

**High expectations:  
Black professional parents' aspirations  
for their children**

**Barbara Adewumi**

**Thesis submission at the University of Kent  
for the Doctor of Philosophy**

**January 2015**

**Word count: 83,106**

## **Abstract**

Qualitative research on education and aspirations has been produced with the sole focus on the reproduction of class inequalities within a White middle class structure. There has only been a handful of studies of analytic engagement with Black professional middle class parents' expectations and aspirations regarding their children's futures in Britain. This gap creates an opportunity for new research to gain deeper insight into what decisions and choices are made by Black professional middle class parents and bring to light important knowledge of professional middle class educational attainment.

The research presented here explored how Black professional middle class parents' construct strategic approaches towards creating better futures for their children within a predominantly White middle class structure. Drawing on primary data taken from interviews with 25 Black African and Black Caribbean middle class parents' (half from African or Caribbean heritage) , this thesis analyses parents' strategic decision making and navigation in an unequal playing field of education. Findings indicate adaptations of Bourdieu's social, cultural and economic capitals to prepare and engage their children along certain pathways in order to create aspirational opportunities. Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) I argue that while class is very influential in explaining educational attainment, understanding Black professional middle class parents' aspirations for their children requires a deeper understanding of race. Evidence from in-depth narratives provided an insight into parents' own biographies that were either originally working or middle class backgrounds in shaping their orientations to, and manner of engagement with, their children's futures. Drawing from the data middle class parents were beginning to be geographically mobile, moving out of inner London areas in search of a better quality of life for their children and a preferred school choice – with a higher quality of education

found around the surrounding areas of London and the South East suburbs. Parents' subjective biographies illustrated diverse parenting practices and values such as those sets of parents using their Christian faith to help build a solid foundation for moral values, self-confidence and respectability. The research offers new insights into the choices made and strategic approaches used to nurture high aspirations for Black professional middle class children's futures.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Larry Ray and Dr Dawn Lyon who patiently read through my endless drafts and provided such valuable constructive feedback helping me to make the best sense of my interviews and writing.

Thank you to all the parents who spared the time in their busy professional lives, without them this research would not have been possible. Gary who mentored me through the ups and downs and always had a word of wisdom for me and to my sisters Diann and Debbie whose special love and encouragement inspired me to soldier on no matter what life throws at you.

A very special dedication goes out to my husband for his formidable, un-phased and constant belief in me, his sacrifices for me and our young family (emotionally and financially) throughout this journey will forever remain dear to my heart and I thank God for his life. My mother will always have a special place in my life for just listening and being there for me when I really needed her. Finally this thesis is dedicated to my three beautiful daughters Tele, Christiana and Temi who spurred me on and displayed such maturity throughout this long journey, for their pure love and patience I am truly grateful.

**Contents Page**

Abstract..... 2

Acknowledgements..... 4

Contents Page ..... 5

List of Maps, Tables and Figures ..... 9

**Chapter 1: Introduction** ..... 10

    Research origins..... 10

    Background to the research..... 11

    Contribution to key debates on race, education and aspirations..... 14

    Thesis structure ..... 15

**Chapter 2: Literature Review** ..... 20

    Introduction..... 20

    Definition of Terms..... 20

    Aspirations..... 23

    Context: Black population in Britain: Black Caribbean and Black African  
    and Black Other demographics..... 25

    Social class formations ..... 32

    Cultural capital, social capital, economic capital, habitus and field ..... 37

    Cultural capital ..... 38

    Habitus and fields ..... 40

    Economic and symbolic capital..... 43

    Education, aspirations and forms of ‘capital’ ..... 43

    Acknowledging race – Critical race theory ..... 47

    Households and gendered practices influencing aspirations ..... 52

    Religious belief as an element of social capital..... 56

    Social capital and religion ..... 59

Faith schools.....	60
Conclusion .....	62
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b> .....	<b>66</b>
Introduction - Methodological approach .....	66
Interviews.....	68
Sampling.....	72
Gaining access to the sample .....	82
Research limitations.....	85
Ethical issues.....	87
Data analysis .....	90
Reflections on the research process.....	94
Conclusion .....	98
<b>Chapter 4: Identity and class status</b> .....	<b>100</b>
Introduction .....	100
Bourdieu’s forms of capital and the Black professional middle class ..	103
Parents’ identities.....	106
Historically Black and middle class .....	107
Cultivating’ self-confidence in children and the need for Black professional role models .....	117
The parent to child ‘talk’ .....	117
Pervasiveness of racial discrimination .....	121
Transmitting diaspora culture - connecting with their past .....	126
Being middle class.....	129
High aspirations versus high costs – is it worth it?.....	132
Parents’ careers advice .....	133

Conclusion .....	142
<b>Chapter 5: Black professional middle class expectations and aspirations</b> .....	144
Introduction .....	144
Make it happen – realising aspirations .....	147
Professional career expectations .....	149
Mothers’ raising aspirations .....	154
Other ways of being successful .....	159
Belonging: White privilege and the Black professional middle class ...	164
There are no guarantees . . . create your own .....	169
Conclusion .....	171
<b>Chapter 6: Aspirations and Parenting</b> .....	175
Introduction .....	175
Parenting practices .....	178
Performance .....	199
Gendered roles and parenting styles .....	201
Conclusion .....	207
<b>Chapter 7: Education is key</b> .....	210
Introduction .....	210
Bourdieu, education and class .....	212
Valuing education .....	215
School choice- a strategic approach .....	218
Choosing the right school .....	221
Making the move to a better school .....	224
The significance of geographical mobility and education .....	232

Avoiding negative peer group influences .....	234
Choosing to stay with London schools.....	235
Education and social class.....	237
Bourdieu, education and race .....	240
Conclusion .....	241
<b>Chapter 8: Discussion: Re-considering Bourdieu, Race &amp; Class.</b>	<b>243</b>
Cultural capital .....	245
Habitus.....	246
<b>Chapter 9: Conclusion</b> .....	<b>248</b>
Key findings .....	248
Education and Geographical mobility.....	249
Identity .....	250
Parental strategies .....	251
Future research .....	252
References .....	254
Appendices .....	283



## List of Maps, Tables and Figures

	<b>Page</b>	
Map 2	Outflow percentages of the Black population	28
Map 2.1	Distribution of non-White population in the South East of England	29
Table 3	Household residential areas	75
Figure 3	Ethnicity and Gender	76
Figure 3.1	Size of Households	77
Table 3.1	Professional occupations by parent	78
Figure 3.2	Social mobility differences between parents	81
Figure 4	Achievements children should aim for 'to be the best'	136
Table 4	Intergeneration university attendance	141
Figure 6	Parenting practices	182
Table 6	Essential values for Black professional middle class parents	182
Figure 6.1	Variations of parents' roles	204
Table 7	Parents that moved out of London to be nearer to a wider choice of grammar schools	227

## Chapter 1: Introduction

“Aspirations for me is more than making my daughter a success – it’s about inspiring her to be whatever she wants to be if she puts the time and effort required to achieve that goal.” (Kate – of Saint Lucian heritage - Grade 7 civil servant).

### Research origins

Seldom do we hear stories about Black people who are in professional occupations working in the City, government departments, or about the highly skilled Black physicians and surgeons working in British hospitals. Yet when I was an undergraduate I helped at a local Saturday school in North London teaching maths and English. There I saw a passion for learning and professional parents volunteering their spare time to help educate Black children who were not given the time and attention by their school teachers. As a postgraduate I joined a volunteer mentoring scheme coordinated by a group of Black lawyers, investment bankers and entrepreneurs. These men and women wanted to transmit their knowledge into various professional sectors and build networks to help create opportunities for young Black academics within the South East. There was an element of hope and active encouragement about what young Black people could achieve with the right support of parents and Black professionals assisting as role models for young Black people. With this personal experience in mind I was curious as to why since the 1970’s there was still a primarily negative view about Black families in Britain centring on failure and underachievement in among Black youth (Modood et al 1997, Gillborn & Mizra 2000, Kotchick & Forehand, 2002) and a lack of sufficient studies on Black professional middle class parenting (Rollock et al 2013).

## Background to the research

Based on this lack of reporting on Black professional middle class parenting since the year 2000, and with my experience as a volunteer working alongside Black professionals I wanted to look deeper into sociological literature on Black families, race, class, gender and education, and find a more balanced discussion about Black professional middle class parents' aspirations for their children's futures. As I began to investigate further I found there to be very little scholarly or social media attention about the Black professional middle class in Britain. The Black professional middle class and their almost invisible lifestyles (Vincent et al, 2013) have been non-existent to the White majority in British society because of the attention given to the Black working class in urban areas and the mostly negative focus on Black children underachieving in schools. Since the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's there has been little research on the sector of Black African and Black Caribbean middle class as opposed to the focus on Black working class families, the latter commonly linked to a long-standing debate on the underachievement of Black African and Black Caribbean pupils in Britain (Strand 2007, Gillborn 2008; Rollock 2007). In 2012 a group of researchers embarked upon a new area of research on a group of Black Caribbean heritage parents as part of a growing middle class (Rollock et al, 2012). This was one of the first pieces of research to cast a more positive light on the second generation of British Black Caribbean middle class people (all of whom were in professional or managerial occupations) in Britain. The two-year project looked at the educational perspectives and strategies of middle class families and examined how professional parents identify themselves as 'being Black and middle class'. Rollock et al.'s (2014) analysis reveals a complex set of experiences based on the 'relative newness' of the Black professional middle classes closely linked to their working class histories, ongoing experiences of racism and operating within a 'dominant White middle class norm'. Their analysis of these experiences created five distinct subjective class groupings:

those who are 'comfortably middle class', 'middle class ambivalent', 'working class with qualification', 'working class' and 'interrogators' (those who did not choose any class position). The research highlighted the concerns Black professional middle class parents had aligning with a class position embedded in Whiteness (individualism and privilege) and were at odds with their moral values while growing up as working class.

In this thesis I contribute to the discussion about identity and middle classness and parents being torn between their historical cultural and moral values (see Chapter 4). The central focus of this current research is on how Black professional middle class parents use their histories and ongoing experiences in order to shape aspirations and develop strategic approaches for their children's futures. I conducted a qualitative guided interview approach (Patton, 2002) of 25 Black professional parents from either Black African or Black Caribbean heritage or origin who reside in South East England. As well as exploring the differences in social and cultural backgrounds of two diaspora groups of parents, the research examines the reasons behind geographical mobility found in half of this sample. In the 1950s and 1960s those who emigrated from parts of Africa and the Caribbean tended to settle in urban areas to find work or further their studies. However, half of those parents I interviewed now live on the outskirts of London and further out to the suburbs of South East England.

My research sought to explore nuanced differences in parents' aspirational strategies and decision making for their children's futures. I aimed to find out what specific tactics<sup>1</sup> were used and trajectories chosen by parents who wanted their children do better than them and be a 'success' (by the parents' measurements). Parents' strategies (their ways of planning to achieve goals they set for their children) were commonly influenced by their social and

---

<sup>1</sup> The term tactics came from the French writer de Certeau (2002) in the 1980s based on his belief that people subvert from the representations and rituals that institutions impose upon them. It is used in my study to mean Black middle class parents finding ways to manipulate the mechanisms that they usually conform to in their daily lives by briefly subverting from conformity to place their children at an advantage.

economic background where 13 of the 25 parents interviewed came from working class backgrounds and the other 12 parents came from an already established middle class background. Evidence through current urban and educational literature Clapson (2003), Butler & Hamnett (2007 & 2011), Rollock et al (2014) share the view that there is a small but growing Black professional middle class in Britain and they are finding ways to achieve social status despite previous socio-economic constraints that the last two generations were known to have experienced. As a result of this increasing social status Black professional middle class parents hold high aspirations for their children and put into place strategic parenting practices to position their children at an advantage. Yet, understanding what determines aspirations is not a simple process for it can be shaped by the preferences parents have, labour market demands and historical economic, social and cultural context. There are a number of other subjective personal experiences of education and work among the Black diaspora in South East England that were explored.

