low, over-thinking alternative social outcomes (Biddle, 2010; Probyn, 2010). The feeling of shame may result from failing to live up to an ideal, or confirmation of how much the ideal has been internalised or how connections with those who share the ideals are desired (Ahmed, 2004, pp.106-107). Viveka Enander (2010) and Morrison, et al. (2006), describe women feeling 'stupid' for not knowing better than to be abused by their partners. Thus, feelings of shame can become forms of social control to the extent that individuals moderate their behaviour in order to comply with expected norms and they may be assisted in doing so through the social responses to their behaviour (Hochschild, 1983). Shame experienced by the research participants is conceptualised in this thesis as 'racialised gendered shame' further developed in Chapter 5.

Evelyn Hammonds (1997) writes that: 'invisibility, otherness and stigma are produced and reproduced on Black women's bodies' (p.182). The historical linking of Black women's bodies with prostitution is a stigmatising and shaming legacy which the Victorian women's club movements resisted in the USA through what Darlene Clark Hine (1989) refers to as 'the culture of dissemblance', or a 'politics of silence' (Brooks Higginbotham, 1997, p.195). Black women created a 'self-imposed invisibility' to project high morality through concealing experiences of sexual violence. This Hammonds (1997) views as a failed project, Black women are still viewed as hypersexual and unrapeable, but in choosing silence on such matters of sexuality, Black women enacted a form of resistance to shame. Though Hammonds (1997) questions both the silence and the silencing of Black women, she does see the impacts of this historical legacy, in the absence of a strong academic voice on Black women's sexualities and sexual violence. However Black women have sung the Blues and written about violence and abuse in literary formats (see earlier section). What remains, is mostly is an intersectional silence which sees Black women as: 'Existing within overlapping margins of race and gender discourse and the empty spaces between, it is a location whose very nature resists telling' (Crenshaw cited in Hammonds, 1997, p.30). This association with stigma and shame extends across the socio-economic strata. Legal scholar Patricia Williams notes:

No matter what degree of professional I am, people will greet and dismiss my black femaleness as unreliable, untrustworthy, hostile, angry, powerless, irrational and probably destitute (cited in Hammonds, 1997, p.178).

¹ Blackman (2008) uses the term 'felt intensities' (p.76) in her description of Grosz's (1994) notions of bodily sensations, intensities and flows. Sonnemans and Frijda (1994) use a 'felt intensity' scale as a measurement of the emotional intensity of a feeling.

A way in which Black scholars have dealt with this stigmatised legacy is not to theorise about how Black women experience their bodies or the lived experiences of violence and abuse. This leaves Hammonds wondering whose voices have been silenced and whose have been heard. The legacy of slavery and the association of Black female bodies with prostitution has had a general silencing effect across many disciplines and when Black women speak about sexual violence especially as in the Anita Hill/Lani Guinier sexual harassment cases, Desiree Washington/Mike Tyson's rape case as with the response to Alice Walker's *The Colour Purple* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* the resounding community response is opprobrium and accusations of hating Black men and racial betrayal. This however, shows that Black women do speak about sexual violence. Many other aspects of Black women's lives, such as sexuality and sexual identity, also remain in the margins, where the accusation of racial betrayal could also result from being outed as a lesbian. While silence can be an act of resistance to the many stereotypes of Black women, it is also an arena where those who speak and those who do not, are wont to suffer (Hammonds, 1997).

Thus stereotypes and social encounters leave traces on bodies (Ahmed, 2004):

In an encounter the individual gets a skin impression; a bodily response based on past histories. There is a relational quality to emotions when we attribute emotions to an encounter it is the impression left by the encounter. Feelings stick to some objects and slide over others' (p.8).

It follows therefore that encounters with violence or abuse may create impressions that communicate social value. These sensations or emotions 'moves us ... makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place ... emotions may involve 'being moved' for some precisely by fixing others as 'having' certain characteristics' (2004, p. 11).

Ahmed (2004) also argues that we feel our way through the world via a series of 'emotional intensities' (p.12). She argues that emotions are not properties of individuals, but become attached to objects and circulate, gaining value with every use. She terms this 'affective economies' (p.44). Ahmed (2004) cites British news media in their construction of 'asylum seekers' as an example of how hatred can be made to stick to some individuals and slide over others, native citizens. Thus the asylum seeker becomes the figure of hatred, usurping local resources and jobs whereby the fictive nature of this affective object becomes lost and public outpourings of hatred may be initiated based on a media created fiction. Affective value and the 'sticky/slide' of feelings were drawn on to think through how controlling images of Black women circulate and were experienced by research participants in public spaces. Ahmed (2010b) notes that in attempting to articulate the fallacy of affective fictions about race, diversity, or racism, within feminist and multicultural organisations, the

one who points out the fallacy becomes the object of hate, for bringing the unhappiness into the room. This was applied to how participants were responded to by friends and family when they attempted to speak about violence and abuse. Ahmed (2004) further argues that attention should be paid to the 'feelings of structure: feelings might be how structures get under our skin' (p.216). The concept of felt intensities in this thesis highlights experiences that may be regular, patterned, unpleasant, shameful and disquieting.

The making of self for African and Caribbean heritage women

At the beginning of the research process I engaged with literature on African American women's experiences of violence and seeking help, exploring institutional racism and controlling images as barriers to this process. The research participants' narratives of gender, race, violence and abuse reflected more nuanced lived body experiences of social categories. How women came into the knowledge of what had happened to them was through their feelings, or observation of how their feelings were being suppressed. They spoke about racism, but described how racial categorisation made them feel. These complex negotiations with experiences of violence and abuse, feelings and bodily consequences, prompted a search for theoretical insights on the phenomenology of race, feelings and emotions, specifically for the social consequences to relationship to self and others.

Black and postcolonial feminisms (Ahmed, 2000; 2004; 2007; Fanon, 2008/1952; Lorde, 1981) have always made productive affective encounters in public spaces where they are pointed out, or become the focus as other, stranger, dangerous and abject and these encounters have compelled them to conceptualise alternative modes of self-making (Hemmings, 2005). How African and Caribbean heritage women may engage in the making of self in the UK context is however under theorised.

The complex ways in which the research participants described their pathways to help, led to a search for literature on 'becoming' (Colebrook, 2000; Braidotti, 1992; Deleuze and Guattari, 1990/1988, Saldanha and Adams, 2012) to explore whether as part of the normative process of living, women strive to connect with others through whatever means they can. However, this was abandoned, because the theories of becoming appeared very directive, affirmative, desirous, confident, self-aware and self-seeking (see also Ahmed, 2004; Hemmings, 2005). On further inspection of the data, the women were describing smaller more subtle and tentative, everyday activities that fostered managing the challenges within their lives currently and coping with recollections of past experiences of violence and abuse. This involved, periods of relationally connecting and disconnecting conceptualised as 'exhausting liminal rumination' in the process of 'living with' the burdens and legacies of violence/abuse.

Black women have been over-associated with oppressive structures thereby seemingly over-determined by them in social science research and theorising, yet somehow manage to live meaningful lives (James and Busia, 1999; Hill Collins, 2009; Tamboukou, 2004). The challenge of the thesis was to explore how Black women live with the intersections of race, class, gender and experiences of violence or abuse and their possibilities of movement within these structures. The overarching research questions were:

1. How is race and ethnicity embodied for Black women and how is this related to their help seeking for violence or abuse?
2. What are Black women's embodied experiences of space and place when coping with, seeking and receiving help for violence or abuse?

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses how the research methods addressed the research questions. The complexity of the themes identified in the literature review required a methodology that would enable exploration of such issues. The limited empirical basis prompted a two stage process: interviews with experts working in violence against women services on their experience of supporting Black women and interviews with victim-survivors of violence and abuse. Black women's lived experiences of race, violence and abuse, seeking and receiving help required both a sensitive approach to the interviews and ways in which research participants could explain such complexity. The other challenge was how to excavate recollections that might be painful in a manner that is ethical, engages the joy, the tensions, the political and cultural issues co-occurring at the time that women experienced violence and abuse. This required a method that would also enable participants to discuss how they felt in their bodies, with reflections on observed changes over their life course. Therefore, the interviews with victim-survivors included visual methods (photographs, maps, diagrams) within a two/three-stage interview process. The chapter begins with an overview of the theoretical assumptions guiding the methodology, interview methods, building a methodological approach, the research and analytic processes and finally the organisation of the findings.

Feminist research practice

Feminist research practice involves approaching research with a political commitment to produce knowledge that fosters social change, informs professional practice and/or has some beneficial impact for participants (Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994; Reavey, 2011; Stanley and Wise, 1990). This is underpinned by transparent accounts of how knowledge is produced, an interrogation of the methods used, the theories informing the methods and the impact of the research process on the participants (Kelly, et al., 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1990). The theoretical assumptions within this thesis are from feminist and Black feminist standpoint perspectives. This means that a real world exists and past experiences may be influenced by the environment, the researcher and the socio-political context where that recollection occurs. Feminist and Black feminist standpoint perspectives are also materialist in that social structures of race, gender, and class are considered critical influences on the types of experiences participants and researchers take to the research situation.

As with Foucault (1977; 1984), sociologist Dorothy Smith (1992) is concerned with how knowledge is created: 'the knowing subject is always located in a particular spatial temporal site, a particular

configuration of the everyday/everynight world ... where theory and practice go on' (Smith, 1992, p.91-92). Smith (1987) begins from the everyday activities within women's lives; she argues that the separation of paid and unpaid labour has social and economic consequences for women's lives where women do most of the 'body' and emotion work, while men mostly do the 'head work' (cited in Harding, 1993, p.55).

Standpoint feminism explores how knowledge is created from the perspectives of those most at the receiving end of oppression. Starting from the perspectives of the most oppressed reveals hidden knowledges and has enabled philosophers (Foucault, Hegel, Lucaks, Marx) who as authors were not directly positioned at such social locations, to theorise about power relations and wage labour in western societies (Harding, 1993).

Philosopher Sandra Harding (1993) concurs with Foucault (1977) that within socially stratified societies, race, ethnicity, class and gender, are organised by ruling elites who both define and set the limits of behaviour for those subjected to their definitions. She thus argues that it is a fantasy to suppose that empirical research can be objective and value neutral, because researchers are already embedded within social locations with interests and theories about what they choose to study, and are already a part of the phenomena they explore. Following philosopher Donna Haraway (1988), claims to objectivity are also for Harding (1993) are a 'god-trick', 'a view from nowhere' (Haraway, 1988, p.589) where apparently universal assumptions obscure the social positioning and interests of researchers. Feminist standpoint theories also historicise knowledge as emanating from a set of understandings of the particular context. Harding (1993) argues for what she terms 'strong objectivity' defined as 'less partial and distorted' (p.67) accounts of lived experiences. In order to maximise this there is a need to 'use the social situatedness of subjects of knowledge' (p.69). To view the subject on same critical plane as knowers and thus exercising 'strong reflexivity' (p.69) is recommended. This involves researchers' critical awareness of historical and current dominant views and beliefs about those who are marginalised and self-examination of their own beliefs. Harding (1993) however, does not detail how to be self-critical, nor how it can be known whether this self-reflection goes deep enough. How can it be known whether researchers have not inadvertently recreated stereotypes, despite their best intentions?

Patricia Hill Collins (1990) also advocates that theoretical insights from research should begin from the lives of marginalised people, specifically, poor and African American women. Lived experiences of African American women may reveal the effects of domination, ethnocentrism, the belief that some cultures are innately superior to others, and how they resist. For example, African American women's notions of femininity are shaped by European ideals in similar and different ways to those held by White women. However, research should also engage men and women who are

marginalised and privileged through constructions of gender, race, class and sexuality (BarOn, 1993; Harding, 1993; Hill Collins, 1990). Hill Collins (1990) also remarks that Black women researchers always operate from an outsider-within perspective: outsiders because of power relations between ruling elites and Black people and insiders, because of being members of minoritised groups. I may have enabled participants to discuss narratives about race and ethnicity based on assumptions of our shared racial/ethnic heritage and from my embodiment as a Black or Caribbean heritage woman.

Some methodologists commend matching the race or ethnicity of researchers with that of participants (Ritchie and Lewis, 2009; Ramanzoglu and Holland, 2002) as a sensitive method to bridge social inequalities and encourage rapport (Ryan-Flood and Gill, 2010; Sanchez-Taylor and O'Connell-Davidson, 2010). Expectations of the racial embodiment of researchers can be met with suspicions, by Black participants if the researcher meets the traditional model of White interlocutor and Black subjects, or the reverse for White participants (Phoenix, 1994; Maylor, 2009; Henry-Waring, 2004).

Despite participatory aims of research, there may still be complex power imbalances, between those who commission research, interviewers and participants and those who carry out analysis and interpretation of data (Finch, 1984; Holland and Ramanzoglu, 1994; Phoenix, 1994; Scharff, 2010). Therefore, potential and actual participants may perceive researchers to embody power or advantage, because they enact roles of interviewer/interpreter. In the current research one participant explained that she does not look clever and I asked *'What does a clever person look like?'* to which the participant responded *'Like you, the way you dress, you are at university'*.

When the topic is violence and abuse and the research process is sensitively and empathically conducted, participants may find the experience useful and insightful (Campbell, 2010; Ellsberg and Heise, 2002; Holland and Ramanzoglu, 2002) and in this study participants welcomed the opportunity and space to talk in depth about their lives. Ken Plummer (1995) argues individuals develop familiar ways of telling their stories that may be influenced by grand or dominant narratives (see also Haaken, 1998) such as 'coming out' about being gay or 'being a rape survivor'. Their styles of telling their life stories are based on a complex mix of media stories, personal and collective ways of talking as well as individuals' own unique story telling ability (Plummer, 1995; 2011). All disclosures are selections by the teller (Plummer, 1995). There are necessarily many silences inherent in sharing lived experiences. Silence and voice are ethically complex (Barker and Langdridge, 2010; Parpart, 2010). I have been mindful of the ethical responsibility on part of researchers to not pathologise groups who may already be pathologised and/or oppressed, data

that is produced from research can contribute to dominant narratives (Haaken, 1998) about groups of individuals with limited collective voice for redress (Ahmed, 2010a; Barker and Langdridge, 2010).

The methodology is also informed by qualitative approaches to research. Qualitative research examines the richness of lived experiences (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and how individuals make meaning of their experiences (Willig, 2013). To that end qualitative research attempts to explain how individuals understand the world, through conversation in the context of semi-structured interviews, where researchers take a list of topics or questions to explore with participants (Willig, 2013).

During interviews researchers aim to explore how individuals understand their lived experiences through asking open-ended questions (Silverman, 2006). When individuals speak they are engaged in interpreting experience rather than simply reflecting events as they occurred (Bryman, 2008; Kitzinger, 2004; Willig, 2013) and the process should be viewed as collaborative interpretations of participants' lived experiences (Harrison, McGibbon and Morton, 2001; Ritchie and Lewis, 2009). Thus the context of the interview must be taken into consideration when analysing the data (Curtis and Curtis, 2011).

Discourse analysis pays attention to the use of language to construct and relay power differentials in accounts shared in interview settings (Edwards and Potter, 1992). For example when a participant speaks about an experience they are making an argument, telling a viewpoint, to convey their feelings about what happened. Hill Collins (1990) argues that Black women have been subjected to many controlling images about their bodies and sexuality and thus may have oppositional knowledges to counter dominant discourses. Although discourse analysis was not applied in this study, the meanings research participants gave to popular discourses about Black women were explored.

The lived experience as described by the participants cannot be taken as representative of all Black women seeking help in the aftermath of violence in the UK, but as insights from those who self-selected to take part in this research process.

In-depth interviews

Using an interview method to research women's lives has become a core feminist research practice (Finch, 1984; Oakley, 1981) with some writers arguing that women are better interviewers because listening is mimetic of the roles women play in everyday lives. Ann Oakley (1981) in her study on

housework, with White English women, argued that interviews were ways in which women as researchers could engage with women participants in an empathic manner. This paid attention to how the emotions expressed in an interview may require researchers to comfort participants and belies the objective distance of researchers. Furthermore interviewers should endeavour to be responsive to participants, giving space to allow their narratives to unfold. This can be facilitated by encouraging participants to talk: reflecting their words back; asking for clarification of points made; demonstrating active listening and interest using verbal and non-verbal cues (Kvale, 1996). This involves leaving space for silence and including follow-up questions to indicate interest and engagement (Bryman, 2008). The researcher can also offer participants short breaks if the questioning triggers unintended emotional distress (Campbell, et al., 2009).

Conversations that occur off-tape, are also part of the data (Parker, 2000). Carla Willig (2013) suggests that whilst participants do most of the speaking in qualitative interviews, interviewers should take care that participants do not disclose too much and should not probe into information the interviewers believe participants might regret once the research enters the public domain. This advice is problematic, how it is possible to know when participants have said too much, especially when the topic of enquiry is 'sensitive' whereby any utterance may be too much? Kelly (1988) advises participants can be offered their transcripts to edit and correct. Because Black women have been the subject of much social science research that presents their lives as problematic and effectively blames them for adversity, offering participants the option to re-read their transcripts enables them to edit and have control over their words (Few, Stephens and Rouse-Arnett, 2003).

Life history interviews

Life history interviews are interviews that enable participants to explain events over their life course (Ritchie and Lewis, 2009). Interviews could be wholly autobiographical, or orient participants to discussing key events and their impacts over their life course (Wengraf, Chamberlayne and Bornat, 2000). The life history interviews used in this study are of the latter type. Interviewing women on more than one occasion in a life-history interview process was intended to elicit a deeper understanding of the experiences of individuals especially those from marginalised groups (Oke, 2008). The marginalisation that occurs as a result of violence can begin with the struggle to articulate and name what has happened (Jordan, 2008; Kelly, 1988). Having a stage based interview process enables victim-survivors to build a sense of trust in the researcher which can be further facilitated when researchers listen with empathy and without judgement (Jordan, 2008). Follow-up interviews also allow participants to clarify points (Kelly, 1988) from first interviews. Moreover a life-history interview process enables the participant to set the tempo of their disclosure(s).

This staged interview process was also informed by feminist research practice (Stanley and Wise, 1990; Kelly, et al., 1994; Jordan, 2008), which involved being aware that researchers may be the first listeners to women's experiences of violence or abuse (Campbell, et al., 2009). Ways in which participants gauge how researchers are coping with their disclosure are via para-lingual responses such as gasps, or extra-lingual shocked facial expressions which they may interpret as judgements (Campbell, et al., 2009). Campbell, et al. (2009) suggest researchers keep neutral facial expressions so as not to infer experiences are unusual. In preparation for the interviews extensive engagement with violence against women research was undertaken (see also Campbell, et al., 2009). Additional to this many societal discourses persist which blame women for becoming the victims of violence or abuse for their choice of lover, dress, what they cooked for supper or past sexual history (Dobash and Dobash, 1992) and in turn women think that in some way they could have prevented the violence or abuse, even if it occurred in childhood. Feminist research practice informs researchers to not ask questions in a manner that would suggest women are to blame or that they are being judged on how they have responded to the violence or abuse.

Researchers have been encouraged to view disclosures and narratives of violence or abuse as gifts of testimony and so seek to create an environment of safety, compassion, empathy and dignity to facilitate the process (Campbell et al., 2009; Ellsberg and Heise, 2002; Jordan, 2008; Kelly, 1998; see also Fricker, 2008).

Visual methods

Visual, sensorial, multi-modal experiences are key facets of social reality (Reavey and Johnson 2008). Exchanging images through the use of mobile phones and social media enabled by internet technology, or being flooded with advertisements as we negotiate everyday spaces is already a part of how we experience the world (Reavey, 2011). Part of the research examines discourses about Black women that describe their visible, physical characteristics inferring social meaning to these putative descriptors (Alcoff, 2006). Therefore, this mode of enquiry was used to develop a 'thick' description (Geertz, 1973), to attempt to explore the complexity of women's lived experiences and capture aspects of memory that may only be evoked through specific modes, places and spaces (Reavey, 2011). Visual methods have a long history of use in anthropological studies (Collier, 1967; Harper, 2002; Pink, 2007; Rose, 2001) where photographs have been used to show the worlds of marginalised groups and individuals, document changing landscapes and people's relationship to spaces.

Visual methods can also facilitate witnessing how participants negotiate identity, embodiment, and define subjectivity in their everyday lives (Coy, 2012; Howarth, 2011; Reavey, 2011). Engaging in

discussions with participants about their lives using past personal photographs (photo-elicitation) (Collier, 1967; Harper, 2002) or photographs they create as part of the research process (photo production) can achieve a number of objectives (Pink, 2007). Photographs may often depict other people, present the participant in a particular space and historical moment enabling them to interrogate spatial occupancy, what constrained and enabled them spatially (Del Busso, 2011, Reavey, 2010; 2011). This may prompt appraisals of shifts in subjectivity or notions of the self over time and the spatial settings for experiences (Del Busso, 2011; Radley and Taylor, 2003).

Photographs also enable inter-subjective moments in the research process through joint attention (Harrison, 2004; Majumdar, 2007; 2011; Pink, 2004; O'Neill, 2001; Radley, 2011; Smart, 2009; Twine, 2006). Creating photographs also enable participants to focus attention to aspects of their lives that may not meet with researchers' agendas, thereby offering new insights into the topic (Reavey, 2011). Using visual methods may also enable participants the freedom to create their own representations of their lived experiences and is especially useful for individuals from marginalised groups who do not normally have access to the power to do so (Oke, 2008).

Using visual methods, may thus disrupt rehearsed ways of narrating past experiences (Reavey, 2011), because in looking at a photograph a person might be faced with contradictions in how they have thought about the self or past events and may be compelled to revise long held notions (Silver and Reavey, 2010). While visual methods may invite emotions into the research process this may not be straightforward (Reavey, 2011), because engaging with the emotions evoke feelings participants might wish to turn away from (Ryan-Flood and Gill, 2010).

Engaging emotions in the research process

Responding to participants' emotions in the research process has become part of feminist research practice (Finch, 1984; Oakley, 1981). Emotional recollections can also enable both participant and researcher an intersubjective interpretation of lived experiences. In this regard using visual methods enables an engagement with the emotions as part of the data production and analysis process (Coy, 2012). Maggie O'Neill (2001) argues cogently that the emotions are a way into '*a politics of feeling* that reflects how emotionality/feelings are embedded in the materiality of social life' (p.183, emphasis in original). When researchers connect with their feelings, theory and practice, with those of research participants, it enables a deeper engagement with the lived experiences that are unfolded during the research process and may be all the more vivid when expressed visually through art, music, dance or in the creation of maps. In the reporting of the research, this could widen the audience for findings, thus may act as a form of activism. Making the emotions visible, was especially important in this study as previous research (see Chapter 2) suggests Black women have limited space to do so and informed the use of the concept of 'felt intensities'.

Iantaffi (2011) discusses the uses of chronological maps or diagrams of experience which he termed 'a river of experience' to enable participants to relate events in a manner that closer reflects social reality, in the sense that the past is not just in the past, individuals may be in constant inner dialogue with past events (see also Haaken 1998; Middleton and Brown, 2005). The research participants in the current study were invited to create a 'body line' (see below) detailing their relationship to their bodies over their life course.

How to capture embodiment

Chapter 2 discussed lived body experiences as normally outside of conscious awareness unless in pain or in trauma, thus they may be brought to focus within the research process by using photographs where individuals or bodies are depicted (Del Busso, 2011; Howarth, 2011; Majumdar, 2011). Lilliana Del Busso (2011) found that when bodies are the focus of photographs, including those from the past, the young women she interviewed tended to focus on their body parts or objectified body, rather than their lived body experience or what it felt like to carry out actions in their physical environment. Further, through the photos women created as part of the research process, they were able to discuss feeling more relaxed in their bodies away from the heterosexual male gaze in parks, or nature spaces. Photographs may also enable participants to discuss the narratives behind events (Coy, 2012; Bourdieu, 1990; Harrison, 2004; Spence, 1991) as well as how they felt within their bodies at the time.

Christina Howarth (2011), in her study of identity with dual heritage children and their mothers, found that otherness may be marked by skin, hair and facial features and that, despite theoretical notions of plurality, hybridity of identities (Hall, 1991; Phoenix and Bhavnani, 1994), racism and racialisation was a strong feature of her participants' accounts of embodiment (see also Few, et al., 2003; Frohman, 2005; Killian and Wang, 2000; Twine, 2006).

As photographs may depict other individuals, identify spaces and places, care must be taken about what enters the public domain when the research is written up. Some researchers (see Wiles, et al., 2008) ask consent to photograph individuals in a manner that is identifiable. However there have been many examples where participants have been unhappy with the inclusion of visual representations (Wiles, et al., 2008). Researchers should, therefore, view consent to using photographs as an ongoing negotiation with participants (Pink, 2007). Once images enter the public domain, it may be impossible to remove them and participants may not fully appreciate the impact of being identified in publications. Anonymisation of faces and places may disrupt the emotional and multi-sensorial appeal of photographs (Reavey and Johnson, 2008) when included in reports, so this raises specific ethical challenges with respect to confidentiality.

Reflexivity in the research process

Feminist research practice also entails awareness of the researcher's situatedness in the research (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1986; 1993; Ramanzoglu and Holland, 2002; Ryan-Flood and Gill, 2010). This is not to simply declare personal demographic data without acknowledgement of how these differences and similarities between researcher and participants might have influenced the data that was produced and how it was interpreted. I diarised the impact of researching, collecting and producing data about violence and abuse and this informed the research process (see below). Using the emotions both displayed during the research situation and my emotional responses in the aftermath was also a route into reading and interpreting the data (Hochschild, 1983; O'Neill, 2001; Stanley and Wise, 1990).

Building a methodological approach

This study draws on feminist research practice (see above), using interviews and visual methods to represent the complexity of women's lives. The study was carried out in two stages. In stage one, six professionals from voluntary and statutory agencies were interviewed. Given the limited contemporary research on African and Caribbean heritage victim-survivors, the goal of the expert interviews was to explore their knowledge of the issues, and to inform questions for the life history interviews. The second stage involved nine African and Caribbean heritage women who have experienced violence and abuse were interviewed over two/three meetings using visual methods. In total 15 (six as experts; nine as victim-survivors) participants were interviewed generating over 24 hours of audio recordings.

Ethics

The study was approved by the London Metropolitan University ethics committee (see Appendix 1). Although expert interviewees could suggest possible life-history interview participants, to maintain confidentiality, they were not given any further information on who took part. The rest of this section describes the ethical decisions for the life history interview participants.

Violence and abuse are sensitive subjects (Bahn and Weatherill, 2012) and there was a possibility that participants might become distressed during interviews. Participants were not probed to provide details of any abusive experiences (Jordan, 2008), were given a list of useful contacts for further support and were informed that they could stop the interview process at any time. The participant who was recruited through a violence support service already had support in place.

Participants were asked to consent to taking part in the study and permission to have interviews audio recorded, all agreed to this. Once informed consent was obtained (see Appendix 3a), participants were advised that their names would be replaced by pseudonyms during the transcription process. Participants were advised that they could decide to withdraw at any time and that they could refuse to answer questions they found intrusive.

Permission was sought for personal photographs to be photographed or scanned, but not reproduced in any published form or in the thesis (see Appendix 3b). Separate permission was sought to keep the scanned image of their photographs created during the research process which could be reproduced in the thesis and any published material or presentations on the study (see Appendix 3c). This consent form stated that photographs included in publications or the thesis, were not to contain details that could identify the participants or people they know. The participants were also given the opportunity to keep a copy of their interview transcripts and given at least a week to review and correct them. None took this offer, although one requested her transcripts after she had completed the interview process. All participants were debriefed at the end of each interview, reminded of the format of any subsequent interview(s), and had the opportunity to ask any further questions about the study. If there were any issues arising from the disclosure of any painful past memories, participants were referred to relevant counselling/support services (see Appendix 3).

Given the open recruitment, there was the possibility that some participants might have mental health diagnoses. The researcher had worked in a forensic mental health environment for five years and had carried out research on the subject of sexuality so was sufficiently skilled to spot signs of distress. Five of the participants had mental health diagnoses. However, they had all discussed past experiences of violence and abuse prior to being interviewed for the research and were receiving counselling support.

A particular ethical dilemma was the possibility of disclosure of information that may indicate a child protection issue. I informed participants of my duty to report any information to appropriate agencies where either the participant or someone who they are in contact with, might be at risk. None of the women reported being in any current danger. However, two women reported that they knew their abusers still had access to children, and one had a sister, who at the time of the interview was in a relationship with a partner who was violent and with whom she has children. This was not deemed a serious enough ethical issue to take further action, because the participant reported that she had already informed another family member and had passed on a list of support services to her sister. I was also at risk of becoming distressed through immersion in past experiences of violence and abuse. I had a support system in place from the student counselling services provided

by the University and from regular meetings the PhD supervisory team and peer support from fellow PhD students researching violence and abuse.

Data protection is an ethical responsibility for all research. Consent forms detailing participants' names and unique identifiers were kept in a locked cupboard at the University where I had the only key. The transcripts and images were kept in a separate and locked location where I had the only key. The analysis of photographs depicting individuals was carried out in secured offices in the University.

Participants were informed that the interviews would only be listened to by me and kept for two years in a locked cupboard at the University, after which they would be destroyed. Only myself and my supervisory team was allowed access to the data as outlined in the consent forms (see Appendix 3a, 3b, 3c). The audio files and images were kept on password protected locations on University computers, where only I had knowledge of the password.

Expert interviews

The expert interviewees were informed of the nature of the study via an email requesting participation and a brief explanation of the purpose of the interviews and consented via email (see Appendix 2). Interviewees were recruited by a combination of recommendations and introductions from research supervisors, internet search, and referral, with an original target of 10 across statutory and voluntary sectors. More experts wanted to be involved than were able to take part, some had to focus on reorganisation of support services following cuts to budgets after the 2011 general election. This appeared to particularly impact the culturally specific support services (Towers and Walby, 2012). This illustrates how the political climate can influence participants' ability to take part in research.

Seven expert interviews with six participants (a reflexive interview was undertaken with one of the experts at the end of the life history interviews) were carried out. The expert interview sample included: a clinical psychologist; a forensic doctor; a researcher, a support service worker; two professionals in culturally specific services. The interview guide was piloted (see below) with three professionals. With the consent of a participant from the pilot, her interview was used as part of the expert interview sample.

Table 3.1 Expert interviews

Code	Employment
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Exp1	Violence against women support worker
Exp4	Clinical psychologist
Exp5	Violence against women advocate
Exp6	Forensic doctor
Exp7	Researcher
Exp8	Violence against women advocate

The experts were contacted to arrange either a telephone or face-to-face interview, and asked to read the three case studies (see Appendix 2b) before the interview. An early decision was made not to publish the findings from the expert interviews outside of the PhD thesis, given widespread anxiety about how the data would be used.

Developing the Expert Interview Guide

Drawing on the literature review (see Chapter 2), three case studies (see Appendix 2b) were developed. Case studies have been suggested as useful tools to examine the complex and intersectional features of lived experiences (McCall, 2005; Valentine, 2007).

The story of Erin (see Appendix 2b) raised issues around parenting for women who have had experience of childhood sexual abuse, local authority care and violence in adulthood. Erin represented someone who had received lots of intervention to provoke discussions around vulnerability, strength, violence and parenting. To explore whether her body size would be associated with race or the strong Black woman construct, Erin was described as slightly built.

The story of Janice (see Appendix 2b) was synthesised to introduce the normalisation of violence as experienced by an affluent and successful Black woman who had sought help through counselling. A number of threads were being encouraged here around faith, socioeconomic status / class and how, or whether, that presented opportunities and limitations for help seeking. The story also encouraged discussions around on the role of counselling and differences and similarities in the philosophies of care between politically oriented feminist counselling and psychological or psychotherapy informed counselling.

The story of Mabel (see Appendix 2b) incorporated embodied strength in the description of her physical characteristics; she was described as 'a largely built woman' to invite discussions around themes of strength and resilience when help seeking for violence.

The interview guide (see Appendix 2c) began with questions that explored what was common across women's experiences of different forms of violence. The first half of the questions focused on how experiencing different forms of violence could present challenges for help seeking for women and the second half, the specific challenges for Black women. The first question '*Can you tell me a little bit about what you do in your job?*' was intended as a warm up and to help to situate the expert and their work priorities. Question 2 (see Appendix 2c) explored the expert's definition and concepts of violence.

Because Black women have been considered invulnerable, questions were included to explore the experts' definitions and concepts of vulnerability and how that related to their work with Black women. Question 4 (see Appendix 2c) probed the silo effect in policy when considering services for women who are categorised as belonging to minoritised groups (Smee and Moosa, 2009). The aim here was to examine concepts such as 'hard to reach' used in UK government policy to refer to women from BAMER communities (Ahmed, 2010b; Cooper, 2010). Question 5 (see Appendix 2c) gauged the expert's knowledge and experience of the challenges women face when they seek help after experiencing violence and abuse, to explore the complexities and specific challenges for African and Caribbean heritage women first by way of the case studies and then more direct questions at the end.

The questions then turned to the case studies (see Appendix 2b) to focus discussions around possible barriers for African and Caribbean heritage women. Finally the experts were asked about challenges specific to African and Caribbean heritage women. The questions did not to assume that race would be an issue for Black women.

There were two versions of the interview guide: one for generic services and the other for culturally specific services. A generic support service was defined as a statutory, voluntary or specialised service with a remit to provide help for women from all ethnic or racial backgrounds seeking help for violence and abuse. The difference between the culturally specific and the generic service interview guides (Question 9, see Appendix 2c) was that in the generic interview guide the experts were asked about their referral processes and in the culturally specific interview guide, the experts were asked about social status, faith, marginalisation and culture; what made the service 'specific'.

Pilot interviews

The expert interview guide was piloted with three experts; one from a culturally specific service and two from generic support services. The interviews were conducted over the phone in two instances and one face-to-face. Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) carried out a comparative study of telephone versus face-to-face semi-structured interviews finding similar quality and quantity in responses. The

participants interviewed found interviews over the telephone convenient and enabled them privacy to discuss sensitive issues. However, in telephone interviews, the interviewer is unable to read the body language of participants (Cresswell, 1998 cited in Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). I was aware of this and during the telephone interviews I used more verbal cues to indicate active listening than during face-to-face interviews. One participant remarked that the interview felt like a media interview, because it was carried out over the phone. Interviewing over the telephone might have enabled the participants to talk more fluidly because they were in a private space of their choice. The two interview methods appeared similar in the quantity and quality of the data they generated.

Interviewees recognised the women in the case studies (see Appendix 2b), said they felt like 'real women', although perhaps more information was given than they would have to hand with their clients. This was done deliberately to explore issues from the literature and in subsequent interviews the experts were advised of this and asked what information they would normally have. All the experts queried the speed at which social services removed the child in one of the case studies. Since this generated so many fruitful discussions about women with multiple and complex histories of abuse, and their lack of trust in engaging with statutory services, no changes were made. In subsequent interviews, experts were advised that the process would not be as quick. The construction of Black women as especially strong and resilient was a familiar one among participants when they recollected their experiences of violence support provision. One participant mentioned internal reasons such as lack of confidence owing to deep histories of racism as more of a barrier than the availability of services. This echoed findings in, Kalathil et al. (2011) where women recounted racism and sexual violence as part of a continuous assault on their mental wellbeing. Question 12 (see Appendix 2c) pertaining to the availability of services for Black women was changed following the pilot, to one that enquired how Black women accessed support.

All provided definitions of both forms of violence and how they are connected. Initially 'physical violence' and 'sexual violence' were used as descriptors. After the discussions about forms of violence from expert interviews, the term 'physical violence' was abandoned. Terms incorporating information such as 'violence from a partner' reflect that sexual violence is also form of physical violence and can co-occur in intimate partner contexts.

One of the themes from the pilot interviews was that Black women in the UK may encounter barriers to seeking help for sexual violence, especially from services such as Rape Crisis Centres. It was decided to therefore, explore the types of services women access in the life history interviews. The pilot helped to clarify awkward phrasing of a few of the questions and some of the social work processes introduced in the case studies. It also demonstrated that giving the expert a problem to

solve, thus making the interview more participatory, elicited insights from their knowledge and experience.

Interviews with experts

Before carrying out the expert interviews, I was concerned about how to discuss racial difference and differential treatment without participants thinking their own professional practice was under scrutiny. These anxieties were informed by what Maddy Coy (2006) terms 'conceptual baggage', and were also taken into the expert pilot interviews. What emerged here was a fascination and openness to discuss help seeking for Black women. The UK government policy context at the time of data collection could have also fed into many of these anxieties, given that many services were threatened with closure, which created priorities other than taking part in research.

For some of the experts the first question; *'Can you tell me a bit about what you do in your job?'* generated lengthy narratives that both touched on some of the issues raised in the literature, as well as introduced new insights for further exploration in the life history interviews.

During the interviews, only the Mabel case study evoked engagement with Black women being associated with strength and resilience, suggesting that the construct of strong Black woman may be particularly projected onto Black women who are largely built, especially by statutory and voluntary service professionals.

The Erin case study did encourage discussions around the relationships between experiencing multiple forms of violence, mental distress, mothering, crime and substance use, but not around physical strength and resilience or race. Expert informants discussed ways in which Erin could be seen as strategising in a potentially dangerous situation with her partner. They reasoned that Erin's strength in doing so could be missed by statutory service professionals who might write her off as vulnerable because of her experiences of childhood sexual abuse and local authority care. Thus Erin would be deemed as having limited capacity to parent.

Questions that focused on vulnerability were answered with disdain, some actually saying 'I hate this question' and then acknowledging aspects of women's lives that may result in vulnerabilities.

With culturally specific service professionals the interviews were very conversational. The participants were interested in what brought the researcher to this particular area of study. There was a depth to the discussions about racial differences, highlighting intersectional dynamics between Black men and Black women and among Black women, generational differences between Black women and differences based on women's sexual identity. Heterosexuality and the race of

Black women's partners were discussed as common assumptions when working to support women with experiences of violence.

The experts were also asked their opinions of the recruitment website (see Appendix 2d); the wording, the look and feel. The experts all liked the use of a range of photographs of Black women, one suggested to include the word 'rape' as well as the descriptions of behaviours for the forms of violence. On the original copy text for the website it stated that little was known about Black women's experiences. Another expert suggested that a lot is known within services about Black women. All of these suggestions were used to improve the website.

The expert interviews enabled a space to critically engage with the studies from the USA that connect race with the type of help sought (see Chapter 2), as relevant to the UK. One of my diary reflections from the interviews was in relation to participants discussing how Black women make decisions about the type of support services that are 'for them', based on their positions in discourses of racial difference and racial pathology.

One expert reasoned that help seeking was more individualised and complex and although she had collected data on race had not analysed it through this lens. This interview was completed in twenty minutes, whereas the others lasted between one and two hours. She was anxious to know how the data would be used and whether she could veto extracts from her transcripts before thesis submission or publication. In hindsight this discomfort should have been explored further.

The depth and insight in these interviews raised questions about what is known through practice-based evidence (Coy, Thiara and Kelly, 2011) and its marginalisation within social science research from the UK.

After the life history interviews, a reflective interview was carried out with Exp8. It was hoped that that there would be at least two more, but these could not be arranged because of constraints on the experts' time. The reflective interview was instrumental in contextualising some of the themes from the life history interviews. The initial expert interviews clarified that during the life history interviews women should be given the space to define and explain their racial identifications and whether race was related to their help seeking. The following questions were therefore added to the life history interview topic guide (see Appendix 3): *What does a being Black woman mean to you? Does being a Black women affect where you seek help?*

Life History Interviews

Nine women were interviewed over two or three occasions. Details of the sample are in Table 3.2, with their pseudonyms, age, self-defined ethnicity and current/former employment status. Two further women wanted to be interviewed, but because of ill-health in one case and a close family bereavement in another, both chose not to participate.

Table 3.2 Life history interview participants

Name (Age range)	Self-Defined Ethnicity	Employment
Farah (20s)	Black African	Student
Patricia (20s)	Black British	Violence against women advocate
Rebecca (30s)	Afro Caribbean with European Jewish descendants	Jobseeker, made redundant, former account professional
Ellen (40s)	Black British	Made redundant, former retail professional
Evelyn (40s)	British born African Caribbean	Jobseeker
Debbie (40s)	Black Caribbean	Health care manager
Jacinta (40s)	African	Amateur actress, unemployed
Norma (40s)	Black Caribbean	Health care professional
Isabelle (50s)	Mixed race; Caribbean and White	Unemployed/Volunteer, made redundant, former mental health advocate

In order to explore help seeking it was initially planned that participants would be recruited on two criteria; those who have used violence against women services and those who have not. Difficulties in recruitment led to these criteria being dropped. Two of the nine participants had used violence against women support services. The woman who worked as an advocate had not used support services.

A wide range of recruitment strategies were used. Email invitations were sent out to violence against women support services; this attracted one participant. The study was announced in a church service, where a presentation was made, but the discussion that followed centred on forgiveness, which might have deterred potential participants. During this discussion a woman who wanted to be interviewed expressed that she was not comfortable with the visual elements of the enquiry.

A recruitment website was created (see Appendix 2d) along with a Facebook page for the study. No participants reported viewing either media. Posters were placed in leisure centres, sent to online networks and to *The Voice* newspaper. Posters placed in libraries were effective with a number of librarians contacting the researcher to assist in publicising the study. The poster and website depicted Black women, to invite recognition and to indicate the everyday nature of violence. Women who took part in the study also recommended colleagues and friends to participate. This attracted two participants. A request was placed on Mumsnet and the F-Word websites and in the newsletters of a couple of women's organisations. This approach attracted two participants. I attended and promoted the study at conferences and undergraduate psychology classes. After this and further leafleting, participants slowly trickled, over several months. Recruitment took nine months.

