



# Uncovering the life-histories of Black-British champions in cycling



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# Considerations

How to take this project forwards:

- Via life-history research (as separate researcher/biographer or
- Via auto-ethnography (Chang, 2016) as method (involved researcher) i.e. my **(auto)** experience used in relation to the reality and experience of the people [or, group] **(ethno)** to whom one belongs [or, with whom one is affiliated].

# The researcher

Started racing bikes in 1994

Began primary school teaching career in 1999.

Created two successful school cycling clubs with children as multiple national schools cycling championship winners.

Mixed teaching career with pursuits in cycling including Road Time Trial, Road Race and Track Sprint. The latter including most successes:

x2 South East Senior Regional championship wins (Gold 2008, Bronze 2013).

x 3 National Masters Championship wins (Bronze 2007, Bronze 2009, Silver 2010)

x 3 European Masters Championship wins (Bronze 2009, 2010, 2012)

1 World Masters Championship win (Silver 2010)

Currently a university teacher-educator/Senior Lecturer in Education studies at School of Education, University of Brighton.

# 'A golden age' of cycling

Great Britain's emergence as a world force in the sport of cycling over the last twenty years has **given rise to a golden age** (Wynn, 2015).

Popularity can also be viewed through a winning run (2008 – Sir Chris Hoy; 2011 – Mark Cavendish and 2012 – Sir Bradley Wiggins) in the publicly voted BBC Sport Personality of Year, cementing their **status as national heroes**.



# Cycling as popular culture

Williams (1976, p.80) defines 'culture' as a 'particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, or a group'.

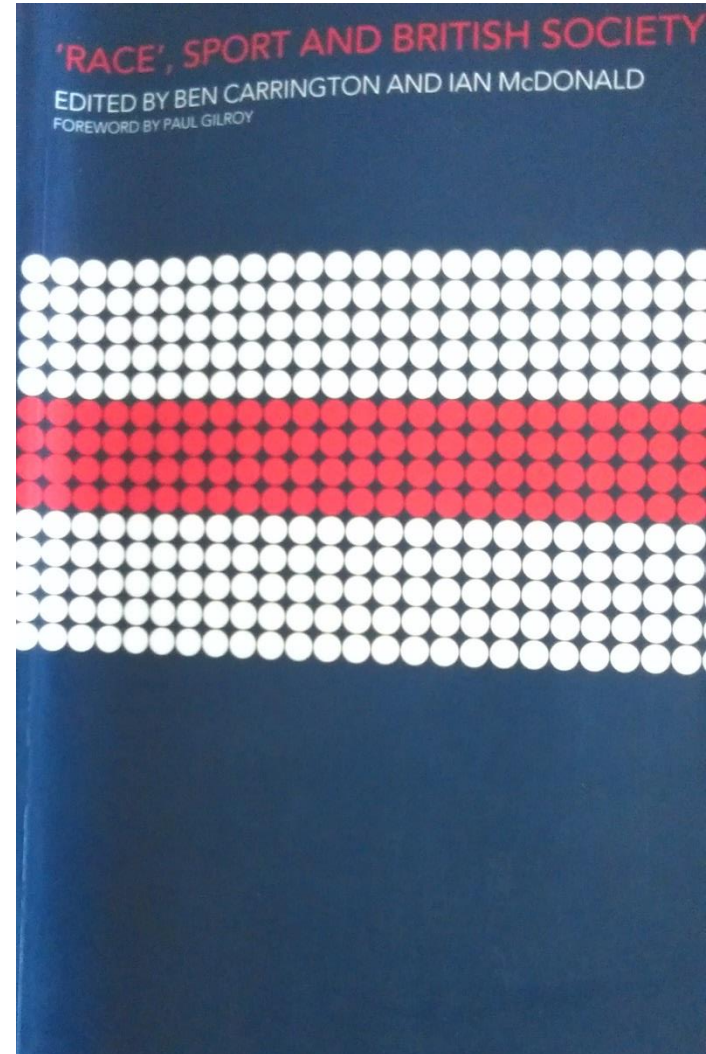
Popularity of cycling has seen prime time coverage on TV over the last 10 years.

From London 2012 and attendance of royalty, to the recent Olympic games of Rio 2016 which saw the BBC root the majority of their coverage from the velodrome.



# Cycling as a distinctive national axiology

When considering **the interconnection of nationalism and popular culture**, it appears that **cycling** as a sport and its various spectator cultures **produces, reproduces and channels nationalist and absolutist identifications** and identities in acute but attractive forms (Gilroy, 2002).



# National icons and our heroes

Prestigious honours such as knighthoods, damehoods and countless MBEs, OBEs, CBEs have been bestowed upon Great Britain's top cyclists.

Sir Chris Hoy, Sir Bradley Wiggins and Dame Sarah Storey in the last eight years are three of only four professional cyclists to be awarded the accolade. David Brailsford the former Great Britain cycling coach was also awarded the accolade.





# 'Whiteness'

Professional cycling like many other high profile sports such as Golf, Tennis and Swimming is evidenced as being **dominated in participation by white people** against the dearth of black and minority ethnic groups in Britain (Ismond, 2003; Long et. al, 2009; Seaton, 2009).

*“Whiteness” signals the **production and reproduction of dominance** rather than subordination; **normativity** rather than marginality, and **privilege** rather than disadvantage (Frankenburg (2009, p. 526)*

**As a theoretical lens, 'Whiteness; helps to explain how the processes of making and re-making of 'race' are rooted in particular histories, politics and cultures** (Delgado and Stefanic, 2012).

# 'Hegemonic functions'

'Whiteness' indicates a hegemonic function in the professional sport of cycling , in terms of who can represent Britain and who can become a national hero/icon.

Hegemony:

voluntary acceptance of the ideology of the dominant class [...] able to incorporate its ideas in to the common-sense view of the world possessed by the working class such as through meritocracy in sport (Boronski and Hassan, 2015)

'Whiteness' as the cultural representation of elite and professional cycling being produced and reproduced allows for a specific discourse and continuous narrative to be maintained as a form of power by the elites of a group or a society (Gramsci, 1971; 2012).

# Interconnections of nationalism, whiteness and popular culture

The professional sport of cycling in Britain as a distinctive national axiology, identified by the interconnections of nationalism, whiteness and popular culture, raises the need for further analysis and consideration of the epochal racist phrase:



**‘There ain’t no black in the Union Jack’  
(Gilroy, 1992)**

## **This study: *'Made in Britain' Uncovering the life-histories of Black-British champions in cycling***

Builds on my doctoral research interests:

- **Critical examination of 'doxic' White-British 'majoritarian' discourses** in history education i.e. the story of migration to the British Isles over the ages (Bourdieu, 1977; Gillborn, 2008; Moncrieffe, 2017).
- **Uncovering alternative and otherwise invisible realities/narratives** of migration to the British Isles over the ages via application of life-history research.
- Moncrieffe, M. L. (forthcoming) 'Using autoethnography to examine the effects of power relations in society on which lives have been written', *European Journal of Life Writing*, 2017 (6).



# Life history focus on Black-British champions in cycling



# Black-British trailblazers and champions in cycling: the visible and invisible



Life history focus on Black-British champions of cycling

Life-history research focus on their lives and cycling careers including: habitus, socialisation, education, mentors, success, barriers, representing Britain. **How were they 'Made in Britain'?**

**What are their legacies to the sport of cycling and to the nation?**

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