In relation to aspirations and educational attainment Bourdieu's theoretical framework (Bourdieu, 1996) is favourably regarded by many education researchers who look at White working or middle class parents and children (e.g. Reay, 2007 and Fuller, 2009). I argue that while Bourdieu's forms of economic, social and cultural capital are (somewhat) useful theoretical tools in explaining the reproduction of class structures, in the light of educational attainment, understanding Black professional parents' aspirations in the context of class, race and gender inequalities for their children requires deeper exploration of individual emotional, historical and social experiences. This thesis seeks to fill the gap of the under-researched Black professional middle class by examining the experiences and expectations of 25 professional middle class parents as they try to navigate an aspirational path for their children.

## Contribution to key debates on race, education and aspirations

This thesis further contributes to the recent research on Black professional middle class of Caribbean heritage by Rollock et al, (2013) and to the existing literature on race, education and aspirations discussed in the literature review. This research also interviewed Black African as well as Black Caribbean parents to obtain a deeper understanding of different social, economic and cultural backgrounds. It was the case that some Black Africans who migrated to England left the harsh experience of poverty behind, though some of the parents came from well-established Black professional middle class families. They believed that a high level of education was a priority in order to gain a professional occupation. Despite most parents centring on higher education, university was not the only route to becoming successful. There were some interesting differences within the same middle class group including sets of parents who held differing orientations to their children's education and saw higher education as an option, but not the only route to a successful future.

An original theme that arose from the group was using their belief system or faith to strengthen the confidence of their children to achieve a set of goals. Faith added another dimension to Black parenting styles and was observed to be another tool used to shape high aspirations for their children for 16 of the parents interviewed in this study.

Moving beyond Bourdieu's work of the reproduction of class by extending the analysis of race and discussing the complexity of race, racism, class and gender was not straightforward. The use of CRT's conceptual tools proved to be an invaluable process; as well as helping to analyse parental practices and values, CRT was used in theorising social inequalities, particularly when it came to analysing race in education. Analysis of parents' nuanced experiences and the reproduction of social inequalities raised important links to parents' values, how

they approached aspirations for their children and how they related formulated expectations and aspirations based on raced, classed and gendered situations.

Choosing the 'right' school for their child was a key factor towards achieving high aspirations for their children. A set of parents took the decision to be geographically mobile and move out of London to the outskirts or the suburbs of South East England for a better quality of life for their children and seize the opportunity to send their children to an independent school or grammar school in order to give their child an educational advantage that would help them focus on aiming for a professional occupation.

## Thesis structure

The overall structure of the thesis takes the form of nine chapters. Chapter 1 the **Introduction** gives a brief outline as to how and why I began this research study and the contribution the key findings will make towards the ongoing dialogue and future debates about race, education and aspirations among Black African and Black Caribbean professional middle class parents have in mind for their children in Britain. The chapter ends with a brief description of the structure of all 9 chapters. In Chapter 2 the **Literature review**, I begin with a brief history of the Black population in Britain with a focus on the South East of England region. I also address the meaning of aspirations. Bourdieu's framework of economic, social and culture capital which proposes mechanisms, processes and structures that legitimise and reproduce inequalities are discussed in the literature review and in the empirical chapters. Bourdieu's theoretical framework of forms of economic, social and cultural capital and his views on habitus and field are considered; however, I approach Bourdieu's work with caution due to the complex intersections of race, class and gender and as a key contribution to the literature review, I suggest an alternative theoretical perspective that enables me to extend Bourdieu's theoretical framework through the use of CRT.

CRT begins with a focus on racism and its central importance in society. CRT scholars posit that racism is normal in everyday life and often goes unrecognised – “business as usual” in American society (Delgado & Stefancic, 1995; Solorzano, 1997). CRT’s arguments about race and racism can be applied to Britain’s Black professional middle classes. In this thesis it is used to challenge Bourdieu’s reliance on the reproduction of class domination and forms of capital (social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital) as explanatory tools in understanding parenting practices that help to shape their children’s aspirations. CRT has been effective in analysing the issues of race and education in Britain because it provides an alternative qualitative research lens to uncover social injustices in the education system.

Chapter 3 addresses the **Methodology** of this study. In this chapter I discuss the general methodological approach I adopted and the techniques used. This includes sampling, access and recruitment, the design of the interview process, data collection and data analysis. In this chapter I explain why I chose this qualitative method with the use of guided interviews, and discuss some of the issues that I encountered on this journey, engaging in a reflexive way on any ethical or unforeseen occurrences along the way.

Chapters 4 to 7 are the empirical chapters. Chapters 4 and 5 are linked to the goals parents set for their children and chapters 6 and 7 examine the approaches parents use to achieve high aspirations. Chapter 4 focuses on **Identity and class status**. This chapter employs a framework to clarify the ways in which the systems of race and class stratification shape one another through culture. This chapter describes how the experience and meaning attached to identity and class can influence parents’ hopes and expectations for their children. Likewise, it explored, through a detailed analysis of those parents who grew up and went to school in Britain, their understanding and expression of being ‘Black professional’ among their White colleagues. Their narratives raised concerns about their experiences of racism, stereotyping and ongoing institutional racism.



Chapter 5, **Black professional middle class expectations and aspirations** for their children, looks at the overview of the parents' aspirations for their children and how these are transmitted down into daily decisions for their children. Issues of middle class inheritance, social positioning and notions of belonging are identified as some of the challenges faced in daily life. The debate about Whiteness as a privilege against the questionable value and position of Blackness is discussed in the context of what is legitimised and reproduced by what participants' refer to as the 'system', schools and in the professions. Parents perceive that through educational attainment, acceptance and recognition can be gained, yet 'difference' (in terms of culture and the colour of your skin) is less welcomed by the 'system'. Parents talked about communicating to their children ways to contest racism or times when they may be stereotyped by teachers or pupils. Participants described their actions (in forms of advice) – “preparing their children for battle” – this is a time when they expect at some point their child's position in society will be challenged or questioned.

Chapter 6, **Aspirations and parenting** gives illustrations of how parents see their role in shaping expectations and aspirations for their children through various parenting practices. Parents hold high expectations for their children and I explored ways in which parents encourage and support their children to achieve certain expectations. More than half of the parents (16 parents) used their Christian faith as a support mechanism for their children. Parents insisted that their faith be passed on to their children to help build a solid foundation consisting of moral values and respect for their own lives as young people with the ability to achieve.

I focused on Black African and Black Caribbean heritage parents and their social background in order to understand what factors influenced their trajectories. Differences in parental gender roles are compared to their concerns about society and influenced their parenting practices. Issues such as respectability for yourself – as a young Black male fighting against stereotypes

and having respect for others – upholding moral values and views on British society’s behaviours were found to be linked to gender. Using parents’ narratives, findings are then presented in relationship to Bourdieu’s theoretical framework of economic, social and cultural capital showing areas of limited discussion of race by Bourdieu and others. Building my conceptual development of race from these parents nuanced experiences helped me further test Bourdieu’s theoretical views about economic, social and cultural capital.

Chapter 7, **Education is key** is set out in two parts. The first section examines the importance parents place on their child’s education and the strategies they are prepared to use to provide their children with “good quality education” in the hope of high educational attainment. The second section of this chapter focuses on a particular strategy – geographical mobility – and why some of the parents in this research chose to move primarily because of schooling. In this current research half of the respondents who remained in London I refer to as the *Stayers* and the other half who have chosen to move further out to the outskirts of London or the suburbs are referred to as the *Movers*. Those parents who live in London choose to do so because they have well-paying professional occupations in London, and they want to keep close to their extended families and social networks. They emphasised that they had made a concerted effort (through research and ‘hot knowledge’ of high performing schools) to find the ‘best’ quality school for their children even if it means their children had to travel further out of their area. Despite these efforts there were stories of racist bullying in schools and teachers stereotyping their children. Parents in the current study held high expectations for their children’s education. High educational attainment was high on the aspirations agenda, to attend university and gain a professional occupation was very important to parents and was a sign of success and status within the Black professional middle classes.

Those parents who made the decision to move out of London did so because they believed it offered a better quality of life – away from crime and negative peer influence that distracted some young Black students from focusing on their

goals. Some parents admitted that moving out of London was a strategic plan of action to further help achieve the aspirations they had in mind for their children's futures; for example a group of parents were highly optimistic (their emphasis) that their child would attend a grammar school. Chapter 8, the **Discussion – Re-considering Bourdieu, Race and Class** explores my engagement with Bourdieu in analysing respondents' narratives and my arguments about the limitations of Bourdieu when it came to understanding the complexity of their historical experiences and present intersections of race and class that have an impact on the decisions Black professional middle class parents make for their children's futures.

Finally, in Chapter 9, the **Conclusion** highlights the main contribution of the thesis with the key findings of the study. Recommendations for future research are then suggested with the aim of a deeper nuanced understanding of the newer Black professional middle class group.

Although this research is a small-scale qualitative study of which no generalisability can be claimed, the research gives a micro insight into the progressive Black African and Black Caribbean diaspora, both illustrating that fewer assumptions should be made with such a multifaceted topic. Black professional parents want the best for their children's futures; however, as CRT explains inequality and unequal access to forms of capital (and other resources) as well as subtle forms of institutional racism remain inherent within dominant entities of society. Lastly, I briefly highlight the need for further potential research opportunities that could follow on from my research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

This chapter reviews research and theory relating to parents' aspirations and parenting practices for their children's futures. Understanding the engagement Black professional middle class parents have with their children's futures has been largely neglected in qualitative parenting research. Understanding the social and cultural dimensions of aspirations within the Black professional middle class is important because they are increasingly becoming a progressive presence within Britain's ethnic minority population. The literature review looks at the conceptual understanding and theory relating to aspirations and education and the empirical literature on race, class and gender within the research domain of parenting practices. All of these studies are useful for those who engage in practical initiatives and research that focuses on educational equity within educational policy, research and practice.

### Definition of Terms

#### Ethnic group

Cashmore describes ethnicity to a group of people with "some degree of coherence and solidarity" that are "self-consciously" aware of their commonalities (Cashmore 2003:142). This suggests that it is a social construction that people voluntarily put on themselves, that makes them feel they belong to a particular group. However the terms ethnic and ethnic group are frequently and incorrectly linked to Black and minority ethnic populations, and are rarely used to define White groups.

The official website for the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2014) remains unsure as to how the wider population choose their ethnic categories. A person

may indeed feel they are part of two or three other ethnic groups and may not even have a genetic similarity to the group they associate closely with. Modood (1993) calls hyphenated identities and Hall (1992) refers to hybrid cultures in multicultural Britain, where individuals may identify with more than one country of origin.

### Race

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe supported the idea that the physical differences between groups was identified by skin colour and was used to justify the existence of the slave trade in which African and native American populations were described by Europeans and White Americans as inferior to the White race, and was explained mainly in terms of genetic differences between African slaves. Today, many authors have commented on the problems of definition and usage that arise in discussions of 'race', 'racism' and associated concepts (Solomos, 2002). Over time there has been some unease about the meaning of 'race', which has led writers of putting worry quotes around the word, to illustrate that the writer does not suppose that it can be used unproblematically.

As Bowling and Phillips so fittingly describe its use:

'race is not "real" outside the racist ideologies and discriminatory practices that bring it into being' (2002,p. xvii).