Screaming silences

I also partnered another research student focussing on violence and abuse to distribute flyers to passers-by on the street, in shops and hairdressers (Campbell, 2003) in areas of London with sizeable Black communities. Many of the women approached during street recruiting averted their gaze or avoided eye contact while talking. Later I reflected on whether reading the flyer was considered an act of indirect disclosure (Reavey, 1997) or evocative of past experiences of violence and abuse leaving uncomfortable resonances. The women appeared to think that they were being especially selected. A shopkeeper offered that while she would suggest her customers read the flyers, they may believe they are being labelled as in need.

Laura Serrant-Green (2010) describes 'screaming silences' as the reception to topics that stir feelings of stigma and discomfort among potential research participants. A screaming silence is a perspective that is marginally known yet felt and understood by the 'listener', or researcher and the participants. Researchers can provide a bridge to engage participants on topics where there are screaming silences. During recruitment at times I thought my embodiment did not facilitate participation. On one occasion a woman sternly handed back a flyer to me with disdain, stating 'I don't have that experience'.

Interviews with victim-survivors

The interviews were conducted between December 2011 and September 2012, each lasted between one and two hours (see Appendix 3c for topic guides). The pilot interviews were successful in eliciting appropriate data, only minor adjustments were made to the interview schedule. This allowed for the pilot interviewee to become part of the life history sample.

Participants responded by telephoning the number listed on the recruitment posters (see Appendix 3d) or by emailing me, to express interest. During the initial phone calls, I explained the nature of the study and what participation would involve. If women agreed to participate, a date and time was scheduled for first interviews. Participants were also reminded by text message or email, a day before the interview. Before commencing the interviews, participants were reminded of the confidential nature of the study, read the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 2e) and signed the consent form (see Appendix 3a). The consent forms for the photos (see Appendix 3b) were signed at the relevant points during the interview.

Participants were also offered a copy of the summary report once the thesis had been written up and informed that consent would be ongoing, whereby if at any time they wished to withdraw a photo or their data from the study, they could inform me and this would be honoured. A decision was made early on to give participants a nominal amount (£20 shopping vouchers) in consideration for offering their time (Campbell, et al. 2009). Although it was stated on the recruitment poster and website that women would receive a shopping voucher, all appeared very surprised. The space offered to talk during the research process, especially in the final interviews where the women brought in photographs they had produced for the research, appeared sufficient.

The participants were offered the choice of a suitable location where they felt safe to carry out the interviews and I agreed they would be alone, except if they had very small children and that there would be no disturbances. Oftentimes if women have experienced violence in the home, the home may not be a suitable location to recall difficult experiences (Stanko, 1988), and equally it might not be safe (WHO, 1997). The interviews were carried out in suitable safe locations, such as a room in the University, a quiet location in a pub or cafe, or the participants' homes. Five participants preferred to be interviewed in their home and one over the phone.

One woman severed all contact with me after the first interview, during which she spoke about her ex-partner committing suicide in her home which was also the location for the interview. I made several attempts to contact her and sought supervision as to how to negotiate the situation. It was decided to send a final text message and then leave it to her to respond. She did not, but was also well supported by counselling and had reported that she attends various community groups.

First Interviews

The first interview (see Appendix 3c) invited women to focus on key events in their lives (Oke, 2008). To avoid presenting violence as essential to their identities (Kelly, 1993; Oke, 2008) they were asked the following questions: *How would you describe your lifestyle?, How do you spend your free time? How do the people you know describe you? What do you consider your main accomplishments?*

What are your current failures/successes/challenges? These questions also got the conversation flowing and invited the women to reflect on their lives. How they understand sociocultural discourses regarding their racial identities and bodies (Mama, 1995) was also explored by the questions, *How would you describe your racial/ethnic background* and *What does a being a Black women mean to you?* Most offered detailed and complex descriptions of their lives and the people and events featured within them. One woman narrated her life story from the question '*Can you tell me a bit about yourself?*'

It became apparent early on that women elected to first discuss experiences of violence or abuse. This was an extra-lingual communication, observed in some women holding the recruitment poster (see Appendix 2c) rather nervously at the beginning of first interviews with their annotated ticks against the forms of violence/abuse they had experienced. On the basis of this it was decided that the interviews could be completed in two or three stages depending on the woman. Two out of the nine women were interviewed over a three-stage process; six had two interviews. Violence was an initial focus, with other topics following and then returned to especially when completing their help seeking diagram (see below) and when describing photos they had created as part of the research process. This appeared to give participants a sense of relief that the worst part was over and relaxed the flow of the conversation.

Women were asked to bring a selection of personal photographs to first or second interviews to talk about past experiences of violence or abuse and the photos to go back to points in their narratives and refocus the interviewer's attention on particular issues. Interviews were especially participatory and interactive when women discussed their choice of photographs, what they depicted, the events and relationships behind the photograph and their importance.

Participants chose family or group photographs (Spence, 1991) to talk about violence, relationships, circumstances, tensions, discrepancies and the fallacy of photographic representation. For example in a photograph a participant might be smiling at the camera, yet she described that period of her life as one of the most challenging. Spence (1991) interrogates the uses of photography to portray working class aspirations and desire to project realities that may not quite exist.

If there was time during first interviews, the women would also begin to complete the body line. This involved annotating how they have felt about their bodies over their life course, to show periods where they both felt 'good' and 'not so good' about their bodies over the years. The bodyline in Figure 1 is a good example.

Figure 1 Jacinta's body line



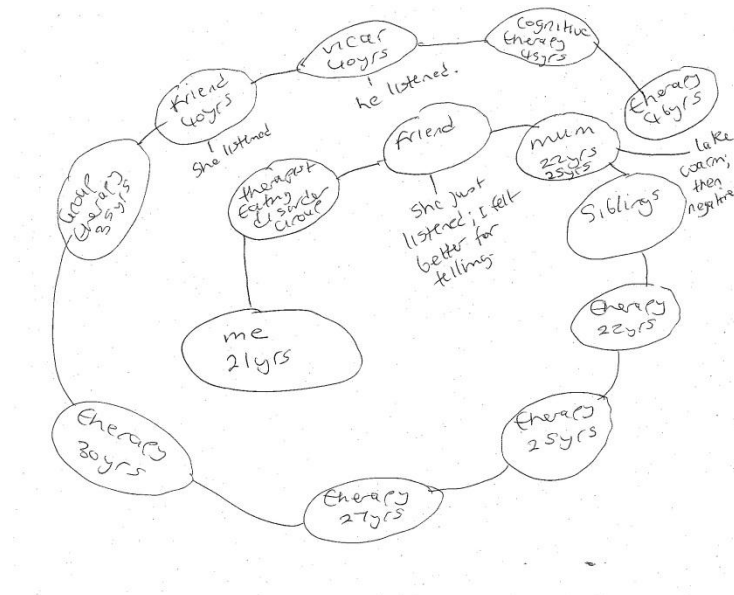
The body line was introduced as a joint exercise, a tool to explore how or whether women spoke about living in their bodies or about their bodies through conversation (Del Busso, 2011). This was initially imagined as a time line, but was developed to elicit specific information about bodily sensations and relationships through time. While participants wrote their experiences on the line, I engaged in discussions about how they have felt about and in their bodies over time. During these discussions, women shared knowledge and insights about violence or abuse. All felt challenged by being asked to talk about their bodies.

The help seeking pathway (see Appendix 4) was used as a tool to examine individual women's help seeking efforts, how women have coped, their support networks, experiences of statutory and voluntary agencies, opportunities and missed opportunities for help, the costs in years and impact of violence or abuse on women's help seeking decisions.

During the development of the research tools, it was decided that while women were narrating their life histories, I would annotate a spreadsheet (see Appendix 4a) of who they had asked for help and the outcomes and use it as a memory aid to complete their help seeking pathway. Women were informed that they could either create the diagram in silence or talk while drawing it. After completing the help seeking pathway, women were asked to describe what they had drawn. Most required some encouragement to begin to draw, but appeared to get quite involved in the process once they had begun. Some created similar pathways to the sample help seeking pathway (see Appendix 4) while others drew elaborate maps of where they had gone to seek support. The

pathway in Figure 2 shows the times that this participant has sought therapy and the responses she has received.

Figure 2 Evelyn's help seeking pathway



Second/Third interviews

These interviews began with questions that arose after transcribing first interviews (see Jordan, 2008; Kelly, 1988). The help seeking pathway diagrams and bodylines were also finalised.

At second or third interviews, photo production (Pink, 2007) was used where women were asked to photograph objects, spaces and places that were important to them at the time of the interviews. This was intended to explore how women have negotiated their self-concept, sexuality (Oke, 2008), their everyday embodiment in spaces and places (Del Busso, 2011), how they feel bodily in these spaces and places, or what the spaces and places meant to them symbolically. The presence or absence of discussions about the body is important when analysing gendered spaces and places (Del Busso, 2011) and it could inform about the enduring impact of violence and abuse on women's sense of embodiment in their everyday life contexts. Photo production was facilitated by the use of camera phones, email and a digital camera. Disposable cameras, initially the media of choice, were found to be less practical to coordinate developing photos and interviews (see also Majumdar, 2007). Only three women requested disposable cameras.

Women used the photographs they created to re-focus my attention to earlier points in their narratives that required further explication. This approach brought focus to the individuals, spaces, places and objects that contributed to their narratives. These visual and narrative explorations gave

me a sense of having walked alongside each woman for a brief moment in their lives pursuing ideas and themes that might have been closed off by narratives alone.

Looking at photographs prompted women to further recollect details about their stories, offer new reflections, or in many cases disclose another story of abuse or violence and its legacies, inviting me to explore these avenues further. Women used the photographs of the past and those they created to stitch together the nuances of the present, past and future directions of their narrative quilts.

During the final interview women were asked whether they had anything to add. Most responded here that they wanted to help others by participating and wanted to encourage more discussion around the issues raised in the interviews.

Analysis

Qualitative research involves the collection of large amounts of data (Creswell, 2007; Willig, 2012). The data for this study included reflexive notes in a research diary, transcription notes, interview transcripts, photographs, maps and diagrams. Identifying themes underlies most qualitative analysis where researchers look for patterns within individual transcripts and across the dataset as a whole and involves observing repetitions, expressions used in familiar ways, metaphors, how topics change between transcripts, missing data and links to theory (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). It may be difficult to articulate what in the data makes it a theme and there may be an underlying quantification of occurrences of themes (Bryman, 2008). Part of this process is based on the researcher's deep immersion in the research process: interviewing; transcribing; thinking and reading (Mason, 2002; Willig, 2013) and awareness of already held theoretical assumptions, hunches and prejudices (Ritchie and Lewis, 2009).

Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was decided upon because of its analytic flexibility that could be incorporated across the range of data sources. Howitt (2010) describes thematic analysis as a poorly defined methodology with research reports claiming that themes 'emerge' from the data obscuring the role of researchers in the process of identifying themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) identify six stages of data analysis: data familiarisation; line-by-line coding; searching for themes; review of themes; theme definition and labelling and report writing.

Carrying out a thematic analysis involves describing what the data illustrates, how the analyses developed and the relationship between themes. In transcribing audio recordings, researchers aim to reproduce verbatim the interview conversations. This may involve paying attention to pauses and other non-verbal responses, but not to the minute details as is found in conversation analysis

(Braun and Clarke, 2006; Howitt, 2010; Willig, 2013). The interviews were transcribed verbatim secretarial style, with pauses reflected in the transcripts.

Thematic analysis requires analytic effort on the part of researchers (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Howitt, 2010). Researchers should be fully familiar with the data, through reading and re-reading, creating line-by-line coding/descriptors. Analytic effort also involves iteration, whereby the data is re-analysed for identified themes. Pertinent questions are used to interrogate themes, what they mean, the underlying assumptions governing their identification and the conditions that gave rise to them such as interview questions, salience, prevalence and how participants talk about the theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Even at the stage of writing up, this process of iteration continued. Descriptions for themes were checked against the transcripts to ensure the fit with the data. If the fit was partial, themes were replaced with ones that better reflected what was going on in the data.

Each theme was described detailing how it answered the research question and fit with the data. The analysis was both theory and data driven (Howitt, 2010). For example I was aware of discourses about Black women delaying seeking help before the interviews were carried out. There were expectations that racism might be a significant theme: that Black women conceal their emotions to the point of becoming severely mentally distressed (see Chapter 2) was also known prior to analysis. Less was available about how Black women use their emotions as forms of knowledge. This was discovered through analysis and theories were sought that could illuminate this, and it was here that Black feminist standpoint theory became especially useful.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) analytic steps were implemented with some alterations. Reflexive notes were made after each interview and transcription notes after each transcription. Analysis began during the data production stages. After every interview, a reflection was written describing how the interview went with preliminary identification of themes, as well as insights into how the research questions were being explored. Throughout the data production process, a visual map of issues or possible themes was also updated and periodically reorganised. This was particularly useful because of the complex nature of what was being examined. The analysis process was an intensely iterative one. The participants life histories appeared fragmented across these disparate sources. After all of the data was produced a brief biography was created for each participant. This enabled both proximity to the data and an engagement with the notion that the interview process was a part, not their whole life histories. Returning to the biographies lessened the risk of presenting an account of lived experiences derived through research, as simply as set of themes (Kanyeredzi, et al. in press). Another method used was to annotate identified themes on one A4 page (see Appendix 6), which was constantly referred to. The biographies were developed into a framework (see Appendix 6a for an example) that was created using MS Excel which also provided a summary of the salience

and prevalence of themes across the data. This framework was a useful reference point in the many written drafts of identified themes. This process has been termed 'data reduction' whereby conclusions and verification of what has been found is analysed to draw a picture of the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Transcripts were also coded for the way in which they provided answers to the research questions and ways in which they did not (Seale, 2000).

Given the emotional intensity (Ahmed, 2004) of the research, there were periods of disengagement with the data. This distance assisted in reducing the intensity and increased the analytical insights. NVivo, MS Word and hand coding were used to work with the data.

Interpretation of lived experiences into themes also requires some explanation. In narrative accounts a combination of 'suspicious' and empathic account of lived experiences is required (Ricoeur, 1996 cited in Willig, 2012). A suspicious account looks for deeper meanings behind participants' words, and might refer to their choice of words and how they are used, which may reflect inner thoughts or wider social implications. An empathic account looks for the meaning the participant gives to their experience and attempts to describe this in some detail again with links to theoretical insights for the wider implications (Willig, 2012).

Additionally, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, Larkin and Flowers, 2009; Willig, 2012) was carried out on some of the themes where women described in vivid details, visceral experiences. IPA is based on philosophers Heidegger's (1962, cited in Willig, 2012) theorisation that experience occurs as a result of being in or interacting in the world. Researchers interpret participants' interpretations of their experiences albeit in a more systematic and theoretically informed way (Smith, et al., 2009). IPA has been applied to exploring phenomena such as pain and psychological distress (Silver and Reavey, 2010; Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009). Speaking about lived experiences involves interpretation (Willig, 2012).

During the life history interviews and analysis it became apparent that the research participants were making connections between their embodiment and intrusive experiences in very nuanced ways. IPA was applied belatedly at the points in the transcripts where participants spoke in depth about race, bodies and lived body experiences in public spaces.

For example six participants discussed their experiences of hair/hairstyles. IPA was carried out on the phenomena of hair/hairstyles to examine meanings for research participants, wider theoretical implications and to address the research questions: *How is race embodied for Black women? What are Black women's embodied experiences of space and place?*. Similar to thematic analysis, in using IPA, researchers describe and interpret data within and across transcripts for wider implications

(Smith, et al., 2009), but to a much greater depth. A process of 'bracketing' or temporarily holding at bay theoretical insights to see the experience in its own right is required (Lopez and Willis, 2004 cited in Willig, 2012). As the analysis progresses, interpretations may change, such that there is vacillation between understanding and not understanding the phenomena (Willig, 2012). Thus, as with thematic analysis, the researcher undergoes an iterative process of 'knowing and not knowing' (Willig, 2012, p.36). IPA also requires researcher reflexivity (see above).

Researchers' interpretations may also challenge how participants conceptualise their own accounts of lived experiences (Willig, 2012; see also Kelly, et al., 1994). Therefore, there are ethical consequences to the interpretation of lived experiences. Carla Willig (2012) cites Jean Paul Sartre (1989/1956) in his 'being-for-others' phenomenological conceptualisation. This is the notion that when we become aware that we are being looked at or objectified as 'other' by another person: this is disturbing and disarming because we are powerless to change how they see us. In a similar vein Teo (2010) argues that how data is interpreted can have consequences for the groups studied. Interpretations of data may become 'interpretive violence' when alternative interpretations, while available in the data, are not used and there is a responsibility on the researcher to reflect on the consequences of their interpretations (Willig, 2012). Willig (2012) offers that whether the researcher has a 'suspicious' or 'empathic' interpretive framework, this has a bearing on the type of representation of participants especially for those from marginalised groups and it is a 'suspicious' account that may unintentionally contribute to pathologising individuals. Therefore an empathic interpretive framework was used in this study because it provided a good fit with the politics of feeling (see above) throughout the research process.

Visual data may be analysed by looking at and comparing images, noting researchers' emotional responses (Gleeson, 2011). Radley (2011) argues that images also require interpretation and evidence of what the images represent should be broadened to wider societal discourses. The socio-political context for the photographs (Pink, 2007) and wider theoretical implications (Hodgetts, Chamberlain and Groot, 2011) also form part of the analysis. The photographs created by women were analysed in conjunction with their interpretations of why they selected those particular images for discussion and how what was depicted related to their life narratives, and diagrams created as part of the research process and for how as a corpus of data they answered the research questions. Participant's narratives of their help seeking diagrams and bodylines were also analysed thematically as deeper insights to the conversations shared in the interview process. The sections of the transcripts associated with the photos were read together and could be viewed as photo essays (see following chapters).

Knowledge is produced by both marginalised and elites and thus this knowledge needs community forms of legitimation (Harding, 1993). Hill Collins (1990) suggests knowledge can gain validation by communicating the results of research back to community groups in non-intellectual language and for researchers to view this process as a life-long engagement for social justice for oppressed groups. It is however, naive to assume researcher insights will necessarily match those of the participants, or that participants will recognise all of the conceptualisations of their experiences especially given that the researcher has collected a range of viewpoints and has applied a number theories to the data (Willig, 2012). Additionally Kelly, et al. (1994) argue that part of the reason why women participate in especially studies on violence and abuse, is because they view researchers as skilled in providing an interpretation.

Reflections on Reflexivity

My research diary assisted as an immediate emotional outlet. My response to the women's stories was a key feature of producing the data. What listening produced was a set of ruminative reflections, suspicions, visceral responses: wanting to run the experiences away; wanting to eat the experiences away; needing clear demarcations between the spaces normally occupied, where PhD work could be carried out and where it could not.

It seems, in our experience, that many qualitative researchers absorb often traumatic data and internalise the suffering of those they interview and relive these experiences when transcribing recorded data... What do you do with all this stuff in your head? There is the stuff that is used for the research, and then the stuff that ends up on the cutting room floor (and swims in your head in your quiet moments). No matter how experienced you are, it has to go somewhere or I think I would carry these people around with me for a long time. (Bahn and Weatherill, 2013, p.27)

My autobiographical reflections on past decisions were made during the process. The narratives of childhood sexual abuse, especially where women shared their childhood photos, were heart-wrenching. Being the parent to a young child of similar age replayed as endless 'what if?' scenarios. *What if the men I know are abusing children? What if my child is abused?* This would return attention to what happened to women, how they described what happened, how recollections viscerally unfolded and how outward appearances bore no traces of past experiences violence or abuse. These reflections often ended in a deep sense of outrage at the world, men, all men at times, especially Black men in remembrance of the participants' narratives of abuse and violence. This process produced periods of feeling numb and silenced by the arbitrary nature of

becoming a victim of violence and abuse. These reflections provided ways into analysing the impacts of violence and abuse on women's sense of being in the world, being embodied.

Leaving time between interviews and taking time out from reading transcripts to process the emotional impact of the research was advised in supervision. Mourning or bereavement may be similar to the emotions felt about experiences of violence and abuse; mourning a lost childhood or innocence (Haaken, 1998). Even writing this section of the methodology took over a year to be articulated. The anticipation, the preparedness for traumatic news also required emotion management. Words from a workshop on vicarious trauma were recalled in preparation and during interviews; 'the woman is here, she is living, she is surviving, she has survived, she has a story to tell, she has chosen you to bear witness, it is a gift, take it and be mindful of how you receive it'.

A process of vicarious traumatising (Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995) can be experienced by researchers after bearing witness to women's testimonies, it may not even be the violence or abuse, but something that personally resonates with the researcher (Campbell, et al., 2009; Stoler, 2002). For example listening to a woman's account of poverty, malnourishment and being denied the opportunity to attend a grammar school after winning a scholarship, was experienced as tragic and enraging, because of my strong views about the transformative nature of education. A participant's account of going abroad for work to get emotional distance from an intimate relationship also resonated with my experience. This brought past decisions, long forgotten, to the foreground for reflection in my own cowardice in not ending a past relationship sooner. Another participant spent many years in a relationship with an emotionally distant partner. This drew parallels in my life experience. When one participant discussed how she can be silenced in her attempts to talk about past abuse experiences, I reflected on whether I had silenced accounts of violence/abuse because of an inability to hear. Researchers (and participants) carry the research situation with them: in this study the expressions on women's faces, the weather at the time of each interview, the clothes worn both by myself and participants and traces of conversations from the interviews would echo long after the data production process.

Another way in which I coped was through listening to affirming music, a theme not explored in the study. There were distinct moments of experiencing a deep sense of shame, being silenced for choosing the topic area and experiencing the emotions that were a part of the process. Thus, the emotional labour continued during transcription, interpretation and writing up (Kelly, 1988) where I would arrive at particular points in the data and would be overcome by tears. The words of the song below both assisted and incited motivation during this stage.

*You've got the words to change a nation
but you're biting your tongue
You've spent a life time stuck in silence
afraid you'll say something wrong
If no one ever hears it how we gonna learn your song
So come on, come on
Come on, come on
You've got a heart as loud as lions
So why let your voice be tamed?
Baby we're a little different
there's no need to be ashamed
You've got the light to fight the shadows
so stop hiding it away
Come on, come on...*

(EMELI SANDE (2012) - Read all about it (Part III))

In presenting the women's words I use long quotes to reflect the complexity of their own analytical engagement with their lived experiences and to capture my conceptual interpretations. It is also an ongoing engagement with the reader to derive their interpretations and to take a brief walk with the research participants (Kanyeredzi, et al., in press). At the outset of the PhD there were few sources of literature on African and Caribbean heritage women's lived experiences in the UK and it was always my desire to explore how women lived with racism, sexism, whether this had similar resonances across multiple narratives. I had originally thought that women would describe how having experienced racism influenced their perceptions of services and how they would be treated. They described more nuanced and profound experiences of the very process of categorisation that had begun long before wider social encounters and how subsequent encounters with being categorised were experienced as oppressive. The women described their knowledge as a lived through skin or visceral, felt sensations that increased in intensity. The concepts of 'the continuum of oppression', 'felt intensities', 'nugatory self', 'exhaustive liminal rumination', 'liminal displacement', were borne out of this engagement with women's narratives and my own conceptual interpretations, enabled by the methodology and theoretical literature. Having follow-up interviews demonstrated for participants my investment in the research process and their investment was evidenced in how they used subsequent interviews to deepen and clarify earlier offerings. Enabling participants to show me their lives humbled me to pay attention to what they saw as important. An ongoing question is whether my own embodiment as a Black African and Caribbean heritage woman impacted the production of the data. In some regards it enhanced the sharing of 'sensitive'

issues described in the previous section as 'screaming silences'. In others, it may have foreclosed further discussions, based on my comportment, or perceived social status.

Organisation of the findings

The empirical findings are presented in the following four chapters. Chapter 4, The continuum of oppression in Black women's lives discusses the sociocultural context of the multiple forms of violence and abuse experienced by the research participants. Chapter 5, Audacious speech: coming from a place where I come from, examines how the women stayed active in situations of abuse and violence, how they started to talk about the violence and abuse, how they were responded to and what they did in the aftermath. Chapter 6, What's race got to do with it: felt intensities of a nugatory self, is in conversation with the previous two chapters, and presents an analysis of how the women live with past and current forms of abuse, violence and bodily control, where hair/hairstyles become focal locations for such discussions. Chapter 7, (Re)assembling the self in everyday spaces, charts how the women daily or periodically enact rituals to enable them to live with past experiences of violence and abuse and their everyday negotiations. The extracts contain: (...) to indicate absence of verbatim; (hh) to indicate laughter or inhalations within words; (::) to show extensions of syllables; () to show emphasis and square brackets ([]) to describe non-word utterances or anonymised data (see Jefferson, 2004). Photographs and diagrams created, or brought to the research process by the women, are used throughout.

CHAPTER 4 - THE CONTINUUM OF OPPRESSION IN BLACK WOMEN'S LIVES

In reality the past is preserved by itself, automatically. In its entirety, probably, it follows us at every instant; all that we have felt, thought and willed from earliest infancy is there, leaning over the present which is about to join it, pressing against the portals of consciousness that would fain leave it outside. (Bergson, 1998, pp.4–5, cited in Brown, 2012)

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the participants' experiences of multiple forms of violence and abuse within the themes of: migration, intergenerational trauma and abuse; displacement through migration and displacement through space; men, fathers and father figures manipulating marginality; mothers and emotional abuse; racism in lived experiences. Kelly (1988) conceptualised sexual violence as occurring on a continuum of behaviours whose forms shade into each other and communicate to women their boundaries of movement and safety in public and private spaces. Kelly's (1988) continuum of sexual violence has been extended by Davis (2000) and Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004), to include the everydayness of economic and structural racism and poverty and by Roy (2008) to include political violence. These additional forms are experienced by African and Caribbean heritage women, and is conceptualised here as a 'continuum of oppression' which also occurs across generations in families. The participants in this study became aware of their racial and gendered social locations, alongside cultural expectations, through encounters within their physical environment, including multiple migrations across and within national borders. Their experiences of violence and abuse were located within these wider contexts. A prominent theme in accounts of child sexual abuse was the structural violence of poverty and how that impacted the parenting they received; women also offered intergenerational narratives of trauma and oppression.

The women also described experiences of racism and discrimination. Ahmed (2012) uses the visual imagery of 'a brick wall' to illustrate how discrimination is affectively experienced. Racism can also be thought of as ways in which aspects of social relations have become so ingrained as to seem solidified, hard and impenetrable to those who experience its oppressive affects (Ahmed, 2004; Galtung, 1969). It is in these affective encounters, where power relations place presumed categorical

aspects of individual selves, that become known or understood through what is theorised here as 'felt intensities' (see Chapter 2).

Consistent with Kelly's (1988) definition of the sexual violence continuum, the women who participated experienced one or multiple forms of violence or abuse at one point, or over their life course. These forms of violence and abuse shaded into each other in terms of how the women described feelings of fear, confusion, intrusion, displacement and alteration in how they negotiated public, private and relational spaces (Kelly, 1988). Echoing findings from previous research (Garfield, 2005; Kalathil, et al., 2011; Kelly, 1988; Potter, 2008; Roy, 2008) women identified many forms of violence and abuse. The table below summarises the continuum of oppression in the lives of the participants in this study, beginning with women abused in childhood, then ordered alphabetically.

Table 4.1: Continuum of Oppression

	Migration, Intergenerational Trauma and Oppression	Violence and Abuse	Race/Racism
Ellen	Mother was thrown out of home when she was pregnant with Ellen. Female relatives in the Caribbean have also been abused. Her brother is in prison.	Sexually abused by stepfather and witnessed her stepfather being violent to her mother as a child. A relative was shot. Slapped by ex-partner, was in a mutually violent relationship with ex-boyfriend. Has experienced multiple burglaries.	Racial discrimination in public spaces and at work. Ostracised by Black acquaintances for choosing to work for the criminal justice system. Witnessed racism at her church.
Evelyn	Thinks her mother worked in the sex industry and struggled with child care.	Sexually abused by different men including her father and was possibly raped. Physical violence from ex-partner; felt emotionally abused by his infidelities. Emotionally abandoned by mother.	Made to feel ugly because she had short hair. Told she would not succeed professionally because she had dreadlocks.
Farah	Her sisters were sexually abused and raped by her uncle.	Sexually abused and raped by uncle, sexually exploited by mother's boyfriend. Treated as the 'Black sheep' of the family.	In three attempts to cut her hair, hairdressers explained the value of her long hair as a Black woman. Feels 'not Black enough'.
Jacinta	Sensed that her mother struggled with childcare. She has beaten and emotionally abused her own son, who was taken into local authority care. Has been arrested twice for harassing a woman who did not pay her for babysitting and for cutting up an ex-partner's clothes. The charges were dropped on both occasions.	Beaten and sexually abused by foster carers. Raped as a child and again at aged 18 by multiple perpetrators at knife-point. Verbally and physically abused by mother. Taken by ex-husband at gun-point to a police station to be a witness for him, strangled by ex-husband. Sexually harassed in the street, sexually exploited in intimate relationships.	Racism from Caribbean heritage people. Teased at school because of her African name. Feels 'not Black enough'.
Norma	Mother possibly sexually exploited and her brothers are in prison. Lots of friends growing up experienced violence and	Emotionally abused, neglected and malnourished as a child.	Reminded of race in public, excluded from Caribbean friendship networks at work, experiences 'racism and sexism'.

	Migration, Intergenerational Trauma and Oppression	Violence and Abuse	Race/Racism
	abuse.		
Patricia	Mother was depressed. She describes her brother as a perpetrator.	Sexually abused by grandfather.	Feels pathologised in professional spaces, being the only Black person 'when all the heads around me are White'. Feels read as aggressive.
Rebecca	Mother was possibly sexually exploited; mother was sexually abused as a child. Grandmother was kicked by an ex-partner. Her sister is in a relationship with a violent partner. Knows women with experiences of abuse and being prostituted.	Sexually abused by family friend, sexually exploited by older man. Told she should be chopped up and fed to pigs as a child by step-father who left pornographic materials lying around. Told she would be taken away and raped when disclosed sexual abuse.	Feels racially excluded and judged in social spaces.
Debbie	Knows lots of women with experiences of violence and abuse, who will not talk.	Slapped and emotionally abused by ex-partner, who was controlling and unfaithful. Witnessed ex-partner being really aggressive to others.	Expected to work harder at work than White colleagues.
Isabelle	Witnessed her father being racially abused as a child. Racism has polarised her family.	Beaten by ex-partner and ex-husband, both controlled her money. Witness to the aftermath of her partner's suicide which contributed to an overdose.	Witnessed lots of racism growing up, had health difficulties. Attributed her inability to read until the age of 12 to racism. Experienced racism from police officers, social worker and neighbours.

The women relayed their narratives in the context of wider, collective and familial accounts of trauma, oppression, violence and abuse, mostly of their female relatives. This generational continuum of oppression feeds into the present, as the women carried these accounts with them and used them as a means through which they evaluated their own experiences of violence, abuse and oppression. Some forms within the continuum of oppression, such as racism and sexism, may be discussed to an extent among relatives and friends, but most forms did not appear to be discussed by the women outside of the research situation. Thus experiencing a continuum of oppression may already be associated with notions of what can be spoken about and to whom, what sorts of help are available and from whom (see Chapter 5 for further discussion).

Migration, intergenerational trauma and oppression

Intergenerational trauma has been defined as a continuum of forms including 'race-based trauma, sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, historical trauma, insidious trauma, cultural violence, political and racial terror, and oppression' (Bryant-Davis, Chung and Belcourt, 2009, p.331). In this study the participants' narratives of parental migration and their own journeys across international

and domestic borders was a key theme. These migrations formed the context for the women's sense of isolation, conceptualised here as 'liminal displacement', or not belonging anywhere and features vividly in the literary narratives of abuse and violence from the UK (see Boyce-Davies, 1994; Mason-John, 2005; Riley, 1985; Williams, 2011). Parental migration narratives unfolded either from the question; *Can you tell me a bit about yourself?*, or when women recounted their experiences of abuse/violence. These narratives formed part of the women's collective memories of the mass migration of their parents from the Caribbean to the UK during the 1950s/60s in how they described their parent's life contexts at the time they were born. Family histories had been retrieved through conversations with grandmothers and elder relatives, as part of their sense-making of what had happened to them. They presented the context of their parent's lives as the conditions that made their abuse possible. Caribbean heritage women recounted their parents experiencing overt racism shortly after migrating to the UK.

Norma: [W]hen our parents and grandparents came here they just expected to get through each day, because life was so tough, it was freezing cold all the time, there was racism, they couldn't find anywhere to live, they were living ... five families in a three-four bedroomed house, everybody was sleeping with everybody else ... There was so much going on, their kids were like second place ... then you got a teenage mother, like my mother was, and everyone's like 'well how did that happen?'

Ava: And just on your relationship with your mother, have you ... come to a point where, you understand her better, you've left the relationship a long time.

Norma: I'm quite indifferent to my mother ... my family think that I hate her, they don't wanna even mention her, at the end of the day she is my mother, she gave birth to me ... Having children, you sort of like appreciate wah a woman really goes through, when they have a child and when my mum had me she was nineteen and she wasn't a worldly nineteen, like I was at nineteen. She was a baby nineteen, because she had come from the West Indies. She'd been cotton-gloved by West Indian parents ... and then in the big, open, outside world ... I have a new found respect for her, because she brought four of us into the world, which wouldn't have been easy, but I'm just quite indifferent to her. I don't love her, I don't hate her ... I used to feel sorry for her, but now I don't as much, because I think she's made choices ... [M]y mother was easily led and al:ways looking for love, 'cos she neva had it, just ae:ny man woulda made her happy ... Even though she was a single parent, her relationship choices were al:ways bad ... [E]ven the fact that we're alive, came out of a ba:d relationship ... I

knew mentally that my mother wasn't very strong, she didn't pay bills, she didn't tidy up the house, she didn't feed [us].

Descriptions of parents' lives reflect some of the features common to migration narratives from the Windrush era in the UK during the 1950s/60s (see also Mead, 2009), but were extended to include how migration provided a gendered context for the sexual exploitation of their mothers, by much older and often married men and how this then structured their childhoods of poverty and marginalisation. Notions of their parents, especially their mothers, making choices despite the many constraints of racism, poverty, isolation and the insecurity of being recent migrants, featured strongly in the women's accounts. In the above extract, Norma's empathy can be observed where she imagines her mothers' felt intensities of isolation due to the overcrowded accommodation and being a recent migrant. This empathy appeared to have crystallised into a complex emotional ambivalence over the years as she refers to her mother's poor relationship 'choices'. Norma describes her mother's depression as 'weakness', further interpreted as an inability to be discerning in the choice of an intimate partner. Norma's association between depression and weakness is consistent with research with Black women viewing having mental distress as indicative of a lack of strength (Beaubeouf-Lafontant, 2007; 2008; Edge, 2007). In attempting to understand the poverty that characterised her upbringing, Norma blames her mother: in her appraisal, neither depression, naïveté, nor racism, were reasons enough to live in poor accommodation with the threat of homelessness. Norma appears torn between empathy for her mother through partial recognition of the violence of racism and marginalisation and ambivalence surrounding her constrained choices.

Ambivalence surrounding parental constrained choice revealed a tension in how the women made sense of the material conditions into which they were born. After her mother became pregnant with Ellen, her mother was asked to leave home by Ellen's grandfather.

Ellen: [K]eeping up with the Joneses ... I'm not making excuses for 'em, but maybe at that point [1950's/60's] ... they hadn't been in this country that long ... they still felt very much under that spotlight. They were still the immigrants ... Everyone now are complaining about the Eastern Europeans and the Polish, but back then it was the Blacks coming over. So I think that must've been another thing for them, another wrong reason for them to stand out.

Ellen draws attention to how aspects of threat and unsafety had already been a feature of her life before she was born. She imagines her mother's felt intensity of parental abandonment in a hostile and racist society. However, the experiences of overt racism had changed by the time Ellen was a girl.

A similar account of the challenges presented by recent migration for young Caribbean heritage women was also offered by Rebecca who infers that her mother was 'taken advantage of' or sexually exploited.

Rebecca: [M]y mother ... she didn't have the best upbringing in life ... because when she was three years old her mother left her and came over here to work and so she was living with her grandmother and then her grandmother died and she didn't have a good experience ... she hasn't been able to read and write and ... she's had a lot of issues in her life. So she had me when she was nineteen ... it wasn't a completely good circumstance either, it was more like she was taken advantage of by someone older, much older sort of thing [giggles] ... happens ... you know it was consensual.

Looking back, reimagining their mothers' lives, enabled the women some recognition of the extraordinary circumstances (see Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004), of recent migration when they were born. Roy (2008) and Wallace (1990/1979) argue that extraordinary circumstances, including times of war or conflict, create opportunities for men who wish to have access to women's bodies or power over women's bodies. Imagining what their mothers experienced at the time of their birth enabled the women who had been abused as children to contextualise their mother's lives. Offering accounts of their young, scared, naive mothers involved with men who became the women's fathers or father figures, illuminated the contexts that were exploited by their abusers. Poverty creates vulnerabilities, such as homelessness, in women's lives that men who are abusive can exploit (see Chapter 2). An expert informant (Exp4) argued that girls and young women exchange the spatial contexts of the abuse; from the home to the street, illustrating the connections between violence and abuse and women's available life choices. Based on the narratives of intergenerational trauma, the mothers of the participants abused as children, could be viewed as exchanging forms of abuse through international migrations. The women's mothers had exchanged the abuse that was occurring at home or through societal encounters with racism, for relationships with the men that became the women's fathers or father-figures. The sexual exploitation of the women's young mothers were precursors to their own abuse and neglect. The context for the poverty and sexual exploitation for the research participants was created by the marginalisation of recent migration. This appeared to provide for the participants a partial rationale for the structural challenges faced by their mothers, and the spatiotemporal context for the abuse they experienced.

Further evidence of the existence of a continuum of oppression was offered by the women through multiple narratives of abuse of friends and relatives (see also Kelly, 1988). Haaken (2003) notes that in telling one narrative, another may be 'smuggled in'. The women could be viewed as 'smuggling

in' accounts of abuse of their siblings, friends and family members, expanding the reach of the continuum of oppression. One woman also shared that both her grandmother and sister had experienced violence from their partners. In her sister's case the account involved both parties using violence, albeit that her sister appeared so physically beaten at times that she could barely walk. Farah also discussed her sisters' psychoses, which she connected to the abuse they experienced from her uncle (see Scott, et al., 2013). In offering these stories of abuse and violence of relatives and friends, the women were recounting a continuum of oppression as a phenomena requiring attention, showing that it is ongoing and not limited to their particular lived experiences. Through these accounts, they were exposing both the perpetration of violence and abuse and its impact on their relationships with their siblings and friends, perhaps seeking recognition for those who have not yet spoken about such experiences. The unremarkable and everydayness of violence and abuse in women's lives can also be read from these multiple accounts.

Four women also discussed the gendered ways in which their siblings were treated at home and connected this with their brothers' involvement in crime. Studies have found boys who have witnessed violence or have been abused/neglected at an early age may respond with interpersonal aggression later in life and girls can be targeted by men and 'revictimised' (see Messman-Moore and Long, 2000; 2003; Mullender, et al., 2005). Violence in the home from the father/partner to the mother often co-occurs with physical violence and or sexual abuse towards the children, especially female stepchildren (Hester and Radford, 1996; Kelly, 1996). Ellen remarked that when she and her mother left, her brother gave her 'the two-finger salute' as a symbol of his alignment with his father. In contexts where men are violent to their female partners and encourage the children to disrespect the mother, boys may side with their fathers (Morris, 2009; Mullender, et al., 2005). This was also a finding in this study. Thus gendered treatment within their families of origin was another theme across some of the narratives.

Five women discussed moving away from their siblings, getting an education, while contrasting this with their brothers' life trajectories (see also Messman-Moore and Long, 2003; Richie, 1996). The gendered difference could also be viewed as overvaluing boys as was found in Richie's (1996) study, where African American boys were spared household chores and girls were expected to fulfil roles in service to them. Thus the continuum of oppression, for some of the women, spatially restricted their actions in gendered ways. However, later in life this process opened up opportunities for them to pursue their education and employment goals. For example, Norma's foster mother expected her to do well educationally and gave her the 'security to think rationally'.

Displacement through migration

Liminality has been defined as an in-between identity, not being quite this or that, 'occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold' (OED, 2010). Having a sense of belonging has been theorised as an important feature of human development and interpersonal relationships, creating a sense of self and security (Hagerty, et al., 1992). When individuals move homes through migration, they may create a sense of home through an imaginary space of what home was like when they left and their current conceptions of home (Brah, 1996). Research participants made many domestic and international migrations as children and as adults and this had displaced their sense of belonging. For two African heritage women, private fostering was also a theme forming the context for the violence and abuse they experienced. Bernard and Gupta (2008) describe private fostering as a common practice among families in countries in Africa based on cultural practices of an extended network of caretakers for children. Similar child care practices have been found among African American women and termed 'othermothering' (Collins, 2000; Joseph, 1993; Reynolds, 2005). Private or informal fostering can become the context in which African heritage children are abused and then taken into local authority care in the UK (Bernard and Gupta, 2008). Three of the Caribbean heritage women were sexually abused in the context of being looked after by care-givers. One woman went to live with her grandmother who effectively became her othermother after the sexual abuse was reported.

Jacinta: I'm not sure if I was privately fostered, but I remember when I was much younger ... I don't know how long I was living in [country name] for, but I know I was born here, I don't remember what age I was in [country name]. I came back to ... England when I was about, maybe eight ... and then I remember my mum left me with a nanny, it was a White nanny ... She looked after me for maybe two or three years, somewhere in the countryside in a nice beautiful countryside ... Then again I was living with my mum's friend, they were Black people. I don't know them, but my mum did, my mum seemed to know them.

Jacinta's uncertainty about childhood homes illustrates feeling liminally displaced, or not belonging anywhere described by those women who were moved through regional, national and international borders, further augmented by experiencing sexual abuse (see also Mason-John, 2005; Riley, 1985; Williams, 2011). In the above extract Jacinta describes being displaced, not having a sense of home and elsewhere in her narrative being abused by foster carers, further dislodging her sense of home.

Jacinta: [I]t's been like a rollercoaster really, I have lived with a lot of strangers ... so I still

feel like I'm African, but I'm British, I feel British, but African I know English and I still have questions as to where do I belong? So I would say that I'm African, Black African British [laughs]

Ava: And do you think that ... the traveling around as well, had a lot to do with you feeling that you don't belong?

Jacinta: I think that if I had a proper upbringing, I think I would have been a better person and I would have loved myself a bit more and maybe people would have appreciated me and I wouldn't feel like I'm an alien. I feel sometimes as if I'm an alien ... all my brothers and sisters were more cared for, were looked after a bit more, were treated more like a king and a queen . I've always felt like, where do I belong? Do I belong here, or there, or where?

In Jacinta's narrative, with every move or displacement, she becomes more alienated from her family and the sense of alienation leaves her with a rootless liminality. Felt intensities of liminal displacement could also be exacerbated by domestic and international migration, whereby the women lost family support. Debbie migrated to the UK as an adult from the Caribbean and lived close to her sister, who subsequently migrated to another country, leaving her with little support when she was looking after her children and in a relationship with an unsupportive partner. Patricia made domestic migrations between her mother and father's homes as they had separated. Her mother also lived with depression, which meant that she was unable to care for her at times. Below Norma describes her weekly journeys with her siblings.

Norma: I used to go to this lady's house, another West Indian lady's house, she knew my dad ... and I used to go to her house every weekend; Friday evening, when I finished [school], well I pick up my brothers ... I travel on the bus at the age of seven or eight. She [Norma's mother] only took me for a couple of weeks, then I had to go alone ... I'd get to her [family friend] house, and the I'd stay there, Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night and I'd leave and go back to primary school Monday morning ... So at least I was taken care of, and actually, going there did show me a different side of life ... I knew I would have food. Sometimes, we didn't even have food in our cupboards, so it was like ... so who's bringing our food? Of course we're going crazy, because we we're hungry.

Elsewhere in her narrative Norma describes the family friend complaining that she had not taken a bath. This was a clear example for Norma that she was being neglected, leaving Norma feeling helpless with that awareness. The movement from unsafety and starvation to being fed and

experiencing care and support, but not quite able to feel a sense of belonging, can be seen to augment a felt intensity of liminal displacement, both emotionally and spatially. More familiar narratives of domestic migrations through fleeing violence and stalking from a partner and family members (Bowstead, 2013) were also offered by three women.

Isabelle: I had to have an escort to get my clothes and furniture, had them put in storage, as well as having my husband hunting for me ... but anyway just got through it, I was in the refuge for nineteen months and then they gave [me] a property, from the council, although my husband still stalked and it took about three years ... before he eventually got used to it.

Farah: [M]y family ... have the tendency of ... stalking ... they describe it as being over protective. I always think it's over-controlling ... knowing what the other person does and know who they see and oh the shame and all that, but I know that my father lives in [another country]. He's been there so many times and I think because of that ... it makes me feel like he's still; out there and I'll always be the one who has an alarm ... I know, logically, that anything could happen, I have to get out of this place [her home] ... and it's gonna be taken off soon ... since the alarm won't be there, I won't be able to feel safe. They can't give me forever. When I reported that people knew where I lived ... they said okay we will give you an alarm and I said okay and they said ... if there's not any incident, we're gonna take it away.

Jacinta: One time, he was smoking cannabis and he was into drugs like that ... he became very violent, where he tried to kill me and my son ... he was hearing voices ... and he actually tried to kill me and my son ... I had had enough and I didn't know what else to do, but I tried to leave, but he put this cord around my neck, so I couldn't really escape, but in the end I managed to escape.

Abuse and neglect were communicated in women's accounts, spatially and physically though the structural constraints of poverty and migrations to, from and within the UK and emotionally from partners. The women also reflected on the abuse and sexual exploitation of their mothers. This ushered in a context for further marginality for the women abused as children, as the following sections illustrate.

Displacement through space

Related to the theme of poverty was marginality communicated spatially through the physical environments where five of the women lived as children. Paula Reavey (2010) writes that spatial anchors for recollections of child sexual abuse become focal points. The women described not having enough food in the cupboards, or the paint peeling off the walls and finding temporary spaces of safety, as Rebecca did in a local library. Rebecca discusses both the safety of the library and the window or liminal space of unsafety where she would wait for her grandmother.

Figure 3 Library



Rebecca: [I]n the past, it's where I used to go as a safe haven away from a lot of the insanity that was happening ... I used to leave my house early in the morning ... I used to stay in the library and just read books ... and wait until five o'clock ... I would then leave from there and stay outside my grandmother's house and wait for her to come back from work, because she used to do evenings and she used to do Saturday shifts as well.

Two women who made many domestic migrations also described having poor recall for experiences around the period when they were abused. This could be related to coping with experiences of abuse (Harvey and Herman, 1994) leaving felt intensities of spatiotemporal or liminal displacement. One woman who had experienced multiple burglaries experienced a sense of spatial displacement in her home as it had been disconnected from notions of safety (see Frohman, 2005). While this was experienced within physical spaces, marginality in the home could also be experienced emotionally. Debbie reflected on the period that she was living with her partner where

even though she was physically expanding by 'eating lots of biscuits and drinking lots of tea', she was reduced emotionally. He used silence as a form of control and when he spoke, it was only to berate her.

- Ava: What was it like living with him here?
- Debbie: Aw [sighs], strange ... because he preferred to sleep here [in the living room] and I slept this side.
- Ava: So he didn't sleep in the same room as you?
- Debbie: But he had to sleep ... he'd have enough rest ...
- Ava: Really strange behaviour.
- Debbie: Yes ... I know I snore, but I've snored since from young, but I didn't have any problem.
- Ava: But then you slept in the same bed before on the weekends when you met with him.
- Debbie: Yep, yep strange.
- Ava: What did your space feel like with somebody here, but not really here?
- Debbie: I couldn't ... it was suffocating me, because this is a person who doesn't talk as well.
- Ava: Not at all?
- Debbie: Oh he just said a few things and then that's it ... I mean that part of my life has gone, but I don't know how I did it. I just switched off as well and it's only because the kids' there, he'd talk with the kids, but with somebody in the house like that ... it would send me mad, mental.

Debbie describes her ex-partner's silence as colonising her space and ultimately her body/breath in that it was 'suffocating'. Towards the end of the extract Debbie recalls felt intensities of imagined mental distress had she stayed living with her ex-partner.

The research participants experienced racism, poverty and overcrowding in contexts of their young mothers' migration and women's own multiple domestic and international migrations, some through being displaced by experiencing violence and abuse from partners. Multiple migrations left them with feelings of not belonging or liminal displacement, which could also be experienced through the features of the physical spaces of their homes and emotional reduction from partners. The following sections describe how the above contexts were manipulated by those who perpetrated violence and abuse.

Men, fathers and father figures manipulating marginality

A common finding in studies on child sexual abuse across racial and socioeconomic differences, is that men who wish to abuse children will orchestrate opportunities to gain sexual access to them (Cotton and Vanstone, 1996; Finkelhor, 1999; Finkelhor and Browne, 1985; Finkelhor, et al., 1990).

I got her to a position where she trusted me implicitly and consummated the relationship ... The things I was telling myself – she won't tell; nobody would believe her because she is a known liar – a troublemaker; she's had it before, it's not going to hurt her. (Cotton and Vanstone, 1996, p.11)

The women's intimate partners, and the men who abused them, were aware of the contexts of their lives and had privileged positions of access to their bodies. For example, Patricia's mother lived with depression and had separated from Patricia's father, this meant that Patricia would live at home with her mother at times, then with her father. Patricia's paternal grandfather helped her mother by taking her to church once a week. He also sexually abused Patricia. Whilst looking at a photograph of herself and one of a Bible, Patricia described her experience of sexual abuse.

Patricia: I never actually looked back at myself as a child ... I was looking at myself, seeing myself as an adult, looking at myself as a child thinking, I can't believe someone would do anything like that to me and then I thought oh I was probably looking much older as you kinda do and I thought I would use that picture because it's what that person [her grandfather] was seeing, what I'm seeing now, a child. A child ... I thought, it's kind of weird actually thinking that that person was seeing the same thing that I'm seeing now.

Ava: And is there anything, just thinking along those lines, is there anything, in terms of how you see yourself, do you then see that person differently, than you'd seen them before?

Patricia: Yep, yep [crying] yeh I do [crying]. It just made me think like, how could a person do that to me, when I look at this picture [crying]?

Ava: Do you want me to stop the tape for a little bit?

Patricia: No [crying] ... I picked that one and the other one is a Bible, it's just kind of ... [crying] it shows the church [crying] because he was in the church as well [crying] and everybody used to like him. He was in the church so [sobs] I was in the church as well so it just reminds me [crying] of that bit of my life so that bit of my life that goes around in my head sometimes, that's why I chose the Bible to take a picture.

Patricia had not looked at her childhood photos for a while and when she did so as part of the research process, was moved to tears on seeing how she looked, that she did look like a child, almost as if she had been carrying an image of herself as mature for her age and therefore somehow to blame for her grandfather abusing her. Looking back now as an adult, she can see herself as a child and she can see what he saw: 'A child'. The photo materialises her grandfather's accountability for his actions; the smallness of her body as evidenced in the photo, settles once and for all his intentions and responsibility, the Bible symbolising the context in which he exploited his access to Patricia. Three women brought in similar photos. One commented that her primary school photo showed her innocence before experiencing sexual abuse. At the end of her first interview, Ellen drew focus to the fact that all of her childhood photos with her mother had been torn into two, by her stepfather and were now held together with sellotape as an illustration of his attempts to destroy her relationship with her mother. After the interview she placed the photograph of herself as a small child on her wall of photographs in her home as a topic for future discussion with her child. She held this personal photograph in parallel to a future discussion with her son about the television series *Roots* based on the book of the same name where the author Alex Haley (1991/1977) attempts to assemble his family torn apart during the Oceanic slave era. This is a visual example of the women's awareness of the continuum of oppression.

After the break-down of his marriage, Farah's father migrated to another country and brought his brother to look after Farah and her siblings.

Farah: That was the worst ever move my father could have done, but he was thinking, it's his brother, he can stay with his children ... so his brother ... how can I describe him? A crazy, psychopath ... paedophile ... He started gradually ... oh he wanted to know everything ... he would do to you, to your head that much ... He knew that I was the black sheep and how can I say, I was also his type ... [H]e started to say it was cultural ... I didn't know about my culture as much, when I was that age ... [holding a pen and tensely wringing her hands around it] ... he was saying I need to know if you are a virgin or not and that was ... whew ... hurt ... what I know is ... I remember... [hands Ava the pen] I don't wanna break it.

Farah's uncle sexually abused, then raped her. He called the sexual abuse 'just checking to see if you are still a virgin' and threatened to do worse to Farah's sisters if Farah did not comply. Despite her compliance, Farah later discovered that her uncle also sexually abused her sisters who Farah thinks now live with psychosis as a result of not talking about the abuse. Tajfel and Billig (1974) noted the term 'black sheep' is used as a means of scapegoating and to justify acts of violence (see also Gilfus,

1993; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). Farah's uncle exploited and perverted notions of 'culture' to legitimate his abusive practices.

The complexity of the context where culture and belonging were manipulated to perpetrate violence and abuse is picked up in Chapters 5 and 6. Experiencing child sexual abuse in the context of being looked after by a male care-giver is a common finding in the literature on child sexual abuse (see Chapter 2) where men are able to orchestrate the environment (Kelly, 2007). The participants also reported that their abusers controlled and influenced their mothers/parents. Ann Morris (2009) draws on Connell's (2009) concept of a 'gender regime' to create the concept of an 'abusive household gender regime' to reflect the systematic and calculating tactics used by men who abuse members of their family. In this study, five of the participants were sexually abused by male care-givers. While Rebecca was being looked after by the man who had sexually abused her, she also observed him taking girls into his bedroom and giggling. Below Evelyn describes her abuser's tactics.

Evelyn: I got home and she [her mother] was going to work and I went to sleep, but when I woke up she wasn't there ... [M]aybe a week or two later ... I was at my auntie's house and then I just started crying, crying, crying, it was as if I didn't try, but the tears were just coming ... [S]he got worried then and she was thinking of sending me to a counsellor, but that [uncle who abused her] had talked her out of it [laughs] ... She looked up to him, because she thought he was educated and wise, but he was just a master manipulator.

Rebecca: He [her stepfather] didn't have a very good opinion of women ... he referred to women as whores ... sometimes if he saw women on television, he used to make comments about them, he was definitely involved in a lot of pornography, he would read a lot and have out a lot of pornographic magazines ... He didn't have a healthy attitude towards women ... that was reflected in the way ... he treated me and ... other people ... There were times when he was nice and he could be, nice, nice, nice and considerate, but he wasn't really ... a children's person ... I remember the time he said to me, I was about seven or eight; ... 'I hate children, but I like you', and then other times, he would just be totally nasty ... he would put me down ... He would tell me that I am worthless, that I should be chopped up and fed to pigs.

Rebecca illustrates ways in which her stepfather set the spatial and bodily boundaries where objects (the pornographic magazines) also played a role in the violence behind the words 'chopped up and

fed to pigs', the 'put-downs' and the abuse to come (see also Briscoe, 2009; Riley, 1985). The women who experienced/witnessed violence by a partner or mother's partner provided narratives where control, emotional abuse and a regime of terror was in place within the household (Morris, 2009). For example, Ellen described how she and her mother were 'terrorised' by her stepfather.

Stark (2007) uses the concept of coercive control to describe how men through subtle and escalating tactics such as monitoring their partners movements and relationships with other men, gradually isolate women from their friends and family to increase their control over women's lives. Consistent with research on violence in intimate partner contexts, the women described ex-partners who were controlling, or attempted to control their finances, contraception, and became more controlling and violent during their pregnancies (see Chapter 2).

Isabelle: He used to slap you and-and, he wasn't a good person ... going out of a night and arguments and then he would slap you and one time when I was pregnant he hit me with my shoes [on her head] when I was walking down the stairs and I begged him to come home with me, because I wasn't feeling very well ... he's not coming, he's playing dominoes and I remember going home on my own and my waters burst, so I had to jump in the bath quickly and I had to go and get on the bus ... it was so embarrassing, because them times you didn't have mobile phones.

Ava: So you had to get on the bus to go to the hospital?

Isabelle: I didn't know what to do, I went down to my doctor and the doctor it was the summer time as well, it was very embarrassing ... I walked to my doctor, and they called the ambulance, they took me to hospital, so I had [her child] on my own.

Debbie: [T]he kids came later on in the relationship, so for half of that time we were together, just going along until the kids. I think that's when the conflict started, because I think he thought I shouldn't have gotten pregnant. He didn't want the children.

Ava: He didn't want children?

Debbie: No, not with me. But me, I was at a stage, I was getting older and I thought, I had to make a decision, if I get pregnant, what do I do? And I decided to have the children.

Ava: Didn't he know that you were gonna have children, or you just got pregnant?

Debbie: I got pregnant and before that, I had two miscarriages and when it happened the next time, I said no ... made up my mind that I had to have them

- Ava: And then after you had the children, was your relationship changed?
- Debbie: He was still controlling.
- Ava: Was he always controlling all the way through the relationship?
- Debbie: I think he was controlling, but I wasn't seeing it. Until things happened, when I started, perhaps asking for more, wanting more, putting pressure on him to decide what you want to do ... I think that's when it started and his whole moods and stuff started changing.

Marriage, or a desire for a heterosexual, committed relationship (see Ting and Panchanadeswaran, 2009) becoming a form of control in intimate partner contexts was also a theme, through the construct of 'the good Black man' analysed by bell hooks (1981) as originating in the Oceanic slave era where Black men were constructed as both sexually desirable to both White women and Black women, whereas Black women were only deemed to be desirable to Black men. In an expert interview (Exp5), a link was made between the man in the case study of Mabel (see Appendix 2b) and 'a good Black man' as self-aware of his worth as a presumed rarity who would be forgiven for his infidelities if he is minimally responsible, looks after his children and cooks (see also Mama, 1995; Potter, 2008). Thus the continuum of oppression can reveal how racialised contexts may intersect with Black female heterosexual desire and notions of Black male scarcity to both conceal and reveal forms of abuse.

Control through marriage for citizenship status was also a present for one of the women. The women recognised forms of control as a result of receiving some form of help and some through the interview discussions, or through gaining new knowledge about their ex-partners. For example during an altercation, Ellen's ex-partner slapped her. They had previously separated because of his constant accusations of her infidelity (see also Stark, 2007). After she ended the relationship, Ellen later discovered said that he had been violent in a previous relationship.

The themes of control and manipulation of the women, and their mothers' marginality, by men, demonstrates the intersectional contexts of poverty, racism and migration. However, in the women's narratives of experiencing violence and abuse male propriety and power plays a much larger role. This may illustrate that irrespective of women's ethnicity, or race, it is mostly the men closest to them who are able to exploit contextual vulnerabilities in the perpetration of violence and abuse. The contextual vulnerabilities were recent migration, lack of support for childcare and needing to do paid work, poverty and the desire for a committed heterosexual relationship, with control and violence escalating after having children.

Mothers, physical and emotional abuse

Mothers as abusers of their children, was also a prominent theme. All but one of the nine women described mothering using societal constructs of mothers as 'all seeing, all-caring, all nurturing' (Agana in Wilson, 1993, p.142; see also Chodorow, 1978; Herman and Hirschman, 2005; Hill Collins, 1990). One described having a closer relationship to her father. Of the nine, four did not report abuse by their mothers, but five women did experience emotional abuse from their mothers, and three of them physical abuse. For some, experiencing abuse, neglect and physical violence from their mothers unsettled assumptions about mothers and mothering. Reflections on their own experience of being mothered were especially potent when the women became parents. Six of the women were parents and described becoming mothers as transformative, for some it enabled them to re-live a lost childhood through parenting, whilst finding it difficult to reconcile that this process had not had a similar impact on their mothers. There were felt intensities of being abandoned, especially for four of the women who became othermothers to their siblings (see Gilford and Reynolds, 2011). This created a profound ambivalence in their relationship to their parents, most specifically to their mothers. Below Norma describes her relationship with her mother.

Norma: It was emotionally void of any emotion.

Ava: No emotion?

Norma: No, it was just like being ... well you just need to be a child ... don't speak unless I speak to you, don't have a voice ... unless I tell you to have a voice ... physically it was quite abusive ... because we got beaten for anything ...

Ava: When you say beaten, was it very severe beatings?

Norma: [S]evere beatings that led us into care ... At that point I realised that my mother doesn't really care about us that much, we just happened to be here, but she's not really that interested in us.

Harsh parental physical discipline has been cited as the primary reason for African American children being placed in foster care (Smetana, 2000, cited in Barn, 2001). Barn (2001) argues the reason why this may also be the case in the UK is that Black parents may be more likely to admit to using physical punishment as a form of discipline. Additionally, marginality may intersect with poverty placing extra pressures on the resources for many African and Caribbean families in the UK (Berthould, 1998, cited in Lees, 2002), as highlighted earlier in the chapter.

Black daughters raised by mothers grappling with hostile environments have to come to terms with their feelings about the difference between the idealized versions of maternal love extant in popular culture and the strict and often troubled mothers in their lives. For a

daughter, growing up means developing a better understanding that even though she may desire more affection and greater freedom, her mother's physical care and protection are acts of maternal love. (Hill Collins, 1990, p.127)

Hill Collins (1990) recognises structural pressures on the emotional proximity of Black mothers to their daughters; thus migration and intergenerational trauma might have affected the mothers of the women who were abused by them as children. However, the participants abused by their mothers both acknowledged this wider context and sought to name and have recognised their abuse. Haaken (1998) notes that dominant narratives of child abuse tend to overlook women's experiences of physical beatings and emotional abuse. The felt intensities evident in the interviews meant that this was not the case in this study, despite these forms of violence not being the explicit topic of the research. Jacinta made distinctions between feeling love from her father, even though he also disciplined her physically, with the abuse from her mother. The participants found it difficult to reconcile their experiences of mothering with their perception of the ideal (Hill Collins, 1990), where they felt blamed for existing or felt relationally distant from their mothers. These themes were also evident in the literary narratives (see Chapter 2).

Jacinta: She [her mother] would say things to me like, 'this happened because of you', or you know 'my marriage went wrong because of you', or 'I didn't want to finish with your dad, because it was your fault'. Or she would say to me 'I wish you were dead.'

Participants drew attention to how the intensity of the physical discipline combined with the absence of emotional reassurance lead them to infer that the behaviour of their mothers towards them was abusive. This was the case for women born both outside and within the UK. That women should have the ability to parent and protect their children, irrespective of their life constraints and adversities, is a commonly accepted assumption (Phoenix, 2009). What the narratives of abuse from mothers illuminated was a complex recognition of the continuum of oppression in their mothers' lives through migration, poverty, racism, youth and naiveté which was exploited by their partners/men. They were profoundly ambivalent in their attempts to rationalise why the abuse had come from their mothers and were seeking recognition for the injustice of abuse for their childhood selves and those of their siblings.

Racism in lived experiences

Racism remains a persisting inequality in western societies (Hill Collins, 2005; 2009). The impact of racism on an individual can be complex and may be buffered by their social supports education

(Mirza, 1997; 2009; Mirza and Reay, 2000) or individual resilience. All of the women in the current study introduced the topic of racism when asked about their ethnicity or racial background and what being a Black woman meant to them. For some, experiencing racism had had a particular and pernicious impact on their lives. This was echoed in the reflective expert interview (Exp8): while not every Black person will cite racism as an ongoing concern, it can be so socially entrenched within their lived experiences that it remains a constant background issue (see also Essed, 1991). Galtung (1990) conceptualised racism as a form of structural violence that can be so normalised that it becomes invisible. Racism can also be viewed on a continuum from everyday 'micro-aggressions' (DeAngelis, 2009), such as being ignored by a waiter/waitress in a restaurant, to more overt verbal and physical abuse. For the participants in this study racist abuse was located within the continuum of oppression.

All of the nine women had experienced, or witnessed forms of racial discrimination, mostly in public spaces and at work.

Isabelle: [M]y ... [child's] father's Black and my husband was White so I saw a lot of discrimination

Ava: That's interesting

Isabelle: It was bad

Ava: So how was it different with ...

Isabelle: I've seen it with my mum and dad, my mother's White, my dad's Black ... My mum used to have to ... in those days it used to be 'no Blacks, no Irish, no dogs' but my mum used to go ... when we needed somewhere to live, to rent.

When in public spaces, it was Isabelle's mother who was recognised as the authority over family negotiations (see also Lewis, 2012). Isabelle also had racist graffiti sprayed on the walls of her home and excrement on her car. Isabelle was the oldest participant in the study. Her experiences of witnessing parents being racially abused, reflected other women's recollection of the migration histories of their parents to the UK in the 1950s/60s outlined earlier in the chapter. Isabelle had had a lot of physical challenges as a child and was referred to an 'open air' school where more emphasis was placed on outdoor physical exercise.

Isabelle: [I]t was because of disability ... and they looked beyond the colour, that's how I felt. They didn't see colour then, because you had disability, everybody had their own individual disability ... so that's when I started to learn how to read when I was twelve.

Isabelle also attributed her inability to read to a combination of her health challenges and racism. Her experiences of the continuum of oppression through racism had profoundly impacted her lived experience and that of her siblings.

Isabelle: We're all mixed race. One of my [siblings] only stuck with White people and don't get me wrong, they're not prejudiced and [this sibling] married White [partners] and only sticks to the White side, [sibling] gets on very well with the White side. Whereas my other [sibling] completely doesn't like White people and is absolutely for the Black side, so it's really funny ... and then there's me. It doesn't matter what nationality you are ... I'm just accepting of all nationalities ... I can see that I am more of the Black side.

Ava: Do you think it's down to your individual experiences of living in the UK or living London?

Isabelle: I think it's down to our own experiences, personal experiences, of living ... how we've been treated ... how we've responded from others ... how we respond to others and our relationships, why we are what we are today, why we are on this side or that side or not at all ... I feel very, at the moment, free to be what I want to be at the moment and I like that feeling ... I don't feel judged and if I am being judged, I'm not in the company of people judging me, I'm doing exactly what I want to be doing.

Ava: [W]hen you were younger, did you feel more judged?

Isabelle: Yeah very much so, I felt very judged ... either you're on the Black side or you're on the White side. I found that very hard and that's why I was a loner ... I loved both my parents and I wanted the war to stop [laughs] ... but my [siblings] they divided one way or the other.

Isabelle's embodiment, as dual heritage, had polarised the racial alliances in her family where she cites racist treatment from both Black and White people in social encounters, as the reason for this. Elsewhere in her narrative, she describes having to identify with a race as limiting where categories are 'put on you' especially during childhood. A similar observation about the limitations of structural challenges and racialised social encounters was offered by Norma.

Norma: I always look at people coming over here from the West Indies ... it was really hard on our grandparents, parents. I know that, but then it also put us on a backward step ... maybe if my life was in the West Indies, I'd be a totally different person. Instead of being a [healthcare professional], I'd probably be a doctor, or a scientist, just because of geography. I think when our parents and

our grandparents they look at us and they think oh they have these expectations of you, but the fact is, we fight a lot in this country, we still fight, there's a lot of racism, a lot of sexism and ... you are constantly battling against these things.

Norma discusses the impact of migration on her generation of Caribbean heritage women, the challenges or the 'fight', as an intersection of geographic, racialised, gendered and spatiotemporal limitations on educational and professional possibilities. Norma and Isabelle's extracts are examples of how the women made connections between past and present intergenerational struggles located within the continuum of oppression as theorised in this thesis.

Figure 4 Open green



Norma took the above photo, which had a dual meaning; her life is an open book where there are no more secrets and at this point she tells the story of her birth how she was 'a dirty dark secret' which for her is worse than being a 'bastard' or a 'mistake'. The life that she leads now is one where she wants openness and is open to discuss the secrets in her past. Her use of the words 'dirty' and 'dark' reflect both historical associations with Black skin as dirty and how the women after experiences, especially of child sexual abuse, described their bodies. The second meaning of the open space is freedom, being free of the burden of self-definition, where she further elucidated: 'even defining yourself and one of your questions was, how do you feel as a Black woman and even that can actually stagnate you and make you ... in chains, so it's just being free, you know, I'm [Norma] first'.

The brick wall in the foreground and in Ahmed's (2012) analogy of how racism feels, could also be read as the fight (James, 1999), the obstacle, the arborescent and striated structure (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004/1988; Tamboukou, 2004) created by the continuum of oppression. The photo could also be read as hope in looking beyond oppression for the possibilities to come.

Figure 5 below summarises embodied burdens carried by research participants, as analysed in this chapter, and will be further developed over Chapters 5, 6 and 7. This diagram illustrates the struggles and challenges for the research participants, through the concept of felt intensities of a continuum of oppression. The photographs in the middle represent the reflective work research participants undertook in making decisions to seek help with the background of both felt intensities and resisting or accepting discourses on mothering.

Figure 5 Embodied burdens (1)



Reflections

This chapter has presented an analysis of the participants' narratives through the concepts of felt intensities of abuse and violence experienced spatiotemporally and located within a continuum of oppression. The women migrated within and across national, regional and international borders, which created contextual vulnerabilities for them as children in the form of inadequate childcare

and as adults who were displaced through being uprooted from their homes when fleeing violence from partners. Some reported also feeling displaced by the physical environment and emotional atmospheres within their homes. These migrations fostered a sense of not belonging or being safe, conceptualised as liminal displacement. The women abused as children imagined how their mothers might have felt when they migrated to the UK and at the time of their birth and how migration created structural vulnerabilities that were exploited by the men who perpetrated abuse and violence. Recent migration was also the context in which four of the women were neglected, physically and emotionally abused by their mothers, but here the historical and social locations of their mothers were less evident in their accounts. The continuum of oppression also encompasses witnessing and experiencing racism; it stretches back and reaches forward through two or three generations of female relatives and friends. This concept enables focus on the intersectional features of the social structures of poverty, migration, sexism and racism which create opportunities for the perpetration of unsanctioned violence and abuse that is rarely visible. The continuum of oppression enables examination of wider contexts of lives. It is proposed as preferable to cycle of abuse theories which locate violence in individual families through modes of transmission between generations (see also Dobash and Dobash, 1992).

The participants reported that intergenerational narratives of abuse and violence were rarely discussed, but they wove narratives which intricately located how they were abused, highlighting how despite the knowledge of their sociocultural contexts, they still felt the abuse and violence as both unexpected and unjust (Bogle, 1988; Mama, 1989; 2000; Wilson, 1993). They knew this because they were not abused in all of the spaces they occupied. Imagining how their mothers felt at the time of their birth or through their own feelings when they were abused was conceptualised as 'felt intensities'. Within this they were profoundly ambivalent about the role of their mothers as abusers, which conflicted with ideals of mothering.

The intergenerational narratives also revealed collective and familial silences. This also gives insight to the protracted recruitment process which could be viewed as compelling Black women to discuss a topic that lies outside of public discourse (this is further discussed in Chapter 5). Locating violence and abuse on a continuum of oppression, is a way of illuminating that for many women this is life as usual, normative, nothing to mourn or speak widely about. Once the continuum of oppression becomes the background from which women make sense of their experiences, they may spend a number of years wondering whether what they have experienced is the norm for their family, racial group, or culture. The normalisation of violence and abuse in the research participants' neighbourhoods and among their friends, also illustrated that theirs were not the only narratives. These shared histories are bound up with unsanctioned crimes, minimal support for their mothers and if they experienced racism, or multiple forms of violence and abuse; expectations of outside

help may be even lower. Hence the continuum of oppression in Black women's lives may be invisible and rarely, if ever, discussed outside of families or close friends. As Crenshaw (1994) noted, Black women's experiences emanate from complex social locations that resist exposure.

The burden of the continuum of oppression is evidenced in the descriptions of feelings of freedom once forms of abuse and violence had ended or through a deeper understanding of the impact of racism. Engaging the participants in a research process that involved using personal photographs to speak about past experiences also enabled visceral and emotionally harrowing moments of recognition where visibility was brought to their perpetrators' accountability, and to the spatial contexts of (un)safety.

CHAPTER 5 - AUDACIOUS SPEECH: COMING FROM A PLACE WHERE I COME FROM

Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of how women started talking about violence and abuse, their observations of modes of coping with adversity and the responses to their testimonies. Research participants remained very active while in situations where they experienced violence and abuse. This could mean also performing childcare or household tasks, engaging with other aspects of their lives; school, work. Those who were abused by partners described periods of actively staying in those relationships, whereby they would gauge their partners' moods, facilitate requests and desires in order to limit the escalation of violence or abuse. The chapter is organised around four themes: being active to manage victimisation; staying silent for safety; cacophonous responses and being silenced; and looking out for the next generation. The themes are explored in reflection with findings from previous research (Enander, 2010; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007; 2008; 2009; Hill Collins, 1990). There then follows an analysis of the role of being silenced routed through subthemes: strategically observing abusers' patterns and 'telling in my own way' where participants coming to voice (Ahmed, 2004; Hammonds, 1992; 1997; Parpart, 2010; Spivak, 2000). Silence is conceptualised here through 'racialised gendered shame' and the lack of support from family members. The chapter ends with an analysis of the research participants' efforts to live with their everyday negotiations in the aftermath of violence and abuse which includes periods of intense reflection of past experiences conceptualised here as 'exhausting liminal rumination'.

Being active in response to victimisation

Black women have historically needed to keep walking, keep moving (Hill Collins, 1998; Lorde, 1981; 1984). A Black woman's inability to push through adversity may be viewed as a collective, familial and intergenerational failure of the survival legacy handed down from the Oceanic slave era (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2008). To stop and reflect may usher in a catastrophic undoing that might end in being detained in a mental institution, a fear voiced by research participants and a theme in the interviews with expert professionals (see also Washington, 2001). Michael Taussig (2004) defined a public secret as one that everyone knows yet no one discusses. The continuum of oppression can be considered a public secret that may be perpetuated generationally among Black women.

The sociocultural construct of the strong Black woman who resists seeking help, because this

represents weakness and a loss of Black female identity (see Chapter 2), appeared explicitly in the women's narratives either associated with the term 'Black woman' or when they were asked about whether being a Black woman had influenced where they sought help. Being strong was associated with 'not talking about your business' (see also Wilson, 1993) stoically coping with innumerable burdens and not seeking help or delayed help seeking (Kanyeredzi, 2013). Three women reasoned that although all women needed to be strong, Black women had an extra quota of strength and resilience, possibly handed down from their ancestors via slavery and from witnessing their mothers who had to cope with the burdens of employment and lone parenthood with little or no support (see Chapter 2). Most growing up had observed this first-hand in their elder female relatives. The strong Black woman construct was however reported as inappropriate for living with the emotional legacies of violence and abuse. Yet, most had experienced a racialised mandate to show strength, not dwell on past abuse and violence and to ignore their emotions. Even though they resisted, they were read by others as embodying strength in the manner defined by the construct.

The strong Black woman construct might appear to elevate minoritised Black women, but in reality it dehumanises them because it leaves little room to respond emotionally and as such is an example of the 'expectations of exceptionality' placed on them (Beaubeouf-Lafontant, 2009, p.20). Within the confines of this construct, they are compelled to remedy the social injustices of marginalisation caused by poverty, migration and low social economic status and abuse through a veneer of strength and resilience. The strong Black woman construct was found to be an archetypical example of being active in response to victimisation.

Toughening of self

During the expert interviews, three case studies (see Appendix 2b) were used to explore the barriers for Black women seeking help. The experts outlined subtle and internalised obstacles such that most services would not encounter two of the women (Janice and Mabel). Strength was a powerful theme, but only associated with the case study of Mabel, a largely built woman. In the life history interviews with women, strength appeared as a historically rooted adaptive strategy associated with delayed help seeking. For Norma, being strong means that Black women take longer to seek help and do so, only when they are at breaking point.

Norma: I think being a Black woman, you have a coping mechanism in your head, I don't know where it comes from, that is higher than the average woman. I wouldn't wanna say that other women aren't strong because every race of woman has to be strong... In order to survive, we're all strong. But I think being Black you sort of have a resilience that's second to none ... I suppose a lot of it is because you

can literally shut off things that have happened and just keep on going, probably sometimes until you end up with a nervous breakdown ... I think there's a strength in us that could well have come from slavery, that just allowed us to keep on going ... seeking help we probably don't do it as much as we probably should, because there's a lot that we cope with, on the way to being an adult, or being a functional human being ... I'm not really sure what the answer is to that.

Ava: Do you think that those coping mechanisms act as a barrier?

Norma: A barrier yes

Ava: To seeking help?

Norma: [I]f you've got a lot of people around you who would say, 'well things that happened in your childhood, forget about it. It doesn't really make a difference'. But it does make a difference, if you listen to those voices a lot of the times, that's why a lot of us will go and go and go until you can't go any further, you are just completely finished.

The expectation that Black women are strong was also evident in the interviews with expert professionals, where one noted that Black women rarely have non-judgemental spaces in their informal networks which bear witness to their experiences of violence: 'we don't have the time for that woman who falls apart'. Strength was also defined affectively.

Ellen: [B]eing a Black woman means strength, being determined ... [Y]our strength exceeds the strength of a man, but in a different way. It's not a physical strength at all ... it's a mental strength ... that Black women ... do anything that it takes for her family ... That's a difficult one, because it's not what being a woman means, but being a Black woman and it's different, for me it is.

Ava: How does it differ from being a woman?

Ellen: I think about where I've grown up and who my grandmother is ... but then I think about my social circles, with my girlfriends and all of them at some point have been single parent families. They may not be now.

Experientially, for Ellen, being strong is emotionally associated with managing as a single parent. Black women being emotionally strong, was also a finding in Potter (2008) and Garfield's (2005) studies with African American women. Below Evelyn introduced 'this strong Black woman thing' without prompt.

Evelyn: [W]ithin my family it is all about protecting mum. Protecting this strong Black

woman ... we stay together and we project what we want others to think.

Ava: You mentioned this term strong Black woman.

Evelyn: My just trying to heal from it [sexual abuse], is her [mum] idea of dwelling on it and she thinks what strong people do, and what she has done, is put it behind them. That's a kind of strength, but how she's dealing with it is not dealing with it, but that's her definition. I think that within our culture we are taught to be strong, not to show weakness and to laugh at our children, to toughen and give the kids a beating.

Ava: And do you also think being strong is related to not talking about ...

Evelyn: Not talking about it ... not dealing with it really.

Being strong here is a way in which Black women are taught to deny emotional distress by not speaking about it and is thus disciplinary guidance, a preparatory lesson for the harshness of an unequal society. It conveys that Black women, especially when they become mothers, should conceal their emotions and experiences of abuse, where to show such emotions is almost infantile. Evelyn also calls into critique collective notions of managing attempts to pathologise Black people. Projecting strength and toughening up children are defensive and protective acts of survival (see also Hill Collins, 1990; Joseph, 1993).

The women's conceptions of strength did chime with previous research on resilience among Black women facing a range of abuse, violence and mental distress (Beaubeouf-Lafontant, 2007; 2008; 2009; Edge, 2007; Jones and Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Kalathil, et al., 2011; Washington, 2001). The association between performing strong Black woman and mental distress and its connection with violence was also evident in this study. Being advised to be strong can be seen to produce a toughened self, a posturing of self that manages a continuum of oppression, copes with being abandoned by a partner and is the sole carer of children. African American women have been found to have had family discussions of experiences of rape that informed their expectations that they might have to deal with being raped (see Chapter 2). In this study participants were told about family members' experiences of violence and abuse only after they had spoken about their own experiences. Preparatory lessons of strength were for the purposes of hardening the emotions and encouraging the adoption of silence about past abuse.

Ava: So how did you know that you were not associated with how you were expected to be as an individual?

Evelyn: Well she raised us like that, before the sexual abuse we were conditioned to not having feelings and be strong and I was the quiet shy one, so I wasn't even up for that ... she might have tried to get me to toughen up and I suppose because

I process through my emotions I wasn't gonna do that ... [M]y siblings, they were quite tough, they were like a product of their environment. So I got that message from when I was little that you don't cry, you're strong ... they rely on me for that because they support her and she has made it as a strong Black woman ... [T]hey've done the same thing. So they can't reject her because to do that would be like rejecting themselves [smiles] and I suppose that that they don't want themselves to feel damaged ... They all call me their favourite one [laughs] that's a contradiction.

Being 'strong' enables Evelyn's sisters to be active in warding off 'feeling damaged'. This affective 'toughening' of self can be likened to the process of gaining callouses on the feet to enable a lifetime of walking as a leisure activity (Stone, 2005) and in the above extract it is seen to erode the processing of the emotions. It could be argued that the five participants' mothers who perpetrated physical and emotional abuse against them when they were children (see Chapter 4) were also actively staying in difficult or adverse situations and were attempting to 'toughen' their children. What emerges in this study is a generational shift from the participants' mothers' coping strategies to the participants viewing this type of strength as in need of revision. Therefore, whilst the strong Black woman construct may enable women to find the resolve to cope with sole parenting, it was viewed as not to be used to 'toughen' children which was defined and experienced by the participants as abusive.

Interestingly, seven of the nine women described themselves as 'quiet', 'shy', 'the good girl': simultaneously the antithesis to projecting strength or the aggressive Black matriarch (Mama, 2000), yet still expected to stoically bear their burdens in silence and support those who turn to them to off-load. Richie (1996) associated special treatment accorded to Black girls whereby they held key positions within their families, with wanting to stay with abusive partners. Along with the women in Potter (2008), the women in this study did not describe themselves as receiving special treatment. They were expected to perform the roles of the strong Black woman through their emotional support of family members. Even those described as less than strong, who were abused as children, were expected to look after younger siblings and continue this practice into adulthood. Potter (2008) concluded that the strong Black woman construct is both a stereotype and a lived experience for African American women. In the current study, the participants described how strength was learned from observation, parental guidance and expectation, making distancing concepts of self from this hegemonic discourse and practice problematic. In this regard actively staying or active while in abusive contexts can be viewed as the default position for Black women who experience a continuum of oppression. While this may not involve toughening up their children, they assume this persona to manage adversity.

Contrasting views of strength were also offered whereby Black women could be viewed as 'too independent', where being Black, female and single can be at odds with the range of available femininities. Thus a sense of a failed choice (see also McRobbie, 2009 for a discussion of how femininity is constructed) is the result, whereby whatever path a woman takes is somehow wrong.

Ava: [Do] you relate anything about being married to being a Black woman?

Debbie: I think so, too many of us don't have a partner and too many of us think oh yes we are too independent and we don't want a partner to spoil things for us ... I think we need companionship in our adult lives ... and not being hard and harsh, being on your own, trying to do too many things on your own, you need that support ...

Ava: Do you think that's how some women in your experience construct marriage as something that holds you back?

Debbie: I don't feel that way ... yes and no. I guess if I wasn't working, it could have h[e]ld me back, because when I want to go somewhere with me and the kids, I say we're going somewhere, I buy the ticket ... But if I had to depend on him [her ex-partner] ... then I may not have gone anywhere. So independence helps you do, or achieve a bit more than being dependent on someone.

There were tensions in the women's narratives surrounding their positioning as Black women evoked by phrases such as 'the women have become men' or highlighted in the contradictory and limited social discourses of femininity through the use of for example 'masculine sluts', with autonomy conflated with masculinisation. Black women's autonomy therefore is in conflict with sociocultural discourses that Black women emasculate Black men through their assumed higher earning capacities (Hill Collins, 1990; 1998; Mama, 2000; Reynolds, 1997). The term Black woman appeared laden with layers of restrictive associations. Patricia for example associated this term with being perceived as being aggressive at work despite her own self-perception as someone lacking in confidence (see also Alleyne, 2004). Whether the self has been toughened or not, Black women may still be read as tough by others.