Some writers avoid the word race altogether and preferred the term 'ethnicity', which suggests a more socially situated, less biological concept. The use of the term race in my study comes from a social constructionist viewpoint that discourses, political practices and policies play a significant role in constructing race and ethnicity through a variety of disciplinary and institutional structures (particularly through education) that define the boundaries of acceptance and privilege status.

## Blackness

Blackness in the context of Black professional middle class groups has a political stance and not a cultural one - where all Black people need to dress, talk and act the same, but of a political nature where they are connected into a common struggle. The use of the term Blackness in this study conveyed a more positive context among the respondents' habitus. According to parents in this study, Blackness was associated with positive assertions of achievement, role models and was linked to high expectations and parents were consciously removed from the notion of being stereotypically Black in education (Archer & Francis 2006).

## Whiteness

“Whiteness becomes the ruler against which everyone else is measured” (hooks, 1992: 97)

The term Whiteness refers to the taken-for-granted privileges of political, economic, cultural systems and across a wide range of institutions and social settings. The meaning of Whiteness needs to be defined not just as a biological or socially constructed group, the framing of 'White' or 'Whiteness' is a moral and political grouping (governments, states and collectives determine who is White and can act for or against White interests) which requires both material practice and symbolic performance for its maintenance (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996). Whiteness often goes unspoken in discussions of race and class formation until recently by writers such as Reay (2005), Preston (2007) and Gillborn (2008).

Debates and ideas on the study of Whiteness originate from the writings and often unacknowledged history of Black people (including Du Bois, 1961; Fanon, 1967; and more (relatively) recently the work of hooks, 1989). Given this emphasis on Whiteness as both social construction and system of social domination, CRT is a useful conceptual tool for considering the relationship

between race, class and gender (hooks, 1989,2004; Leonardo, 2005; Gillborn, 2005, 2006,Crenshaw, 2009; Allen, 2013).

## Background to the research

Research has highlighted the intersection of social class, parental values and Black children's experiences of the inequalities in the educational system (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000, Modood et al 1997, 2005). Studies have also used large amounts of quantitative data to investigate ethnic minority educational attainment and the injustices reproduced in education such as school exclusions (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996, DfES 2004a; Youth Cohort Study (YCS) 2004, DfES 2005a). However, there has been little analytic engagement with Black professional middle class parents' expectations and aspirations regarding their children's futures even though parental aspirations are deemed very influential for children's future professional occupational outcomes. There is relatively little (besides Rollock et al 2011, 2013, 2014, Vincent et al, 2011, 2012, Archer, 2012 and Ball et al, 2013) current evidence about how Black professional middle class parents shape their children's futures (particularly during the period of primary to higher education) or the ways in which high expectations or careers are discussed between parents and children.

## Aspirations

An aspiration can be defined as 'a hope or ambition' it can take many forms from uncertain, vague hopes for the future, through to more concrete and achievable plans (Branven & Nilsen 2007: 155). A clear, concise and universal definition of aspirations remains unclear and elusive (Hart, 2014). Yet the study of aspirations does have some usefulness in sociological analysis, particularly in the sociology of education linked to gender, ethnicity class divisions and location

(Reay, 2007, 2008, 2011, Ball 2008, Butler & Hamnett 2011, Archer 2012, 2013, Croll & Attwood 2013, Fuller 2014 and Rollock et al 2014). Aspirations may refer to a desired place of well-being in the case of Black professional middle class, such as wealth or social status more aligned to ambition such as a professional career. (Rollock et al, 2011, 2014). Such studies suggest that aspirations can influence an individual's future, whereas expectations are slightly different to aspirations – they are more about the likelihood or positive belief of a goal or action being achieved. Morgan (2005) argues that aspirations overarch the expectation(s) and are more about future desires to achieve the ultimate future aim. Therefore, the current expectations can help satisfy the route to the aspiration and act as a motivator (Quaglia & Cobb 1996).

Hart (2014) attempted to breakdown the meaning of aspirations using theories by Sen (1992) and Bourdieu (1996) for a sociological analysis of aspirations within the context of educational attainment. She combined the two theories to gain some insight into young peoples' decisions about engaging in higher education. She used Sen's conceptual patterns of commodities, conversations factors agency, well-being freedoms and functionings with Bourdieu's ideas of forms of capital, habitus and field and arrived at a point of decoding aspirations as revealed, concealed, adapted and apparent types of aspirations (cited in Unterhalter et al, 2014).

Empirical studies in the sociology of education have suggested that ethnic groups consider educational attainment to be a key element in improving their life chances and are a key component in helping to map their ambitions and aspirations. (Reay 2003, 2007; Platt 2005, Mohood et al. 2005, Fuller 2009, Archer 2011). For example, Butler & Hamnett's (2011) illustrates how education becomes central to the language of aspiration and determines methods of achieving social and spatial mobility for parents' own personal aspirations as well as their children's. Butler & Hamnett looked at urban and suburban space and the means by which those living in the East End use specific social resources to aspire in the society around them. They found that educational



opportunities and the key role of school choice preferences, played a major role in how ethnic minorities structure their lives. Butler & Hamnett's study is held as a more optimistic focus on the minority ethnic middle class, but acknowledges the problems that remain. They have observed some change in the ethnic and class structure they claim is taking place in other many major British cities. However, as their focus was primarily on social geography and parents' school choice, including constraints, they did not explain or make any specific links about how these middle class groups utilise their various forms of capital to achieve their aspirations.

### Context: Black population in Britain: Black Caribbean and Black African and Black Other demographics

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) most recent 2011 census figures show that Britain's White population makes up 86 per cent of the total population followed by Asian/Asian British 7.5 per cent, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British 3.3 per cent, Mixed, multiple ethnic groups 2.2 per cent and Other ethnic groups 1 per cent. The Black, Asian and minority ethnic populations of England and Wales are not evenly distributed but are concentrated in London and the other urban conurbations of the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. In 2001, 63 percent of the BME population of England and Wales lived in these four conurbations. In the 2007 midyear population estimates this had fallen to 55 per cent but it has risen again to 59 per cent in the 2011 census.

My research focused on the Black Caribbean, Black African and Black Other middle class families ('nuclear' and single parent families) living in inner London and those who have moved to the outskirts of London and further out to the suburbs within the South East region.

A further breakdown of the Black population shows that 41 per cent of Black Africans and 14.4 per cent of Black Caribbeans live in London. More than half of the Bangladeshi group (54 per cent) also live in London. In Southwark nearly half of the borough's population is from a minority ethnic community. In London 4.2 percent are Black Caribbeans and 7 per cent Black Africans and 2.1 are Other Black. Currently, there are now 989,628 'Black Africans' in England and Wales (source: ONS, 2011). The largest Black African groups are the Nigerians and Ghanaians. The largest Black African groups are to be found in the areas of Hackney, Haringey, Lambeth, Lewisham, Croydon, Luton and Brent. Lewisham ethnic profile has seen an overall change. Residents identifying themselves as White British has decreased from 56.9% in 2001 to 41.5% in 2011. 'White Other' residents have risen dramatically, the Census believes is likely to be due to migration from the EU accession countries. Black African residents are now also higher than Black Caribbean, with Black Other also seeing a sizeable growth. Black Africans have risen from 22,571, 9.0 per cent in 2001 to 32,025, 11.6 per cent in 2011 and Black Caribbean decreased slightly 30,854, 12.3 percent to 30,543, 11.2 per cent in 2011 and Black - Other rose from 5,146 2.1 in 2001 to 12,063, 4.4 per cent 2011.

Demographic predictions are suggesting that Barking and Dagenham will experience an increase in the proportion of its Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) population by nearly 20 percentage points between 2006 and 2031. Six other London boroughs are projected to have increases in their BAME population of over ten percentage points: Croydon, Redbridge, Harrow, Greenwich, Hillingdon and Hounslow. Map 2 estimates the proportion of ethnic minorities over that will be well over 50% of the population by 2020.

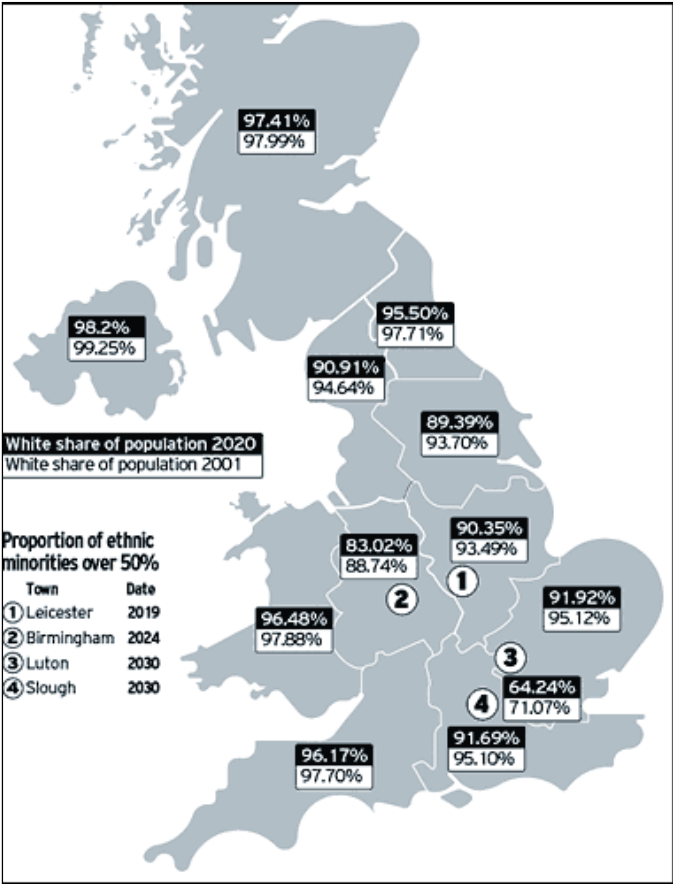
From the second half of the twentieth century there was a concentration of the Black population in the urban inner cities due to employment opportunities for new labour. The Black population have historically been classified as 'economic migrants' leaving everything behind and travelling thousands of miles to seek work, a good education system and a better life for their families in the UK

(Simpson & Finney 2009). Many were recruited to work with the NHS and for London Transport. Between 1955 and 1961, 4000 West Indians joined London's transport system; many of these workers were young men from Barbados. A large number of Jamaican nurses were also encouraged to come and work in Britain; many became specialists in midwifery (Taylor 2005, Jones & Snow 2009).

Simpson et al. (2009) claim that there is now some evidence of dispersal of the minority ethnic populations. The net movement out of the highest concentration districts was a little greater as a percentage than that of the White population from the same districts (0.96% rather than 0.82%). "White flight" is not a suitable term to describe the migration from these districts by minority ethnic populations, unless one also adds non-White flight in the same description. Simpson et al. (2009) believe that the movement could be considered as movement from poor housing conditions.

The 'Black outflow' from inner London to outer London is particularly noticeable, because the Black population make up the largest minority population in inner London. This is called 'counter urbanisation' and may be an explanation of much of the ethnic pattern of internal migration patterns found in Britain. South East London and outer parts of London have experienced a major demographic change over the last decade and a half (Simpson et al. 2009 and see Map 2, page 28). Map 2 shows the outflow in percentages ranging from 6.6% up to 17.8% in outer London areas. These areas have changed from being overwhelmingly White, working class areas with pockets of ethnic groups in the 1960s and 1970s to places of large minority ethnic groups comprising of a third of the population in 2001 and was projected to possibly grow over 40% by the 2011 Census.