Racialised gendered shame and the strong Black woman

Whilst women observed in others and were themselves encouraged to show strength, they simultaneously resisted and practiced strong Black woman. They described their admiration for the independence of their elder female relatives, 'getting on with' childcare and employment responsibilities in the absence of support while also embodying strong Black women. They also experienced shame in failing to live up to expectations of strength or by thinking asking for help

would be perceived as 'needy'. Evelyn, who earlier disidentified with the strong Black woman construct, recollects feeling ashamed because she was crying in her therapist's office.

Evelyn: The shame comes from the conditioning that you grew up with ... maybe from being a minority and feeling judged ... I used to feel like I'm being judged and maybe my lifestyle is being judged. When you do go for help, the majority is from an outsider culture ... So it might make things feel more acute, but then I've also experienced therapy from a Black woman and it still felt the same [laughs] it's still there [laughs].

Ava: What do you now think those feelings are about? Do you think those feelings are about culture?

Evelyn: I think those feelings are about a lack of emotional education, or a lack of being emotionally brave, so when you encounter that wave of feelings and emotions, you encounter it as though you are a child and then you feel embarrassed because you know you are an adult ... [Y]ou have these expectations that I'm a woman and I'm supposed to know what to think and what to do and I mustn't speak my business unless I'm with Black people [laughs], you feel at a loss and you don't feel [any] power there.

The shame of feeling her emotions calls to mind her mother's childhood toughening lessons described earlier and how disempowering it can be to experience 'waves of feelings' as an adult. Enander (2010) developed the concept of gendered shame in her study of Swedish women with experiences of violence. Enander (2010) explores the shame women felt since they lived in a 'gender-equal' Nordic context, yet had ended up in relationships with men who were violent to them. She draws parallels with Morrison, et al's. (2006) study with African American women who described feeling ashamed, since as Black women they should know better than be victimised by intimate partners. In both studies cultural constructs were used selectively to locate shame within, where women referred to themselves as 'stupid'. As a consequence, gendered shame held them in situations, since they chose not to talk to their support networks, or ask for help. This concept is extended here to 'racialised gendered shame' for the women in this study, through the strong Black woman.

Debbie: I was slapped by a partner and although I seek help, information came back to me, but I just stayed still ... I did not act on that right away, but eventually and it's sort of shameful to tell anybody that that sort of thing has happened to you, and nobody could see it.

Ava: Do you think it is shameful now, or while it was happening?

Debbie: While it was happening, I felt the shame then, but I couldn't have done anything because that night it happened, I went home. I left one of the children there, because she didn't want to stay with me. So I was saying I should have taken my children home with me, but one wanted to stay.

Debbie here was actively staying in the abuse situation by responding to the needs of her children. Shame fulfils the function of reining in the behaviours back to the acceptable norm (Ahmed, 2004; Hochschild, 1983). This can be seen in both Debbie and Evelyn's extracts where they are viewing their responses in the light of how they ought to have responded; in Evelyn's case racialised gendered shame in 'feeling judged' and contravening family expectations, and in Debbie's case feeling that she should have taken her children, and elsewhere in her narrative re-committing herself to her ex-partner by becoming more isolated from her friends. In the reflective interview with an expert professional (Exp8), she described how women strategise when they are experiencing violence and abuse. In the first interview she argued that what is conceptualised here as actively staying may be difficult to identify and recognise as a coping strategy.

Exp8: [W]hen it comes to Black communities, it's not seen as strength or survival or strategising. It is seen as weakness or even failure of that person and so the ability to survive that situation, isn't seen as strength at all ... and the longer you stay, the weaker you are, and thereby you stay because you feel more isolated, because everyone you know thinks that you should have left and thinks you're weak.

Racialised gendered shame for Debbie and Isabelle also came from being brought up in loving families and experiencing violence from partners. Isabelle felt too ashamed to talk to friends and family about the violence she experienced while Debbie felt more ashamed after being advised by her mother to 'get strong' and leave her ex-partner. Being advised to leave a relationship was in contrast to studies finding African American women being encouraged to stay with partners to maintain their middleclass two-parent family status (see Chapter 2).

The strong Black woman construct was found to delay the women's help seeking through a linked process of racialised gendered shaming. Those who adopted the construct did so through their coping strategies and were too ashamed to seek support. Those who actively resisted the construct were also shamed through realising how embedded concepts of strength were when they attempted to talk or seek support for violence and abuse.

Staying silent for safety

A central tenet throughout the women's narratives was the role of silence. Thus experiencing a continuum oppression that stays outside of testimony was also a theme.

Jacinta: I feel guilty ... I could've really, I wanted to, but the reason why I didn't tell anyone in the end was the guys said that they would kill me, because ... they kn[e]w where I lived, they could get me ... I couldn't really tell anyone, but one time I was so confused with my life, I was just bathing and bathing and bathing, trying to clean off all these ... I was living in a hostel at that time ... the guys that did this to me, they pulled a knife on me, they said they were gonna pull out a gun to me ... I could have knocked on somebody's door because there were loads of flats, but I was so scared I didn't do it and then I met my social worker and the police came round and someone told them and they tried to interview me and I still couldn't tell ... [T]he hostel where I was staying, one of the young ladies there, got beaten up because she said that somebody was looking for [says her name] ... I was too scared to tell the police ... somehow I should have, but I feel totally stupid up to this day, for not doing anything.

A common response of victim-survivors of sexual violence, reflected by the women in this study, is to stay silent and/or view their bodies as dirty (Brison, 1997; Coy, 2009; Jordan, 2008). The fear of the rape remains current, as Jacinta is taken back to those memories when she goes past the spaces where they occurred (see also Reavey, 2010). This silence could also be viewed as Jacinta's internalisation of shame, that she might receive negative judgements had she spoken (see Lamb, 1999). This theme of being judged was also prominent across the participant's narratives and given that they bore their burdens in silence, it may have appeared logical for them to persist in this strategy. Arguably Jacinta's silence is also about how she views the boys who raped her as more powerful than the police, calling to mind Connell's (2009) notion of a gender order, where in this case, Black masculinity as expressed through the rape, beatings and threats of rape in the space of the hostel where Jacinta was staying, is ultimately more of a threat than either police racism or police authority.

Speaking out and coming to voice is not universal among women and some are more able to speak about their experiences than others (Scharff, 2010). Speaking is not just about the voice of the one who speaks, but the capacity and willingness for listeners to hear (Ahmed, 2000). Gayatri Spivak argues for 'testimonial ethics' which 'is not simply about speaking, but about *the conditions of possibility of hearing*' (cited in Ahmed, 2000, p.157, emphasis in original). Ahmed (2010) writes that

silence is a powerful act where to speak would risk further injury to self.

Sometimes silence can be a tool of oppression; when you are silenced, whether by explicit force or by persuasion, it is not simply that you do not speak but that you are barred from participation in a conversation which nevertheless involves you. Sometimes silence is a strategic response to oppression; one that allows subjects to persist in their own way; one that acknowledges that, under certain circumstances, speech might not be empowering, let alone sensible. Sometimes you might speak out to announce a disagreement with what is being said, sometimes not, as to speak can mean to agree to participate in a conversation that you don't agree with. (Ahmed, 2010, p.xvi)

Using silence strategically for long periods, or being silenced, was a powerful theme in all of the women's narratives. Reflexively, recruiting participants was challenging: I witnessed the shame in potential participants handing back fliers or saying that while the topic is an important one, many women will not speak. For the women who were interviewed they recounted abuse and violence narratives for family members and friends (see also Kelly, 1988) again with the caveat that while many women should speak, many will not. The women who self-selected into the study could be viewed as going against the grain of family, cultural and community norms by speaking about violence and abuse (see also Hammonds, 1997; Hill Collins, 1990; Wilson, 1993). All the women chose to speak because they believed that by offering their narratives they might help women in similar situations (see also Campbell, et al., 2009).

Telling in my own way

When women experience 'unspectacular' and everyday forms of violence, including rape and sexual abuse, they frequently adopt 'normative codes of gender, class and sexuality that demand female silencing of sexual wrongs in the name of honour and respectability' (Roy, 2008, p.323). Roy (2008) further argues that while women may stay silent, bodies have ways of revealing experiences of violence and abuse (see also Rothchilds, 2000). It was in the context of 'acting out' that Norma met with a psychologist as a last stage intervention to keep her in school (see also Bentovim, et al., 2009). While she attended the session, she still could not talk about the physical and emotional neglect she was experiencing.

Ava: Did you feel able to talk about what happened?

Norma: No, I probably couldn't really talk ... a lot of the times you act out, don't you? So your behaviour says what your mind really wants to say and at that age you're not really able to communicate what's going on. But I really didn't start talking

and telling people properly until I was about twenty-three, when I thought oh, this is really killing me, all this internal anger and hatred and upset ... [E]ven ... my extended family who probably thought perhaps that it wasn't really that bad, but they didn't live in our house, so they didn't know.

Ava: And when you were telling them what happened, how were they responding?

Norma: They don't really wanna know, do they?

Norma is discussing being literally unable as a child to speak, yet she acted out her rage to the extent that it kept her underweight, a problem for which she sought help from her GP. Norma eventually spoke about the abuse twenty years later in a work counselling session. In the reflective interview with an expert professional (Exp8), she confirmed that after spending years observing how speaking about experiences of violence or abuse are responded to, or of being silenced, it can be very difficult for women to start talking, even if they get the space to talk.

Women's behavioural testimonies can also be viewed as illustrative of being active while in situations of abuse. Five women described behavioural ways of communicating the abuse that they had experienced. However, their behavioural testimonies did not always raise the alarm that they were being abused. Allagia (2004) in her study of disclosure patterns among men and women who had experienced child sexual abuse, notes that providing behavioural clues when they were children to the non-abusing parent was often unsuccessful. Thus, behavioural testimonies alone may be insufficient communications to others (Allagia, 2004). Patricia echoes this recalling that as a child she thought the messages were clear, but not recognised by her friends and family.

Patricia: I show[ed] so many signs ... that I was being sexually abused. I remember writing ... a magazine and it was explicit stuff ... sexual stuff and when my friends would read it, they'd be looking at me and say 'what have you written [says her name]' and I'm like 'wah? What's wrong?' ... I remember actually being at school ... Why did I react that way when I was in maths and a teacher stuck his tongue at me and I freaked out? I absolutely freaked out ... no it was happening ... I didn't know why I was acting strange ... I did not want to be in his class anymore ... [T]here was no help. It was just actually really shit. It's only ... because I'm in this field [violence against women support] ... It never used to affect me when I was younger to be honest ... but now I'm an adult, I can see how it's affected me.

Patricia uses this memory of her writing explicit stories in the school magazine and 'acting strange' to illustrate how at the time she struggled with not being believed by her family and her attempts

to speak behaviourally and through her stories. By going back and getting evidence from her recollections of school, she resolves that the abuse 'was happening'. Her responses to her maths teacher sticking his tongue at her confirmed that she must have been telling the truth. Reflecting on her past after having had training as a violence support professional, Patricia can now read all the signs that appeared indecipherable to her friends and teachers at the time. In this sense her behaviour is an example of being active, while in the abusive situation.

However, while the women were silent others around them also recognised abuse (see also Kelly, 1993).

Norma: I think people know and when you're a child you don't really realise how many people know exactly what's going on ... I suppose coming from the Caribbean, a lot of people just felt it's not excessive abuse because [smile] everybody else was in more or less the same boat, but looking back I would think it was quite a lot of physical abuse ... at about the age of thirteen, fourteen, people outside of our family had actually alerted social services ... Our school was aware ... [W]hen you're young you tend to see things inside your house, what goes on in here stays in here.

Ava: How did you know that you had to keep it in your house?

Norma: I just think it was the way that we were raised, you don't discuss your business outside ... of the house, it stays in the house, so even within your own family, extended family, nobody would really know how severe you're being neglected, or abused ... [P]eople think the last thing is ... you should always want to be with your parents no matter what they're doing to you. And I think it's ... quite a Black thing to think well they're your parents, you should live with them, you should be obedient.

Ava: I'm interested as to how you know it's a Black thing.

Norma: I suppose it could be Black, White, Asian, everybody probably has the same thing, it's just that if you're Black, when you're growing up a lot of the times, you only know Black people, you don't know anybody else, we're all raised the same. And as you get older and you talk to your friends and you talk to other people you'll feel well everybody was going through some kind of turmoil, but nobody said because you keep it within ... I suppose it's no different if you're sexually abused in the house and that could be any race of people, but you will know more Black people because that's the kind of ring you were hanging around with.

Looking back as adults and through the research process enabled women to reflect on notions of culture, violence and abuse. A mandate to be silent is a common finding in theorising and studies carried out with both African American and African and Caribbean heritage women and girls in the UK (see Chapter 2) and confirmed in this study. Staying silent about abuse might not necessarily be racialised, but based on assumptions individuals make because of commonly held views of 'normal' family life in any given racial group. Therefore it may not be straightforward for individuals to decouple family norms from racial group norms to identify abuse. The difficulty of naming abuse has been a consistent finding from studies where women are asked about their life experiences (Kelly, 1988; Towns and Adams, 2000). Later in her narrative Norma reasons that a lot of the families where she grew up had a lot of problems and were probably too overwhelmed to help her and her siblings. Goodman, et al. (2009) and Richie (1996), found that in poor African American communities, while women experiencing violence in intimate partner contexts can be supported with childcare within their informal networks, their support networks can be equally limited in resources and capacity to offer emotional and financial assistance. The possible indecipherability of women's behavioural testimonies thus intersect with the perpetration of abuse and violence, poverty and a lack of resources, and extended periods of living with abuse for three of the nine women. The impact of what had happened to them could also be felt through reflection as adults.

Strategically observing abusers' patterns

Observing the patterns of abusers is a coping strategy that is well-documented in the findings from research with both women and children (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Mullender et al., 2005; Stark, 2007). The desire to stop abuse and violence is a common reason why victim-survivors of child sexual abuse talk or seek help (Finkelhor, 1999). For two of the women who were abused as children, the fear of being raped compelled them to talk and for another being unable to cope with the rape and abuse she had experienced prompted her to act. After observing her mother's boyfriend gaining more control of the household and learning he had got a girl pregnant, Norma decided to leave home.

Norma: Even though I was re:ally tough, even though I was re:ally mouthy and I was re:ally feisty and I think I could handle myself, but I just remember thinking, if your m:other is gonna side with him, and he is li:ving in your house ... [I]t's different if someone is not living in your house, you can pick up a knife and do wah you goh-a do, but when they're living in your house, you can't even sleep at night ... knowing wah he'd done with this sixteen-year old girl ... I just remember thinking I won't be able to handle this situation, this is a little bit bigger than me ... that's basically what was the final straw ... [I]t was heart-wrenching because I

had to leave my brothers ... 'cos that's really what kept me in the house with my mother ... I was like, you've got to look after number one and I'm the only girl in the house.

Sue Lees (2002), in her study of African, Caribbean and Dual heritage young women in care, found that a combination of neglect, maltreatment and physical and sexual abuse, over-work at home looking after younger siblings while their mothers were at work, as well as simultaneously attempting to fulfil formal educational qualifications were the precipitating factors prompting help seeking. Voluntarily entering local authority care, as Norma did, was also a common finding in Lee's (2002) study. Below Ellen describes how active she was while in an abusive context.

Ellen: [T]he sexual abuse started maybe when I was about thirteen, by my stepdad ... I realised over the years if I didn't say something, or do something, he would've raped me because it was progressing ... the abuse had got to a level where it never did before and I thought no, I can't have this ... [H]e would always send my little brother out to play ... 'cos where we lived across the road one side, it was the green and then behind that was a leisure centre ... I used to be petrified being in the house with him, by myself, because it always happened when we were off school ... I remember one day, I kept ringing on the phone to my friends asking, come round, come round, come round, we can do this and we can do that. And he was listening to me and when I put the phone down and he said 'I know what you're doing'. He was very calculating. This particular day [afterwards] ... I remember crying ... couldn't stop crying and we saw one of his friends and he stopped, he pulled up and his friend must've said '[says her name] what's the matter with you?', and he [her stepdad] turned round and said, 'oh she just got licked' [was smacked], just to disguise what was really going on.

Ellen had observed her stepfather's patterns as a child and the rhythms and routines of abuse; making sure there was no one else in the house, sending her brother out to play, so that he could be alone with Ellen. In recalling her attempts to divert his abuse by inviting her friends over, Ellen also draws out the spaces of her memory. The spatial anchoring of the recollection (Reavey, 2010) also reveals Ellen's was active in observing the role of the physical environment in the facilitation of abuse; the park that could hold her brother's attention and through her stepfather eavesdropping on her phone calls. Not only were the patterns consistent, but the acts of abuse were escalating where Ellen on one occasion was 'crying uncontrollably' hoping, yet failing, to alert her mother and a family friend.

Ellen's stepfather used the disciplinary method; 'she got licks [was smacked]', to divert his friend's attention from Ellen's distress and a possible opportunity to speak. It may not be deemed acceptable yet unremarkable to see a young girl crying uncontrollably after being disciplined. Lees (2002) found that conflicts in the home regarding physical discipline accounted for 60 percent of the reasons why African and Caribbean young women placed themselves in social service care. Bernard and Gupta (2008) discuss African and Caribbean cases of childhood maltreatment as being among the most severe that have come to public attention and query acceptable notions of disciplining among African Caribbean communities. Therefore, knowledge and awareness of these forms of discipline more than the prevalence of smacking, might mean individuals in African and Caribbean communities dismiss possible signs of abuse among their social networks as normative disciplinary practices.

Despite the women's efforts to alert their non-abusing family members, those who abused them were considered more influential and trustworthy (Finkelhor and Browne, 1985; Lamb, 1999). This raises the issues of the worthlessness of Black girlhood (see Chapter 2) within families, especially where there are intersections with childhood sexual abuse. Women also described reaching to a point where they had to get help, because of the level of emotional distress they were experiencing. Below Farah explains how she came to the decision to leave home, after a long period of being active while looking after her siblings and experiencing sexual violence and abuse from her uncle.

Farah: [Voluntary organisation] helped me and I was in a room in a police station and my sister was having an episode [psychosis] in the street, so they took her into the police station and I was introduced to counselling and I knew that I was gonna get a break ... by then I was so tired. I wasn't sleeping well ... I was waiting for [siblings] to be okay and ... to grow up so ... This [was] my way out ... I could escape, I felt like I did everything. I waited for so long for them to be mature enough, I was not needed any more and I needed a break so, I took it.

Two women waited for opportunities to leave homes where they experienced abuse, where in the above extract for example, looking after younger siblings could no longer be prioritised over self and this altered and in some cases, severed those relationships. Four women took many years before they could speak about what had happened to them. In some cases they literally could not and in others, they decided it was best not to speak. In Chapter 4, Norma described how she was told by her mother: 'don't speak until I speak to you ... don't have a voice', a patterning of silencing that was very effective. Women and girls are strategic in weighing up the costs and benefits from speaking, because choosing to speak might risk too much: personal safety, loss of family

relationships (Ahmed, 2010a; Moore, 2010; Parpart, 2010) as was the case with four of the women. One woman 'did something' (which she did not disclose) to her body in order to be hospitalised so that the abuse would stop. This was an example of a bodily testimony.

Cacophonous responses and being silenced

Despite attempts at silencing, all the women interviewed did eventually come to voice. A common response to speaking as a child was for family members to accuse them of lying (see Finkelhor and Browne, 1985; Lamb, 1999; Wilson, 1993). When Rebecca spoke about her abuse from a family friend, her stepfather responded by saying she and her siblings would be taken into care where she would be raped. He told her that perhaps she would also accuse him of rape, thereby reformulating her as a liar. Or it was communicated to women that they were dwelling on a past they should sooner escape and put behind them (see Evelyn above). Children often feel a sense of betrayal by family members who fail to respond protectively when they speak about the abuse. When family members do not believe children, they can feel an even greater sense of betrayal (Finkelhor and Browne, 1985). The responses to women when they spoke were cacophonous, theatrical whereby the men accused of abuse made their denials, or through the shouting and high expressed emotions from members of their families. Thus the women's voices became drowned out by such responses. Research participants sought acknowledgement for what had happened to them, and protection against further abuse.

'Blah-blah-blah-der-der-der-der-der' was the phrase used by three women in their descriptions of responses to them speaking about their experiences of abuse. This phrase also calls to mind Tucker Green's (2003) play about child sexual abuse in a Black British family where the protagonist DAWTA begins to speak about the sexual abuse from her father, but instead of support, she becomes the problem and the focus, whereas her father is discussed by her siblings with much more sympathy (see also Ahmed, 2010b).

Despite empathising with the structural constraints experienced by their mothers, seven women who were abused or raped as children also held their mothers accountable for how they responded to news of the sexual abuse/rape. Some victim-survivors of sexual abuse believe that their mothers colluded with their abuser, but Chapter 4 explored this as a misrecognition of the tactics of abusers. Ideals of mothering (see Chapter 4) persisted in how the women wanted to make their mothers accountable for their roles as parents who abandoned them as children: the assumption being their mothers had the power and resources to protect them from the abuse. Three women reported feeling despair, mental distress and rage as children because they could not understand why they had no consistent parent (mother) around. Ambivalence that surrounded what they saw as their

mothers' complicity in the abuse, through knowing it had occurred and insufficient support in the aftermath, was also a finding in this study. Four women challenged their mothers later in life. Two were successful at resolving issues and rebuilt those relationships. One concluded 'my mother couldn't give a fuck'.

Evelyn: I confronted my mum because when I was in therapy ... she was due to come back from [country] ... I felt ... a desire to share with her some of my discoveries, without blaming her ... I put it all in a letter and I was ... sure to make ... the letter was about me ... about feeling abandoned, abused and that she didn't love me and the way she didn't support me and how she went away a lot and ... at some point in the conversation she did cry and I remember one tear falling from one of her eyes ... She didn't really have much to say ... she had to do a bit of thinking ... she then went back and told my sisters and then gave it a different spin. She said that I blamed her for everything, so she got all their sympathy and understanding and then I didn't get any ... [T]here was another time maybe two or three years after that ... But by the time I shared what I had to say about him, what I had to say about her, became kind of put back and she was thinking about him. So she left there feeling angry ... within a month, they broke their relationship ... but there was a month where they were friends again, for a whole year after that, he was still around the house, still around children.

Ava: Even though she'd known what he did?

Evelyn: And my children have never stayed at her house, never and she's never asked and I think she's too afraid of what the answer would be.

Claudia Bernard's (2000) study with non-abusing mothers of African and Caribbean victim-survivors of child sexual abuse found similar responses of denial and blame. As with Evelyn's extract above notions of mothering gained from popular television programmes were at odds with lived experiences of childhood abuse and neglect. This could also be read as misrecognition of the continuum of oppression experienced by their mothers that may have limited their mothers' ability to hear testimonies of abuse. In one of the interviews where the woman brought in photos of her mother and sibling, I remarked on how all of the people depicted looked like siblings. She then reflected on how young her mother had been in a manner that she had not considered before. Seeing her mother's youth through the image was a shock and one she returned to in a subsequent interview. Notions of mother-daughter relationships persisted in the women's current contemplations of past feelings of parental abandonment.

Farah: [M]y mother ... it's just always about her ... how she suffered ... [S]he just thinks

she has the right because she pushed. Oh my God, I am so sorry, but that's not the way it works for me [laughs] ... we can never repay the pain that she felt ... 'I had you when I was young' ... I do have a lot of memories of her saying that she wanted to leave us and people would come, begging her to stay ... to come back to us ... it wasn't the first time she did that. Anytime that she had a row with my father, she walked out ... She had a strange problem with walking out.

In Chapter 4 Black mother-daughter relationships were discussed as preparation for the harsh realities of racism and sexism through teaching self-reliance and the importance of being educationally and financially independent. Some writers caution against hegemonic discourses of mothering and Black mother-daughter relationships, because they leave women abused by their mothers torn between notions of how their relationships with their mothers should be and how it actually is/was (Boyce-Davies, 1994; Collins, 2009; hooks, 1981). There was evidence of this struggle among the participants, who attempted to rekindle relationships with their mothers when they became mothers, with differing outcomes.

Women abused as children continue to be challenged by the recollections of emotional neglect (Briere, 1992; Finkelhor, 1999; Haaken, 1999). This was also a finding in this study. Women's continued attempts to rebuild relationships with their mothers could also be viewed as an attempt to remedy feelings of neglect, abandonment and emotional abuse.

Liar-liar: sweep and race it under the carpet

As noted in the literature on adults abused as children, the research participants were commonly not believed (Finkelhor, 1999; Lamb, 1999) or not compassionately supported when they started speaking about their abuse to family members. Farah's father listened to her account of abuse and then coerced her to recant her allegation.

Farah: I remember when I told him I was at [tube station], we were in [place] even though I did not know the names of those stations, [tube station] was the first station that I ever remembered ... and then we went to our house and the room was black. He didn't even put on the light ... I was sitting on the bed and he was sitting on a chair ... He made me tell him every detail, literally ... [T]hen he took the Quran and he opened it and he said 'if you put your hand on it [the Quran] and you're lying, you're gonna go to hell' ... I knew I could do that, because I knew that I was telling the truth, so I actually put my hand on it [the Quran]. ... I told my ex-husband that I've been sexually abused and he was sympathetic

to that. Later on I had to tell him that I lied ... I told my father, who made me go back to all those people and say I was lying ... and I did ... even though he [her father] actually knew that I wasn't ... because I [swore] it to the Quran. He asked me to do it for my own dignity and for the family's dignity. He said, 'you will never understand. But people will see you as the tramp, the one who let it happen ... [W]e're not European, so stop being western. We're not western, because they will not understand ... and people will judge you, so shut up and it will go away'.

Farah's vivid spatiotemporal recollections of the scene (Reavey, 2010; Reavey and Brown, 2009) of her secondary victimisation (Campbell and Raja, 1999) from her father is a powerful one for the anchors of colour, space and place that left traces on her notions of the truth for years afterwards. Farah was married at a very early age it enabled her to escape from her abuser. Her husband was sympathetic after she told him about the abuse. Her father insisted that she lie to protect her family's dignity and their culture, thereby blaming her in the process. This had been one of many instances in Farah's narrative where culture had been used exploitatively. Her abuser exploited the cultural practice of virginity-checking to facilitate his sexual abuse (see Chapter 4) and in the extract above Farah's father makes cultural distinctions between 'we' and 'western culture' to facilitate a cover up, or to silence her from speaking about the sexual abuse. Farah was expected to be the bearer of 'dignity' for both the family and their culture, where she is encouraged to 'shut up' for her own protection against being judged (see also Tiyagi, 2001). Her father's advice to be silent could also be viewed as another example of racialised gendered shame as he is indicating how Farah ought to feel and respond. Elsewhere in her narrative, Farah reports that her father often chides her for being 'weak' in that she was unable to fight off her abuser. All of the women abused as children reported either ongoing references to past experiences of abuse by family members, or ongoing denial, and it could be argued that these interchanges were also burdensome.

Admitting to her husband that she had lied was all the more painful, because he had been a source of support. Farah eventually believed her truth about the sexual abuse after being diagnosed with an STI. Patricia's resolve 'I know I'm telling the truth' was echoed in all of the women's narratives who were abused as children and consequently a fear of not being believed or being judged by services became reasons to stop speaking about past abuse for long periods afterwards (see Ahrens, 2006; Jordan, 2008; 2012). Some held their mothers specifically responsible for hearing their testimony and stopping the abuse. When Ellen's first attempts to talk about the abuse to her mother were unsuccessful, she persisted.

Ellen: She confronted him and he called me a liar ... [M]y bedroom door was opened,

the light switched on and my mum said to me ... 'come here I need to talk to you'. So I got pulled out of my bed into the bedroom ... parent's bedroom ... on a chair ... in front of him, my mum said to me, 'right tell me in front of him what you told me' [crying] ... I said it I don't believe that I was lying ... I was tryin[g] [to] give my mum an example, because there was just this one occasion, where I was like, no, this has to stop ... [W]hat he was doing to me ... I felt as though I was being groomed ... but it's almost like he wanted me to be like mum's stand-in.

The six women who were sexually abused as children protested the way in which their testimonies were received by their families and a theme of feeling they were 'put on trial' where they would be faced with their abusers who always responded with denials (see also Black, 2010; Bolen, 2001) was a common experience. Towards the end of her extract Ellen ponders whether she was her mother's sexual substitute, a commonly accepted view of child sexual abuse (Fyfe, 2007; Herman and Hirschman, 2005; Wilson, 1993). Wilson (1993) attributed this both to men's practices of masculinity bolstered by a social discourse of the sexual agency and availability of Black girls (see Chapter 2). This also relates to the discussions in Chapter 4 about men specifically targeting the women when they were children, to take advantage of their mothers' life contexts as lone or absent parents who did paid work to support their children.

The coming to voice and speak-outs from second-wave feminist activism did not sufficiently occur in Black communities either in the UK or the USA, leaving women's experiences of child sexual abuse normatively enshrouded in silence (Wilson, 1993). The current study was carried out almost twenty years after Wilson's (1993) and while it cannot be said to be representative of all Black victim-survivors of child sexual abuse in the UK, some of the themes resonate within the women's narratives. Ellen's mother waited a year before she left Ellen's stepfather. Ellen later found out it was because an aunt had told her mother that Ellen must have been lying. Bolen (2001) remarks on the societal wide denial of the commonality of child sexual abuse perpetrated by ordinary men, giving credence to this form of abuse as transcending racial and socio-political eras. Patricia below also explained the response to speaking about the sexual abuse from her grandfather.

Patricia: I think people don't like to admit that ... [child sexual abuse] happens quite a lot, it happened to me ... especially in the church, people have gotta keep things quiet in there ... I was really disappointed over the years how family members didn't believe me, I think my brother didn't believe me either, but he's a perp[etrator]. He ... was like how could I sleep at his [grandfather's] house ... I feel betrayed really a lot of the time.

Patricia discusses both familial and institutional silencing about sexual abuse that occurred within the church she attended with her grandfather (see also Fortune and Enger, 1996). Patricia notes her brother and elsewhere in her narrative, her father, not believing her. Supportive families enable children to cope better in the aftermath of abuse (Finkelhor, 1999). One woman (Rebecca) was supported by her grandmother after speaking about the abuse. None of the other women felt supported by immediate family members. Thus, speaking about sexual abuse placed them as outsiders, occupying the relational borders of their families for many years.

Rebecca: I don't think people really wanted to believe it ... I am sorry to say, but when it comes to Black people, they don't really want to appreciate that things can happen really bad in any of their communities and just as White ... like in any other community ... [S]omeone said to me 'Black people don't do those things' ... I've noticed that there are many women who have suffered experiences and the same thing as well and some of it worse [giggles nervously] ... but they don't want to talk about it ... 'no it's not Black people, it's only happens to White people'.

Family responses to the women speaking about the abuse experienced as children, was to 'brush it under the carpet', by claiming, as above that Black people do not engage in child sexual abuse. Rebecca discussed self-identifying as Black and participating in this research as a political act to state that her lived experiences run counter to those claims. Silencing accounts of sexual abuse may form part of a collective defence to pathology or racialised gendered shaming enacted by members of minoritised groups and given Black women's experiences of a continuum of oppression, it is unsurprising that they may delay seeking help. Racialised gendered shaming may make it more difficult for Black women to believe that their words will fall on fertile, safe ears.

Therefore protecting from the impact of one form of violence – racism – may reinforce the silencing of another; child sexual abuse, through a process of collective denial (see also Bogle, 1988; Wilson, 1993). Denying the existence of child sexual abuse in Black communities, means that it receives little or no political or collective attention among Black communities (Wilson, 1993; see also Bolen, 2001). Similarly, Farah who has had intimate relationships with both men and women, described being silent about her sexuality as this would cut her off from her siblings. In the reflective interview with a professional (Exp8), she describes the dilemma faced by women who need to hide some aspect of the self in order to receive help where she recounted a common retort is to prefix Black women's lived experiences with 'there's no...': 'there's no lesbians in the Black community.' The 'there's no' prefix is a way in which individuals attempt to protect collective minoritised groups from pathology and the shame and dishonour they presume this identity or characteristic will bring to the

family/community. Anything that is deemed taboo and shaming gets placed into the 'there is no...' basket (see also Hammonds, 1997; 2002).

Miranda Fricker (2008) uses the concept of 'testimonial justice', that when individuals speak about their experience of violence and abuse this requires recognition and belief as such denial is another form of violence. Speaking about violence and abuse for the women in this study came with many risks (see also Brown, et al., 2010) the most profound being becoming an outsider within their families and communities. Patricia discusses how she would have preferred to be treated by her family when she told them about her experiences of sexual abuse.

Patricia: I would've preferred a better response from my mum, but she didn't know what to do at the time. I would have preferred a better response from all my family. It would've been good to have spoken to somebody ... someone to tell me 'we believe you' ... I just didn't feel I had enough professional support ... I didn't know what the outcome was, I just remembered just knowing that he was about ... I'd seen him in his car ... I thought well obviously he hadn't been arrested ... nothing happened, everything got brushed under the carpet ... just as if it just disappeared in a puff of smoke really.

The responses to speaking were much like those reported by Ullman and Filipas (2001) where the minoritised women had more negative social reactions. Women's first and subsequent attempts to speak about past experiences of abuse, were responded to with denials and blame and resulted in occupying outsider-within positions in their families.

Looking out for the next generation

One aspect of living with a continuum of oppression is how it reverberates in the women's contemplations. Women described the burdens of reflecting on past experiences of violence and abuse as part of their everyday activities. Norma below describes her emotional exhaustion.

Norma: [S]ometimes when I say to my husband I am tired, I don't think he knows wah I mean, it's like I am emotionally tired ... because the fight has been so hard ... so hard that no:body ... I think my fight is the worst in the world, I know it isn't, but in my head, it's like how much more fighting, I am so:oo tired.

Having periods where they think they have reached the point of exhaustion can be viewed as another example of the way in which the research participants were active in both past situations where they experienced abuse and currently, where they attempt to gauge how far they have

moved away from violence and abuse in their lives. They described periods of being physically safe as with Norma, yet consumed by thoughts of past abuse and current actions.

- Ellen: I'm in my flat ... I'm living by myself now and I would just go into these dark moods ... I come home from work on a Friday ... I wouldn't leave the house until Monday morning to go back to work.
- Ava: So you didn't go out anywhere?
- Ellen: People would phone, people would knock, I wouldn't do anything, I would just cut off until it got to a point where my friends, they wouldn't see or hear from me for about a month ... The only person that perhaps would get in contact with me, every day I would always speak to my mum ... It happened, maybe a couple of times a year I'd go through those stages and then it became more frequent ... One particular Sunday the phone is ringing constantly. I was just in bed with the covers over my head, constantly and then there was a knock at the door. I'm not gonna answer the door. Knock, knock, knock until I hear my mum's voice shouting through the door, so I've gone and opened the door and see her and my [current] stepdad and they're livid! They're absolutely mad, 'we've been phoning you, we thought summin's wrong with you, you're being stupid, I told you [says her name] ... you goh'a stop doing this'.

Women's processing of the past may not appear to those around them to be active at all, because they engage in exhausting reflection. In the above extract Ellen's withdrawal from her family was viewed as her inactivity, while for Ellen this was her periodic and strategic response to recollecting past experiences of sexual abuse. Ellen's withdrawal could also be viewed as an extreme example of this, where she is attempting to make sense of the past, but invariably alone. It is the exhaustion of having to carry out this activity alone, even when involved with trusted partners and relatives, that makes this activity disconnected or positions women in an in-between, or liminal space, conceptualised here as 'exhausting liminal rumination'.

Exhausting liminal rumination was evidenced in how research participants all commented on how burdensome it can be to inspect current experiences in light of past abuse/violence in similar way in which they watched their perpetrators for repeated incidences of abuse. Here they are referring to what Kelly (2009) has termed 'violence work': the work that women do to manage memories or impacts of what has been done to them. Irrespective of how much or how little women appraise the impact of the violence and abuse in their lives they are compelled to live with the presence of the past (Brown, 2012) in their current lives. The women also discussed how they watch current partners for evidence of violence and have strategies to ensure their children are not abused. Debbie

reflected on the times that her husband, who has not been violent to her, is on the phone while she is in the room. She wonders whether he will turn out like her ex-partner who is and was controlling and is careful not to let her ex-partner have their children's passports as she thinks he might try to take them out of the country. Patricia makes sure her child does not sit on any adult's lap.

Patricia: Every morning I walk up this road and there's this man that comes out the house and always has a cigarette, but I always check as I'm walking past to see if he's still looking at my son, or if my son is looking at him and I'll always watch him ... This is a catchin' out ... I'm just not sure with people ... life is like that and it can be like that. I think it's got better though ... no one would know what I was feeling, but I would not ... let him [her son] sit on anybody's lap.

Rebecca watched for abuse among peers, because she had been sexually abused, saying that the abuse give her a kind of maturity to know that she was not yet ready for sex and to read the signs that boys/men were interested in her sexually.

Rebecca: I had a little bit of wisdom ... people said guys never showed interest in me ... There were some guys that did show interest in me, but I didn't feel comfortable and I didn't pursue it any further and I think it was obviously to do with what had happened in the past ... sometimes your life experiences can make you mature faster than your peers.

Ellen ended her relationship with her ex-partner after he slapped her and she found out through her son's nursery that he had heard the altercation.

Ellen: I can't remember exactly what happened, me and him must've had an argument ... and he slapped me in my face ... I got all his stuff and I threw it out which is a vast contrast to what I did when I was in my teens ... I just didn't want anyone putting their hands on me ... They tell you I'm never gonna do it again, and they tell you that the next time ... I was brought up with violence, so I know it don't stop there.

Evelyn watches out for the girl children in her family, because one of the men who sexually abused her is still in contact with her extended family and attends family events.

Evelyn: I feel that it [will] always be [with me] for the rest of my days ... you could play it any way you like really, because I'm such a relationship person, I still think that I am making a difference to the children in this family, by being in this family ... we

can make a difference together [laughs] ... I still see a bigger picture and I am comfortable to do that.

She marvels at the outpouring of public empathy for spectacular forms of violence such as wars and other atrocities occurring internationally, when the unspectacular (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004), 'the bigger picture' for her, is that locally and commonly, women experience child sexual abuse and 'just because you don't see it, doesn't mean it isn't happening.' These 'watching' and 'catchin out' activities can be connected to theories of how African American women manage adversities through 'every day pragmatism' (James and Busia, 1999; Hill Collins, 2009), doing what they can within structural constraints, interrupting the continuum of oppression for the next generation.

The seven women abused as children also described various ways of responding, behaviourally and for one, bodily and through their everyday practices, to both the abuse and the minimal support they received from family members. Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962) describes how normative it is not to be fully aware of every minute bodily activity required for walking, talking or typing. A traumatic event can however compel us to be consciously even less aware of our bodies to actively avoid thoughts about the unpleasant or intrusive experience. Herman (1994) theorised that people who experience sexual violence and abuse can suffer the impacts of trauma similar to war veterans where vivid memories of abuse can intrude into victim-survivors lives in a range of manifestations long afterwards. Thus while they may make conscious efforts to forget, in order feel less distressed, the body remembers (Rothchilds, 2000; Roy, 2008). Feeling disembodied, being separate to, or not quite, in the body was conveyed by all of the women. In attempts to control recollections of abuse they described periods where they actively forgot, or temporarily lost connection to their bodies, floating above their bodies, mimetic of strategies used to cope with bodily intrusions in the past (see Coy, 2009; Young, 1992). Living as an embodied self then becomes dangerous, since as Farah explained 'my mind will get to know what happened to my body'.

During the bodyline exercises (see Appendix 5) women relayed the pleasures they find in their own body aesthetic, yet relaxing in their bodies still remained uncomfortable. This 'not lived-in' feeling is specifically related to the bodily intrusion from the men who abused them and comments about their bodies in social spaces (this is further discussed in Chapter 6). Feeling intrusion, through being looked at or commented upon in public spaces (see also Elvines, 2014), was experienced by all of the women. They described their bodies during and in the aftermath of sexual abuse and rape, as 'dirty', 'not mine' (see also Coy, 2009; Young, 1992). Jacinta needs to bath after sex and describes her disgust and dislike of sex connecting these bodily responses to multiple sexually intrusive experiences with men and annotated her body line 'I hated my body', 'I really hated my body'.

Similarly, Debbie recollected that she did not care much about her body during the period where her ex-partner called her 'a long list of awful things'. Farah described being unable to take a shower without clothing for a long period after experiencing sexual abuse and rape. Ellen described loving her body now because her first boyfriend enabled her to uncover the body she had concealed beneath layers of clothing. For Norma, being in a relationship where her spouse accepts her body with all the 'stretch marks and everything' and having children brought a new respect for her body and while she completed the body line she remarked on how little she considers her body in her day to day thoughts. Women abused as children also reported whenever they relax, they are fearful that the memories may become more vivid. For example, in the past smoking cannabis and 'bingeing on [self-help] books' helped Evelyn to cope.

When asked about her body, Patricia replied: 'I don't think about my body, I don't want attention, I hide behind my clothes, I don't like compliments'. For Patricia, a compliment about her clothing from a work colleague brings her body into focus leaving feelings of discomfort that 'gets right into my day'. Rebecca brought in a photo of a room in process of decoration (see Figure 6).

Rebecca: [I]t represents the inside of my body, it's a work in progress and I'm still ... working on how I feel inside ... I'm okay with the physical aspects, I'm learning to love the outside of my body ... the inside's got all its parts intact. Just like here [points to the photo] ... I need to decorate ... over the old parts ... all the memories from the previous occupier are there ... the nicotine on the walls, which is a lot [laughs] ... I need to make it into my own, take away all the things ... are not representative of me that have nothing to do with my body.

Rebecca uses the photo to provide a spatial metaphor of the body, which detaches her from her 'inside' making her body a mere surface to be painted over to describe how unsettling it feels to live within her body. Likening the work she had to undertake to decorate her flat, with the work she had to undertake to feel at home in her body, reflected Rebecca's struggle to come to terms with what had been done to her body by her abusers, how family members responded, which she attributed to disrespecting her body or wanting to become a glamour model elsewhere in her extract. Marginal occupancy of their bodies appeared to be connected to what was done to women's bodies and whether they had had the opportunity to move back in and gain a sense of home there. Having affirming, safe and trusting intimate relationships reinforced positive bodily appraisals for three of the participants.

Five participants live with mental distress, which has included a problematic relationship with food: self-starvation; over-eating; bingeing and purging; or experiencing an all-consuming rage that

quickly metabolises the food, low mood; hearing voices and intense worry (see also Cromby et. al., 2013). Five women had considered ending their lives to reduce feelings of distress and two have made attempts. For two women getting a medical diagnosis provided them with the opportunity to make sense of past abuse 'gave names to things' and reported 'feeling validated' (see also Kelly, 1988) especially as they had been silenced when they attempted to speak about the abuse as children. For three women, medical diagnostic labels were resisted because of their association with stigma (Cinnerella and Lowenthal, 1999; Cromby, et al., 2013). These were the embodied legacies of violence and abuse women also lived with.

Figure 6 Room body



Wearing the mask

Many of the women also described wearing the mask of confidence, of having everything under control, which is somewhat tied into notions of the strong Black woman. Ellen brought a photo of her with heavy make-up in a wooden frame, wrapped in cloth, framing her face to typify living with unpleasant feelings from her abuse/violence experiences. She described how she performs

motherhood for her child and is a good employee, using this mask. Patricia also described faking confidence, as she hates public speaking, and would mask it by trying to make herself less visible, dressing down for group presentations at university, staying in the background and feeling her heart bursting out of her chest, unable to maintain eye contact. Patricia thinks her mask is obviously effective, because her work colleagues read as her as confident and well put together whereas she feels otherwise. Norma, when describing her selection of past photos remarked on her smile in all of her photos, how it masks the unhappiness and turmoil in her life (see also Spence, 1991) at the time due to the abuse she was experiencing.

The mask being described is a face/persona to hide the turmoil when impacts of abuse and violence are felt, but perhaps too painful to articulate, and for self-preservation by not leaving the self too open for scrutiny. Black women may wear the mask of strength because they believe they have fewer options for public displays of vulnerability and pain (see Chapter 6). In this study women described a variety of masks for the self: at work; as parents; as partners managing abuse; and as victim-survivors of violence and abuse. They had few avenues for speaking and when they spoke were advised to stay silent. What the mask may also represents is how the women are 'shadow-boxing' (James, 1999) the continuum of oppression. These activities may be invisible to those whom they encounter. The mask is thus an example of being active in managing everyday tasks while living with recollections of past abuse.

Figure 7 below summarises embodied burdens carried by the research participants, analysed in this and the previous chapter, and further developed over Chapters 6 and 7. This diagram illustrates the continuum of oppression for the research participants, through the concept of felt intensities. Added to this, are felt intensities of being silenced, experiencing shame or failing to live up to racialised constructs of strength and the work involved in daily living with past recollections of abuse and violence. The photographs in the middle represent the reflective work research participants undertook in making decisions to seek help with the background of both felt intensities and resisting or accepting discourses about mothering, Black women and speaking about violence and abuse, conceptualised as exhausting liminal rumination.

Figure 7 Embodied burdens (2)



Reflections

This chapter analysed how the research participants were active while in or actively staying in situations where they experienced violence and abuse, most archetypically through the performance of the strong Black woman. Being active while in violent and abusive situations, enabled the women to survive silencing, including where women had spoken as children about abuse and through which they found the capacity to speak or give behavioural and in one case bodily testimonies. Actively staying with partners in situations of real danger is a process whereby women are strategic. When women spoke to others about experiences of violence and abuse, common responses were denial, minimisation and accusations of confabulation. By speaking the women had broken an unspoken code or rule of intergenerational silence making audible the public secret (Taussig, 2004) through their talking back (Hill Collins, 1995; Lorde, 1995) and speaking out about the violence and abuse they had experienced. This could also be read as contravening family or cultural norms for emotional displays or 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983).

How the women were responded to when they spoke communicated their audacity and the effrontery of claiming the right to speak about that which has been mandated to silence. A consequence of audacious speech is being silenced. Thus living with the legacies of a continuum of oppression involves periods of disconnection through reflection conceptualised as exhausting

liminal rumination. This also involves being vigilant for perpetrators of violence and abuse some of whom are still in contact with members of the research participants' families and finding modes of everyday coping to manage the minutiae of life. Women used 'the mask', which is somewhat related to the strong Black woman construct, but this was to hide feelings of low mood to enable them to parent and manage a lack of confidence.

A common finding in previous studies is that victim-survivors of child sexual abuse wait until adulthood to talk about their experiences. The women in this research spoke about the abuse to family members in childhood and encountered denials, and silencing. This silencing process may be a contributory factor to what appears as delayed help seeking among Black women. The women's attempts to speak were not recognised, or they were sanctioned and this influenced how they related to their bodies and the self in the period after speaking. It was almost as if the responses to speaking justified the abuse and violence, made it less of an issue or infringement in their families' eyes, thus inculcating more self-blame and shame among the women, conceptualised here as racialised gendered shame. Their voices and the content of their speech were made to seem almost alien, unusual and remote, with threats of judgements if the women continued to speak. Thus speaking about abuse and violence even in a safe setting, for some of the women, became shame-inducing.

Speaking for some stopped the abuse and violence, but incurred the cost of being accused of betraying families, thus relationships with siblings and other relatives became strained, or were completely severed. As a consequence, most of the research participants subsequently occupied the relational margins of their families, watching for and guarding against the perpetration of abuse in the next generation, gaining further layers of alienation and isolation. Speaking about abuse and violence opens up some channels for help and assistance, largely outside of families and a closing down of others; the desired and hoped for support from close relatives. The research participants' responses to how they were responded to were worked through their estranged relationships to their bodies. They rightly wanted the violence and abuse to stop, but the costs were borne long afterwards. The responses may well be attributed to the wider social responses of denial to childhood sexual abuse. However, when considered in line with the treatment of their male counterparts, the value of Black girlhood/womanhood appears wanting (Pierce-Baker, 2000; Richie, 1996), where the boys retain the patriarchal power of judgement over their sisters' accounts of abuse and are less sanctioned for their misbehaviour as children. Most of the women abused as children became the bearers of family shame and honour, especially at the time they spoke about the abuse. Calling the women liars relationally removed or marginalised them within their families, thereby upholding the honour and concealing the shame and paradoxically positioned them as suitable listeners for relatives to off-load. Two women, who experienced violence from partners,

reported feeling 'embarrassed' and ashamed since they had not experienced abuse in their families of origin, one chose not to speak. In the reflective interview with an expert professional (Exp8) she discussed how honour and shame are concepts not often associated with Caribbean heritage women in support service practice, but which are critical in understanding why it may be so difficult to speak and seek help.

Brison (1997), Fricker (2008) and Spivak (2000) similarly argue for the audience to a testimony to hear the one who testifies. The research participants mostly remained unheard by those they wanted to listen (this is further discussed in Chapter 7). The space and audience provided by the research process may have presented one of the few occasions where they had the opportunity to engage in speaking about violence/abuse that is not considered audacious, without either a 'heavy silence' or a cacophonous response. Space to hear Black women's testimonies of violence and abuse remains a challenge for communities, families and existing service provision where culturally specific spaces have been eroded and may have far reaching consequences for the narratives yet to unfold.

CHAPTER 6 - WHAT'S RACE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

FELT INTENSITIES OF A NUGATORY SELF

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of how the research participants experienced racialisation, and their relative values in racial and sexual hierarchies, in social encounters with family and colleagues and in public spaces. The concept of 'a nugatory self' is introduced here to capture how the research participants described their limited redress to challenge already determined assumptions based on their embodiment as Black or dual heritage women and the intersections with their experiences of violence and abuse. The Oxford English Dictionary definition of nugatory is 'useless; of no value or importance' (OED, 2010). This chapter develops the concept of a continuum of oppression (see Chapter 4 and 5) in describing how being racialised was experienced by the research participants as a form of abuse or intrusion to the body/self.

'Felt intensities' is the concept being used to make women's emotional responses visible in this chapter. It is applied to how the research participants described feelings of being negated in public spaces and at home through comments about their bodies. Ahmed (2004) argues that we feel our way through the world via a series of 'emotional intensities' (p.12) and emotions are not properties inherent within individuals, but are socially created through interactions with others. She argues that types of emotions or affects become associated with objects. An object may be an idea or a discourse about groups of individuals. In this study, the research participants described feelings that morphed between, for example, feeling different as in diverse and cosmopolitan, and different as in 'less-than'. It is this transformation of feelings that is conceptualised as 'felt intensities of a nugatory self', an overarching theme that is both connected to race and gender through social responses to the research participants' hair/hairstyles and skin tone, and intersects with their experiences of violence and abuse. The nugatory self encompasses the subthemes in this chapter: intrusive racialisation; hair as a bodily site for control; hair reveals and conceals race, violence and abuse; and 'not Black enough'.

Racism can be the outcome of spatiotemporal relationships between individuals such that for Black and Asian people, streets or regions of the UK may be more or less racist (Back, 2005). Examining how individuals negotiate racialised geographical spaces may enable visibility for modes of resistance, adaptation (Back, 2005) and living with forms of oppression. Relatedly, it has been

argued that African American girls may undergo processes of 'becoming-negro', 'becoming-colored girls' whereby they make distinctions between their objective selves, informed by negative stereotypes of Black women's bodies, hair and skin tone and their subjective experiences of their bodies/self. This also forms the context in which they make sense of violence and abuse (Garfield, 2005). Racialised values may be attached to Black women's skin-tone, hair-texture that are then associated with their sexuality and role expectations in intimate relationships, such that darker-skinned women may be told by intimate partners they are not 'marrying material' and the longer a woman's hair and the closer her skin tone to the European ideal, the higher the expectation for heterosexual relationship success (Few, et al., 2003; Garfield, 2005; Nelson, 1997; Valandra, 2007).

The subtheme 'feeling intruded by racialisation' describes the research participants' experiences of being racialised in public spaces. This echoes Fanon's (2008/1952) analysis of how he experienced his body after being racially abused in a Paris street, and linked to Ahmed's (2000; 2004; 2007) theorisation of how individuals gain knowledge of racially embodied differences through their feelings during/after social interactions. The subtheme 'hair as a bodily site for control' explores how the research participants came to know negative associations with their racial category through family members' and their own attempts to control their hair texture and hairstyles. 'Hair reveals and conceals violence and abuse' discusses how hair was a bodily site that both concealed and revealed racial category and impacts of violence and abuse. Everett, et al.'s (2010) everyday stressors, Greene's (2011) intersectional analysis of Black women's hairstyles in the workplace and Dickerson's (2011) process of concealment are used to illustrate how the research participants' hair/hairstyles became the symbolic location for bodily control and racialised associations of a lack of beauty and femininity. These concepts are extended to include how they intersect with experiences of violence and abuse. 'Not Black enough' describes how the research participants were positioned within restricted constructions of race or 'Blackness' that seemingly conflicted with being a victim-survivor of violence and abuse. Coy's (2008) notion of self-stigmatisation is used here to explore how experiencing violence and abuse can be extended to include stigmatisation associated with being racialised.

Feeling intruded by racialisation

How to explore women's lived experiences of violence and abuse and what influence if any, their racial category had had, without seeming reductive, was a key challenge in this project. The descriptive term 'Black women' was used on the recruitment poster to indicate the inclusion/exclusion criteria as well as, 'Dual heritage' and 'African and Caribbean heritage'. The

descriptive categories provided by the nine women when asked either about their racial or ethnic background were as varied as the individual women (see Chapter 3). All nine critiqued, resisted, de-constructed racial categories and ethnicity, especially the terminology 'Black woman', what being a Black woman meant to them and whether it had influenced how they sought help. Patricia below reflects how the women conceptualised being read in social spaces and how racial differentiation can be associated with pathology.

- Ava: [W]hat does being a Black woman mean to you?
- Patricia: It don't mean nuh'en ... I look at my whole being, not just being a Black woman ... when I look at everyone else around me and in the UK and being Black ... I am just different ... I dunno if it means anything to me ... or how it means to me.
- Ava: Okay, and ... I guess related to that, I wanted to ask whether ... if it doesn't mean anything to you, I dunno, but I'll ...
- Patricia: I feel like what it means to me is I feel is a pathology ... just being a minority ... for example at a meeting ... I often have a lot of heads around me are White and I'm probably gonna be the only one there that's Black and then it feels like I'm a minority. I like being Black, I like difference and I like having my heritage that is different from everybody else's.
- Ava: Would you say then that it's more of a feeling you get when you're in particular environments? Is it just in general when you leave your house, or is it just in specific environments?
- Patricia: I think in professional environments, I feel different in professional environments. When I'm out, I don't feel anything really, but I enjoy being different.

Patricia describes a range of perspectives to being Black; from it not meaning anything, a part of her heritage, experiencing pleasure in looking 'different', but it also feeling like a pathology in professional spaces. Patricia's feelings of 'minority' and 'pathology' calls to mind Fanon's (2008/1952) triple splitting of his body schema, after being pointed out as a Black man by a White child (see Chapter 2). Patricia is, however, not discussing being racially abused, but feeling 'different', feeling negation. Ahmed (2007) builds on Fanon's (2008/1952) phenomenology of race to argue that: 'Whiteness could be described as an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space' (p.151). Ahmed uses phenomenologist Edmund Husserl (1969) in his observations while at his desk in his home office, of his family that are objects in the background of his work, to discuss how Whiteness orients some objects and people

as familiar and others not. Fanon's (2008/1952) 'historico-racial schema' is beneath the surface of the body, the phenomenology of the body that is present, but under theorised. Ahmed argues that bodies have a memory and racialised bodies are the outward representations of colonial histories. For non-White bodies, this is a representation of pathology and domination and for White bodies; the privilege of passing unnoticed, familiarity and of being at home, not simply of numerical majorities. This familiar fluidity of movement within space, without being stopped, stared at or standing out (Ahmed, 2007) could also mean that although White bodies may feel less comfortable in non-White spaces, this discomfort is not associated with pathology. Ahmed (2007) then uses Bourdieu (1977) to explore how Whiteness inhabits public spaces. For Bourdieu (1977) habits are the unconscious orientations of bodies that do not draw attention to actions. Her argument further weaves to Merleau-Ponty (2002/1962) to note that the habitual body stays in the background of the action. What the phenomenology of Husserl, Bourdieu and Merleau-Ponty suggest to Ahmed, is that Whiteness and White bodies do not need to consider their Whiteness in public spaces.

Institutions can also be thought of as public spaces. 'The effect of this 'around whiteness' is the institutionalization of a certain 'likeness', which makes non-white bodies feel uncomfortable, exposed, visible, different, when they take up this space' (Ahmed, 2007, p.175). If bodies do not pass, they become bodies that are 'out of place' (2007, p.159), but this is a complex and intersectional process of fitting or not fitting in. Having a socioeconomic or class inheritance may enable a body to fit in more. However, bodies can be also ejected from Whiteness. Ahmed cites Husserl's Jewishness that lost him his chair at his university, and argues that while she is able to work and theorise about Whiteness she still bears its effects as part of the background to her everyday embodied experiences.

Patricia's extract can be thought of as revealing a lived body feeling of being out of place within institutional Whiteness and demonstrates some of the ways in which women articulated their struggles to negotiate feelings of being racialised in public spaces despite their own positive embrace of their racial and cultural heritage. It could also be argued that Patricia's feelings are to do with her experiences of bodily intrusion from being sexually abused, where elsewhere in her narrative she describes how she lacks confidence and fakes confidence in presentations at university and at work, where she does not want focus to be brought to her body: 'it gets right into my day'. She describes, in the past, using her clothing to avoid being seen. Rebecca draws on wider societal discourses in her description of being racially judged.

Rebecca: [T]here are lots of obstacles ... no matter how hard you try to sugar coat it and have a positive attitude ... we are living in a society where people will look at you

and judge, just on your appearance. And sometimes when I go to festivals and other places, and there are White faces there, plenty of White faces ... I mean in some ways they're rounding me up ... although I will try to overlook it ... [A]s a Black woman you are caught up in this sexism and you may be caught up in this racism, which is people's opinions and people's attitudes affecting you ... [T]he term brings out negative connotations. The first things you can think of; racism and sexism, baby mother, single mother, strong-willed or stubborn ... [T]his African American woman was doing an article on the Wedding Crashers and her major concern was that they went through every single nationality, but they never slept with any Black women [laughs] and what is it about us and why is it that we're not so desirable? [giggles]

Rebecca conveys an awareness of racialised and gendered discourses about Black women as 'strong-willed', 'single mother' and sexually unattractive (see Chapter 2) that stick to her in social spaces where she feels she is being read. Although she attempts to 'overlook it', the resonances are still felt. The 'looks' she receives also leave feelings of uncertainty about the self. Sartre (1989/1956) conceptualised 'being-for-others' as the way in which individuals cannot control how others view them through 'the look'.

I grasp the Other's look at the very center of my act as the solidification and alienation of my own possibilities ... Of course I still am my possibilities ... But at the same time the look alienates them from me. (Sartre, 1989/1956, p.263)

What buffers the reduction of self through the look is an individual's own self-knowledge or their 'facticity' (Sartre, 1989/1956): Rebecca knows that she is none of the above constructs, yet she questions this. Fanon (2008/1952) conceptualises the 'fact of Blackness' as a racialised being-for-others whereby Black men (and women) may feel reduced to historical and stereotypical objects when looked at or pointed at in postcolonial public spaces. Being looked at when they inhabit public spaces for the research participants invoked a complex mix of feelings that appeared to be bound to racialised othering.

While these feelings may not qualify as 'felt' racism they are racialised in that they evoke assumptions about Black women. These felt intensities are also akin to Ahmed's (2007) conceptualisations of how inhabiting Whiteness in public spaces reorients bodies as those that are either at home or out of place (p.259). Both Patricia and Rebecca's feelings of being reduced by assumptions about their racial category in public spaces also bear similarities to their accounts of

being reduced through experiencing sexual abuse. This can be viewed as a demonstration of how the impacts of forms of abuse shade into each other forming a continuum of oppression in the research participants' everyday negotiations with body/self.

Discussing racialisation via the term 'Black woman' revealed its stickiness (Ahmed, 2004) where research participants relayed encounters where they felt negative association with that term spatiotemporally adhered to them. Ahmed (2007) argues that negation is a visceral pressure on the body surface (Ahmed, 2007). These encounters may not always involve being pointed at (Fanon, 2008/1952) or speech. They are often encounters without words (Ahmed, 2004; 2007) that leave emotional resonances. Such emotional resonances are also evoked in the intersubjective discomfort within the conversation evidenced in my hesitance to explore Patricia's feelings about racialisation (see above). Here the affective tone of the conversation becomes tense and uncomfortable and this was the case for all of the interviews. Discussing racialisation may then reveal 'feelings of structure' (Ahmed, 2010) through being embodied as Black and female when in public spaces, which may intersect with the legacies of past experiences of violence and abuse and form part of the everyday burdens the research participants carry conceptualised in Chapter 4 as the continuum of oppression.

During the life history interviews, the topic of skin tone, hair/hairstyles and racism came up in a number of ways; in response to the question *How would you describe your racial heritage/ethnicity? What does being a Black woman mean to you?* Responses to questions such as: *What do you consider your main accomplishments? Can you tell me a bit about yourself?*, or during the body line activity (see Appendix 5). None of the women were asked about racism, their hair, or skin tone, yet hair and skin and how they were racialised, were deeply stitched into their narratives.

Seven of the nine women discussed their skin tone and seven discussed their hair/hairstyles. Of the two who spoke less about hair/hairstyles or skin tone, one remarked that she did not 'use my colour' as she observed others who have lighter-skin tones do. What can be inferred from this is that skin and hair played a role in their negotiations of self. Underlying these narrations was a deep sense of shame. Through their discussions about their hair, skin tone and experiences of racism, alongside violence and abuse, all of the women reported being compelled to accept purported truisms about Black women that through their lived experiences were later exposed as mythical.

The following sections explore how women described responses to their hair and skin complexion in social encounters and how these responses can be viewed through the concept of a nugatory self.

Hair as a bodily site for control

Hair remains a much debated and contested issue among Black women where 'natural' hair or Africanised facial features may be negatively compared to a European ideal within Black women's families and among their friends (Mama, 1995; Nelson, 1997; Tate, 2005; 2009; Williams, 2013). In response to this Black women may make efforts to conceal traces of Africanised features (Dickerson, 2011). In this study, Black women's hair was found to be a sensitive and common discussion topic. One woman joked that Black women's relationship with their hair was such a complex and nuanced phenomena it would require a separate PhD. In response to being asked to clarify the distinctions that she had made between being Black, and being Black British, Norma cited hair as another of the characteristics that Black women lack.

Ava: I wanted to ask about being a Black woman, whether there are expectations laden on you ...

Norma: [T]he expectations are ... you don't get pregnant, you get a good job, you get an education and actually the expectations of being a Black woman and of being a Black West Indian woman I would say are a lot higher than being a Black West Indian boy ... I've always found within families, and it's not just my family ... oh you're a girl child, you have to do this ... I'm sure there is an unsaid world isn't it ... you're not pretty enough, your hair's not long enough, you're not fair enough, all these other things that sew into it ... if you spoke to most West Indian families they have a lot higher expectations for their daughters, than their sons.

Norma notes the contradiction that hair and skin tone though commented upon, and felt, are not openly interrogated: 'there is an unsaid world'. Hair and skin tone associations may be tacit forms of knowledge whose function is to regulate Black women's relationship to their bodies and sense of control over their lives. Norma also draws focus to the gendered nature of how educational attainment was encouraged in her family of origin, which on first reflection is a positive endeavour. The promotion of 'a good education' also appears laden with discourses around Black women's sexuality within the advice 'you don't get pregnant'. Ellen similarly described that her first experience of low mood came after being advised by her mother to not get pregnant. This coincided with being told that the man who she thought was her father was in fact not her father.

Ellen: She [her mother] drummed it into me and she gave me the same conversation at seven; 'I don't want you to do what I did, I don't want you to come home

pregnant at sixteen' ... I never ever forget that conversation, not so much about the [dad] part, because that was nothing that I didn't already know ... it stayed there.

This parental advice could be viewed as protective of the women's futures, but is also connected to societal discourses of Black single mothers that women did not find supportive, but negating. How this bodily advice was experienced by Norma and Ellen was that their sexuality was in need of control. Ellen recalled feeling blamed for experiencing sexual abuse after the cautionary warning. While research participants did not identify with the Jezebel controlling image (Hill Collins, 1990), growing up or as adults, they were aware of this perception by men they knew. Three women (Ellen, Debbie, Farah), were explicitly called 'whores'; Rebecca's stepfather referred to women as 'whores'; Evelyn described the men who used to visit her home and sexually abuse her and her sisters as 'strangers coming in' while her mother was away working. Jacinta relayed a dream she had after she was raped as a child as 'put in a pot and turned into money'. Analysing these narratives showed women's awareness of body/self/sexuality as commodities that were negated: where they were likened to prostitutes by the men who sexually abused them and by men who either called them worthless or women in general whores, and through advice to not get pregnant.

Farah discussed a more explicit form of control of her body through her hair. She relayed that in her cultural background parents, then husbands, grant girls permission to cut their hair. Farah described how her desire to have her hair cut short became somewhat of a quest that began when she was a girl.

Farah: I love my hair now, the way my hair is now. I always wanted to cut my hair and I wasn't allowed.

Ava: You weren't allowed to cut your hair?

Farah: No. They say it's forbidden and you are unable to cut your hair until your husband says so. Now if you are a girl, you have to wait until you are married to get permission, you don't have a choice. That was the second thing that I did when I left home ... tried to cut my hair. It took a long time ... [T]hey [hairdressers] were just oh no, no, no, no, your hair is beautiful, don't cut it ... [Y]ou are Black, you shouldn't cut your hair.

Ava: Why shouldn't you cut your hair if you're Black?

Farah: The first hairdresser told me because I was Black, that my hair was so long and thick ... Then she cut it [motions to her shoulders] and I was like hell no, that was the wrong look ... all of the ladies, [were] was staring at me, I want it cut. They

said 'no, no, no, no, no, no, no, do you know how ... much people pay for their hair?' [T]hen they convinced me to have it shorter like this [motions to her chin] I wanted it short like this [how her hair is now] ... My next thing will be piercings ... I'll have to be strong enough to be able to meet my father [once the piercings are done] and he will say, 'you see you are just becoming just like everybody else ... you are becoming more Western' or 'you are wild'. In my culture I am considered to be a prostitute, because I live on my own. 'Why would you wanna live on your own, unless you just wanna prostitute yourself?' I don't understand what prostitution has got to do with that, my father is feeling so disturbed, that nobody will wanna marry me and I don't think that's [marriage] ever gonna happen.

Although Farah's hair had accrued a racialised aesthetic value in the UK, she experienced the Black women hairdressers' insistence that she leave it long as intrusive. Control is diffused from her body surface to her movement in public spaces, for fear of the shame that her father would experience if she is viewed as a prostitute, a visible example of Farah's failed femininity and value as worthy of marriage. Despite the self-affirming way in which she views her short hair, her lifestyle and her eschewal of marriage, Farah is acutely aware of how this is perceived by her father.

Farah's process of concealment (Dickerson, 2011) – her headscarf – was worn to protect against this shame and to maintain contact with her siblings. Farah's quest to have short hair reveals how hair can be used to resist and affirm selfhood in response to subtle and overt attempts to control women's bodies and how the proscription of 'oughts' (Horney, 1995, cited in Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007) is experienced as intrusive.

Farah's extract also demonstrates the double bind of presumed possession of bodily lack and overabundance characterised as the projection of a nugatory self onto the research participants. A sense of self as nugatory may be inferred by encounters with family and individuals in wider cultural spaces that Black women are not quite free to occupy their bodies from a position of acceptance and affirmation and if they do, may be judged against racialised, gendered cultural discourses. A nugatory self was actively resisted by the women, as demonstrated by Farah's extract.

When asked *What does being a Black woman mean to you?* Norma answered by describing how she has to think twice about her comportment in public or in work spaces. However, at work she is she is treated differently because of her skin colour and ethnicity. Norma also describes in the past, not being quite free to wear her hair to work, in a style she desires.

- Norma: [W]hen I'm at work everybody lets you know that you're Black, because we're treated very differently ... not treated as equals to our White counterparts. I think that stands out ... probably living in the area that I do, which is meant to be a highly racist area, you are more aware of being Black. Where I grew up, Black was probably the dominant factor, nothing reminded you that you were Black until you went somewhere that was predominantly White or of a different colour ... You're reminded that you're Black when somebody in the England team is Black and they win a race, you're quite aware and you're quite proud, well they're one of me ... It overlaps in lots of ways ... I find it really ... hard to define ... being Black British is itself a totally different ball game ...
- Ava: So you think being Black is something different ... to being a Black British woman?
- Norma: Yes ... there are variants ... Black African ... this is an assumption ... I think Black African women, they know that they're African, they know that they're Black, it goes without saying, Black Caribbean are almost the same. Black Caribbean women know that they're Black, you wake up in the morning and if you've been raised in a predominantly Black country, it's not necessarily something you would think about, being Black ... If you want to go to work with a certain hairstyle, no one's gonna question it. Whereas here, you've got to think twice, could I go to work with bright blonde hair? Maybe not so much now, because it's more accepted, but years ago you'd have to think twice.
- Ava: Do you think there are more complexities to being Black and British?
- Norma: Yes and ... I didn't realise how much, say for instance where I work, there are a lot of Black Caribbean women and I don't fit into their group, because ... I'm... in between aren't I? I'm Black, but I'm also ... British.
- Ava: How do you feel excluded, or not fitting in?
- Norma: Oh they don't invite me to things [laughs], they invite me last minute and say [adopts a high-pitched tone in voice] 'oh you can still come' [usual tone] because they really, fundamentally don't accept me as one of them, which is really, really weird, because I'm treated the same as them ... to everybody else, we're just all Black.

Norma explains both her spatiotemporal awareness of racialisation (Back, 2005) and that being Black British can leave feelings of not belonging (see Riley, 1985) or being 'in between'. She therefore negotiates racial and ethnic differences and similarities where she is both included and excluded among her family, colleagues and friends, both in the UK and 'back home' (see Brah, 1996).

One of the features of this in-between-ness is limited aesthetic freedom with her hair. Greene (2011; see also Delgado and Stefancic, 2000) documents legal cases where African American women have taken their employers to court over allegations that their hairstyles do not fit in with the corporate image when the style is either in braids or in dreadlocks. Or, that the hairstyle does not fit with their skin tone; wearing dyed blonde hair when dark skinned or being lighter in complexion and wearing dreadlocks. Greene (2011) points to a lack of an intersectional analysis in American courts that refuse to acknowledge an individual self that can be both black skinned and female with blonde hair, or light-skinned with natural hair. The corporations have argued that because they employ Black women they cannot be accused of racism. Thus there are proscriptive rules about race and associated behaviour that appear to be enacted on and through Black women's bodies via hairstyles and skin tone (Dickerson, 2011; Green, 2011). How Norma wears her hair for work is subject to racialised scrutiny, although in articulating the spatiotemporal nature of her experience, Norma offers that it is less of a pressure now than twenty years ago.

Norma's extract also conveys that being racialised by skin colour may presume visible unity and homogeneity among minoritised individuals belying ethnic, cultural and individual differences (Gilroy, 2000; Hall, 1999). Women narrated heterogeneity in their lived experiences of Blackness and how awareness of race is spatiotemporal. Experiences of social restrictions on their bodily and relational practices compelled them to consider their intra-ethnic, inter-racial relationships as well as how they present themselves to dominant White racial groups in wider social spaces. This illustrates subtle and everyday negotiations with difference as a constant shifting of identities (Phoenix and Bhavnani, 1994) and belonging as well as the body/self-fragmentation this may entail. Connected, and also in resistance to feelings of negation, is that all of the women identified their education as one of their accomplishments (see also Mirza, 2009). Many choose to focus on their intellectual abilities or to consider their bodies only from the neck up (Blackman, 2008) because of their purported lack in terms of bodily aesthetically qualities. Negation of their physical aesthetics can also be viewed as a positive and negative motivation to succeed academically.

Thus, learning how to be a Black woman may be based on the notion of an inherent lack of some qualities and an overabundance of others. The women in this study negotiate a selfhood from positions of avoiding, accepting, resisting and subverting negation. Popular discourses and everyday exchanges between Black women and their family and friends, can communicate an inherent lack of aesthetic beauty depending on where a woman's physical characteristics are in relation to a White or lighter-skinned ideal and the associated self-disciplinary practices (Everett, et al., 2010; Frost, 2005; Wolf, 1990). Black women can also be simultaneously presumed to possess an overabundance of sexuality, aggression and strength (see Chapter 2). Feelings of negation were

found to be carried by the research participants at some point in their lives or currently, into their everyday negotiations in private and public spaces in addition to legacies of past experiences of violence and abuse and were intricately woven into their narratives of educational and professional success.

Hair reveals and conceals race, violence and abuse

This section discusses how hair/hairstyles can become symbolic bodily locations that reveal or conceal experiences of abuse and violence. For four women, hair was a bodily site that displayed their neglect as children or as adults in the context of intimate partner relationships. For Evelyn her lack of hair symbolised ways in which she felt excluded and alienated. Below she uses a past photo of herself as a child to discuss her experiences of abuse.

Evelyn: Every time I look at this picture and I try to identify more ... see if I could get a feeling of myself at that age, sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. I do at the moment, but when I've looked at this picture, one of my first impressions was ... I was quite pretty really. When I was growing up the focus was on a lack of hair, so because of that I grew up thinking I was quite ... ugly. But I actually had a really nice face and when I look at my eyes, sometimes I wish I could just, go back in time and give that side of me a great big hug ... but in one of my eyes I can see ... it's quite sad, it looks upset, like it's about to have tears. I think sometimes even when I look in the mirror today I think, there is one side that is quite a copper ... then there's another side that holds the emotions ... [looks at picture], but this is a little girl who ... has been just left to get on with it on her own and all things considered, she has done quite well [looks at photo].

Evelyn connects her lack of hair to feeling ugly and her reading of the sadness in the image of herself as a child symbolises a lack of emotional nurturance. Below she describes her spatiotemporal journey with her hair where she attends to the emotional resonances left by comments in childhood.

Evelyn: How you feel about your hair is about the emotions ... for me that centred around my lack of hair ... I could feel the impact on my psychology and my self-esteem, because my mum would say things to me about my hair and I grew up kind of not feeling like a girl ... I remember when all my sisters ... there used to be this girl that used to live around the corner from us where everyone would

go to ... she used to cane-row everybody's hair, and I couldn't take part in that because I didn't have hair to cane-row, that made me feel left out ... I used to go the shop sometimes and ... the shopkeeper, he used to say, 'okay sonny what do you want?' even though I had my earrings in. I used to spend ages ... looking in the mirror ... I guess I was just trying to find something that was ... attractive about myself ... because my hair just never grew. But then when I started to look back on my past, when I was in therapy, it didn't grow, because my mother didn't groom it, when she was away and she was away often, her partner used to take me to the barbers to cut it off and I used to hate going to the barbers, because I'm not a boy. It was more shocking in the mind rather than the physical ... I became ... a bookworm ... I was the intelligent one ... even now – I know I'm attractive – I'd rather you recognise me for the inside, for my intellectual self. I feel uncomfortable being recognised [when] people or men ... they go for that more than who I really am and when who I really am comes out, a lot of the times that's when the problems in the relationships start ... [W]hen I became older and I took control over my hair, and I started to get it permed ... it started to grow ... I remember thinking no matter how hard or however I get up on the ladder, I still wanted to keep ... my cultural heritage ... even though I was feeling quite isolated because of my family, because of my experience, I still love my culture ... I wanted to be an educated person, but also I wanted to be true to my culture and that was through how I wear my hair and I then I stopped perming it ... I spent many ... a day wondering around in my own world ... you've got these dandelions and then you've got to make a wish, I used to always wish that my hair could grow [laughs], but I actually felt that my wish came true with my hair, because it grew right down into my back [laughs] and that was like an amazement and ... my hair tormentor mother ... was really ... sceptical of me locsing my hair. I got that reception from Black people and I just put that down to Black people being ashamed of their natural hair, which they are. What about if that stops me from getting a career? What about if I change my mind? ... I was alone once again in that and that's another feeling of being an outsider, but a different one and then my hair grew and then my mother, one day when my hair was very long, she looked at me and she said ... 'Oooh waow, who would've thought that your hair would've grown so long?'

Through her periodic reflections on her lived experiences, Evelyn connects what was done to her hair as an extension of the neglect and abandonment she felt as a child and over her life course. She

uses her lack of hair, comments about her hair and how a male shop-keeper thought that she was a boy, to illustrate how she felt excluded, especially from sisterly bonding braiding sessions. Simultaneously, a lack of nurturance alluded to by Evelyn, was marked by the neglect of her hair care. Evelyn's subsequent hair practices of 'locsing' can be viewed as a response to being excluded and a self-protective act to shake loose negation. After her hair grew, hair lost its affective symbolism. Once the constructions of stereotypes are revealed they lose their affective power (Ahmed, 2004). For Evelyn, having short hair had previously meant she was unfeminine and ugly. However, through growing her locs she disproved her mother's prediction and those from 'Black people' that wearing 'natural hair' would mean professional failure. Evelyn could then view her hair as a symbol of beauty and elsewhere in her narrative she recalls that she cut her hair as it no longer held such profound meanings, 'it's just hair'. Thus hair can become a symbolic location for feelings associated with abuse and a process of reclaiming the self.

Evelyn also described negating the body for books as a response to this extreme and critical lens through which her lack of hair was appraised, and how that connected to her experiences of abuse and neglect. With that comes the later discomfort of still being only read as sexually attractive by men and having her intellectual side negated. Evelyn's embrace of 'my cultural heritage', despite efforts by those around her to control her hair practices through derogatory comments, is reminiscent of how Norma was also compelled to consider how her hairstyle might affect her employment prospects (see also the women in Dickerson's (2011) study and Greene, 2011). Evelyn relays that through her hair practices – 'locsing' – she held at bay feelings of shame and ugliness. Many of the themes in Evelyn's account make connections between cultural and family discourses and individual lived experiences as Black women, where hair becomes a site of racialised aesthetic shaming, prompting a process of concealment. While their lived body experiences may be pleasurable, their bodies may not be perceived as such within both their social networks and in wider social encounters. Thus the women are required to undergo self-management to deal with projections of a nugatory self, such resistance may be also experienced as painful and alienating.

Evelyn's narrative connects her journey with her hair to her 'journey of recovery' from abuse and neglect where her hair was embodied evidence of abuse and also the beginning of her practices to remedy both through techniques of self (see also Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1993; Foucault, 1984; 1994)

Shame could also be experienced by observing how Black women wear their hair in public spaces, where hair was viewed as a reflection of inner psychological states of self-hatred (see Dickerson, 2011; Mercer, 1987).

- Jacinta: I actually think somebody should love the Black woman for who she is ... a lot of Black ladies, women, they wear a lot of wigs and ... I don't agree with it because they are covering their hair and it's their choice. I think they should have their hair naturally. Black people should love themselves, be who they are and if they think they are not pretty enough ... that's something I still think about myself ... I want men to, and I am going to use the word men, to appreciate us more, not just use us for sex. Some of them come up to me and they say 'oh excuse me, what's your name? Where are you from?' And as soon as they find out where you're from, they don't want to know you.
- Ava: You mentioned about the way in which men approach you. Do you think men approach you in a particular way because you are a Black woman?
- Jacinta: Yes.
- Ava: How do you think they approach you differently, if you can explain?
- Jacinta: I think it's very disrespectful, because everything I wear ... when it's summer, sometimes I wear nice sexy clothes and they are only looking at your legs, or they'll go 'the way you dress is bad'. I know some of the women, maybe some of the way they dress is not good, maybe I am doing that as well, but I am doing that to feel happy. I am not doing that because I wanna be raped, but the men are looking at you like yes I want something from you and I'm gonna do this, and some Black men, I expect them to know better than the White guys and it's just the Black men they chat to you on the street, morning, noon and night.

Jacinta begins with a discussion of being racialised, where race becomes known when in public spaces through the symbolism of Black women's hairstyles, as an expression of self-hatred. This then enables her to reflect on how the sexual harassment that is a feature of her interactions, is also racialised. Jacinta explicates that while Black men should be aware of the racialised gendered treatment experienced by Black women those she encounters, instead exploit the opportunity to be more persistent in their sexual harassment. Jacinta is making visible performances of Black masculinities in public spaces where she feels more targeted by Black men for sexual harassment. Here and elsewhere in her narrative Jacinta assumes a unity based on race without note to how gender may intersect with racial identification. What this reveals is how a 'race first' ideology (Benton-Rushing, 1993; Crenshaw, 1989; Mama, 1989; Nelson, 1997) may obscure the intersectional features of Black women's experiences of violence and abuse. Benton-Rushing (1993) was raped by a Black male stranger and afterwards was struck by how she could no longer view Black men as 'brothers in the struggle' (see also Pierce-Baker, 2000; Roy, 2008; Wallace, 1990/1979).

Hairstyles could also be used to conceal bodily evidence of abuse and neglect. Although Jacinta's informal foster carers braided her hair, offering her a sense of nurturance, they also abused her. Below she described her attempt to run away because of the abuse. She brought this up in the context of being asked *Can you tell me a bit about your life?*

Jacinta: Then again I was living with my mum's friend, they were Black people. I don't know them, but my mum did, my mum seemed to know them. I was living with her for some time now ... they were very nice, they used to plait my hair and all that but, what they were doing to me, I wasn't happy. What they were doing to me; slapping me, beating me, abusing me.

Jacinta here disconnects being cared for through the hair practices of her foster carers and their perpetration of abuse. To the outside world her foster carers presented Jacinta as a nurtured child. In her racial descriptors of her foster carers and how they had nurtured her hair, Jacinta assumed her safety was guaranteed. Hairstyles can be read as outward expressions or evidence of neglect, abuse and derision as well as the means through which care givers or the women demonstrated nurturance (Dickerson, 2011; Mercer, 1987), but rarely is the possibility of them being used to conceal abuse considered. Rebecca discussed her hair in one of her photos of herself and her cousin standing outside of a building and revealed her hair in the interview session.

Rebecca: I had shaved off all my hair ... my head was totally, totally shaved off

Ava: Oh, so was it like an inch?

Rebecca: It was shaved off completely?

Ava: You were completely bald?

Rebecca: For five years I messed around with it a bit, I did all sorts, as we do you know it we always ... it was plaiting it, relaxing, shaving it, dyeing it and as a consequence of that, the hair was totally [giggles], it wasn't in a good condition ... and so what I did I shaved it all off, because I wanted to start afresh.

Ava: Did you do it yourself? Did you shave it off yourself?

Rebecca: I went to the hairdressers and they did it for me, I had no hair, I was a skin head and there's a photo of me in one of my diaries of me with a skin-head cut looking menacing. I was dressed ... I was dressed all in Black ... so I looked really gothic.

Ava: So here it looks really lush here

Rebecca: It doesn't look like that anymore [laughs] [takes off her head scarf to reveal her hair] this is what it looks like now.