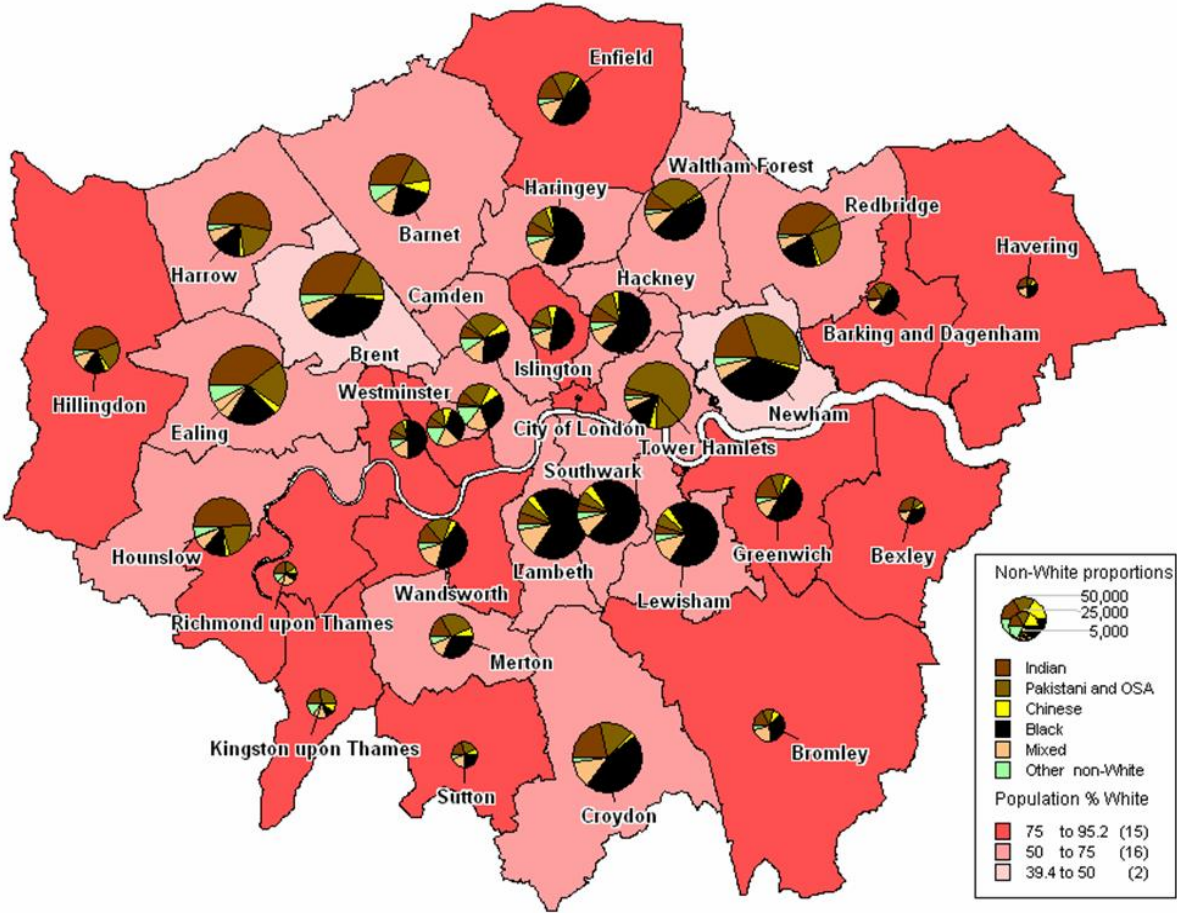
MAP 2 Outflow percentages of the Black population:



With such increases, the more affluent members of the Black population have also increased their ability to move to what were largely White outskirts of London areas such as Croydon, Redbridge, Brent parts of Kent are beginning see a small but rising groups of Black African and Black Caribbean populations, particularly, moving from London's South East borough of Southwark to more outer regions of London. For example, Barking and Dagenham has 10.71 per cent Black African and 9.51 per cent Black Caribbean, Croydon has 11.79 per cent and 13.65 respectively. In the Medway region of Kent the BME (Mixed Asian and Black population) increased from 5.4 per cent in 2001 to 10.4 per

cent with the Chatham ward having 20.1 per cent of the total Medway BME groups. Other regions of Kent have grown from 1.1 per cent in 2001 to 6.3 per cent in 2011 and are part of BME groups (source, ONS 2011). The demographic map 2.1 below shows the distribution of the Black population compared to the White majority.

MAP 2.1: Distribution of non-White population in the South East of England:



Phillips’s (1998) study on Black ethnic minority patterns of dispersal (although dated) also proved useful to the field of social mobility and aspirations by

analysing data from the 1991 census. Since then Stillwell & Williams 2005, Finney & Simpson 2007, 2008 and Stillwell & Hussain 2010 have also looked at counter urbanisation movement of ethnic groups and have found that contrary to conventional theories of ethnic 'self-segregation' and 'White-flight,' some non-White ethnic groups have been found to be migrating away from areas of ethnic concentration to areas of highest White concentration. A pattern that could be explained in some way by a desire demonstrated historically by many groups to move away from densely populated urban areas (in which large numbers of non-White groups can be found) to less densely populated, predominantly White areas.

Phillips (1998) analysed data for Black Caribbeans and Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi groups, but not Black Africans. Her paper did not discuss the notion of aspirations directly, however, there is data that helps to further examine the characteristics of those involved in de-clustering of inner cities, suburbanisation and dispersal of ethnic groups. Phillips also looked at the institutional framework of housing allocation and labour market recruitment which Phillips claimed enabled the constraints process, meaning limited access to resources or knowledge. Phillips concluded that social mobility within ethnic groups is one of a fragmented minority ethnic experience, with increasing opportunities and empowerment for some, *but not for all*. It is an experience which varies according to ethnicity, social class, gender, over different generations and location (Stillwell & Williams 2005).

On the basis of the literature discussed above, one can suggest that minority groups are beginning to leave inner London faster than the White population. This is known as counter urbanisation. To fully understand the socio-economic reasons for counter urbanisation, one has to gain more qualitative information from individuals who have left their homeland. There is a general agreement among researchers (Phillips 1998, Champion 2005 and Simpson & Finney 2009 and more recent studies on several other ethnic minority middle class groups by Archer 2010 and Butler & Hamnett 2011) that counter urbanisation involves the

satisfaction of aspirations for larger housing in more comfortable surroundings, involving larger mortgages experienced by the more affluent groups. Therefore, the employment and income composition (the economic capital) of each minority ethnic group is a significant factor and therefore likely to affect their attitudes toward suburbanisation and counter urbanisation.

Rees et al.'s (1996) demographic analysis of census data over the 1981–1991 period shows that despite the relatively rapid growth rate of the majority ethnic population, there has been a rather low level of minority ethnic spatial redistribution across the country (Rees & Phillips 1996). There has thus been a growing metropolitan concentration, with ethnic communities in regions such as Greater London (which now accounts for 45 percent of Britain's ethnic population), the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire increasing their share of the ethnic population. From a generational perspective we are beginning to see small changes in the propensity to migrate out from the inner cities and the outer regions. As Robinson (1996) has stated, British born Black Caribbeans are more mobile than their parents' generation and show signs of moving beyond urban regions. (Clark & Drinkwater 2007). Although movement has been stable, as socio-economic progress develops it is expected that minority groups will desegregate and disperse (Mackintosh 2005, Stillwell 2008 and Phillips 2010).

The process of gentrification remains an important element in transforming the class structure and housing market of some inner-city areas (Watt 2008). With changing ethnic socio-economic structures, gentrification needs to be looked at in the context of a wider set of social and spatial transformations of the city. For example, the traditional Whites 'urban seeking gentrification' were seeking the cultural diversity and stimulation of the inner city, along with proximity to central work places and affordable housing. The new suburban residents are in part, trying to escape from the negative attributes of inner-city life where Blacks were placed at the bottom of the pile (Gilroy 1995) and I hope to show in my recent research that some Black professional middle class parents are purchasing

more larger homes and leading a more affluent lifestyle in London and on the outskirts of London. (Johns 2011, Butler & Hamnett 2011). Therefore, starting from a different social and cultural background to the White population (from emerging ethnic suburbanites to Black professional middle class), moving to the outskirts of London is not a form of gentrification but simply suburbanisation (Butler & Hamnett 2011). Butler & Hamnett found that some parents were in flight from what they saw as the long-term decline of the inner London boroughs in which they were – for the most part – born and raised. The Black professional middle class can be seen to be establishing their middle class status through geographical mobility – having enough capital to live outside the less preferred inner London boroughs. (Stillwell & Hussain 2008). Concerns about crime, and peer influence were seen to be an obstacle for parents who had high expectations for their children and wanted to move their children further away from such distractions.

## Social class formations

Current sociological analysis of class formations argues that classes possess an ambivalent nature (Savage 2000) as social science intellectuals fail to reach a consensus on the actual use of the concept. Savage (2001) suggested that the reason for the demise of class as an everyday language within people's lives is precisely due to class processes. For example Savage notes that 'people do not see class identities as the ascribed product of their birth and upbringing, but rather they elaborate a reflexive and individualised account of their mobility between class positions in ways which emphasise the continued importance of class identities' (Savage 2007:1). Savage further claims that middle class modes of individualisation are increasing normative ways of being and middle-classness is a relational formation. This means that middle class identities can be understood as produced in resistance or reaction to working class identities essentially trying to embrace all that is 'not working class' (Savage 2001). These



identities are produced and reproduced within relations of protest, uncertainty and anxiety. That is the meaning of middle-classness and middle class identities are constantly being reconstituted and reconfigured through a range of material and symbolic struggles (Wacquant 1991).

Moreover, debate continues regarding the middle class internal divisions. There is debate over whether sociologists should discuss their positioning as having a singular middle class or diverse middle classes – with many opting to use the more ambiguous categories of middle class(es). Crompton (1995) argues that the middle class is differentiated in various ways, but that there are two major dimensions of difference, via the professionalism/corporatism distinction or expert qualifications of labour. Like Mann (1993), Savage et al. (1992) point to three key groupings within middle classes, namely the *petit bourgeoisie*, managers and professionals, each of which draw on distinct assets which are important within class formation (property, bureaucracy and cultural capital respectively). And yet as Savage et al. (1992) point out, there remain underlying points of commonality across middle class factions so even though processes in the labour market tend to fragment the middle classes according to different types of career they pursued, those based around family structures and neighbourhoods tended to unify them (1992:151).

The middle class would appear to constitute the second largest class category in the UK and it continues to increase (Ball 2003) in relative terms to the rate of growth of the economy. Existing literature would suggest a growing interest in the sociological analysis of the middle class(es) (e.g. Savage 2000, Archer 2000, Skeggs 2004; Reay 2007, 2008), but in particular within the sociology of education, where interest is growing in middle class families' engagement with education in both the UK and the US (e.g. Ball 2003; Lareau 2003; Power et al. 2003; Reay et al 2007, Vincent & Ball 2006, Hamnett 2010 and Archer 2013;). Empirical studies focusing on understanding middle class educational practices have identified different factions and classification within the frame of 'middle-classness', Reay et al.'s study (2007, 2008) of White middle class parents who

make it a point to send their children to 'inner-city' or urban comprehensives highlights generational differences as important for understanding differential family identities and engagement in education.

Vincent & Ball (2006, 2007), however, point to the importance of occupational grouping in shaping educational values and practices. It is notable, however, that research within education has been framed within the sociology of the White middle class. Comparatively little sociological analysis, empirical or theoretical attention has been given to 'race' or ethnicity within the middle class debate. Studies by Archer & Francis (2007) for example argued that educational policy approaches tended to be acknowledged through a narrow individualised approach focused on 'under-achievement' (Archer & Francis 2007, 2010). Archer & Francis argued that there was a predominantly raced and classed approach to understanding factors underlying and driving educational success and 'under-achievement'. Thus the 'causes' of 'under-achievement' among for instance Black Caribbean pupils and Muslim pupils were often popularly assumed to be a product of personal attitudes, beliefs and cultural/family practices and values. Archer & Francis (2007). As well as using Bourdieu's work, they also drew on post-structuralist theorisations of identification offered by Hall (1992) and Butler (1990) respectively: 'Within this approach, social identities, divisions and inequalities (of race/ethnicity, social class, gender and sexuality) are understood as being brought into being through social life - through talk, actions, policies, practices and so on'. (Archer & Francis, 2007:25-6). This approach relies on a more diffused notion of power and the performance and embodiment of identities than is perhaps usually associated with Bourdieu. Archer & Francis argue that 'theories of social class have been primarily formulated with reference to White communities, and hence care must be taken when extending these notions to minority ethnic communities' (Archer & Francis, 2007:34). To emphasise their point, Archer & Francis argue that issues of race and ethnicity are only addressed by educational policy under the context of 'under-achievement'. Also issues of race/ethnicity, social class and actual academic achievement (achievement relating to Black and Asian girls)

have been dominated by 'Black boys' under-achievement. Yet statistics on the achievement of Black African and Black African boys have been on par with White boys and Black African and Black Caribbean girls are out-performing boys and White girls in GCSE results.(DfE 2013).

Gillborn & Mirza (2000) reported that despite efforts from parents and teachers communicating and being more supportive to Black pupils they were still not sharing in the yearly improvements at each key stage (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; DfES, 2004a; DfES 2005a) and were still being permanently excluded from school in disproportionate numbers (DfES, 2003b, 2004b, 2005b & Wright et al 2010). Gillborn, 2008 believes there is a phenomena in the field of education called the 'conspiracy theory' against Black students in British schools. In exploring the role of education, Gillborn's conspiracy theory idea was shaped by CRT and Gillborn proposed a radical analysis of the nature of race inequality in the English educational system. Gillborn's findings suggest a long standing construction of inequalities between Black/White that have been obscured by a disproportionate focus on students in receipt of free school meals (FSM). In building an argument against the inequalities in education against Black/White students, Gillborn also argues that the media continue to present Whites as race victims, making them the centre of interest. His analysis further claims that there is a form of conspiracy that is continued and maintained by policymakers (through Gillborn's claims of Whiteness privileges being used as a fundamental driver for social policy) and institutionalised systems and processes that perpetuate race inequality in education. For example assessments where Black children do comparatively well, new methods such as measurement models for SATs testing are unfair and reinforce Black student subordinate status – as underachievers in English schools. Wright, (2010) also claims that social policy relating to Black children in British schools takes the form of "assimilation to the current 'colour blind' approaches which have entailed the erasure of 'race' from policy" (Wright, 2010, p.306). In addition, Tomlinson makes a perceptive argument "...the education system over the past 50 years has developed within a socio-political context in

which there has been a lack of will to ensure that all groups were fairly and equitably treated” (Tomlinson, 2008). For example the introduction of the London Education Authority (LEA) in 1998 increased competition between schools and gave parents more school choice.

Gillborn (2010) gives the example of the introduction of state set tests (SATs) where the results are published on national school league tables. He argues that the SATs system is part of a neo-liberal education policy (free market policy) that further disadvantages ethnic groups i.e. Black students who are disproportionately and unfairly represented in lower attainment schools and thus being placed in lower sets.(Gillborn 2010: 94).

Despite unfair assessments, educational practices and social policy in English schools, the drive by minority ethnic (ME) middle class(es) constitute a particularly interesting both (class) privilege and (racial) exclusion. While ethnic minority communities account for 8% of 18-24 year olds in Britain, they make up almost twice this proportion of university entrants (Shiner & Modood, 2002 : 210).

Research by writers such as Modood 2002, Maylor & Williams 2009, Archer 2011, Rollock et al 2014 and Keer 2014 suggests that the minority ethnic middle classes are growing in size – with this growth particularly noticeable among Black Caribbean, Black African and Indian men and women. This has been explained by some (Modood, 2004, Butler & Hamnett 2011, as reflecting increasing or higher levels of education among these groups. However, it is notable that LFS (2011) statistical analysis has also highlighted that minority ethnic individuals in ‘middle class’ occupations, such as within the service sector, experience inequalities in lower average earnings and are finding it more difficult to access higher level positions than their White counterparts. Keer et al (2014) found that between 2007 and 2012, the number of Black / Black British people in top management positions decreased by 42%.

Researchers are aware of the complexity and differences in terms of achieving aspirations, be it on the topic of race, gender or class, but research suggests that some groups clearly do have higher aspirations than other groups. For example, statistics reveal a greater proportion of ethnic minority students attend university than White students (Modood 2004). Indeed, the number of Black students at English universities has tripled over the last 12 years (NAO 2011), but such students are at a disadvantage in comparison with White students at every stage of their higher education. Therefore, literature suggests the idea that aspirations are more 'raced' than 'classed' – in other words you can have high social capital but low cultural capital because of your ethnic background rather than your class background. Evidence from recent research by the National Audit Office in 2011 suggests that ethnic minorities have high levels of representation in higher education, making up 18% of all students, compared with 8% of the working age population. This picture, however, masks a more complex situation in which rates of participation vary between different ethnic minority groups and types of institution.

## **Cultural capital, social capital, economic capital, habitus and field**

Much of the literature regarding individual and family aspirations is to be found in the sociology of education. Empirical studies suggest that the topic of education can be related to an individual's aspiration or sense of achievement (Scott 1990; Rikowdki 1997; Platt 2007, Fuller 2009 and Evans 2010;). Words such as pathways, life chances and lifestyles have been used to describe a sense of achievement by setting certain goals in life. There is growing interest in the middle classes and their educational practices, yet research to date has predominantly been framed within the context of the White middle classes (Savage 2000; Archer 2000; Ball 2003, Skeggs 2004, Reay 2007, 2008). One exception although dated was Dayes (1994) study on the Black middle class in

the UK. Although differences in educational attainment continue to be a topic of interest to scholars, the actual in-depth level of engagement, negotiation and strategic navigation of Black professional middle class parents for their children's futures have often been left out of the discussion (for exceptions, see Lareau 2002,2003, Rollock et al 2011, 2014 and Vincent 2012, 2013).

Bourdieu's work has been particularly influential in educational research. His social and cultural capital theoretical links to educational attainment and aspirations (1977, 1986) is of some value in this thesis because although Bourdieu is most interested in how the dominant class reproduces itself, his theoretical approach is useful in understanding how the Black professional middle class might seek to raise their socio-economic status by the deployment of or investment in different kinds of capital beyond the economic (Bourdieu 1997). These different capitals may include social capital, such as the operation of social networks or group membership, cultural capital and economic capital are elaborated further in this thesis to further explain the Black professional middle class positioning in British society and pose the question is it possible to see the Black professional middle class operating as a form of social networks, or as a set of shared norms and values or as a form or social or cultural capital? Certainly Bourdieu's work is important in emphasising the importance of familial norms in the production of socio-economic advantages and disadvantages. His work also offers a theoretical framework and starting point for making the links between the wider social structure, power and ideology.

### Cultural capital

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital refers to the general cultural background and skills possessed by an individual, such as linguistic ability, cultural knowledge of art, taste and shared norms and values. Cultural background is linked with class because (according to Bourdieu) it is economically determined.

This is in line with classical Marxism whereby the accumulation of profit widens the division between those who own and control the means of production, and those who rely on waged labour. Bourdieu modernises the conflict theory suggesting it extends the analysis to everyday cultural reproduction and to a notion of cultural power as a key sphere for reproducing class domination. (Bourdieu, 1997). Access to higher education is a good example of the cultural 'goods' with which students play the game of university life (Bourdieu, 1990). University life overlaps with other social fields and other areas of social privilege (private education or a good state school, family situation, social aspirations, access to funding, 'ability' and government policy). In a Bourdieusian sense, if this is the case, it raises the question of how ethnic groups can acquire or need to possess high cultural capital if they do not start on a level playing field with the White majority. Wacquant (2008) found that Black Americans living in the hyper-ghettos have fewer and less dense social ties/networks and have considerably less volume of all major three forms of capital; economic, social and cultural. In the case of Black professional middle class parents in Britain, they may have large volumes of economic social and cultural capital, yet they too did not and are not on a level playing field with the more privileged White middle class majority and also experience obstacles due to the reproduction of White middle class domination.<sup>2</sup> Bourdieu can be criticised for determinism on many different occasions of his work in relation to his point about class being based on the accumulation of economic capital as being generalised.

---

<sup>2</sup> There are historical differences between the US and the UK Black middle class for example the history of African American slavery shaped the perceptions of White domination and segregation again shaped their views about White supremacy and injustice, creating differences between multiple Black identities. In the UK Blacks experienced explicit to subtle experiences of racial discrimination including the heightened debate about whether institutional racism existed.

## Habitus and fields

Bourdieu argues that the *habitus* varies with class and is determined by the agent's understanding of what is happening around them. Habitus is a set of dispositions resulting in particular practices, improvisations, bodily attitude, and gestures and so on which provide the 'feeling for the game'. In this sense Bourdieu claims habitus is created and reproduced unconsciously, "without any deliberate pursuit of coherence . . . without any conscious concentration" (Bourdieu 1984: p.170). In other words, one's class habitus shapes one's existence that is one's values, tastes, opinions and aspirations. Habitus, as shaped by individual and collective histories, provides a framework of dispositions that guide (and set the limits of) future actions. Thus, social axes of "race"/ethnicity, social class, and gender all contribute to shaping what an individual perceives to be possible and desirable. Habitus fundamentally consists of internalised principles resulting from one's upbringing (structured structures) that result in an agent's action and view of the world, which reflect the construction of an agent's social position – of which is ongoing (structuring structures). Habitus then provides a practical "feel" for the world, framing ways of thinking, feeling, and being, such as taken-for-granted notions of "who we are," and "what we do," and what is "usual" for "us." For instance, various studies have shown how habitus can shape the extent to which higher education is seen as an expected, "automatic" post-16 route or as "not for the likes of us" (Archer, Reay and Ball, 2005).

Although this theory can be used quite carefully when looking at the emerging Black professional middle class, habitus focuses heavily on structural conditions. Bourdieu neglects to analyse how people's preferences are shaped by broader structural features such as the contribution and influence gendered practices within the home or by external structures such as other social networks including work relations. Butler and Hamnett (2011) claim that Bourdieu provides no indication that people do not necessarily draw boundaries



around their 'race' or gender experiences alone or that habitus is affected by broad features of society, whether they be a strong state or a high level of geographical mobility. A weakness in Bourdieu's work is the absence of more modern ethnic class changes and uses of the various forms of capital. At this point this raises an opportunity to critically engage in Bourdieu's conceptual tools *of field, habitus and forms of capitals* and explore 'to what extent' (my emphasis) are Bourdieu's conceptual theories appropriate to Black professional middle class in the Britain's South East region.

Secondly, Bourdieu's concept of 'field' refers to the different social and institutional spaces in which people express and reproduce their dispositions (Bourdieu 1993, 1996). He refers to this 'reproduction' as the game played by social agents (people or institutions). The game that occurs in social spaces or fields is competitive with various social agents using differing strategies to maintain or improve their position in the field. The accumulation of social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital are all part of the process within and a product of, a field. Bourdieu spent considerable time on the analysis of the social field of education and was particularly concerned about the socially (re)productive effects of formal education Bourdieu (1979). He demonstrated that those who benefitted from the French schooling system were those who already possessed social and economic advantages. He argued that the purpose of the school system was not to create meritocratic institutions of knowledge but was one that produced and maintained intellectual elites. He claimed that education in elite universities was necessary cultural capital for social agents taking up dominant positions in the universal field of power, such as the public spaces of government, finance, politics, art and education. He concluded that in practice the power and social rank of individual agents depends not simply on the capital they can mobilise but, crucially, on the perceived 'fit' within that field as he describes as 'homogeneity of dispositions' (1979:110).