[both laugh]

Rebecca: Looking at this photograph because our [hers and her cousin pictured] have changed so much. Here she was a single career-woman and now she's gotten married, she's got two children.. I looked at this picture and I thought to myself oh my goodness I was eighteen years old then ... things have just changed so much. She had a graduated from university and was working ... her life has moved on so much, but then again my life has moved on so much in a spiritual sense ... so you can't really complain ... I don't wanna do any more comparisons [laughs]

Ava: You just look well and I'm not comparing to your current situation, but it just looks so bright and ... beautiful

Rebecca: [L]oads of things had happened by the time that I'd had that photograph taken, for example the old man had gone out of the picture and ... I was in the church then, but ... I was stuck between two worlds [laughs] ... I knew about God, but I wasn't with him as such, my spiritual life wasn't going good at all. I was dabbling in witchcraft, I was trying to work out who I was. I'd also left university, regrettably I didn't get the full degree [giggles] because of a lot of things happening in the background, there was a lot of conflict between the social services and my mother. My mother had withdrawn my sister from school and social services got involved and now they were all in foster care, so I mean [giggles] there was a lot going on behind the scenes.

Hair is used by Rebecca to connect responses to her speaking about the sexual abuse she experienced, the neglect she and her siblings experienced, being in a relationship with the 'old man' which was sexually exploitative, to her practices of witchcraft. Rebecca uses the photo to communicate her feelings of abuse, alienation and negation at the time. There is a sombre longing in the way she compares the trajectory of her life with that of her cousin's. A challenge for Rebecca at the time of the interviews was considering how to fit a second career, marriage to a spouse she has not yet met and children. It all becomes too painful. As Rebecca excavates the impact of sexual abuse on her body, her haircut becomes a focus of the discussion: even though her hair looked healthy, it masked her many challenges. Her photo is also evidence of her continued attempts make good of her spiritual and academic goals: 'trying to work out who I was' despite feelings of negation. The extract can be read as a mournful reflection on her losses.

Rebecca also describes how she wore the abuse/violence she had experienced on her body through her hairstyles and clothing. This enabled her to speak through her hair and body as she had limited

opportunities to speak verbally. The extract also demonstrates how the embodiment of the researcher as a Black hair/hairstyle collaborator 'I did all sorts ... as we do' may have enabled Rebecca the freedom to explore her complex relationship with her hair, and even revealing her hair during the interview as an embodied demonstration of her current challenges in making sense of the past.

Ellen described a period of stress from experiencing multiple burglaries and living with legacies of past abuse which she attributed to her hair falling out. She then wore a wig.

Ellen: For a short period of time, I was wearing a wig ... I used to stop off at the [shop] in [place] ... from work ... and the guy behind the counter, he'd be stony faced. When I wore the wig, the reception I got was com:p(hh)letly different. He smiled ... [I]t makes it like the locs alone to me was like a barrier. I was like okay then, the reception that you're getting now is different, you're not gonna wear the wig forever, so how are you gonna change that? I'm conscious now, if I walk into somewhere to get something and I see people look at me like, this girl ... what's she gonna be like. I smile, I make an effort, then suddenly ... just sort of break down that barrier and that's not something every woman is faced with. I'm not saying that that's something that every Black woman's faced with, but it's something that I'm faced with on a daily basis. When I first moved here, I used to go to the shop just round the back, stony faced and once I start talking and they figure out that I'm just cockney, so she fits in ... so she's just Black and then the reception is just totally different. With friends who are English, I sound like them, so there are certain arguments that they are not used to having in front of me, but I'm not like them ... I said you can't ... have a conversation to me about ... colour and ... expect my view to be the same as ... your view, because our experiences are completely different. For me there is a difference between just being a woman and being a Black woman, I definitely think that you are faced with more obstacles.

Ellen articulates being conscious of being read through her hairstyles and how she manages this as something that only Black women have to do. Her encounter with the shopkeeper also brings credence to the hair practices observed by Jacinta of Black women wearing wigs and weaves. Wearing wigs and weaves may normalise the gaze in public spaces for Black women in a similar way in which Ellen describes being more socially accepted because of her 'cockney' accent. Ellen illustrates the spatiotemporal nature of racialisation and/or a nugatory self through her

comparative experiences with the shopkeeper. Managing her own stress that made her hair fall out and managing how she feels her hairstyle is being responded to, is burdensome, described as 'obstacles' for Black women. For the seven women who discussed their hair/hairstyles, there was an underlying theme of subtle shrinkage of self spatiotemporally with increasing social encounters where they experienced racialisation for which hair was an important signifier. This leaves an intrusive, restriction on their lived body experiences in social spaces, especially at times when they may have been working through past experiences of violence and abuse.

Hair/hairstyles could have different, positive meanings, but this is also connected to abuse. Debbie described it as an aesthetically affirming and consolatory feature during the time when her ex-partner criticised everything about her (see Stark, 2007).

- Ava: [Y]ou mentioned how you felt emotionally, but how did you feel about yourself, I mean your physical self, your body throughout?
- Debbie: Some days ... I had doubts about myself, but yet ... I think I was still younger then, I looked okay [laughs].
- Ava: I think you look better than okay now.
- Debbie: [laughs] So when I looked in the mirror, what reflected is you are good-looking, your hair is nice, I didn't have all this weight on, I was slimmer, so I said well, no, I am not bad in appearance I look ... good so I guess that kept me go(hh)ing. If I hadn't have and looked all shaggy ... but I put a lot of emphasis on myself. I always had my hair done as good as I can, you know dressing and all that ... I put a lot ... into myself.
- Ava: Would you say you did more for yourself ...?
- Debbie: I-I guess so, you know because I still met someone else you know while [laughs] so I must have been kind of alright [laughs].
- Ava: Was there any point that made you think, oh is there something about me, how I look, why he's treating me in a particular way?
- Debbie: Yes, all of that, I thought of that, because he'd say some days that I didn't dress good, that I didn't look good, but I think he was just putting me down. I knew in myself, I made an effort and those days my hair was done and these marks on my face were never there, I was always ... fresh-faced and all that ... And I say to myself as well, I do have my profession, I drive, I'm independent, I used to travel a lot more as well, every year I'd go abroad, you know, so I had managed. He never really prevented me from doing things apart from emotionally, but yet I overcame that. I was doing my own thing. I'd book my ticket, take my children

and my father use to go, 'How you travel with these young kids?' I just did it. Anyway it was courage and determination and I did it, he never prevented me from doing things, yes-yes-yes.

In this case Debbie was not responding to negative associations with Black women's hair, but trying to restore a self that was being daily negated by her ex-partner. Having the resources to spatiotemporally remove herself from her partner was beneficial (see also Walby, 2004). This can be observed in Debbie's extract where she worked harder to prove her worth by committing more time to her relationship and her ability to travel and work.

- Ava: You mentioned hair and when you don't feel good... I was just wondered that importance with hair, do you think that's connected with being a Black woman in any way? The kind of importance that you put on your hair and the pleasure your hair gives you?
- Debbie: No, not really, that's my thing. I saw my mum who ... she greyed quite quickly ... she constantly dyes her hair, she doesn't like to look old ... I knew my hair for what it was, big hair and I always see myself liking my hair and how it made me feel. I am just comparing my mum and myself and my sisters. All of my sisters, they don't have hair, they cut it all, their hair, they've got short hair ... so I don't know how it makes them feel, but ... I like my hair, I think it makes me the person who I am.

Debbie's freedom with her hair could also have reflected a conscious effort within her family of origin not to reinforce negative associations with their hair and skin complexion. For Debbie, 'good hair' was about how her hair 'made me feel'. This can be seen in the way she likens herself to hair attending to both the symbolic and lived experience of hair as indicative of inner emotional states.

Hair could be viewed as the putative beginnings of ways in which Black women's spaces for self, begin to become constricted from an early age. Comments about their hair begin to suggest something about them is not quite right. Hair is a bodily site through which constructions of beauty and racial difference are negotiated and as such also conveys a restricted space for expression of the women's sense of bodily ownership and freedom. Hair was also a site where bodily control was contested through cultural associations between hair length and texture with modes of acceptable femininity and professional success. It simultaneously exposed the impacts of abuse, violence and racism, falling out because of stress, or not growing because of a neglect of nurturance. This also meant that well nurtured hair could also be also used to conceal abuse.

Not Black enough

Black women can also find themselves unwittingly transgressing a plethora of culturally mandated rules (see Mama, 1995; Tate, 2005). Farah replied to *What does being a Black woman mean to you?* as 'not being Black enough' by virtue of not obeying the rules for being African, Muslim and now because she lives in the UK.

Farah: I wasn't Black enough

Ava: Not Black enough?

Farah: Yeah ... I don't like to kick my kids. I would never kick my kids and when I was growing up, they used to say 'ooh, you see the lady is pretending to be a White lady' and I would think, [smiles] that is not true, it-it is not about being White, [mock confession] okay I like country songs you know [laughs]

Ava: Ahh it's all coming out now [laughs]

Farah: [laughs] I always listen to opera and classical music, so that makes me less Black and, psychology is a main thing for me, it is the basis ... I wanna be a therapist and that's just the thing yeah [slows pace of speech] oo:kaa:ay, not Black ... [Y]ou know being Black has to be a set of rules and you have to get with that set. Being [country of origin] I have to get with that set of rules and I don't judge myself by any of them and being Muslim. I have to get with another set of rules and I don't like either. I've kinda been rejected by just about everybody. I think being White also comes with certain things. I don't think they will accept me either [laughs] so I would say in all honesty, I'm like whatever. So being me is just being in the middle of everything, having all my mixed cultures, and problems and just say hey, I'm on my own. Being female is really hard and being Black also ha(hh)rd and being Muslim, I'm not a terrorist ... I really think the whole issue of abuse is also a bit hard.

For Farah, 'not Black enough' is related to seeking help for violence and abuse rather than accepting this as her lot. Feeling 'in the middle of everything' can be read as an in-between-ness, not belonging, especially when experiences of abuse and violence are thrown into the mix. While the women expressed pride in their cultural heritage and skin colour, they found some of the expectations placed on them by friends and family and in encounters in wider social spaces as limiting, mimetic of how their desire to give testimony to their experiences of abuse and violence was met with denials or indifference (see Chapter 5).

Rebecca: I don't really perceive myself as being ... Black in such a way and I don't see myself as being White. I see myself as being a Christian woman, that's first of all and then, maybe British second and maybe Caribbean third. Because my attitude, my beliefs, everything is tied into Christianity and I think if we're getting into this area of well I see myself as a Black woman, I see myself as a White woman ... it doesn't allow for any diversity ... we start to set standards to ourselves and because of my past experiences ... where something happened to me and I was told, that doesn't happen amongst Black people and this is not what Black people do ... it kind of like put me off from using that term [giggles] ... If I'm going through that terminology that is sort of like saying I must behave or act a certain way and if I don't then I've betrayed my race ... [T]here are some good aspects of Black culture and there are some good aspects of White culture ... actually I gravitate towards Christian culture, but there's no such thing nowadays, but the things that I'm into, people would say that that is more on the European side, more on the righteous side ... When they notice that I'm not really into hip-hop, I'm not really into eating Caribbean food and stuff, I'm not really into ... Black culture as such. It's not to say that I am ashamed of my race, that I don't like my skin colour, it's not to say that I hate it ... Apparently as a Christian I can be accepted as I am so maybe I could be White [giggles] ... that is not really my problem.

Rebecca further explains how fractious notions of race can be especially where her experience of sexual abuse is being negated as 'not Black'. While she is expressing her agency in identifying 'as a Christian first' where she may be accepted as White, she is also explaining the pressures of being charged with racial betrayal for her aesthetic tastes and behaviour. For Rebecca, these proscriptions are attempts to negate her lived experiences of abuse. Identification with a racial category for the research participants was complexly contingent with past experiences of racism, disavowal of gendered notions about Blackness and Black culture when these denied recognition of experiences of violence and abuse, as well as pride in their cultural heritage (see also Hall, 1991; Noble, 2005; Phoenix and Bhavnani, 1994). Discussions about racialisation revealed how the women made connections between multiple ways in which they experienced negation. The phrase 'not Black enough' is even defined by way of negation. This would in effect make this state of being a double negation. The phenomenology of Blackness is a phenomenology of spatial restriction and negation where the 'I can' of classical phenomenology of capacity of bodies to act and be acted upon is replaced by the 'I cannot' where Black bodies may be governed by what they are not permitted to do (Ahmed, 2007, p.161). All of the women struggled with being excluded by racialisation both from

within their families through comments about their hair, skin tone and sexuality and through feeling negated in encounters in public spaces. Racialisation was also experienced as spatiotemporal control over their aesthetic tastes (see Ali, 2005; Noble, 2005; Tate, 2005).

For Jacinta, not being Black enough lives within her body because she embodies vulnerability and she is not from the Caribbean. Therefore she is not the right type of Black person.

Jacinta: [M]ost of them were Black, the social services, some of them were from Africa, some of them were from England ... [T]hey said [social worker] was on holiday, then you have to do all this, then you will get your house and all your dreams will come true ... I did all that and I didn't get [her son back] and I dunno if it is because I am not Caribbean? Or because I am not Black enough? I think it's the way they see you.

Ava: Do you think that the Black people who were in that position, do you think they saw you as different because you are a Black person from Africa or because of your African heritage?

Jacinta: [T]here's no one beside me and they know my story ... [T]hey know how to pick on me ... [I]f somebody was with me all the time like a partner, or like a friend or like a sister or a mum, it would have been better, because I am from Africa, or maybe because I was born here, the way I speak or the way I am. Most people, they look at me and they know that I am vulnerable straight away

Ava: Do you think you look vulnerable? Is that how you see yourself or do you think that is how they see you?

Jacinta: I was vulnerable, because I was quiet and I was scared all the time, but as I [grew] up ... I know that I've changed but, it is like you could see it and other people I've met could see it, but ... my family and all those people don't see it. I still see myself as vulnerable ... maybe it says on my forehead, or when you see this lady, just do wah'ever you like to her, pick on her ... [I]t sounds stupid, I know ... I feel like somebody has written a book about me and published it onto the web and wherever I go that person or that channel they can pick and say yes it is that one [laughs]. I feel mixed up, but I also feel like, maybe if I was different or if I become taller or if I had lots of money or was the Queen of England, they wouldn't be doing this, but obviously they are doing it for a reason and I don't know why.

Jacinta here expresses her fears that, as she had multiple foster placements and multiple experiences of violence and abuse, abused her son and lost him to social services, that everything about her is already known, not only by social services, but via the internet in ways that could be read as her experiencing mentally distress. Whether or not she feels vulnerable, vulnerability is read as bodily stigmata 'on my forehead' and her only escape is to not be in her body, be taller or be more supported by partner, friends or family, all of which she does not have.

Coy (2008), in her study with young women in prostitution, who had experienced child sexual abuse and multiple placements in local authority care, explored how these inflected women's sense of self as 'spoiled identities' (Goffman, 1963). The young women thought they were invisible as individuals, marginalised and stigmatised: 'when you go out everybody can tell' (Coy, 2008, p.1416). Jacinta feels as similar stigmatisation, and this extends to her body surface. Bodily stigmatisation through multiple experiences of violence, abuse and racialisation can contribute felt intensities of a nugatory self. For Coy (2008): '[t]hose young women who drifted into selling sex viewed themselves as survivors, feeling that they were making sensible choices to generate income and create a "somebody" from the girls they felt had been "nobody"' (p.1422). Jacinta also feels dismissed and stigmatised because of the way she speaks. In a reflective interview, one expert professional (Exp8) discussed assumptions about BAMER women and how they can be dismissed by virtue of their accents. Jacinta believes she wears bodily stigmata and embodies it through her accent, which encourages further negation. In the current study four women described being made to feel already 'wrong' by family members, even before they had consciously developed a sense of themselves as children and then engaged in processes of questioning of what they were told about themselves and how this connected with experiencing violence and abuse. Being stigmatised within limited notions of Blackness and experiencing violence and abuse exacerbates everyday burdens. Once women transgress notions of Blackness they may experience further layers of negation (see also Mason-John, 2005; Riley, 1985).

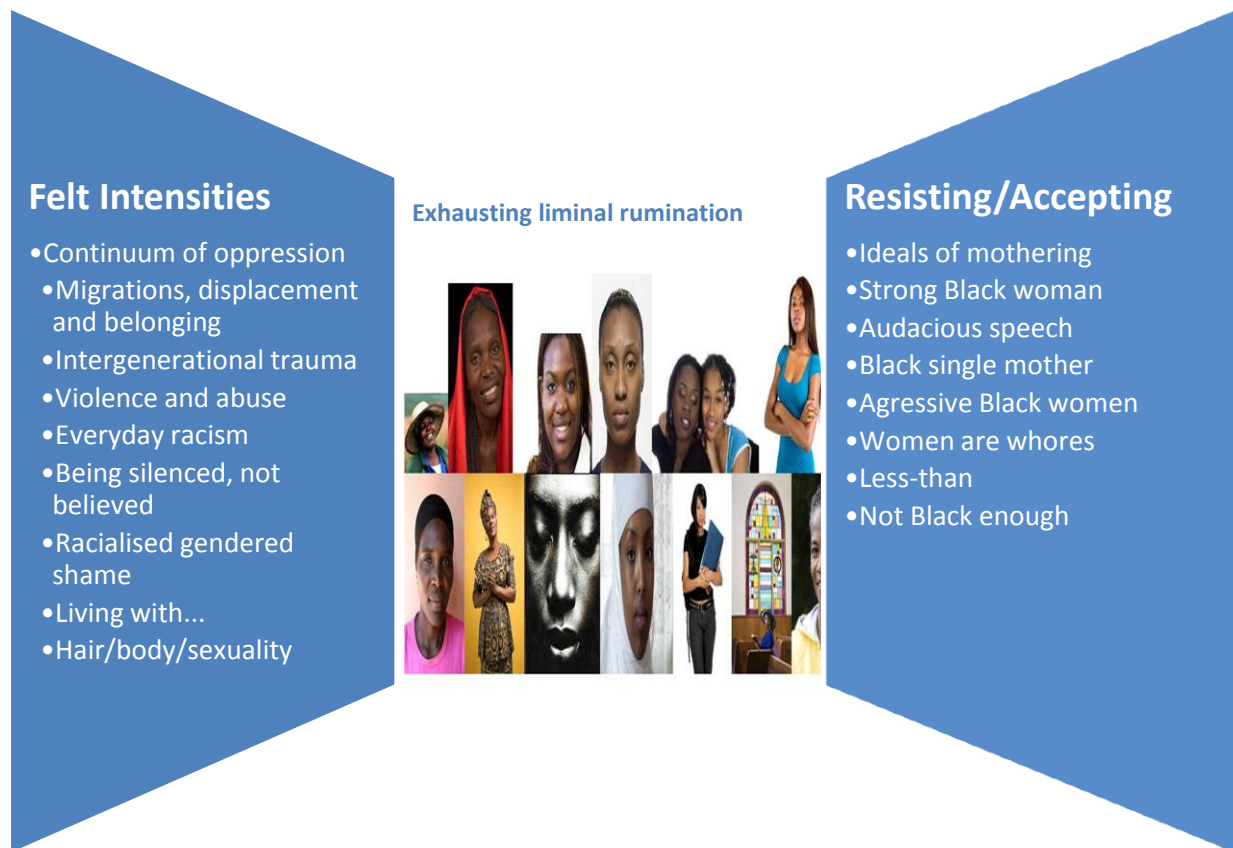
Research participants described their own bodily negotiations with becoming a self. This has been analysed as observing, investigating and testing the truisms of felt intensities of a nugatory self, experienced through feeling 'different', 'judged', 'like a minority', 'a pathology', looking 'vulnerable' in public spaces, being told negative words about their skin, body, hair or sexuality. This is also compounded by an unmet need from especially Black men to recognise abuse that may result in feelings of alienation or in Jacinta's case further abuse. Racialisation experienced through the hair and body for the women interviewed could conceal and reveal violence and abuse.

These complex and profound meanings are ones which are often hidden in interactions and in perspectives on violence and abuse as this expert interviewee makes clear.

Exp8: A lot of the times it's not safe, it's not safe for women to talk about things like that, about my identity at that level? How I view myself, my skin tone, my hair, the messages I got. Was I the darkest in my family or the fairest? And then is my experience based on that? And then, when I met my partner who was violent, did any of that come into play? ... [I]t gets more and more layered.

Figure 8 below summarises embodied burdens carried by the research participants, analysed in this chapter and the previous chapters, and will be further developed in Chapter 7. This diagram illustrates living with a continuum of oppression for the research participants, through the concept of felt intensities. Added to this, are felt intensities of projections of a nugatory self through comments or responses to their hair, body or sexuality. The photographs in the middle represent the reflective work research participants undertook in making decisions to seek help with the background of both felt intensities and resisting or accepting popular and family discourses, including those about their sexuality, gender, attractiveness and acceptable performances of Blackness.

Figure 8 Embodied burdens (3)



Reflections

This chapter has analysed social encounters where research participants were differentiated by their bodily features which left them with felt intensities of a nugatory self. Sartre (1989/1956), Fanon (2008/1952) and Ahmed (2000; 2004; 2007), were drawn on to analyse how the research participants described their lived body experiences, as a phenomenological split between being-in-the-world and a racialised gendered being-for-others, which was experienced as subtle reductions when in public spaces. This revealed multi-layered processes of othering from family and friends and within encounters in wider social spaces.

Hair/hairstyles were analysed as bodily sites for the control of gender and sexuality linked to social discourses about Black women's bodies. Participants' simultaneous lack of hair, femininity, beauty and abundance of sexuality, or the wrong type of body encouraged a process of concealment. Hair was used by women as a symbolic bodily site to discuss what has been done to them, either by others or through their own practices.

Hair/hairstyles and skin tone became one of the many ways in which women could contravene proscriptive Blackness, the final charge of which was the double negation of being regarded as 'not Black enough' for their aesthetic tastes, but especially for speaking about past experiences of violence and abuse. They lived with, were subjected to and resisted these proscriptions engaging in activities to counter or test these presumed truisms to gain a more liveable version of the self, revealing their productive responses to negation.

Thus felt intensities of a nugatory self are conceptualised here as forms of abuse and intrusion located within a continuum of oppression in Black women's lives. What's race got to do with it? Nothing, if race and racism are not features of women's lives, but something if they become the focus in public spaces and then something more for research participants who felt compelled to view their bodies, hair and skin in a negative light especially when this intersected with violence and abuse. Race and hair may be revealed to mean nothing only after they are unpacked, inspected and deconstructed, yet this process does not entirely dissipate felt intensities of a nugatory self, because women live with memories of past encounters. Engaging in discussions about the past using childhood photos may make these feelings all the more vivid and current. Hair/hairstyles, like race, may again mean nothing and everything if focus is placed upon that site of the body either at home, at the hairdressers or in wider social spaces. Carrying the burdens of racialisation, projected negation of the body, hair/hairstyles from both experiences of bodily intrusion and racialised bodily shaming were also conceptualised as felt intensities of a nugatory self. Once these felt intensities are challenged by speech or lived body experiences of pleasure and freedom in body/hair/hairstyles, the ultimate charge for three research participants was of not being Black enough.

Black women being bodily regarded as less than, or symbols of pathology, in their informal and formal spaces has been explored (see Chapter 2). The strong Black woman construct (Chapter 5) may protect from seeing or knowing a nugatory self because it positively obscures a space for personal reflection. Revealingly, every time the research participants had periods of reflection where they had to carry out fewer activities, they reported anxiety, low mood, or exhaustion. As strong Black women they can disengage with feeling wrong and focus on their aspirational selves as a protective strategy, but this was argued as at the cost of their emotions, linked to past abuse. Embodied encounters of violence and abuse, bodily reduction through comments about hair/hairstyles, skin and in home and public spaces through feeling judged were seen to influence multiple shifts in the research participants' interpretive horizons (Alcoff, 2006) of their relative self-worth to those around them (Coy, 2008).

CHAPTER 7 – (RE)ASSEMBLING THE SELF IN EVERYDAY SPACES

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of ways in which receiving help enabled the women who participated in the research to make sense of past abuse, gain comfort in being supported, validation of harm and to name and reframe abuse. It begins with a summary of their experiences of seeking help from the services they accessed, highlighting serendipitous routes and how counselling enabled women a reclamation of self. It then places focus on the role of faith or religious spaces in enabling women to cope with the emotional legacies of violence and abuse and access practical support in childhood and adulthood. The role of religious spaces in enabling women to recognise, name and make abuse visible is also analysed. Religious spaces are often analysed in feminist work on violence against women as oppressive and dogmatic, especially for racially marginalised women (Patel, 2013; Siddiqui, 2013, see also Chapter 2). However, women in this study experienced such spaces as transitively supportive.

Visual methods were also used to elicit narratives of help and the participants drew diagrams to reflect their routes to help. This chapter builds on the findings of the previous three chapters to analyse ways in which the women were engaged in rebuilding notions of the self after violence and abuse.

Eight of the nine women at some point (six in childhood, two in adulthood) either called the police, or the police were called on their behalf. This is consistent with findings from the USA that show women from all backgrounds call the police if they perceive they are in real danger (Bachman and Coker, 1995; Hutchinson, et al., 1994). Four of the six women abused as children reported that the fact that their abusers had been released without charge was not explained to them. Four women were referred to social services by neighbours, family members, or teachers as children and this helped to stop the abuse: all of the women helped by social services as children conceptualised this as being 'saved'. Rebecca, Norma and Farah expressed their relief that they, and their siblings, came to the attention of social services. Two women were raped as children (another reported that she was not yet ready to accept or name that she was raped): no police reports were made and their narratives documented the

multiple forms of abuse from multiple perpetrators. These findings are consistent with studies showing men responsible for child sexual abuse are rarely prosecuted (see Chapter 2).

Two of the five women who were physically assaulted by their partners called the police. One (Debbie) did not press charges as she did not have a bruise and did not consider herself a 'battered woman' at the time. Tricia Bent-Goodley (2004) in her study of perceptions of abuse within the context of intimate relationships with African American women, found they made distinctions between being 'hit' and getting a 'beating' in determining whether or not they would seek assistance.

Of the nine women interviewed, only two received help from specialised violence against women services. One woman's narrative bears the closest resemblance to the findings reported in Mama's (1989) study. Isabelle was severely physically beaten by two ex-partners. During the period when the abuse occurred, her children were taken into local authority care. Whenever she called the police, their responses were inflected with racism: her Black ex-partner would be arrested and she would be threatened with arrest for disturbing the peace, while her White ex-husband was verbally abusive to the police officers. Like the African and Caribbean heritage women in Mama's (1989) study, Isabelle stayed for a long period (two years) in a refuge, before she was re-housed. She also experienced being bounced between statutory agencies before she was eventually assisted by a Black-run Advice Bureau. Isabelle's help-seeking was compounded by witnessing and experiencing many years of racism. Both Isabelle and Jacinta had their children taken into care; Jacinta because she physically abused her child and attempted to take her own life and Isabelle because she was experiencing violence from a partner at the time and complied with a social worker's request that she voluntarily place her children into local authority care, effectively losing custody. She later had to negotiate with her ex-partner for access to her children (see also Thiara, 2013). Farah, the youngest of the participants also received help and had received counselling from a rape crisis centre.

Women also drew on varied sources to enable them to cope with emotional distress, including dreams, a masseuse, with most being assisted from churches at some point in their life history. All had accessed some form of help over their life course.

Serendipitous routes

The women sought any way possible to access help to reduce feelings of distress about past

abuse. An example of the serendipitous routes this might involve is Rebecca who was referred to a group for victim-survivors of abuse where she had psychotherapeutic counselling. After being alienated from her family as a result of speaking about past sexual abuse, Rebecca 'dabbled with the dark arts' (witchcraft). This enabled her to form friendships with others for a period and when this was no longer beneficial, she began attending church. Through attending churches she accessed counselling and when she no longer felt the need to attend church, she accessed online religious sites that discuss ways of living with experiences of abuse for Christian women. Farah also used the internet to access services and was eventually referred to a feminist oriented violence against women project. She was the only one out of nine participants who had long term counselling from this type of service. The internet was suggested by a violence support professional (Exp5) as a means through which African and Caribbean heritage women can avoid racist treatment or stigma. Online support groups provide women the space and anonymity to talk about their experiences of violence with a sense of safety, being believed, not judged and understood by a group of women with similar experiences: they can play a role in women then contacting off-line support services (Berg, 2014).

Patricia 'fell into' human rights and violence against women advocacy and through this has been able to gain new insights into her experience of sexual abuse. She also receives support from a trusted friend. Jacinta started writing poetry about her experiences of abuse and performs monologues in amateur theatre. In Taylor's (2002) study with African American women, reading affirmative words, poetry and creating art works was found to assist the women in living with the legacies of past abuse. These modes of seeking help and support were individual, dynamic and purposive. Women in this study made connections to individuals, practices and concepts, to enable them to deal with the legacies of past abuse, make decisions about ending violence and to access the support to do so wherever they could (see also Tamboukou, 2004).

Participants also self-helped via engaging with popular or academic psychology literature. Four women also mentioned the role of the television programmes in helping them to make connections with, for example, normative mother-daughter relationships as was the case with Evelyn or intimate relationships in general. Jacinta below describes the role of African films for her.

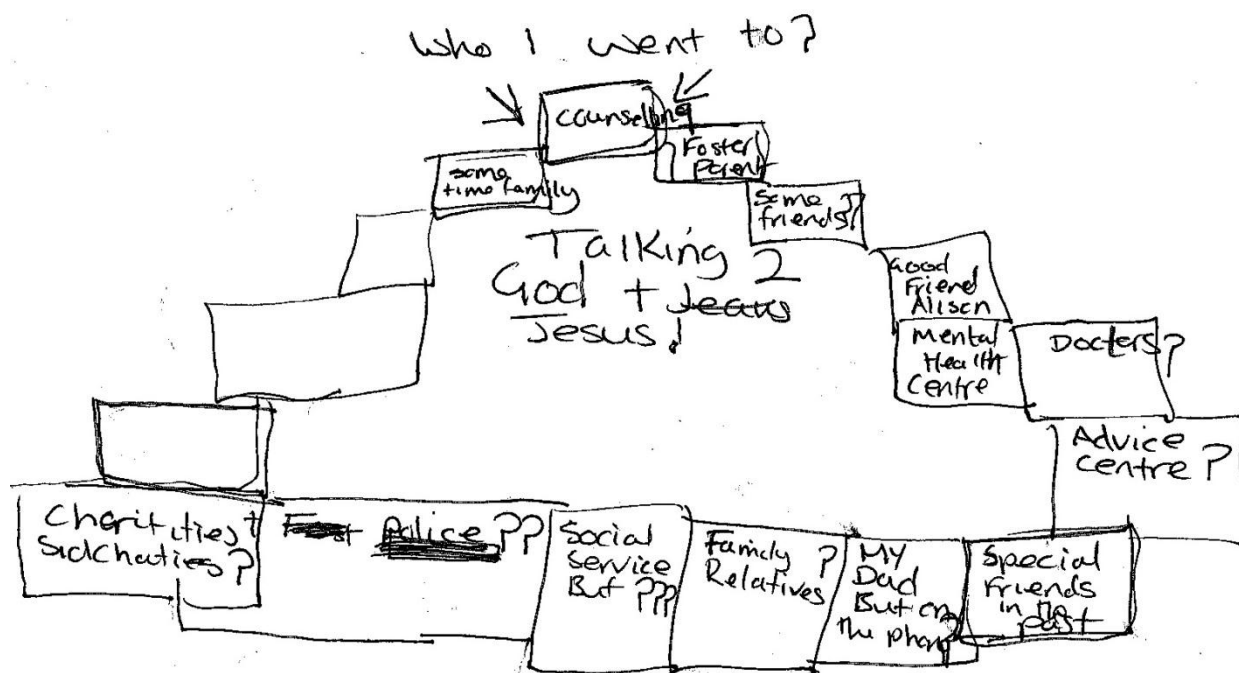
Jacinta: [A]nd when I'm watching it [African film], some of it really gets to me, because of ... the topic in the film and sometimes I have to turn it off, or

forward it, or rewind it and then I'm always thinking, why do people make these films? They must have made them for a reason. So when I'm not sleeping because the neighbours are like making noise like every night, so I turn my TV up really loud ... If I hear it all around me, then I'm okay and I enjoy it, it relaxes me ... when I'm getting all the noise in the middle of the night, or at two o'clock ... or four o'clock in the morning, once I start to watch this, I feel a little bit together again.

Turning up her television really loud to close out the noise enables Jacinta space to imagine the self she would like to become. She then describes the function of the space as making her 'feel a bit together again'. In connection to films Jacinta also brought a photo of actress Whoopi Goldberg who symbolises, for her, overcoming abuse and an acceptance that Jacinta has not yet managed to reach. Television programmes also enabled women to be momentarily or periodically immersed in the imaginary to distract from the noise of their thoughts of past abuse.

Eight of the nine women received a range of talking therapies, from short term GP referred counselling, occupational therapy, to long-term group therapy for victim-survivors of child sexual abuse, psychoanalytic psychotherapy, Christian or religious based counselling and feminist empowerment counselling. These were dynamic and serendipitous processes, in the sense that there were points when, whilst women felt distressed, they were not explicitly looking for help. For example Debbie went to a masseuse and in the process felt able to start talking about past abuse, or Evelyn (see below) who was explaining someone else's experience of abuse, but in that process got recognition for her own experiences. Figure 9 below created by Jacinta is an exemplar of this.

Figure 9 Jacinta's dynamic and serendipitous routes to help



Jacinta depicts the help and support she has received, the question marks '??' represent sources of help that have been both supportive and obfuscating. For example the doctors were helpful in referring her to counselling, but the counselling is always short-term which involves a constant re-telling of her experiences. The extent that services, friends and relatives have supported her is also depicted. The empty boxes can be viewed as possible future sources of help and assistance. In the middle of the Jacinta's help seeking pathway is her relationship to God/Jesus which transcends all of her other sources of help and is omnipresent, at times her only source of support. The role of faith is further elucidated in the coming sections. Women's help-seeking pathways represented attempts to access support and make sense of what had happened to them. The next section presents an analysis of the research participants' lived-body experiences (see Chapter 2) of receiving help where the spaces for these recollections, and the way in which the recollections were received by the listeners, became key influences on notions of self.

Becoming self through counselling

Psychologist Carol Gilligan (1995) in her conception of a 'feminist ethics of care' theorised individuals' sense of self as relational and argued that patriarchal families socialise women

and girls to be selfless or care without reciprocity. Richie (1996) discusses the consequences of this for African American women who experience violence from partners and attempt to hold on to such relationships. Coy (2009) notes that maintaining relational attachments for the young women victim-survivors she interviewed was also not beneficial to them, as they misread any connection whether harmful or not, as valuable. After experiencing a rape by a stranger, feminist philosopher Susan Brison (1997; see also Benton-Rushing, 1993) theorised that sexual violence not only disrupts a women's sense of safety in being in the world, it also disrupts this relationally in that the victim-survivor must learn anew how to trust others in order to live again in the world. Participants in this project described varied ways in which they opened up to the world with assistance from counsellors. Therapy enabled them to identify their experiences as abuse and be able to talk about them, assisted in preparing them for parenting and three women cited talking therapy as preventing severe mental distress.

Sharing testimonies of abuse and violence externalises blame and foregrounds this phenomena as a social injustice towards many women (Brison, 1997; Campbell, et al., 2009; Herman, 1994; Jordan, 2008). Through talking and connecting with women sharing similar histories, women may enter into political activism to end violence and abuse (Kelly, 1988; Taylor, 2002), or paid employment and volunteering. This was true for three of the nine women.

Farah: There are people out there that do really great things for free and you don't have to do anything for them. I feel like it makes me a person, a better person. At first my therapist became like a best friend or the best thing about it is I don't care about how they judge me [laughs] ... I remember one of them told me I will be able one day to have that kind of relationship with a friend and be able to speak to them about this [sexual abuse and rape] and then it actually happened and then one told me that I'll be able to talk about my abuse without [breathes in] breaking into pieces and that happened.

Becoming a person, being able to talk without feeling overwhelmed, judged or blamed was a common theme for all of the women. In the above extract the assistance received by Farah enabled her to move beyond the fear of being judged by her therapist, to talk about past abuse and this extended to opening up to a trusted friend. The women reformulated experiences of violence and abuse, as inerasable features of their life histories, in order to cope with the legacies.

When women recollect experiences of violence and abuse, especially when they have experienced multiple forms, these narratives can appear almost fictional in a manner that troubles the listeners sense of a just or safe world (Brison, 1997). Jacinta explained how she can be disbelieved by counsellors who ask 'are you sure that happened?'. Throughout her narrative she attempts to come to terms with feeling 'like an alien', and a 'nobody' as a result. A similar account was provided by Evelyn.

Evelyn: I think when you say really traumatic things to people ... why survivors find it really difficult to share because there's the hope that people will hear and the fear that they won't and you could feel totally unheard and rejected again. When you share those kinds of experiences, that are so horrible and the human psyche ... I think it's so hard for people to get their head around ... [A]fter you've told, you're often left with a silence, and that silence is painful, even if it's like a warm silence, or if it is a cold silence, it's still silence [laughs]. That's how it felt, she listened, but then you got the silence.

Evelyn calls forward Spivak's (2000) testimonial ethics for hearers, to discuss the peculiar silence left after speaking about abuse. It is a silence that evokes feelings of rejection and 'is painful' perhaps even prompting further silencing. In becoming self, women may encounter struggles with how their testimonies of violence and abuse are received (see also Ahmed, 2010a; Roy, 2008; Spivak, 2000; Sisley, 2011). Below Evelyn describes how she felt heard on one occasion when discussing a report of child sexual abuse that had occurred to a member of her church.

Evelyn: I was bringing it to the staff meeting ... and I got that silence and it was really painful and I started crying because that was so unexpected, I just couldn't collect myself and there was another [person] who is part of our team, but is not often particularly outspoken, but at the end of the meeting, I didn't know whether he actually could tell, he came over and he put his arms around me and gave me a big hug. He said, 'I was dying to do that all through the meeting'. He got it, even though it wasn't directly about me, but he got something and he responded to me. I never did get that kind of help from all the people that I told, I got it from my therapist ... they did listen to me, but I felt listened to but not heard.

The above extract demonstrates an occasion where the testimony of abuse was given a

response Evelyn thought was appropriate. For Evelyn the type of knowing that was shared between her and the church member was a rare occurrence in her experience of talking about past abuse with friends and counsellors/therapists where she had felt 'listened to, but not heard'. Friends and counsellors, not intimate partners, have been found to provide good emotional support for women after a rape (Ahrens, et al., 2009). However, self-protective measures of the listener to testimonies of violence and abuse may act as barriers to an empathic interaction (Ahrens, 2006; Brison, 1997) and this appeared to extend to counselling professionals in Evelyn and Jacinta's narratives. Bearing the silence or the shocked responses from counsellors to testimonies of abuse and violence also meant that both Evelyn and Jacinta were left with uncomfortable feelings (see also Ahmed, 2010a). This was also experienced by Norma, who felt that after speaking about abuse to an occupational counsellor, that she was 'opened up' and left feeling vulnerable. I also felt and witnessed uncomfortable feelings during the points in the interviews where women spoke about the abuse, where they avoided eye contact, whispered and appeared nervous and uneasy (see Chapter 3), reflecting the fear of being judged. Social denial of the high prevalence of violence and abuse influences popular opinions, that construct such behaviours as aberrant, and not everyday occurrences (Bolen, 2001; Brown and Walklate, 2012; Kelly, 2012), thus closing off avenues for being heard and recognised.

Additionally, women may receive help in the form of counselling for their emotional distress, but the abuse and violence may not be framed within wider political contexts by the counsellor. This was raised during the interviews with expert professionals (Exp1, Exp4). Herman (1994) notes that therapy can mimic the secrecy that is a tactic used by men who wish to perpetrate abuse, thereby depoliticising the legal, community and public relevance of such behaviours. Politicising and speaking about experiences of violence and abuse in a more public forum can serve to alleviate some of the legacy of shame. Receiving apolitical counselling may be insufficient for women to externalise the blame for violence and abuse (Armstrong, 1996; Brison, 1997; Jordan, 2012): such was the case for most of the women in this study.

Having a faith

Eight of the nine participants cited faith or spirituality as important to them. Seeking salvation is linked to religiosity among African and Caribbean heritage women (see Chapter 2). In the expert interviews, one violence against women professional (Exp5) articulated that: 'as a people we [Black people] do God. We do God big style'. She also noted that churches have

been instrumental in Black anti-racist and liberation struggles (see Chapter 2). Two further expert interviewees (Exp4, Exp8) cited churches as both sources of support and help as well as systems that can entrap women in violent situations (see also Fortune and Enger, 2006). Both argued that churches or religious institutions, where they are considered as helpful for women, should be included as part of the work that is done with women who seek help for violence/abuse. Another of the strands of argument from one of the experts (Exp8), surrounded African and Caribbean heritage women's faith not being taken as seriously as that of South Asian women and this pointed to ways in which the role of faith in women's lives could be made invisible or less important.

All of the women used the word 'saved' in their life history interviews to describe being rescued from either death, rape, or sexual exploitation, by social services, mental health services and by God. Six cited their belief in God as an intrinsic source of support and assistance (see also Chapter 2).

Rebecca: Getting to where I am now, changing my opinions about what I want to do with my life and who I want to be, I attribute that to God, because before God, there was psychology. I do look at psychology, try to understand why people behave the way they do and why I behaved the way that I did. I realised that certain things had happened to me and I never really knew about it [laughs]. I never really realised the effects that they had had on my life. I think that my greatest achievement at the moment is having more confidence, having a better esteem, a better value of myself. Yes there are times where I feel, oh I hate this world, I wanna die now, but thank God they are minimal now ... In the past I was just self-destructive. I did lots of crazy stuff and now, I'm still a little bit self-destructive, I'm not destroying myself or harming myself the way I used to harm myself.