In the case of Black middle class families in this research, the development of aspirations and strategic decision-making processes, through their mobilisation of capitals are complex because of race and racism within the social field of education. Numerous factors are involved: feelings and emotions, experience, access to information and guidance, perception of opportunities available, family background, class and gender (Reay 1998).

Patterns of activities within a family such as parenting and what they believe is important for their children are a collection of practices that seem 'right' and 'natural' in terms of the 'way we do things'. A collection of differing dispositions, values and priorities has been labelled as the familial habitus or family habitus – a 'deeply ingrained system of perspectives, experiences and predispositions family members share' (Reay, 1998, p. 527). The concept of family habitus has been challenged by Atkinson<sup>4</sup> contesting the use of the concept as possessing a 'fatal flaw' because the family does not belong to a particular field but is defined in and of itself (Atkinson, 2011, p.336-337). According to Reay (2004) habitus is not extensively deterministic, but there are limitations within habitus, for example there is no straightforward alignment between family habitus, capital and parents' aspirations for their children. Social inequalities in the distribution of capital and differently classed family habitus combine to produce uneven (classed, racialised) patterns in aspirations and potential outcomes. With such social inequalities taken into consideration, the concept of family habitus used in studies on parenting suggest that it may also be the subject of conscious (rather than unconscious) reflection (Reay, 2004; Vincent et al., 2012)

---

<sup>4</sup> Atkinson's reservations of Bourdieu's concepts of collective habitus, such as 'institutional' and 'familial' habitus are debated fully in a response article by Burke et al., 2012. This article engages with Atkinson's recent criticisms in order to defend Bourdieu's utility of concepts and theories.

## Economic and symbolic capital

The main function of economic capital is to maximise economic profit and is represented in most material types of capital (money, assets or property) that is limited and is unable to present itself in immaterial forms such as cultural capital or social capital. This explains Bourdieu's reasons to extend the sense of the word 'capital' by using it in a wider system of exchanges whereby assets of different kinds are transformed and exchanged within complex networked or circuits within and across different fields.

Symbolic capital is distinctively different from the other capitals as it is linked with the well-formed habitus and can exist in any group. Bourdieu defines symbolic capital as "the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate (Bourdieu, 1989: 17 & 1986). Alternatively, for Bourdieu, any form of capital may experience a process of change so that it is recognised and legitimate for its "currency or worth". For example higher education qualifications in a university undergo a process of being recognised as institutionalised cultural capital. Secondly, Bourdieu (1986) uses the example of artists and scientists seeking the truth in their work, yet they are recognised and sometimes honoured for their talent or gift, giving them legitimacy and a position of privilege.

## Education, aspirations and forms of 'capital'

Bourdieu is concerned about the cultural and structural mechanisms by which inequality is reproduced. There is no better place than school to fuse and reproduce the democratic ideologies and effectively help reproduce the status quo or what he calls the established order. In his writings Bourdieu (1996) examined the elite education systems in France known as the *grandes écoles*,

in the United States by the Ivy League schools such as Harvard and Yale and in England by Oxford and Cambridge, as well as public schools. He believes that these powerful educational institutions have at their disposal an unprecedented range of powers and distinctive titles to justify their privileges. Bourdieu shows how it is their structural and sometimes genealogical – of the '*noblesse de robe*' – which, in order to consolidate their position in relation to other forms of power, had to construct the modern state and the republican myths, meritocracy, and civil service that went along with it. To summarise, he suggests that the social mobility of individuals does indeed assist to conserve that state mobility structure, being the bourgeoisie and top corporations of a country. Guaranteeing social stability through the controlled selection of a limited number of individuals (the educated elites) gives credibility to the ideology of social mobility of the school as a 'liberating force'.

Lamont (2000) critically suggests that Bourdieu tends to generalise about the culture that prevails in the intellectual milieu in which he lives, arguing that it exists in the French population at large. And like many high powered intellectuals he presumes that everyone is equally consumed with professional success. It is important to point out that the survey items he uses in his book about French distinctions of tastes (1984) to compare class cultures are reflective of the culture of intellectuals. This is notably the case when he probes respondents on their favourite painters and classical composers. This is unlikely to be as obvious to the general French population.

Lamont's (2000) view on cultural boundaries takes Bourdieu's concept further by explaining differences in boundary ideology by the cultural resources that people have access to and being aware of the structural conditions to which they are placed. These push them toward using some cultural resources rather than others. This is known as the 'cultural-materialist' causal framework. It focuses on the social constructions that make up people's lives. This takes us into the various elements of influence upon a person's aspirations, such as national,

historical and religious traditions and various sectors of cultural production, the educational system, church denominations and the mass media.

Available cultural resources make it more likely that specific patterns of boundaries will arrive with individual experience in one national context than in another or in one racial group or class than in another. This is because their environment and subculture exposed them to different sets of cultural tools. This can have a direct influence on how Black professional middle class parents' structure and measure expectations for their children. What is socially or culturally important to parents through their experiences can determine the length to which they would navigate through barriers and challenges to exploit avenues to help their children achieve a particular goal. Goldthorpe's (2003) theory of social mobility argues along the same lines that individuals of differing class origins will differ in the use they make of available educational opportunities. In other words, those from more advantaged class backgrounds, pursuing strategies from 'above' will exploit such opportunities more fully than those less affluent and disadvantaged groups pursuing strategies from 'below' (Reay 2000, Goldthorpe 2003; Platt 2005, 2007).

More recent analysis of class claims to be central in utilising the concepts of social capital and cultural capital. Bourdieu's (1993,1996,) cultural theory of class analysis proposed a theoretical framework in which social and educational inequalities can be understood as being contextually produced through interactions between habitus and through forms of resource or capital (economic social and cultural and symbolic forms). Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as an aggregate of potential resources available through a social network of individuals. Social capital refers to forms of social participation and connection such as membership of network groups, communities and families. These types of networks are an important type of resource and relevant to the discussion of aspirations and family support. Since Bourdieu's interpretation there have been others such as Putnam who defines social capital as "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness

that arise from them” (2000:19). Coleman (1988) defined it as any entity that has components of social structure and facilitates social action. Others suggested slightly different definitions (Lin, Ensel & Vaughn 1981, Fukayama 1995; Portes 1998). Social capital is conceptualized as a resource at an individual, group, and/or country level. Therefore, the observational units may be individuals, communities, groups, regions, or nations (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000). Among all the definitions, Bourdieu's (1986) definition is credited to be theoretically most rigorous (Portes 1998).

The theoretical basis of class and cultural capital linked to the notion of aspirations is supported by the views of Savage, Ward & Devine (2004) who claim that if researchers accept the shift in definition of class as macro-relationships, such as the exploitation of and possession of cultural and social resources by individuals (as many sociologists have done), then a justified argument can be made for the importance of concepts like cultural capital. They argue: “If social class is a matter of categories of people accumulating similar volumes and types of resources and investing them in promoting their own and their children’s life chances the metaphor of capital is then helpful” (2004, p. 7). The accumulation of resources (if placed in this context) would then be a good reason for mobility of ethnic groups from urban to suburban areas.

Therefore, the study of aspirations can be debated using the concepts of structure and agency, a fundamental sociological tension. This is first adopted by the work of Bourdieu (1977). Bourdieu is concerned with the texture of everyday action and sees agency as central to his work. He believes that individuals exercise agency, but within existing social conventions, values and sanctions; in other words, they do not recreate the world but learn how to live within the rules and conventions of society. He refers to this as “playing the game” whereby agency involves individuals strategically engaging in and manipulating the rules of the social situation(s) (1990a: p. 13). Therefore, he viewed the relations between practice (what we do in our immediate environment) and the field (the larger parameters of power relations) as being

intrinsically linked. However, Bourdieu has been criticised, from various standpoints, for a model of cultural reproduction which rests on an overly-deterministic correspondence between origins and outcomes and leaves little room for the intentions of the agent (Jenkins 1982). Bourdieu believes that habitus reproduced through the agent's unconscious mind. He is accused of leaving human agents to be entirely dependent on structure when in fact critics argue that agents are aware of these habitual responses as they occur and they can consciously reflect on their actions or decisions. (Jenkins 1982: 82, 90). Reay (1998, 2004) challenged this criticism and argued that while habitus reflects the social position in which it was constructed, it also carries within it the beginnings of new creative responses that are capable of transcending the social conditions in which it was produced.

### Acknowledging race – Critical race theory

A critical discussion in this thesis is the extent to which Bourdieu can be used to discuss the nuanced and in-depth experiences of Black professional middle class parents' strategic approaches to parenting and building aspirations for their children. Although authors have adopted his framework, there is a gap in explaining the nuanced and in-depth complexities of race as well as the intersections with class and gender. Literature based on CRT aided this research to highlight the limitations of Bourdieu's theorisation of forms of capital in relation to race. His major limitation is his preoccupation with how the dominant class (White privileged class) reproduces its domination in fields of power. Repeatedly in his work he side-lines gender and race.

The starting point for CRT is a focus on racism, in particular, it's central importance in society. CRT emerged from critical legal studies and the civil rights movement. Groups of lawyers were getting frustrated by the weakening of the civil rights movement greatest achievements at the hands of US courts.

They claimed that the predominantly White leftist movement of critical legal studies needed to address race more directly and the White leftist movement was not doing enough. CRT begins with a number of basic insights. CRT begins on a premise that racism is normal, and its routine (often unrecognised) character, in American society. Because racism is an ingrained feature of our landscape, it looks ordinary and natural to persons in the culture. Formal equal opportunity/rules and laws that insist on treating Blacks and Whites (for example) alike/can thus remedy only the more extreme and shocking forms of injustice, the ones that do stand out. It can do little about the business-as-usual forms of racism that people of colour confront every day and that account for much misery, alienation, and despair. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi)

CRT argues that racism is “endemic in US society, deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and even psychologically” (Tate, 1997, p. 234). In the light of this research thesis it is important to break down the term “racism”. It is used not only to describe direct acts of race hatred and offensive racist language but more importantly, it is also in relation to the more subtle and tacit operations of domination over the less advantaged minority groups that are in the hands of the more powerful individuals in society. The more implicit operations of domination such as micro-level racialization are not widely recognised as being racially unfair because it?? is embedded in policies and laws (which are normally assumed to be right and moral) in British society.

Such operations are referred to as “institutional racism”, a term used to describe how the attitudes of Whiteness are embedded in Britain’s key institutions that shape our society for example Britain’s education system or the police force, which both contain subtle and hidden forms of racism. The concept of institutional racism has been subject to a lot of debate. For example, following public disorders, by the end of the 1990s the term had re-emerged, becoming part of mainstream political discourse when it was used to brand the Metropolitan Police Service for its failed investigation into Stephen Lawrence’s



racist murder (Macpherson, 1999). The Macpherson report of 1999 that investigated the Metropolitan police force gave an account of institutional racism as follows;

“Institutional racism” consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (Macpherson, 1999, p. 321).

The Macpherson report of 1999 provided prompted major reform of policing and race equality measures, although its validity was contested by sections of the right-wing press and Civitas (see for example Dennis et al., 2000), and was strongly rejected by front-line police officers who claimed that the report labelled the majority of police officers as being racist was an unfair allegation (Foster et al., 2005).

Alongside the debate as to whether the police force was intuitively racist there was a similar concern within the provision of education in England and racism has long been emphasised (Gillborn, 2002, Richardson, 2005; Gillborn assertively raised the question regarding institutional racism as follows: If we can't discuss it, how can we defeat it? (Gillborn, 2005, p.94)

Gillborn argues that institutional racism in education must be uncovered and addressed to justly provide all pupils with a good education regardless of race. His studies have recognised that a lot has been done to address some of the pressing issues within the educational system (2002, 2005). However he still claims that much has remained unchanged. Gillborn (2005) argues that research has covered more than 35 years ago showing that England has more academically successful Black children – and yet he argues, “we still endure a system that fails disproportionate numbers of Black children, excludes many from mainstream schooling altogether, and channels others into second-class courses

deemed more appropriate by a teaching force that continues to be unrepresentative of the community it serves. The need for radical change is as pressing today as it ever was". (ibid, pp.95-96)

This then suggests a more sophisticated understanding of the covert and overt outcomes of racism. CRT's teachings have been useful particularly to the sociology of education (Gillborn 2002, 2008) as they provide an alternative to the domination of class discussions and assert that racism be placed at the centre of analyses providing an opportunity for researchers to consider another research lens.

CRT regards race as a social construction and analyses the connection between race, racism, privilege and power (Delgado & Stefancic 1995). According to Solorzano (1997), CRT's basic perspective included a premise that "race and racism is endemic, permanent" Solorzano 1997: p.6) in both implicit and explicit ways within individuals own experiences as well as institutions (institutional racism). CRT seeks the conscious and unconscious in biographical narratives and its theory intersects with both gender and class discrimination. In addition, CRT challenges the dominate power structure (that which Bourdieu refers to as the elite) and is committed to using subjective story-telling and placing it into critical historical context (Solozano1997). According to Matsuda et al (1993) this CRT effort, which began in the 1970s, has produced a substantial body of legal scholarship that seeks to provide six unifying themes that define the movement.<sup>5</sup>

---

5

1. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is endemic to American life and in the literature review page 51 I have related racism to the Black population in the UK.
2. Critical race theory expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colour blindness and meritocracy.

Tate captures well the dynamic of CRT when he describes it as “an iterative project of scholarship and social justice” (Tate 1997: p. 235). CRT believe they have a commitment to social justice in education and aims to eradicate racism and other forms of subordination while empowering other groups that have been subordinated (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001). Educational scholars such as Tate (1997) analyse the dynamic impact and consequences of power and privilege in areas such as school financing, school discipline and academic inequalities.

Looking through a CRT viewpoint, in education, Bourdieu’s work on cultural capital for example, is solely explored through White middle class values. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital refers to gathering of cultural knowledge, skills and abilities held and inherited by privileged groups in society. Bourdieu claims that cultural capital (e.g. education, language) can be acquired two ways, from one’s family (through wealth) and /or through formal schooling. The dominant groups within society are able to maintain power because of limited access to acquiring and learning strategies use cultural capital for social

- 
3. Critical race theory challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical analysis of the law. Critical race theorists adopt a stance that presumes that racism has contributed to all contemporary manifestations of group advantage and disadvantage.
  4. Critical race theory insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of colour and our communities of origin in analysing law and society.
  5. Critical race theory is interdisciplinary.
  6. Critical race theory works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression. (p. 6).

mobility. Consequently, while Bourdieu's work provided a structural critique of social and cultural reproduction, his theory of cultural capital has been used to make the claim that some groups are culturally wealthy while others are culturally poor (Yosso, 2006). This explanation of Bourdieu's work on cultural capital makes the assumption that White middle class culture as the standard and therefore all other forms of expression of 'culture' are judged in comparison to this 'norm'. This implies that not only is cultural capital inherited, held and reproduced by the middle class in the school context, but Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital in education refers to a specific accumulation of knowledge, skills and abilities that are valued by the privileged groups in society and assumes that all other knowledge, skills and abilities from other communities are less valuable in education by White middle class standards.

Carter (2003) argues that lower status groups as well as middle class Blacks use 'dominant' and 'non-dominant' cultural capital. They resist a cultural default –that which is regarded as “normal or regular” – namely white middle class standards of speech, musical tastes, dress distinctions and instead convert their own cultural resources into capital to maintain valued status positions within their communities. Dominant cultural capital is used for instrumental purposes and non-dominated used for expressive purposes. However this can be a challenge socio-economic mobility because “dominant cultural capital facilitates success within mainstream institutions and organizations” (Carter, 2003:139). Therefore while Bourdieu exposes the idea of exclusion and power by the middle class and elite groups in society, he himself neglects the cultural wealth of other groups.

### Households and gendered practices influencing aspirations

Lovell argues that Bourdieu's sociology is in danger of positioning sex/gender, sexuality and even 'race' as secondary to that of social class (Lovell, 2000). One

problem is that it is difficult to operationalise notions like field and habitus on multiple axes (although this should be possible). The complexities may be overwhelming. Moi (1991) argues that gender, like class, needs to be understood as part of a field because of its relational and shifting nature. Thus gender is for Moi, understood not as an autonomous system but as a 'particularly combinatory social category, one that infiltrates and influences every other category' (Moi, 1991 cited in Skeggs, 2004b, p6). The same must also, I would argue, be said for race, but this is rarely accomplished by Bourdieu's work. As Lovell argues: 'While class penetrates right through his [Bourdieu's] diagrammatic representation of the social field, like the lettering in Brighton rock, gender is largely invisible, as is race' (Lovell, 2000: 36). If we are to understand the multiple interrelations between race, class and gender (within the context of Black middle class parenting styles) Bourdieu's construction of the habitus does not offer sufficiently flexible analysis of all three complex concepts. In the case of gender in modern Western society gender relations are key aspects of social division. Inequalities are built into the patriarchal capitalist structures of society. Gender is an important way in which aspects of our lives are organised (McNay 2000, Hughes 2002, Adkins & Skeggs 2005). Recent studies analyse how aspirations are shaped by structural forces (for example, class, gender and ethnicity) Archer et al 2013 and shaped by spheres of influence for example in the home – family and parents, school teachers, peers groups leisure activities and the media appear to shape different types of aspirations. (Reay, 2004 & 2007, Fuller 2009 and Evans 2010).

In relation to aspirations for girls research by Mizra (1992) found that Afro-Caribbean girls anticipated careers but that Irish girls saw their future as home makers, child carers and part-time workers. Reflecting on more recent findings from Mizra (2006) of second-generation young Caribbean working-class women, she suggests that while on the surface these women wanted to climb the career ladder and were seeking academic success by gaining qualifications, Mizra claimed that motivation was not simply driven by a desire for educational credentials but "educational urgency", a desire to succeed against the odds and

forge new identities that were grounded in a refusal to be quantified as failures (Mizra, 2006: 144). In this sense, education was a “transformative mantel”- The Golden Fleece <sup>6</sup> (2006: 143). Mizra went on to add that today most young women expect to combine motherhood and marriage with paid employment; it is only academic girls, mainly from middle class backgrounds, and some African and Afro Caribbean girls, who expect careers. Working class girls anticipate having part-time employment that fits in with their domestic responsibilities. In terms of occupational choices, Archer (2013) similarly found that children from middle class ethnic families aspire to work in medicine or in science more than White children. For example in Archer’s survey of the 12 to 13 year olds 60 per cent of Asian and 54 per cent of Black pupils aspired to work in medicine compared to 30 per cent of White pupils (Archer 2013).

Gender relations, occupational choices and domestic responsibilities were also shown to be a central part of Pahl’s (1994) work on the intra-household economy and its association with controls over household finances. Phal looked at the level of and more general power relations within the household. Six systems of money management between couples were identified. For Phal, even when couples nominally pool their money, in practice either husband or wife is likely to control the pool. In only one-fifth of couples was the pool jointly controlled, but these households were characterised by the highest levels of equality between husband and wife in terms of decision making, experience of deprivation and access to personal spending money. Findings from the study highlight a complex pattern of relationships between household income level, allocative system and gender. Female control of finances, though it was associated with greater decision-making power for women, did not protect them against financial deprivation; however, male control of finances, especially when

---

<sup>6</sup> In the Greek myth ‘Jason and the Argonauts’, Jason goes in search of the Golden Fleece. It is a journey of courage, love, and endurance, which, at the end, transforms him and makes him King. For Mizra’s study of Caribbean women it relates to a journey that transforms your life, and is a useful way for us to think about the postcolonial educational experience. (Mizra,2006:8).

it took the form of the housekeeping allowance, did serve to protect the financial interests of men in comparison with women.

Relationships between men and women and structured gender relationships are changing and are not static, but Lees (1993) suggests that gender remains as an important dimension of stratification. The structures of opportunities available to men and women in the home remain unequal, but not fixed. Women do have 'agency' (self-determination and choice), but this agency also remains constrained in the workplace. There is a continuing debate about performativity, pay and performance between men and women (Butler 1996, 2014 and Lareau, 2002).

In addition to gender relationships in families, debate on the significance of social class within families continues. Research in the US by Lareau (2002a) looked at aspects of family life between working middle class families. Lareau sharply criticises previous research on social class and childrearing in Black and White families and claims that previous research has frequently debated about the transmission of class advantages to children; however, they were narrowly focused, looking at the influence of parents' education or parent involvement in schooling or times spent visiting relatives. Only a few studies examine more than one dynamic inside the home (Hays, 1996, Lareau, 2002)

Lareau's most perceptive criticism is that little research has integrated what is known about how gendered roles, behaviours and attitudes are taught inside the home. Her criticism can be reflected in the work of Khon and Schooler (1983) who argued that middle class parents value self-direction while working class parents place a premium on "conformity to external authority" (e.g. officials and professionals). Lareau points out that they did not investigate how parents go about translating these beliefs into actions. Lareau focused on childrearing approaches and had three key dimensions: the organisation of daily life; the use of language; and social connections; and claimed that behaviours and activities related to these dimensions dominated the rhythms of family life. It was observed that they were so intricately interwoven into their daily life that they

appeared “invisible to parents and children” (2002, p. 753). Lareau used ethnographic methods with 12 families to show that social class does indeed create distinctive parenting styles. Lareau argues that parents differentiate class in the ways according to how they define their own rules in their children’s lives. Her study also suggests that race is less important than class in shaping childrearing patterns. Despite this claim, we need to bear in mind that Lareau conducted a micro study and this is not a true representation of all Black professional middle class childrearing patterns. There are cases where race and the experiences of racism are as important as class position in the sense that one can be shaped by the other depending on the social, economic or political structures that evolve over time (Rollock et al 2011).

### Religious belief as an element of social capital

Religion is a source of social capital and can be a resource for many people in terms of cultural identity. Portes (1998) offers a comprehensive review of the theoretical empirical literature on social capital and concludes:

“Despite these difference (between scholars on secularisation and decline in religious beliefs), the consensus is growing in the literature that social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures.”  
(1998:6).

However, there is negative connotation with social capital; although inclusive of groups, it then can exclude outsiders in the wider community and restrict individual freedoms. Coleman’s empirical work focused on the link between school and attainment and particularly the success of Catholic high schools in offering benefits to pupils from less-advantaged backgrounds (Coleman 1988, 1994). His definition of social capital is:



“the set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organisation and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or young person.” (Coleman 1994:300).

Coleman’s findings suggest that economic disadvantage can be compensated by a strong form of social capital in the form of family norms, values and networks, as well as a broader set of community values and networks which promote particular educational aspirations. Coleman has, however, been criticised for his failure “to consider the nature of social networks and the differences between weak and dense ties” (Portes 1998, p. 5) and for his understanding of social capital which he tends to frame as ‘traditional’ families when referring to family relations and community social organisation.