Ava: Can you give me an example of what would that be ... ?

Rebecca: Well not treating my body right, just allowing different people to take advantage of me ... me looking at my body as just a sex object, something that is to be used as an object by men and by other people. I didn't do anything like cutting ... [W]hen I was in my twenties, people were telling me forget about relationships, just go out there have fun, screw around. [T]here was one person in particular that I did meet, I would say he took advantage of me in some ways I was stuck, kind of idle

in that relationship for four years, there was no sex involved, it was just other stuff.

Rebecca's immersion in psychology literature, witchcraft and an intimate relationship which she now sees as 'damaging' and finding solace in being 'saved' by God have enabled her to respond to and make sense of her experiences of past abuse. More importantly, being 'saved' meant that she received an alternative (Christian) perspective on her life experiences and could exercise her agency in a manner she now considers as more empowering. Seven of the nine women, regardless of their beliefs, received help from churches. Neighbours, et al. (1998) cite churches as first sources of help for African American women. While churches may not have been first sources of help in this study, some received help as children through their parents' connections to churches or through their own beliefs as adults.

Rebecca elsewhere in her narrative used the term 'forgiveness' to infer the abuse is not forgotten; she resists the urge to seek revenge although the process is challenging and enraging, yet somehow liberating (see also Smith, 2005). In the expert interviews (Exp4, Exp5, Exp8) the theme of forgiveness was discussed as a particularly difficult process for Black women who are religious, who experience guilt because they are not ready or willing to forgive their abusers.

Spirituality was also a source drawn on to incite action. Below Debbie describes how during a relationship with her (now) ex-partner, he had had a child while pressuring her to not get pregnant (see Chapter 4).

Ava: You mentioned ... that faith keeps you going ... Could you explain a little bit more about that?

Debbie: Well I've always been a spiritual person and I've always relied on God for help. I grew up in a Christian home so I knew that had to be my source and it has been my source, because when I had the conflict and people going on, one night I said 'but Lord how can this be? I am with this person, he say he loves me and yet he's not wanting to be with me' and I dreamt that night that I saw him with a woman and a child, clear as day ... and I said who is this then? And he said 'this is my niece', but then he never looked at me ... in my eyes ... I said 'why are you not looking at me?' But that was one part of the dream and another part came when he was going to [country name] for work and in his luggage was an envelope. So

I took the envelope and I kept it, because it was addressed to him ... and what got my attention was, the girl's name was the name of my daughter. It was a bit mesmerising ... The child was already born two months before my daughter [month] ... I had all this information and I kept it in my head for a whole month.

Debbie cites her spirituality, God and dreams as sources she used to make connections to gain knowledge of her partner's infidelities. Despite both the dreams and knowledge of her partner's child and infidelities occurring at different periods, they gradually coalesce into a known fact that she eventually acts upon.

For Ellen a supernatural encounter that was experienced as if in a dream gave her comfort and assurance that she would be alright after experiencing multiple burglaries.

Ellen: I had a visitor here ... I was in bed one night, and this is where things started turning for me. I was sleeping and I woke up and I went to use the bathroom and I went back to bed and you know when you're in that state where you're not sleeping, but you're not awake, I just felt ... [someone] on my bed ... I'm like [says child's name] ... I turned round and there was nobody there and then I got really scared, so I started to kick, the weight shifted and then I turned back over and my eyes opened, and then I felt the weight come back. I felt someone and I thought, it's my guardian angel, and I just fell asleep, with someone at the bottom of my bed. It is the first visit that I can remember as an adult ... and from then I started to feel stronger. From then I started to feel protected. From then I started to feel as though everything is gonna be alright.

Ellen's 'visitor' assured her that she would be protected, renewed her lost faith and strengthened her resolve to live through the intrusions of the burglaries. Having a faith as a companionate, supportive relationship throughout their life course was described by three women who through regular church attendance, accessed ongoing support and renewed connections to others through fellowship and to a higher being, God or the Creator. Evelyn in Figure 10 below also describes the supportive presence that has kept her going.

Figure 10 Grasping joy



Evelyn When I'm okay I have to remind myself, or make a concerted effort to hold on to joy, to make things okay, but actually when I'm challenged ... that's the time when I can actually feel joy [laughs] ... and that's been my saving grace, it's like having that feeling in the background, I don't know where it came from, but it's been there from when I was a child. I'd probably would've been more on the mental health side ... But there's been this other presence within my life that whenever things have gotten really bad ... it kind of kicks in as a ray of light, kind of comes and reminds me ... [W]hen, I'm feeling okay it seems as that's down to me and I have to stay positive, think positive, say positive things, but then when I'm not feeling okay, I know that it's not down to me and that kicks in.

Ava: Do you think then that ... is it related to faith, is it related to the spiritual?

Evelyn: It's about the spiritual, but I try not to put conventional words on it, when I'm pensive or when I'm in a conversation, and people are grappling too much, I say it is a mystery. I don't need to conceptualise it, but it is summin that you can't grasp [laughs].

Evelyn also produced a photo of the altar at her church to relay how attending church enables a spatiotemporal embodied experience of connection to self and others and the

transcendent nature of her faith (see also Bell and Mattis, 2000). This is in contrast to the disconnection and disembodiment that she experienced as a child.

Evelyn: I felt that I needed a place where I can to pay homage to that side of me, because there is something inside that's so strong, you know that song [?] [by Labi Siffre] ... when I hear that, it always ... signifies [laughs] ... and it took me a little time to find the church that I go to. Any old church won't do, because I can't pay homage to the spirit if I'm in a place where there's all this hypocrisy, because then I'd rather be at home, wherever I am God is ... [S]ometimes your faith can get stronger and takes on more meaning when you share it. With someone else, because something takes hold of you and I'm able to at the church that I found because ... wherever humans are there's gonna be hypocrisy ... but there's not too much of it in the church [where she goes] [laughs]. So I'm not distracted and I'm still able to have that personal relationship, individual relationship, that is not part of the collective ... [T]hat's why that is important to me ... The altar is powerful, to me the altar is the heart, when I go up to the altar, it's like I'm going up and doing something that it is in my heart [laughs] ... I think things are more powerful, you know that saying 'whenever one or more are gathered in my name'. I wanna make use of that power and that energy that's ... I'm glad that I can have my individual space, that feeling that I don't need to really conform with what the larger society dictates.

Having a faith or being spiritual enabled eight of the nine women space to consider their roles or contribution to the world as individuals and expand in transcendent strength somewhat related to, but distinct from, the strong Black woman construct described in Chapter 5. Faith, spirituality or religious practices enabled the women to both reconnect to self and others, through space and objects (see Reavey and Brown, 2009) and can be viewed as a constant renewal of a becoming self.

Visible abuse through spiritual readings

One of the ways in which these connections were crystallised is through the women's encounters with church members who they felt could 'read' sexual abuse from their bodies. This meant that without the women telling them, church members somehow knew about their past experiences of abuse. This was a particularly powerful encounter for four of the

women who thought that their abuse had gained public visibility, given their experience of being silenced when they had attempted to speak as children. Church members were viewed as able to both see and share the women's pain described by Rebecca as 'crying out in the wilderness', in the manner she thought secular counselling could not.

Patricia: I was baptised ... another thing related to the sexual abuse, I was having a lot of bad dreams, I was feeling like I can't breathe, got panic attacks in my dreams and feeling quite frightened a lot of the time ... I went to church ... I had a friend who ... used ... to go and get prayed for ... and someone said to me when I was in [church] ... 'I know what's happened to you, and I believe ... we know that something has happened to you ... you were sexually abused'. I was just so relieved to hear someone else believe me and that was a Christian person ... I never said anything, I don't know how they knew ... I do still believe in God and have that feeling that I might want to go back at some point, but the church has to have something that grabs me ... I'm not gonna go if I don't enjoy it.

Ava Does that make you feel that many other people, knew what happened?

Patricia I used to think ... if they said that about me, did they say that about him [her abuser], because he was in another church, because they think that he's done things like that, that's one thing that God knows wah happened, I know wah happened and he knows what he did and whether people believe or not ... I think I can hold on to that.

Jacinta: I like going to church and praying ... my spirit is telling me ... and I can't cope with what's going on there, or the way they talk down to me or their attitude or their gossiping or their pressuring me, I just feel God, I can't cope. Lots of people say, 'oh don't let that worry you', but for me, I can't cope. I've got to look around, or I've got to go to another church. Now there's one lady ... [W]hen I was younger and it was at that church near where I moved to with my foster parents, when I used to live with them ... She is a spiritual lady, she has a gift from God. Now when I went to give her my testimony, she believed that things had happened to me, she said you suffered abuse as a child ... she said, is it something to do with my family? ... [W]hen I saw her the other day, I just mentioned one or two things and from those two things that I told her, she was experiencing,

more or less what I told her has happened so I didn't say any more words, she came to the conclusion and now she's telling me that I need to go to a church, or do something to make it go away.

While attending church can be a source of pressure, gossip and condescension, Jacinta also gains reassurance that the abuse happened from a church member. Some of Jacinta's past experiences of abuse have been shared with the church member, but for others, abuse appeared to be known by 'spiritual' church members without explicit communication. This knowledge of abuse appeared to originate from the church members' own spiritual enlightenment and also served the function of externalising legacies of abuse. Spiritual readings of abuse were experienced as powerful and transformative for some participants. The recognition was, however, conflicting in that Patricia's abuser who was also in a church was not made accountable in that setting. Five women also felt judged and reported changing churches, or periods of attending, not attending and resuming church attendance.

Two women reported experiencing recurrent and distressing nightmares about past sexual abuse.

Rebecca: I was having some weird dreams and I said to her [psychoanalyst], 'look I'm having dreams ... I'm doing this and I'm doing that to someone and we're doing [sexual] things to each other' and she'd be like, 'well that's normal' and I'm thinking well, that's not normal at all. When I went to church and they said to me [adopts a female Caribbean accent] 'that is a deeman [demon], come on leh we say to the deeman dem ged out' [usual voice] [giggles] and that's it. Or you'll tell them about a dream and they'll say, 'that's a leftover from your past and we are going to pray about it and we are going give you counselling' ... you got this lady she would be like [adopts a high pitched voice] 'oh yeh no it's normal, it's normal' [usual tone] and it wasn't normal, it was stressing the hell out of me ... I mean I never felt like I was talking to her about the abuse, I was talking to her about the shyness and everything and it was like segued into discussing the abuse.

Rebecca's psychoanalyst counselled that her nightmares were a normal aftereffect of sexual abuse. Church members offered an alternative perspective: that the abuse was demonic, which was validating for Rebecca (see also Cinnerella and Lowenthal, 1999). Having another

person recognise the distress and offering relief through prayer enabled Rebecca to let go of the nightmares. Another interpretation is that the sexual abuse was being reformulated as a supernatural or demonic possession that absolves perpetrators' responsibility. Spiritual readings provided positive reinforcement that the abuse, previously hidden and silenced (see Chapter 5) could be seen. These findings contrast with a number of prior studies (see Chapter 2) that have found women unable to speak about past experience of abuse to church members. Readings of past sexual abuse by church members enabled recognition and relief from distress. Felt intensities can also be seen to be spatiotemporally connected with the spiritual as research participants were not discouraged from expressing their emotions, as in Chapter 5, and appeared to be relieved of judgements to some extent within church spaces.

At periods in their lives, the kindness from church members and the social connections made, was also a common finding. Farah, who is Muslim, received practical support from a Christian support organisation.

Farah: This is also another Christian organisation who paid a little amount towards me staying in the hostel ... [A] friend from church, and her husband helped, bought my fridge. They paid for the delivery, I don't even know them well enough for them to even do that. They prayed for me a lot ... and I actually feel my wish came true from the prayers.

On the other hand, four women noted that church members were also judgemental and gossipy. Norma recounted that as a child she and her siblings being treated by church members with condescension and hypocrisy.

Norma: I don't think it's good within a church, to be ... running other people down, when you yourself have made mistakes, actually you are not supposed to be judging in a church. You should be able to rise above that. I think a lot of this determines people's judgements, it's always good if I'm sitting in the front of church and you're in the back benches of church, I'm bigger than you ... it was also a West Indian church ... there was all this ... silliness ... ideologies and ideas... And they spent a lot of time cussin' other people ... whose daughter was pregnant, whose daughter wasn't, mistakes happen, they happen in life. We used to have a man who used to come up and he would talk to me and he would say, 'you know you are being naughty', because my mom was always complaining about

me ... not thinking, well why is she being naughty? And it wasn't hard to see why, to me, I was only a child and I could see why ... they would say to my mother, 'oh lets pray with you'. I think though, God, well the Lord help's those who help themselves, we needed practical things, we needed a hot meal ... we were starving.

Church spaces frequently enabled the women to feel connected to others, get practical support and kindness, recognition for past abuse, and relief from distress. However, women could also feel judged within these spaces prompting conflicting and transitory church attendance. Church or faith spaces enabled abuse to be visible for some, which was in contrast to family responses to speaking about abuse in Chapter 5 and racialised responses to women in public spaces in Chapter 6. Thus some women felt more freedom to express their emotions, which in church spaces may be linked to spiritual practices, and therefore more acceptable to display (see Hochschild, 1983).

Self in everyday spaces

This section charts the women's attempts at rebuilding their lives after past experiences of violence and abuse. Migration or journeys from abuse and violence both geographically and emotionally were prominent themes. Emotionally, the ability to move and create their own families was important for those who were parents. Most of the photos Norma brought to discuss her current life contained themes of movement from abuse. Below she describes a photo that she took of a road, which is not pictured for reasons of confidentiality.

Norma: I think what I'm trying to signify here is just how far ... I've come from where I was born and raised ... so to anybody, they will look at this picture and just think, this is a picture of any road in England, but to me it's so:0 far from where I was born and raised and everything that's happened ... within the space of time, having gone abroad, worked abroad ... qualified as a professional, getting married, having kids ... [S]o much happened to me in that space of time and yes it looks like any other road, but it isn't, it's just so far ... from where I began.

Norma here describes a complex set of migrations from literal physical spaces, emotional spatial migration: feeling love and having children and socioeconomic migration. Most women described not being allowed to occupy the spaces of their childhood homes in a

manner that would enable them a sense of safety and security and how that had impacted on their embodiment in spaces over time. Thus the impact of abuse and violence was the not just on the body, it was also on the capacity of the embodied self to feel attached to spaces. Interestingly elsewhere in her narrative, Norma explains that she tries not to attach too much to spaces or people, because she fears losing them, which she attributes to the neglect she experienced as a child. The symbolism of a journey to a homely space of safety is also offered by Isabelle.

Isabelle: I'm happy that I've got a nice home, my children are all well and grandchildren ... I'm happy where I'm at now, able to ... do my exercises and keep my mental state stable and helping others and going to meetings, I go to centres as well, mental health centres. I join women's groups, I'm very much keen on gardening and very much into anything to do with holistic living, I like all that.

This description is in stark contrast to her past experiences of racism and violence from partners and the isolation that characterised her life. Symbols of safety represented current themes within their home spaces as explained by Farah's photo of a door in Figure 11.

Ava: What did you feel like, staying in this room?

Farah: It was my first ever room with a key and that was the first ever room that I was staying in that was permanent. I just felt comfortable and if I don't wanna wake up, never wake up, [jokingly] that was my plan and it worked out really well.

Ava: Yeah [laughs] so could you lock the door as well.

Farah: Yes you could, you could lock the door, it was my own door, I didn't decorate it, I didn't go overboard with it, but it was nice.

Figure 11 Room with a key



Having a lock on her bedroom door for the first time in her life was enough to enable Farah a sense of a self that was safe from sexual abuse and rape. Farah offered that the sparseness of the space behind the door that was minimally decorated was less important because 'you could lock the door, it was my own door' (see also Frohmann, 2005). Below Patricia discusses the future spaces (Figure 12) she would like to visit now that she feels safer within her life and she is opening up more to the world.

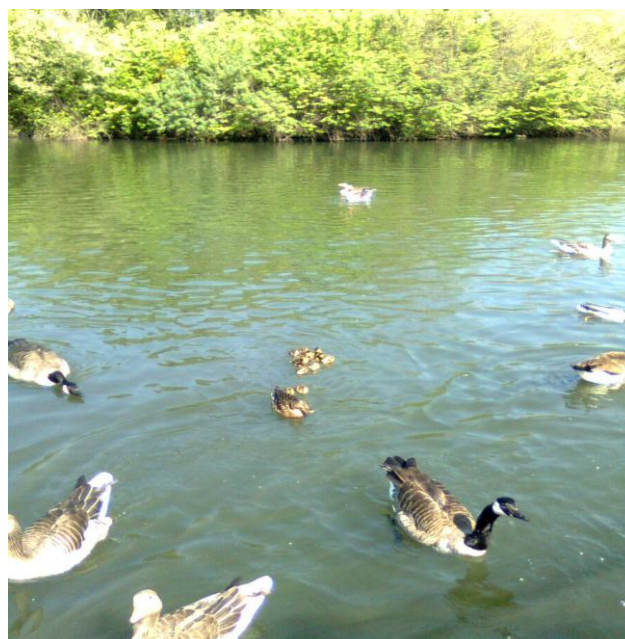
Patricia: So basically at this time, my son's education is important, so is mine, my learning and his. I wanna travel with my son at some point, on my own and with my son, just like short, little holidays and just to do more of that ... I'm just tryin' na get myself out and be more sociable and learn more about the world.

Figure 12 Get myself out



For Patricia 'trying to be more sociable' is thus an ongoing process. Spaces also enabled the women to periodically assemble the self. For example the discussion below is about the photograph Evelyn took of a pond (Figure 13).

Figure 13 Balance and nourishment



- Ava: And it also sounds like a little bit like, in the places and the spaces where you go to feel peace, that it is also about you as an individual.
- Evelyn: Ah-huh
- Ava: And nothing else
- Evelyn: [R]emember I said about standing on the inside and feeling on the outside? ... At the same time, I think those spaces makes it quite validating, the fact that even though I do feel alone and on the outside, how those spaces balance me out and nourish me ... I get quite involved in relationships from the beginning. So I actually need those spaces to get back to me, because even if I was just alone ... That may be kind of a defence system, but it's not, it's actually kind of a balancing act [laughs]
- Ava: So you go there to get nourishment?
- Evelyn: Yeah.

Evelyn had previously discussed feeling quite left out of family activities as a result of experiencing childhood sexual abuse (see Chapter 6). Perhaps Evelyn thought the importance of her alienation within her family was not adequately discussed, or that there was more she wanted to capture about that feeling. In the interview, Evelyn refocused my attention to that earlier discussion to develop the theme, weaving social alienation to self-alienation to indicate how she uses the space in the photograph 'to get back to me'. Through the use of her photo, Evelyn explores how she feels like an outsider in her family, but is able to go inside herself within the outside space near the pond, where she feels less alienated due to the calming nature of the space. Outdoor spaces featured less prominently across the women's life history interviews (see also Del Busso, 2011). Rebecca photographed a launderette, a space which enabled her to reflect on her life, be alone, yet safe. Debbie wanted to photograph the mountains she visits on holidays to the Caribbean reinforcing that the lived body experiences of outdoor spaces may be somewhat restricted as Ellen explains in her description of Figure 14.

Figure 14 A certain freedom



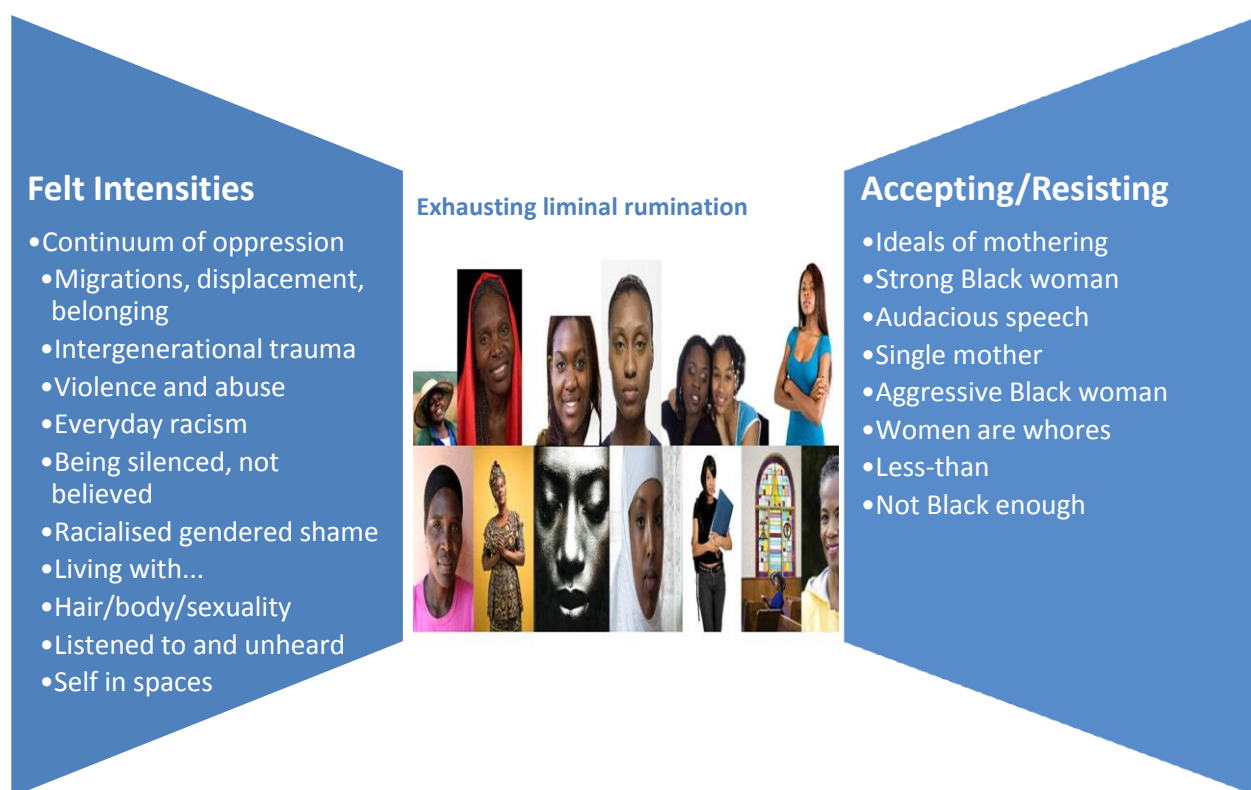
Ellen: I love spending time with [child] ... [We] are happiest when we're out. We always are. It's almost like we become different people when we're out, it gives us a certain freedom that I love and when I'm in these sorts of environments, I do feel free. I do not feel restricted whatsoever. I mean how can you not in that [points to photo]? In that sort of environment ... it was a gorgeous, gorgeous, long weekend, because you had this side of it and a ten-minute drive down the road you've got the beaches, they are absolutely stunning in [place], really, really lovely. Now this is a different side, we talked earlier about being a Black woman, I go to these places and people are not looking at you like they're rude, rudely or anything, but obviously they don't often see your type out there. I'm not saying they say it, but you know that, and then it's for me then to break down that barrier, once I open my mouth and they know then that you're from London, that then just sparks up a conversation and it goes forth from that, but I just turn these sorts of situations to my advantage.

Ellen's explanation of the freedom she feels in the open space depicted is bracketed by responses to her racial embodiment which she refers back to an earlier discussion about being a Black woman. While Ellen describes her skill at managing the intrusions of racialisation in her embodiment in space, her extract reflects restrictions that occur in public spaces for individuals who are visible members of minoritised groups (see Chapter 6). The women's use of their photographs to illustrate their embodiment in space and place documented the work they actively undertook to fashion lives different to, and better than,

past experiences of violence and abuse. Not all of the women have created, or found, the spaces they desire. Engaging the research participants in creative tasks was revealing not only of how they used or felt embodied in spaces, but also of their physical and emotional distance from the times and spaces where violence and abuse occurred.

Figure 15 below summarises the embodied burdens carried by the research participants. The completed diagram illustrates the struggles and challenges for the research participants, through the concept of felt intensities of living with a continuum of oppression. Added to this, and analysed in this chapter, is being unheard when receiving help and negotiating the body/self in everyday spaces. The photographs in the middle represent the reflective work research participants undertook in making decisions to seek help with the background of both felt intensities and resisting or accepting popular and family discourses.

Figure 15 Embodied burdens (4)



Reflections

Calling the police enabled research participants to stop the abuse and violence, but failed to sanction the behaviour of perpetrators. Whilst involvements with social services went against family and cultural norms, women reported being 'saved' as children. However, as adults they experienced service professionals' perceptions of Black victim-survivors negatively implicating their parenting thus felt betrayed by social workers in two cases. Receiving counselling and having a faith enabled further access to support, action, and connectedness to self, for some through transcendental encounters. Such spaces may enable temporary periods where speech can be heard and not responded to as audacious, recognition that abuse happened and relief from feeling reduced. Having church members read that women had been abused as children also gave recognition and visibility to past experiences that offered comfort and reassurance for periods, which points to church spaces as important for the research participants. However, churches were also experienced as judgemental and gossipy.

Women gained support and insight about the abuse or violence, and simultaneously sought to reclaim and expand concepts of self. Help seeking and receiving were analysed as

spatiotemporal combinations of serendipity, people, objects, practices, faith, dreams, interventions, encounters and concepts. This level of creativity and dynamism stands in contrast, not only to how they were mistreated, abused or violated, but also the lack of support and encouragement from family and friends when they gave testimony of their experiences (see Chapter 5). Living with a continuum of oppression (see Chapter 4) was found to be affectively and bodily challenging, and women were in processes of accepting an inerasable past. This everyday activism laid the grounds for future possibilities for the participants and their children evident in their accounts of rebuilding their lives.

In a re-telling of the Osirian drama (Kwei Armah, 1995) Isis has to reassemble the body of Osiris that has been shattered into a thousand pieces along the Nile. Research participants used photographs to illustrate both the fragmentation of self through the continuum of oppression and periodic or daily (re)assembling self through spatial practices. Thus Osiris' dissembled body represents the fragmentation of self for research participants, that is a result of the intersection of patriarchal control and power waged on their bodies through violence and abuse and felt intensities of a nugatory self (see Chapter 6). They then enact the role of Isis to piece together fragmented selves. As racialisation and racism may be everyday encounters and violence and abuse may be periodically called into current reflection, (re)assembling the self requires everyday acts of love and resistance in the hope for violence and abuse-free futures. Thus despite their much theorised entrenched fixity and over-determination as racialised gendered bodies and the spatiotemporal nature of the continuum of oppression, the research participants etched a liveable and desirous sense of self to live better with the presence of the past. These acts of faith, hope and spirituality may appear individualistic, even neoliberal, but are ultimately pragmatic in the absence of access to collective and political Black feminist/feminist spaces of empowerment.

CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter begins with a reflection on the themes and concepts from the empirical chapters. It then discusses how research participants used feelings and emotions as means to make sense of what had happened to them and how this informed the thesis. An outline of the thesis' contribution to knowledge is followed by implications for policy and professional practice.

Reflection through concepts

Most of the forms of violence and abuse experienced by the nine women occurred in childhood, with a few also experiencing violence in adulthood. Child sexual abuse occurred in sociocultural contexts of poverty (Cawson, 2000; Long and Ullman, 2013; Thomas and Hall, 2008) and displacement through multiple domestic and international migrations. This spatial and emotional reduction left feelings of alienation conceptualised here as 'liminal displacement'. The concept of a 'continuum of oppression' was used to reflect that each woman experienced a range of forms of abuse and violence to her body or concept of self and to describe how impacts may be indistinguishable. Included here were experiences of racism, family histories, specifically their mothers, friends and elder female relatives' experiences of violence and abuse and the impacts on their siblings' lives: the women learned of elder family members' abuse after they had spoken, which is the reverse of findings in Washington (2001) and Wyatt (1992). Women in this study carried narratives of intergenerational trauma faced by their mothers, including how legacies of historical migration formed the sociocultural context to their experiences of violence and abuse. Historical migration forming a continuum of oppression veers into current reflections and may also be less visible in thinking about how African and Caribbean heritage women who were either born in the UK or have lived for most of their lives here make sense of past experiences.

Women gained knowledge through their emotions, conceptualised as 'felt intensities' or feelings that intensified within or across spatiotemporal contexts. The participants learned through emotions felt within their bodies. Alcoff (2006) furthers that knowledge through the body creates an interpretive horizon, a way of knowing for individuals or an identity for individuals especially when marginalised. The marginalisation that comes from experiencing

violence and abuse may also create shifts in notions of self-worth and relationship to the body (Coy, 2008; 2009; 2012). For Whitney Douglas (2008), these shifts in women's interpretive horizons, first felt in the body as pain, anger, injustice can inspire movement or activism. When shifts in identity/interpretive horizons are reflected in activist feminist communities, emotional literacy can transpire. Thus emotional literacy is the result of being provoked by viscerally felt sensations, inciting movement and a search for a community or sponsor who feels similarly enraged, thus can hear and understand the injustice (Douglas, 2008). If such a community is found, this can lead to dynamic and enduring professional practices that challenge inequalities in a manner that is supportive of women who both work in and are served by such initiatives (Douglas, 2008).

The women in this study mostly experienced their emotions being negated by unsuitable sponsors. Women were perturbed and enraged by the injustice of violence and abuse and being silenced, experiencing shifts in their interpretive horizons (Alcoff, 2006) through felt intensities. This however stopped short of finding a listening audience (see Douglas, 2008). All of the women had not yet arrived at a space that could foster emotional literacy about past experiences of violence and abuse through their interrelationships, even though counselling had enabled them some recognition for what had happened to them. They understood the depth of the injustice, but those immediately around them did not or could not and those whom they reached out to for help, only partially understood. Finding understanding partners, engaging in forms of activism could be seen as first steps towards emotional literacy. However there was a strong sense that all of the participants desired a collective and more visible reflection of the injustice that had occurred, especially from informal networks.

Experiencing a continuum of oppression, being aware of and resisting controlling images of Black women (see Chapter 2), in their everyday negotiations presented research participants with many dilemmas, about who they could speak to or approach for help and support. Thus the continuum of oppression both normalises abusive practices and silences women which may contribute to apparent delays in seeking help (see Chapter 2) which in this study meant spending up to twenty years making sense of what had happened.

Women were also silenced by forms of abuse and violence: rape and threat of further violence. Women felt judged and silenced by the controlling image of the Black single mother as being how they felt they were read in public spaces or by their desire for heterosexual marriage. In line with literature on violence and abuse (see Chapter 2) women

experienced some self-blame; for continuing to visit the homes where they were looked after by abusers, for not speaking sooner and many were blamed for becoming victimised.

Women abused as children first attempted to speak behaviourally, largely misrecognised by their targets. Once the intensity of abuse became unbearable, they chose to speak. It was through speaking they learned the price for this audacity would be further marginality within their families, feelings of negation and mental distress, a further layer of consequences of the abuse (see Thomas and Hall, 2008).

Families wanted to protect the family image or honour within communities, or to the 'outsider culture' theorised also as fear and mistrust of social service intervention reflecting previous research findings (Barn, 2007; Bernard and Gupta, 2008; Levett, 2003). This formed complex sets of negotiations and management for the women that went unrecognised by either informal support networks, or professionals they encountered through seeking help.

Social services were reported as supportive for seven women who described being 'saved' by intervention as children, and for two women, betrayed as adults. These two women had their children taken into local authority care, and both lost legal guardianship of their children to their abusive ex-partners; one had to negotiate access with her partner in order to rebuild her relationship with her children. These two women felt judged for their abilities to parent because they had experienced violence and abuse. In the expert interviews the professionals discussed in depth the lack of support from social services for women with multiple experiences of violence and abuse who are parents. Furthermore, forms are not connected in practice, especially for the impacts on parenting. These arguments are not new (see Chapter 2). Women did experience a sense that they had betrayed their families especially when the police or social services became involved after reports of child abuse.

Police and social service intervention protected six women from escalating abuse, with the exception of one woman who recounted being unable to report multiple experiences of violence and abuse out of fear for the abusers. The three women who did not report being raped to the police were also those most severely abused and by multiple perpetrators.

Those abused either by their mothers as children, or on recollecting their mothers' unsupportive responses to their testimonies of abuse, were profoundly ambivalent about this relationship. Such experiences could have reflected their mothers' own challenges with parenting in contexts of violence and abuse (Mullender, et al., 2005). However, women struggled with making these connections, and feelings about their mothers' (in)actions

intensified when they became parents (see Briscoe, 2009; Tucker Green, 2003; Williams, 2011). Two women successfully rebuilt their relationships with their mothers. Women who did not rebuild relationships reported experiencing sorrow and grief for unresolved relationships and/or their investment in repeated attempts to mend and make good these relationships.

Concealing abuse by silence also meant that the women's abusers were still somewhat in their lives, turning up to family events, approaching them in public spaces, pestering them (Tiyagi, 2001), one even attempted to stop a woman from attending her therapy sessions. This and the findings on police and social service intervention, infers ongoing support and advocacy may lessen these intrusive behaviours by past abusers and may even encourage women to either begin a legal process, or some intervention to curtail harassment.

Another of the challenges for research participants was learning how to be Black women. This was gained through parental guidance, especially in response to speaking about abuse and violence to family and friends. The internalisation of such responses was conceptualised here as racialised gendered shame. The strong Black woman construct is sedimented through habitual practice and inculcation and may be a survival tool for African and Caribbean heritage women. Women in this study also reported feeling ashamed, unheard or felt judged by counsellors after sharing narratives of violence and abuse. The strong Black woman construct is double-edged. When adopted and internalised, racialised gendered shame is incurred for either failing to live up to its merits, or on realising that despite its eschewal, the self is exposed to those outside of family and friends through displays of emotions or feelings.

There was some support that Black boys were overvalued and minoritised men protected (see also, Richie, 1996) in that women recounted families had lower expectations for their brothers, and connected this to their poorer educational and employment outcomes. Additionally, indirect complicity with perpetrators by family members not addressing or reporting violence (Pierce-Baker, 2000) in three cases, could also be interpreted as overvaluing Black men. Differential gendered treatment may have encouraged higher educational aspirations for the women. Despite moving beyond family expectations through education and employment success in some cases, and recognising their strengths and survival in doing so, a sense of unacknowledged injustice remained.

Subtle feelings of unequal treatment or negation due to feeling judged in public spaces, racism at work and remarks from family members about their skin tone, hair and body shape

were described by women as abusive/intrusive. Here women described how hair/hairstyles were bodily locations where they experienced control both from families, abusers and wider discourses about European ideals of beauty. Hair/Hairstyles were also bodily sites where women could see the impact of abuse through lacklustre or neglected hair. Paradoxically well-groomed hair could also conceal practices of child sexual abuse.

The concept of a 'nugatory self' was borne out of participants' descriptions of these projections. This chimed with studies and literary narratives on Black women's lived experiences of race, violence and abuse (see Chapter 2) and controlling images about Black women's sexuality (Hammonds, 1997; 2002; Wilson, 1993), not held by research participants, but by men they knew. Within this women were aware of discourses that Black women are aggressive and 'single-parents'. Added to this were felt intensities left by controlling constructs of Blackness and culture exemplified where some were told they were 'not Black enough'. Felt intensities experienced through a continuum of oppression, public encounters where women described feeling reduced and judged may compound how women felt reduced by experiences of violence and abuse and how they were responded to after speaking. Felt intensities of a nugatory self could also become part of the racialised gendered shame women carried as an embodied burden.

Participants' narratives documented ways in which their sense of body/self was fragmented (Ahmed, 2000; 2004; 2007; Fanon, 2008/1952). Liminality was further experienced through periodical reflection on tactics used by partners, fathers and father-figures and in four instances, women's mothers, to abuse them. The concept of 'exhausting liminal rumination' was used to describe participants' accounts of recycling thoughts about past violence/abuse and gauging present distance, to exhaustion, resulting in disconnection from those around them. Living for extended periods with a continuum of oppression and little social support resulted in frequent periods of exhausting liminal rumination which heightened vigilance and emotional distress.

Women recounted many layered embodied legacies of violence and abuse (see Chapter 2): extreme worry and sadness; attempts on their own lives; feelings of betrayal; feeling estranged from their bodies; and challenges with trusting others. Body-in-the world experiences were pleasurable, as well as shameful and stigmatising, where some felt their bodies were associated with violence and abuse noted by periods of not caring, starving or concealing bodies under layers of clothing, to tentative acceptance encouraged by supportive partners, or after having children. Eight of the nine women were academically

and/or professionally successful thus the focus on their head work distracted thoughts from their bodies. However, all struggled with notions that they were now 'allowed' to fully inhabit their bodies and most remained in marginal occupancy revealing periods of pleasure in their own body aesthetic, albeit that were constrained.

Women also described pragmatic and everyday forms of activism (James and Busia, 1999; Hill Collins, 2009) including being watchful over their own and children in their wider families. Participants were (and still are) active members of their communities, schools, churches, places of employment and at times when they were in need of support. Such need or vulnerability was not visible enough to those whom they encountered. Therefore, daily challenges to make it through the front door, were also part of their invisible labour.

Women used a discourse of salvation to describe how counselling or mental health services supported them and literally in three cases saved them from ending their lives. The narratives provided also contained diverse sources used by women to cope or manage legacies, including dreams, spirituality, a masseuse, counselling, with most being assisted from churches at some point in their lives. This they illustrated through the photographs they created as part of the research process. They were unrelenting copers, managers of emotions, attempting to make sense of the past or access support for feelings of distress. While most had good social supports currently, they all described being socially isolated during periods when they experienced violence and abuse. Formal support services also enabled women to challenge their informal networks on their responses to past disclosures.

Of the nine women interviewed, two received help from specialised violence against women services. The youngest of the participants also received help and counselling from a rape crisis centre.

Women who participated in this study could have benefitted from having more support, from both informal networks as well as agencies. This study illuminated how by actively staying or being active while in situations where they experienced violence and abuse and living with the legacies in the aftermath, the research participants undertook unpaid and unacknowledged labour and carried out violence work (Kelly, 2009) alongside their everyday activities.

Faith and religious spaces were enriching and supportive for some. Women described spiritual ways in which past experiences of abuse became visible and recognisable, gaining comfort and reassurance in the process. Church spaces were also transitory spaces for

support, as women could also experience judgement and gossip. However this pointed to ways in which such spaces could be politicised and made even more accessible to African and Caribbean heritage women seeking support. These spaces appeared to enable women freedom to express their emotions in a way that was problematic in other spaces.

The women assisted me through their use of the visual methods to gain insight into how lived body experiences can be influenced by racialised attention or social disdain for the pleasure found in their body aesthetic, or through comments from abusive partners. Lived-body experiences in everyday spaces (Del Busso, 2011) such as parks, domestic spaces, launderettes, depicted daily attempts to (re)assemble self and body image from a history of splitting, fragmentation and liminality. While African and Caribbean heritage women may be minoritised this minoritisation is intersectionally nuanced, based on ethnicity, culture, racialisation, skin tone, hair texture and body shape/size. Thus lived body experiences are influenced by the types of bodies Black women have and the social locations they inhabit.

Engaging participants in discussions about racialisation and seeking help offered space to talk about less visible forms of violence, abuse and intrusion. Women wanted familial, community and wider societal recognition for the social injustice of violence and abuse. Black women need active hearing communities sensitive to their lived experiences (see Fricker, 2008; Parpart, 2010; Spivak, 2000).

The politics of feeling in the creation of knowledge

Women gained knowledge through their feelings, spatiotemporally, in the emotional atmospheres, physical environments and objects within their homes and in public spaces (Cromby, 2007; Reavey, 2010). Thus feelings left from looking at peeling wallpaper, childhood photos, being stared at or standing out, feeling like a minority or a pathology, without power to clarify errors of legibility, were ways that communicated value and worth to women.

Women recognised or came to know what had happened to them at first through felt intensities and when these escalated, they were compelled to speak. Understanding how families and services valued them through their feelings after dismissive, minimising and (un)supportive responses, provoked journeys towards acknowledgement/recognition. Women held on to feelings about what had happened and the bodily legacies provided further evidence of undeniable truths. Thus felt intensities describe what it feels like to

experience multiple and complex intersections of race, gender, class, violence and abuse (see also Ahmed, 2012).

The knowledge within this thesis was created through a partnership between research participants and myself. The politics of feeling (O'Neill, 2001) as a form of knowledge creation enabled the safety to engage women in discussions about racialisation, skin, hair, differences and similarities. It opened up channels for further and deeper reflection and deconstruction, facilitated by visual methods. My embodiment as an enabler to knowledge, bearing witness, holding the space, investing in the space, was also an important part of the research methodology. My emotional responses to the women's narratives were also key in the analytical process.

Conclusions

This thesis mapped ways in which nine African and Caribbean heritage women's potential for participation in social life was delimited by violence and abuse and how their survival was premised on their skill in managing embodied burdens and through daily acts of self-renewal. This was analysed through the concepts of 'felt intensities'; 'a continuum of oppression'; 'racialised gendered shame'; 'a nugatory self', 'liminal displacement' and 'exhausting liminal rumination'. It raises more questions than it answers. The continuum of oppression may mean that violence and abuse goes unsanctioned due to silencing and negation. Race is thus embodied through negation of the body, hair and skin tone or through feeling out of place in public spaces (Ahmed, 2000; 2004; 2007; Fanon, 2008/1952) alongside experiences of racism, which evoke feelings of reduction left by tactics of abuse. This silenced and stigmatised the research participants. As a result, when seeking help and receiving support, much may remain, in what one participant referred to, as 'an unsaid world'.

Women were aware of ways in which they become visible and what remained hidden. Ways of seeing and of hearing may begin by asking what accounts for absences of presence. It appears to an extent that child sexual abuse may be brought to visibility by agencies, and concerned individuals, but this may not sufficiently support girls through to adulthood. What enables the visibility of tropes of the single mother, the aggressive Black woman, the strong Black woman and not the woman battling with issues of confidence and overwork, yet turns up to work on time, parents her children on a single income, yet rarely (if ever) speaks about her challenges? What are the processes that enable the visibility of some forms of Black womanhood, Black masculinity, childhood, poverty, marginalisation and not others?

So much of seeking help is also based on speaking. But speaking is dangerous for women who have been silenced not only by experiences of violence and abuse, but by race, family expectations and racism. Women may need assurances that speaking will benefit and not further harm them. Embodied experiences of seeking help included: validation and externalisation; naming and recognition of injustice; and stopping further escalation of violence and abuse. Such experiences also incur racialised gendered shame, which is carried over into supporting the need for politically informed and culturally specific support. Recognising this burden of shame may be a first step in enabling women to speak. This returns us to 'screaming silences' (Serrant-Green, 2010), the women who have not yet arrived at speech, who may not have had or sought the opportunities.

Women who participated could have benefitted from support and acknowledgment for not only experiencing a continuum of oppression, but for the unacknowledged work they undertake, periodic or daily resurrection, and reassembling of the self. This they did in isolation facilitated by everyday spaces. Such isolation could also be related to finding support or for them help, from protecting presences of 'guardian angels', 'mystery', 'God' or the spirit.

The contribution to knowledge of this thesis are through these conceptual terms that describe the embodied burdens carried by African and Caribbean heritage women as knowers and to suggest meeting their needs within the everyday spaces they inhabit. Toni Morrison (1993) conceptualises a 'unique social space' for Black women to act or share lived experiences. A liminal space for exhausting rumination could become externalised to a unique social space to examine the continuum of oppression in lived experiences. The research situation could also be viewed as the beginning or an example of a unique social space. Culturally specific agencies may also provide such spaces that can enable Black women the safety to speak and foster emotional literacy (see Douglas, 2008). However such spaces are being eroded. Faith or religious spaces may also serve this function, with the caveat that they are non-judgemental and non-oppressive. This reveals a tension, as some South Asian feminists (see Patel, 2013; Rehman, 2013) argue for secular spaces where women can experience autonomy, free from oppressive, gendered religious dogma. This study however, illuminated beneficial spiritual, emotional and practical support for women within religious spaces (see also Alexander, 1996; Cinnerella and Lowenthal, 1999).

The absence of either feminist, or Black feminist perspectives, within African and Caribbean heritage women's lives can be seen in the repetition of negative discourses about Black

women in the participants' informal networks obfuscating their routes to seeking help and support. Women thus appeared to be 'moving in the shadows' (Rehman, Kelly and Siddiqui, 2013), doing unacknowledged 'shadow work' (Garbardo and Gulati, 2003, p.325), 'shadow-boxing' enemies largely invisible to those around them (James, 1999).

Implications for policy, practice and communities

Expert interviewees highlighted that violence against women support services focus on the extremes, whereby women may be near death before they access support or receive intervention. They may already have practice-based evidence (Coy, et al., 2011) that can enable them to illuminate women's invisible burdens, but need the funding to do so effectively. Without such funding they may also be engaged in unacknowledged shadow work for their African and Caribbean heritage clients.

Race, racialisation and racism in private/public spaces may be shadowy burdens Black women bear in silence. There was also an undercurrent of a discourse on Black mothering, both require further interrogation and exploration in family and community spaces.

To reduce the discursive gap, there should be more commissioning and investment in, rather than reduction of, culturally specific services that enable women to explore the intersections between forms of violence and abuse and the continuum of oppression. These spaces may also enable inter-group and intra-group acknowledgement and visibility of forms of violence and abuse through open discussions of practices and spaces that leave women feeling reduced and those where they experience freer embodiment using visual and participatory methods (see Coy, 2012).

Further explorations are required into the intersectional features of women's lives to explore whether African and Caribbean heritage women have voice and visibility in policy, whether and how their needs are met and for this to influence the commissioning of services.

Reaching out to women may be not only in the form of support services, but in research calls that explicitly specify the importance of engaging hidden narratives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Ethical Approval letter



Ava Kanyeredzi PhD Student
C/o CWASU
London Metropolitan University
Ladbroke House
London N5 2AD

July 31st 2010

Dear Ava

Research ethics application: Knowing what I know now...women of African and African Caribbean descent talk about their experiences of violence inside or outside of the home

Thank you very much for your response to queries about your research ethics review and I am now able to give full approval for this project.

Please let me know should you make any changes to the research which may affect the research ethics approval you have received.

We wish you every success with the research and look forward to hearing how it has gone.

Yours sincerely

Georgie Parry-Crooke
Chair Social Sciences Research Ethics Review Panel,
Tel. 020 7133 5092
Email. g.parry-crooke@londonmet.ac.uk

Appendix 2 – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION Email – Expert Interviews

My name is Ava Kanyeredzi and I am a PhD candidate at London Metropolitan University at the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit. I am carrying out a study on how African and Caribbean heritage women seek help after violence and how violence affects their relationship to their bodies. I am interviewing experts, and practitioners who provide support services as well as women with experience of violence.

Based on your expertise in the area of violence, I would like to carry out a telephone or face-to-face interview with you. If you agree to take part, I will send you three case studies to read in advance and the interview will be a discussion about the case studies. Your participation is entirely voluntary and confidential and you can withdraw from the study at any time. The study has been ethically approved by the London Metropolitan University Research Ethics Committee.

I would like to arrange a time to conduct the interview with you, which will help me to clarify some of the issues raised in the interviews with women. Additionally, if you know of women who you have worked with, who might be interested in taking part in the study, do let me know. The outcome of this study will be a PhD thesis, published papers and presentations at conferences. I would welcome your participation.

Do contact me if you require any further information about the study and to indicate whether you would be interested in participating in an interview. My contact details are below.

With kind regards,

Ava Kanyeredzi

Appendix 2b – Case Studies:

Erin is 22 years old, slightly built with shoulder length brown hair and she is pregnant with her third child. Her first child which she had at 14 years old was given up for adoption and her second child which she had aged 18 was taken into care after she brought the child to A&E and doctors were alerted to the fact that the child was failing to thrive at 6 weeks old and could not find an organic reason for this. Social services were called and the child was taken into care. Erin insists that she wants a child and wants contact with her second child, but refuses to engage with social service staff. Erin lives with her boyfriend, the father of her unborn child on a local authority housing estate. Erin is unemployed and so is her boyfriend. Erin is known to social services as she was put on the Child Protection register at the age of 4 and taken into care at the age of 9. Erin was sexually abused by her mother's boyfriend. While in care Erin had a difficult time adjusting and has had three sets of foster parents. She was described as bright but withdrawn and easily influenced by peers at school and was cautioned several times for shop-lifting, but does not have a criminal record. Erin left school without sitting for her GCSE's, but attended sixth form college for half a term, leaving at 17 after she got pregnant and moved into her own flat. Social workers suspect all of Erin's boyfriends have physically abused her. Although Erin has attended A&E on a number of occasions with bruises on her body, she has never indicated to social services or A&E staff that they were inflicted by her current or previous boyfriends. However she has called the police a number of times, but has never pursued any of the allegations.

Janice is 45 years old, softly spoken, of medium build, with dyed honey coloured hair and greenish-brown eyes. She runs a successful estate agent business with her husband and lives in a large semi-detached house in North West London with her two children. Janice has been to her GP requesting for help for her persistent low mood and sadness. Her GP has advised her that she needs to take more time out for herself and has referred her for counselling. Janice now has regular counselling sessions every fortnight, which help her to put things into perspective. Janice has been looking after her husband's parents at her home. They have retired abroad and come back periodically to visit their children and grandchildren. Janice is feeling the strain of having to manage making extra meals, taking her parents-in-law on trips as well as looking after her boys and working full time. Janice is also very active in her church where she is a deacon requiring her to be at church on Wednesday evenings and early Sunday mornings. Janice runs a women's breakfast every couple of months at her home. She has two older daughters from a previous relationship, who no longer live at home. She met her husband when the

girls were toddlers. Janice's husband pays her little above the minimum wage to run the house and if she requires any more money she has to request it. He is also very sexually demanding and pressures Janice for sex all the time. Since going to counselling Janice has disclosed to him that she was sexually abused as a child, but this has not altered how he treats her sexually. Janice feels at a loss, wanting to leave her husband, but fears that she will be unable to offer her boys a good education as they currently attend a good school. Janice also feels quite ashamed and embarrassed at her apparent wealth, but functional poverty, she has no savings despite investing her time and energy in the business over a number of years. Her husband bought her a nice family car after years of her protesting that the car she had was unsuitable and old. Janice is aware that her husband has had a number of affairs with much younger women, some as young as her oldest daughter who is 23. In his parents' eyes, her husband can do no wrong, even though they are aware he is a bit of a bully. His mother has advised Janice that these are some of the sacrifices a woman has to make for the lifestyle Janice enjoys. Although Janice can talk to her sisters, she cannot tell them everything as she feels this would be ungrateful as her home is a central point for family gatherings. Janice does not believe in divorce.

Mabel is 50 years old, largely built and she has three sons and a daughter. Although Mabel is separated from her partner, the father of her children, he still visits her regularly and helps to look after the children when she is at work. Her partner has physically assaulted her in the past and has been arrested once. Mabel felt the officers appeared to take his side, because he is a short, slightly built and very polite man. Mabel works as a health care assistant at a nursing home and she does hair in her home on her off-days. She also does bank at another care home now and again. Although they are no longer a couple, Mabel's partner still argues with her over how much time she works as he thinks she might be having an affair with her boss. He has forced Mabel to have sex with him on a number of occasions. Mabel feels too embarrassed to talk about this to her friends or relatives, who are aware of her ex's physically abusive behaviour. Although Mabel dislikes how he treats her, she thinks he is a good father to their children.

Appendix 2c – Recruitment Poster



Knowing what I know now...Black women talk about violence and abuse

Are you a black or dual heritage woman of African or African Caribbean descent?

Are you over 18 and live in London?

Has any of this happened to you?

I have been emotionally abused, or told that I am ugly, useless, worthless.
I have been called names that I dislike.
I have been physically abused or slapped, punched, kicked, pushed, beaten, threatened.
I have feared for my safety/life and the safety/life of my family.
I have been raped, pressured or forced to have sex.
I have been pressured or forced to touch someone in a sexual way.
My health or feeling of wellbeing has been affected by my experiences.

My name is Ava Kanyeredzi and I am a PhD student at London Metropolitan University in the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit. This study aims to get a better understanding of how black women cope, or seek help after experiencing violence or abuse and how experiences of violence or abuse affect black women's relationship to their bodies. Your participation is greatly appreciated, entirely voluntary and confidential. This study has been ethically approved by the London Metropolitan University Research Ethics committee.

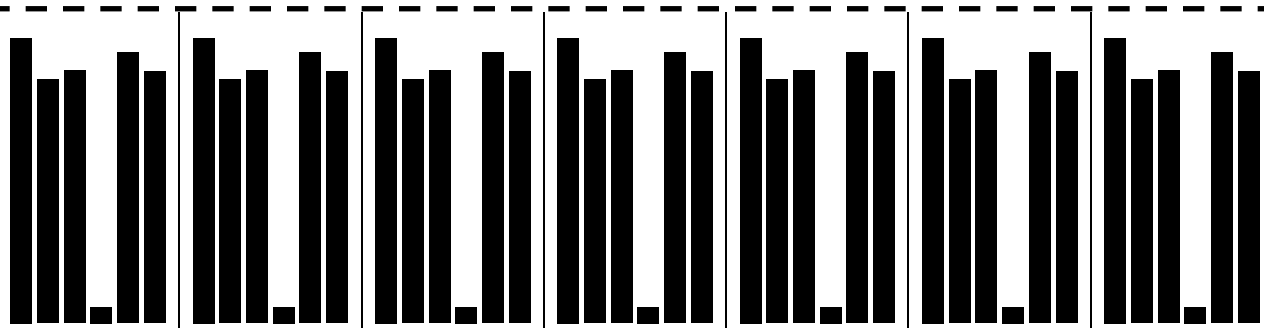
Would you be interested in sharing your knowledge and experience?

You are invited to talk about your life experiences with me over 2 or 3 occasions.

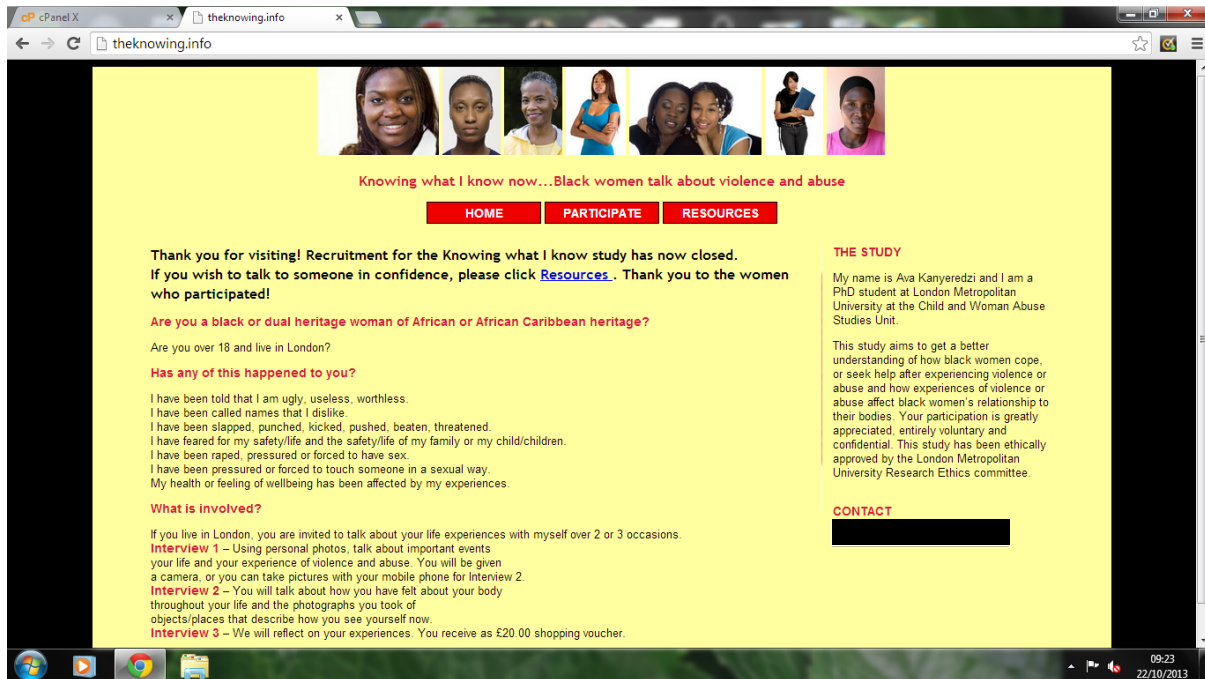
Interview 1 – Using personal photos, you talk about important events in your life and your experience of violence or abuse. I will give you a camera, or you can use your mobile to take pictures of objects/places that describe how you see yourself now for Interview 2.

Interview 2 –You talk about how you have felt about your body throughout your life and the photographs you took of objects/places that describe how you see yourself now.

Interview 2/3 – We reflect on your experiences. You receive a £20.00 shopping voucher for the contribution of your time.



Appendix 2d – Recruitment Website



Appendix 2e – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Knowing what I know now...women of African and African Caribbean descent talk about their experiences of violence inside or outside of the home



My name is Ava Kanyeredzi and I am a PhD student at London Metropolitan University in the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit. This study aims to get a better understanding of how black women cope, or seek help after experiencing violence or abuse and how experiences of violence or abuse affect black women's relationship to their bodies. Your participation is greatly appreciated, entirely voluntary and confidential. This study has been ethically approved by the London Metropolitan University Research Ethics committee.

Has any of this happened to you?

I have been emotionally abused, told that I am ugly, useless, worthless.
I have been called names that I dislike.
I have been physically abused, slapped, punched, kicked, pushed, beaten, threatened.
I have feared for my safety/life and the safety/life of my family.
I have been raped, pressured or forced to have sex.
I have been pressured or forced to touch someone in a sexual way.
My health or feeling of wellbeing has been affected by my experiences.

What is involved?

You are invited to talk about your life experiences with me over 2 or 3 occasions.

Interview 1 – Using personal photos, you talk about important events in your life and your experience of violence or abuse. I will give you a camera, or you can use your mobile to take pictures of objects/places that describe how you see yourself now for Interview 2.

Interview 2 – You talk about how you have felt about your body throughout your life and the photographs you took of objects/places that describe how you see yourself now.

Interview 2/3 – We reflect on your experiences. You receive a £20.00 shopping voucher for the contribution of your time to the study.

How will it all work?

- If you live in London we can have a face-to-face interview.

- If you are outside of London, you can send me a written testimony of your experiences, or we can arrange a telephone interview.
- Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reasons.
- I will ask your permission to audio tape and transcribe your interviews.

How long will it take?

Each interview will last 1 to 2 hours and can take place in a suitable location such as a café, room in a library, or a council or university building, or a venue of your choice. The interviews will be an opportunity for you to talk about your experiences which could help other women in similar situations and will be completely confidential.

What will happen with my information?

- All your personal details will be kept confidential.
- Your identity will be anonymised.
- You will have the opportunity to read your transcripts in between interviews.
- I might use parts of your interview transcripts in the PhD thesis, book chapters and any reports or presentations about the study.
- I will only use your photographs if you give explicit permission.
- You can have a brief summary of the study findings.
- You will get the opportunity to ask questions about the study before agreeing to take part.

Next steps

Please read the consent form and feel free to ask any questions. If you would like to read the draft report at the end of the study please contact xxxxxx Tel: xxx xxx xxxx, <http://www.theknowing.info>.

Appendix 2f – Interview Guides

Interview Guide for Experts (Generic services):

1. Can you tell me a bit about what you do in your role?
2. How would you define sexual violence or physical violence?
3. Are some women more vulnerable than others to sexual or physical violence?
4. Can you tell me who you think are the hard to reach women or those most in need of sexual or physical violence support services, but who are less likely to use them?
5. Can you tell me what you think are the main challenges women face when seeking help from experiences of sexual or physical violence?

We are now going to discuss the three case studies which you read before the interview. For each case study please tell me:

6. What are your initial thoughts on this woman's situation?
PROBE: What information from the case study do you think you might not have access to in your practice/work and why?
7. What do you think are her choices now?
8. What do you see as her main challenges?
9. What service / services do you think might be most appropriate for her and why?
PROBE: Looking at social status or marginalisation, can you describe how social status or marginalisation comes up as an issue for women accessing support services? Can you give any examples?
PROBE: Looking at faith/religion, can you describe how faith/religion comes up as an issue for women accessing services? Can you give any examples?
PROBE: Can you tell me what you know about culturally specific support for women accessing services? Can you give any examples? [If haven't already] Would you recommend a culturally specific service to any of the women and why/why not? [If have] Why did you recommend a culturally specific service?
10. Are there any other aspects of the case studies that you have come across in your practice/work? If yes, how have you dealt with it/them?
11. Are there any other issues for black women of African / Caribbean heritage in relation to sexual or physical violence that come up in your practice/work that are not reflected in the case studies?

12. Thinking about the black women of African / Caribbean heritage who you have worked with, how have they accessed sexual or physical violence support services?

PROBE: Have they been referred, or have they self-referred?

PROBE: Have you noticed any differences in how they have accessed support services to women from any other ethnic backgrounds? Can you explain, or give examples?

PROBE: What are their perceptions of services: this could be anything they have said about how they viewed your service, before accessing or anything they have mentioned about previous experiences of accessing support services? Is this noticeably different to perceptions of women from other ethnic backgrounds?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

14. [Give website address] What are your initial impressions of the website? How do you think it might better attract potential participants?

Interview Guide for Experts (Culturally specific services):

1. Can you tell me a bit about what you do in your role?
2. How would you define sexual or physical violence?
3. Are some women more vulnerable than others to sexual or physical violence?
4. Can you tell me who you think are the hard to reach women or those most in need of sexual or physical violence support services, but who are less likely to use them?
5. Can you tell me what you think are the main challenges women face when seeking help from experiences of sexual or physical violence?

We are now going to discuss the three case studies which you read before the interview. For each case study please tell me:

6. What are your initial thoughts on this woman's situation?
PROBE: What information from the case study do you think you might not have access to in your practice/work and why?
7. What do you think are her choices now?
8. What do you see as her main challenges?
9. What service / services do you think might be most appropriate for her and why?
PROBE: Looking at social status or marginalisation, can you describe how social status or marginalisation comes up as an issue for women accessing support services? Can you give any examples?
PROBE: Looking at faith/religion, can you describe how faith/religion comes up as an issue for women accessing services? Can you give any examples?
PROBE: Why did/didn't you recommend a culturally specific service for the woman?
10. Are there any other aspects of the case studies that you have come across in your practice/work? If yes, how have you dealt with it/them?
11. Are there any other issues for black women of African / Caribbean heritage in relation to sexual or physical violence that come up in your practice/work that are not reflected in the case studies?
12. Thinking about the black women of African / Caribbean heritage who you have worked with, how have they accessed sexual or physical violence support services?
PROBE: Have they been referred, or have they self-referred?
PROBE: Have you noticed any differences in how they have accessed support services to women from any other ethnic backgrounds? Can you explain or give examples?

PROBE: What are their perceptions of services: this could be anything they have said about how they viewed your service, before accessing or anything they have mentioned about previous experiences of accessing support services? Is this noticeably different to perceptions of women from other ethnic backgrounds?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

14. [Give website address] What are your initial impressions of the website? How do you think it might better attract potential participants?

Appendix 3 – Support Contacts

Knowing what I know now...women of African and African Caribbean descent talk about their experiences of violence inside or outside of the home



Sharing experiences of violence and abuse can be upsetting and you might wish to talk further with a professional from a specialist support service.

Akina Mama Wa Afrika

Unit 1B, Leroy House,
436 Essex Road, London N1 3QP,
T: 020 7359 8252, E: info@amwauk.org
Women/Mental health/Domestic violence.

Black Women's Health and Family Support

1st Floor, 82 Russia Lane, London E2, T: 020 8980 3503

Promoting the eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Black Women's Rape Action Project

T: 020 7482 2496

<http://www.womenagainstrape.net/black-womens-rape-action-project>

Offers advocacy, support, advice
and self-help services women
who are survivors of domestic violence.

Crossroads Women's Centre,

230A Kentish Town Rd, London, NW5 2AB,
T: 020 7482 2496
(formerly Kings Cross Women's Centre).

East London African Caribbean Counselling Service

Stratford Advice Arcade, 107-109 The Grove,
London E1 5HP, T: 020 8221 1233.

East London Black Women's Organization

(Newham residents only) ,
Forest Gate Methodist Church, Woodgrange Road Forest Gate London E7 OQH,
T: 020 8534 7545
<http://www.elbwo.org.uk>
Advice, counselling, advocacy, childcare, domestic violence services.

Eaves

Unit 203, Canterbury Court,

1-3 Brixton Road, London SW9 6DE,
T: 020 7735 2062
E: post_eaveshousing.co.uk <http://www.eaves4women.co.uk/>
Services for women who have experienced violence.

Rape Crisis

National Freephone helpline
0808 802 9999 12-2.30pm 1 – 9.30pm
every day of the year. Free for mobiles.
<http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/>.
National organisation for survivors of rape and sexual abuse.

Single Mothers' Self-Defence (SMSD)

230a Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2AB
(Entrance on Caversham Rd, near Kentish Town Tube, wheelchair accessible)
T: 020 7482 2496, E: smsd@allwomenscount.net
<http://www.allwomenscount.net/ewc%20moms/smsdindex.htm>
A network of single mothers of different races and backgrounds.

Southall Black Sisters (SBS)

21 Avenue Road, Southall, Middlesex, UB1 3BL
T: 020 8571 0800, E: info@southallblacksisters.co.uk
<http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk>
A resource centre offering services to women experiencing violence and abuse.

Women and Girls Network

T: 020 7610 4345,
E: info_wgn.org.uk <http://www.wgn.org.uk/>
Counselling, therapy, training hotline for the healing and recovery
from experiences of violence.

Women in Prison

Unit 3b, 22 Highbury Grove,
London, N5 2EA, T: 020 7226 5879,
<http://www.womeninprison.org.uk>,
Support group for women in prison.

Appendix 3a – CONSENT FORM

Knowing what I know now...women of African and African Caribbean descent talk about their experiences of violence inside or outside of the home



Participant ID Number:

Name of Researcher:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected. ☐
3. I give permission for this interview to be audio taped and transcribed with my personal details and any names omitted from the transcript. ☐
4. I understand that parts of the transcript might be used as quotations in the PhD thesis, book chapters, any reports, or presentations about the study. However, my name, or any other identifying details will not be used in reference to any quotations used. ☐
5. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Consent Form Version 1.1 Dec 2011

Appendix 3b – CONSENT FORM for Personal Photographs

Knowing what I know now...women of African and African Caribbean descent talk about their experiences of violence inside or outside of the home



Participant ID Number:

Name of Researcher:

Please initial box

1. I give permission to have my personal photographs copied and scanned for the above study.

☐

2. I understand that my scanned personal photographs might be described in the PhD thesis, book chapters, any reports, or presentations, but not reproduced in any form for publication.

☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Appendix 3c – Life history Interviews Topic Guide

Interview 1 – Key Events, self-concept

Demographics

1. How old are you, pick from the following range
18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50 – 59, 60 or older
2. How would you describe our racial heritage/ethnic background?
3. What is your employment status?
4. If employed: What is your job title?
5. How would you describe your social status/class?

Main Interview

Introduce the timeline to help the discussion going around how the participant has felt about her body

6. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
7. How do you spend your free time?
8. How would you describe your lifestyle?
9. How do the people you know describe you?
10. What do you consider your main accomplishments so far?
11. What or who do you value in life?
12. What would you say are your successes/failures/challenges?

The following question can be asked at any stage of the interview process.

13. What does being a Black woman mean to you? How does this affect your help seeking?

Ground the discussion around the topics the participant chooses

If there is time and participant has brought photographs, ask to see personal photographs.

Move to Interview 2

Activity: Participant reflects on the discussion and updates the timeline, how she sees it, what she feels is incorrect. **Update help seeking spreadsheet**

Interview 2 – Violence, incidents, coping strategies, identity

Ask to see the personal photographs the participant has taken. Ask her to select 5 that she feels will help her to talk about her experiences of violence.

14. For each photograph, when was this taken and describe what is depicted in it.
 - Explore how participant anchors visual details in photographs with experiences. Note the life stage childhood (0-5), school life (6 – 16), teen life (17 – 19), early adulthood (20 – 25)...
15. What was going on in the news, in your home, locally, in the world at this time?
16. What were you doing at this time?
17. What is it about this photograph that reminds you of the incident(s)?
 - Note how participant talks about her feelings during the incident.
 - Explore how she understands experiences of violence.
 - Explore how she understands/rationalises the behaviour of the perpetrator.
18. Can you tell me what you did afterwards?
19. Did you tell anyone? If not, why not?
20. Can you tell me who you told? How did he/she respond?
21. What would you have liked the person to do?
22. How would you like to be asked about violence by someone you know?
23. Did you call the police or go to a refuge or use another service?
24. If yes which service?
25. How did you hear about this service?
26. Did you have any opinions about the service before using it?
27. What thoughts were going through your mind when you were deciding to look for help?
28. What did you think of the help that you got?
29. How would you like to be asked about violence by practitioners?

30. What would you like practitioners to do?

31. What happened afterwards? If more incidents, Go back to Q.16.

Activity: Participant reflects on the discussion and the updates the timeline, how she sees it, what she feels is incorrect. **Update help seeking spreadsheet**

Interview 3 – Self-concept after violence, hopes and dreams

Ask to see the photographs of spaces and or objects that the participant has taken. Ask her to select 5 that she feels says something about how she sees herself now.

32. For each photograph, describe what is depicted in it.

- Explore how participant anchors visual details in photographs with experiences.

33. Can you describe the importance of the space to you?

34. Can you describe the importance of the object(s) to you?

Reflect on topics discussed, where she is now and how she views her experience.

35. Can you tell me how you feel the experiences of violence that we have been discussing have affected your life now?

- Explore and note the time she has spent reflecting on it, the circumstances. How she sees herself, related to her body, her ideal typical body or concept, place, song, feeling. The accessibility of this place concept feeling, how she talks about herself, her life.
- Does she talk about the future, the day-to-day?

Reflection on body timeline so far, how she sees it, what she feels is incorrect.

36. Can you tell me what you thought about while completing the timeline?

37. Have you thought about your relationship to your body in that way before?

38. How do you think/feel about your body now?

39. Do you think the violence affected your relationship to your body? If yes, in what way, if no why not?

Reflect on help-seeking:

Update help seeking spreadsheet and agree on all the steps

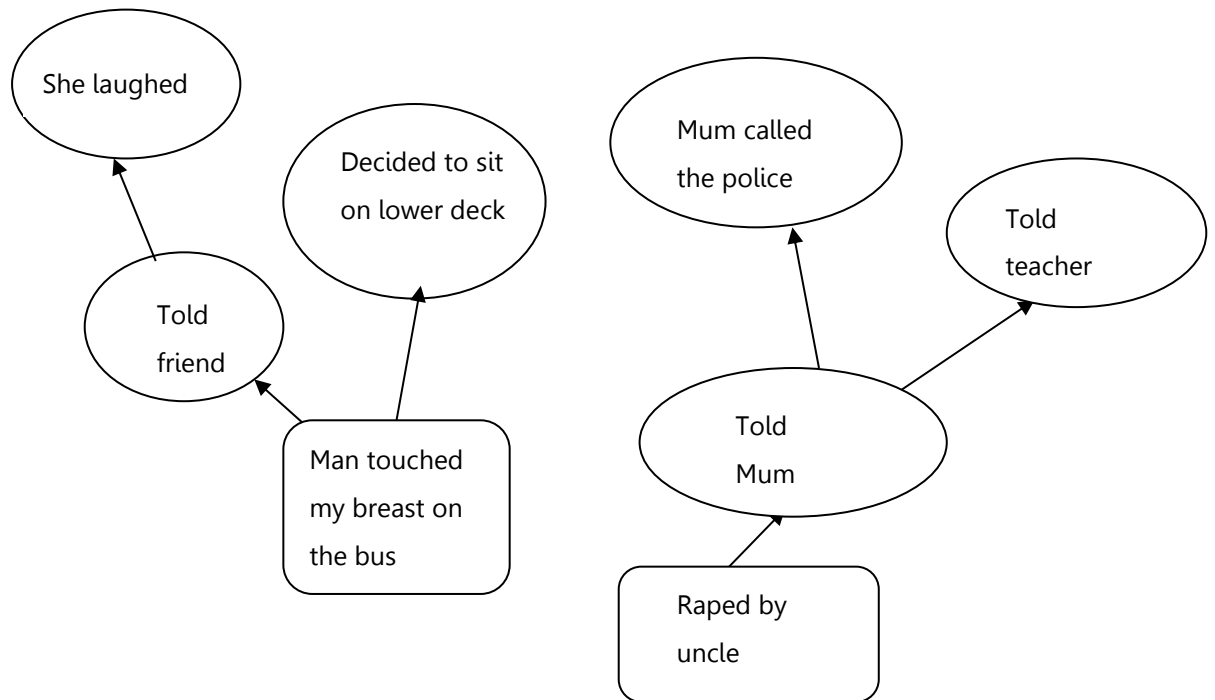
- 40. No you have seen the help seeking spreadsheet/map, what do you think about your help seeking?
- 41. Could you draw a diagram that summarises or describes your help seeking? Show example, show spreadsheet?
- 42. Before doing this had you reflected on all of the ways in which you have tried to help yourself? If yes, please explain.

If no, how did you see your actions then? How do you see them now?

- 43. Is there anything that you would like to add?

Give shopping vouchers and thank participant.

Appendix 4 – Help seeking pathway



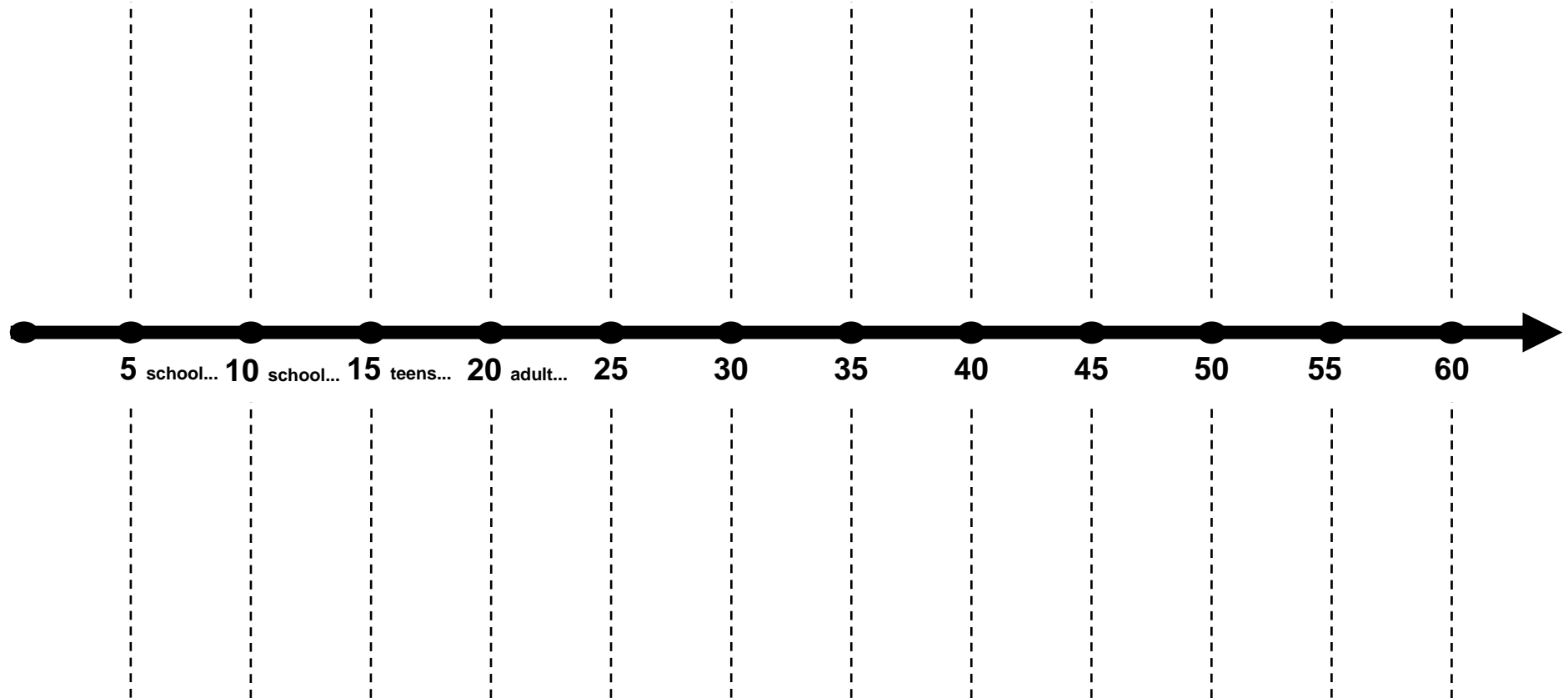
Appendix 4a – Help seeking spreadsheet

How I have tried to help myself over the years					
Incident	Age	What did you do?	What did they do?	Actual outcome	Preferred outcome

Appendix 5 – Body line

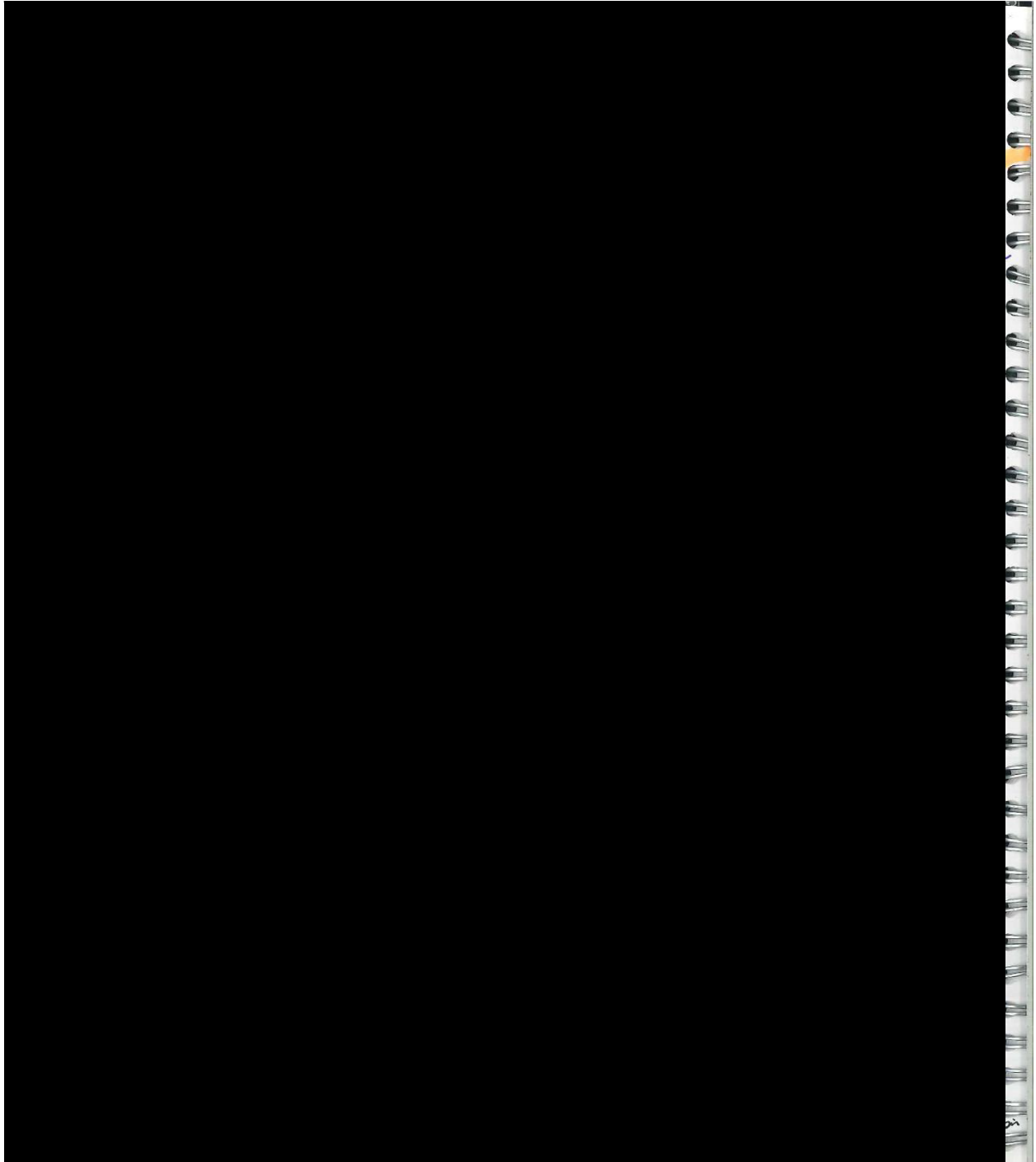
How I have felt about my body over the years

THE GOOD THINGS



THE NOT SO GOOD THINGS

Appendix 6 – Examples of analytic work (1)



Appendix 6a – Examples of analytic work (2)

	Embodiment while talking about abuse	Embodiment in spaces at the time of abuse	Bitch, prostitute, whore	Manipulating racial/spatial marginality	Sexuality/sexual decision making	Body work	Raging and resignation	Problems with food	Escalating patterns
008	Limited eye contact and nervousness, I felt nervous	Conditioned to occupy less emotional space at home. [2_L26] Feeling like an outsider attributed to abuse. Anxiety relates to how she used to feel as a child.	Abused by different men coming to her house- was money being exchanged?	Her abuser would drink with mother, when mother passed out, would go upstairs and abuse her and her siblings.	The way in which she discussed feeling dirty that her partner's infidelity light leak into her by way of diseases.	Used to feel her body was not hers, had to forget about body [2_L569], was dirty during abuse and by ex's promiscuity [2_L20].		Was diagnosed with bulimia, a male friend said her body was perfect and she should stay exactly how she is.	Dream, masseuse 'I just switched'
009	Nervousness, watching me	Can't go near area where she was raped and if she does has a panic attack	As a child, she had a dream where she was put in a pot and turned into money [2_L133]. Thinks she looks vulnerable,	Lived with a lot of strangers as a child [L_20].the structural opportunity presented by this unsupervised child.	Doesn't like sex, washes enough, feels unable to say no to having sex without contraception.	After rape, felt she lost her intelligence, soiled herself at school hated her body for most of her life. Washes a lot.	Rage made her smash things and fight [3_L101]	Periods where she does not eat, notes that she has always been slim.	One morning after arguing with her mother's boyfriend, because she would not take money from him. Thought he was a 'dangerous man'.
020	Limited eye-contact, nervous giggle	The library space was a safe haven to wait for her grandmother, because she could no longer go home.	Wanted to be like the women in her neighbourhood who 'used' their bodies, one neighbour prostituted her child	Childhood was 'different, damaged and far from God' [L327-332]. Dilapidated space. Flour porridge		She disrespected her body as a girl, was too thin, wanted to be sexy and curvy and use her body like the women in her neighbourhood.	Rage made her call her abuser 'a child molesting bastard'		Realised abuse after a friend disclosed at school.
021	Crying over the phone, being unable to talk		Sometimes in intimate relationships, feels uncomfortable expressing her sexual desires	Home space fragmented as a child [L182, 330-336]	Notices her own discomfort with how her partner might read her sexual decision making.	Aware of her body from puberty. Doesn't really like her body, didn't like what pregnancy did to her body. [L454-463]	Raged at mother [L310] at brother and at father.		Did 'something' to her body to get hospitalised.