Churches and other houses of worship (synagogues, mosques and temples for example) provide opportunities for informal and social capital building. Religious members gather together not only to worship but to do good work in their community volunteering. Their religious faith drives their moral foundation to do good works for those in need in the community. More recent debates have focused on the decline of religion and the rise of secular societies. Empirical studies on the influence of religious beliefs on the individual’s ability to make use of religion as a social capital resource are growing. In Britain, although overall figures show a 500,000 fall in typical Sunday congregations since the last comparable research in 1998. Churches in England have been in long-term decline since the 1950s, with an estimated one million people giving up regular churchgoing in the 1990s alone (ONS 2011).

However, according to the figures from Christian Research, based on an extensive census of congregations since 2005, the decline has been slowed as Britain has become more ethnically diverse. Worshippers from the Black population now outnumber White churchgoers in London. Forty-eight per cent of London churchgoers are Black, 28 per cent are of ethnic minority background ONS 2013. Nearly two thirds attend Pentecostal churches. Many Black

Christians have formed their own churches such as Pentecostal and Methodist and other independent churches, while African communities have been introducing their own particular institutions (independent ministries) into the UK. Some of these churches have become the most successful in the UK with weekend congregations sometimes topping 1,000. The figures were revealed by the London Church Census covering the period 2005 to 2012, and show that the growth is driven by London's ethnic diversity. The census, commissioned by London City Mission, found that two new London churches opened every week in the seven year period and two thirds of those were Pentecostal Black majority churches (BMC) and a third catered for a particular language or ethnic group (such as Polish Lutheran or Ghanaian Seventh-Day Adventist). While the growth of Black churches has been recognised for some time by the London City Mission, the figures show that it has been significant enough to affect overall church attendance in the UK. Elsewhere, the Roman Catholic Church may start growing if migrant workers continue to arrive from Eastern European nations such as Poland. For example, diverse congregations now represent 8.8 per cent of Londoners going to church each week (10 per cent in inner London) compared with five percent in the rest of England (London City Mission 2013).

Religious participation can play an important role in family life among the Black population (notably those with Christian beliefs) and can also bring a source of comfort and assurance of belonging within society. The role of faith can also help to build aspirations by setting the rules and providing a family with hope and faith in what they want to achieve against the socio-economic and barriers towards social status. Smith (2003) investigated the religions in Newham, East London and found that Christian organisations appeared to have good resources in terms of buildings, qualified paid staff, were better networked than Muslim and Sheikh organisations and more involved and committed in terms of building informal social capital links and providing activities and services for the wider community. They also used their global associations as a way of representation through umbrella bodies. This, they believed, was due to its long

-standing Christian values compared to more recently settled communities of other world faiths.

In contrast for Smith (2003), Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs had far less organised social capital leverage resources. They also found that world faith and Christianity in particular also have a well-established global system and structure. As a result each Christian denomination in East London has a distinctive mix of membership depending on particular mission history. For example, Baptist and Methodists churches have recruited from Jamaicans, Ghanaians and Nigerians. The Black Majority Churches have links with West African and the Americas, often travelling between the international branches of the church. The Muslim groups have a close relationship with groups in Pakistan and Hindu groups had links with temples in India and Malaysia. This global social capital was important for information sharing and for tapping into resources such as religious education ministerial training and overseas funds.

The need for social solidarity may be felt by those seeking a sense of belonging in an unfamiliar outer urban environment. There is little literature on the area of social capital as a resource for social networking for those ethnic groups living outside London, and Smith's research on Newham does not refer to social class. This poses a question as to whether the Black professional middle class use its religious beliefs as a way of promoting the socialisation of achievement to nurture aspirations for their children.

### **Social capital and religion**

Rengerus & Elder (2003a) argue that established institutions, such as religious entities, provide "functional communities amid dysfunction and in doing so reinforce parental support networks and control" (2003a, p. 635) which aid in the creation of social capital in communities where there is a lack of social capital. Smith (2003) also suggests that religious institutions, for example, private high

schools and after school programmes, are ideal for creating a community with network closure for adolescents. As students form connections with adults within their religious organisation, they are building relationships that "tie back to the adolescents' parents" (Smith 2003, p. 260). The relationships usually encourage normative, positive behaviour among adolescents by providing network closure (Smith 2003).

Perhaps the most compelling argument for religiosity as a factor in the development of social capital in the family and in the community can be found in the studies conducted by Muller & Ellison (2001) and King & Furrow (2004). Muller & Ellison (2001) analysed two waves of the National Educational Longitudinal Study and found that religiosity of an individual, as defined by their involvement in religious activities, religious attendance, and self-perception as a religious individual, was positively associated with the accumulation of social capital. The more religious students showed higher expectations but also reported higher parental expectations than those who were not involved in religious activities or services. For King & Furrow,(2004) the more religious participants showed higher levels of moral behaviour. Possible explanations for higher educational expectations might be explained by a higher value of self-discipline and persistence that is encouraged by most religious communities (Muller & Ellison 2001).

## Faith schools

Faith organisations have a long and noble tradition in education in this country – from medieval times, through the Reformation, to the present day. This involvement predates that of the state, catering for all children, especially the most disadvantaged. Between 1811 and 1860 the Church of England founded

17,000 schools through its National Society to offer education to the poor 200 years before the state.

There are 7,500 faith schools across the UK. Academies make up a smaller number of schools. (DofE 2010). Admissions policy is determined by the school governors, but in many cases the local education authority is also involved. A school can insist children come from a particular faith background but it is bound by the Race Relations Equalities Act 2000. Popular schools may insist on proof of baptism and regular church attendance and even marital status (Allen, 2013). The Church of England urges schools to take account of the local community and make sure wealthier parents from outside the area do not push out local people. According to Butler & Hamnett (2012) perceptions of good behaviour standards, the reproduction of social privilege and educational attainment rather than religious faith have become their main attraction for parents.

The 1988 Education Act formally recognised the right of parents to choose schools for their children outside the narrow areas where they live and indeed outside the London Education Authority (LEA) area. Parents who lived outside a catchment area of a preferred non-selective school found this to be a way of avoiding being allocated a less popular school (Allen, 2013). Following the move to comprehensive schools in the 1970s – a process led by the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) – many middle class parents sought out of borough solutions. Ball et al. (1995) devised a notion of ‘circuits of schooling’, in which they agreed that different social classes tend to conceptualise and then inhabit different secondary ‘schooling circuits’. They found a largely ‘Black circuit’ based around faith schools which favoured the school’s disciplinary ethos and the fact that they are far enough away from what is seen as the ‘bad influence’ of other working class boys.

In contrast, an ‘Asian circuit’ for schooling favours non-selective schools in educationally successful suburban locations – usually in areas already occupied by other Asian families. Butler & Hamnett (2011, 2012) found there to be a slight change in faith school choice with a new pattern of emerging Black professional

middle class families favouring selective schools as well as faith schools on the outskirts and in suburban locations “... perceptions of good behaviour standards, the reproduction of social privilege and educational attainment rather than religious faith have become their main attraction” (Butler & Hamnett, 2012: 2).

## Conclusion

This literature review sought to discover any existing knowledge on the Black population in Britain that relates to changes within the social and economic structure. From the range of literature discussed the Black professional middle class in urban and suburban parts of the South East are in the minority within the Black population within the UK. The majority of the Black population are working class. This would explain the limited empirical studies conducted on aspirations of the Black professional middle class (Daye, 1994, Archer 2011, Rollock et al 2011, 2014) compared to the widely researched topic of migration and the key social ideas of exclusion, racial inequality and segregation (Phillips 1998; Platt 2005; Aspinall & Mitton 2011). Specific issues of discrimination and inequality are vividly illustrated by qualitative and quantitative data on the social issues of occupational status, housing conditions and within the education system.

Further specialist research suggested that despite the barriers experienced within institutional structures such as education, work and housing conditions, the Black professional middle class population does possess high aspirations and seeks a better life such as improved accommodation, better schooling and a more comfortable quality of life similarly to the majority of the White middle class population. It was found that small but significant change is happening in relation to upward social mobility. The more prosperous and established Black professional middle class groups show some small signs of migrating to outer areas of the inner London region and recently further out to suburban locations.

Consequently, literature on class, race and gender and their evident close association with educational aspirations suggest that Black professional middle class parents have remained under researched. More recent developments in Black professional middle class studies carried out by Vincent, Rollock, Ball and Gillborn (2011) onwards confirm an established Black professional middle class presence in Britain's middle class, particularly through upward social mobility from working class to middle class positions, accumulating economic, social and cultural capital from the acquisition of middle class professional/managerial service positions. Increased levels of participation in higher education by Black students demonstrate that educational qualifications have been shown to be both a route to success (upward mobility) for working class second and third generations towards becoming part of the middle class, but barriers, boundaries and levels of inequality remain within the field of education and has been shown through Bourdieu's work (1977, 1996) to be the way to reproduce and maintain the status apparatus of the intellectual elite.

The impact of class upon aspirations and mobility was debated within the sociology of education. It was argued that economic and symbolic capital are the key drivers to create and reproduce class, education and occupation advantage in society. Those groups that achieve tend to be those who know how to 'play the game' (Bourdieu 1977). Once a goal is achieved or an aspiration has been reached, it is the knowledge and the power used to transfer such benefits that are now showing signs of less marginalisation and more pathways to opportunities for some better established ethnic groups. A recurring theme in the literature was the suggestion that, at particular times for certain racial groups, racial inequality was less of an issue than class. This was a contentious issue for some current authors who still stand firm on the idea that race remains a determining factor and it is not only social class that dominates the discussion with regard to achieving aspirations for their children.

The focus of this research is on the notion of Black professional middle class aspirations and race needs to be considered further and the use of Bourdieu's conceptual tools of capitals, field and habitus. Specific arguments within the sociology of education that adopt Bourdieu's work highlighted the many unequal social relations that exist in society through structure and agency. There were some critical debates regarding Bourdieu's views on class habitus being rather deterministic (Jenkins, 1992) though not all commentators understood this to be the case as discussed by Reay (1998, 2004). Bourdieu's distinction of tastes and economic capital and his subtle mentions of gender and race do not do justice to the complex historical, social and cultural subjective experiences of Black professional middle class parents in Britain. CRT and the studies that reveal in-depth empirical narratives on race and the significance of identity forewarns researchers that race as well as gender should not be neglected but should be acknowledged as a valuable contribution to social research.

The notion of aspirations and the specific study of Black professional middle class parents centres on the key concepts of, race, class, gender and faith. There are gaps in the literature within all of these areas when the majority of studies have applied White middle class ideas to Black professional middle class groups. The existing knowledge and empirical studies have shown that forces for segregation and dispersal, inclusion or exclusion are clearly complex, dynamic and contextual in that they are experienced in different ways in different places by different minority ethnic groups.

Studies on the intricately interwoven gender relationships within the Black professional middle class households are very scarce and tend to be micro ethnographic studies, largely from American families. Life chances, lifestyles, values and pathways towards children's futures can also differ within Black professional middle class families via different family structures, beliefs and nuanced norms, and are subject to change over several generations. Britain's current Black professional middle class families (including single parent families)



raise an opportunity for in-depth qualitative research on parents' (deemed) influential involvement to the shaping of aspirations in their children's lives.

This thesis builds upon and contributes to the work on ethnic minorities' aspirations through upward social mobility and small pockets of internal migration away from inner-city locations by the Black African, Black Caribbean and Black other population (Phillips 2003, Reay 2004, Platt 2005; 2007, Butler et al. 2011). The study of aspirations and patterns of mobility within small groups of the Black population will add another dimension to the present range of studies that have focused on the prevailing negative forces of exclusion, segregation and discrimination in British society. The majority of the Black population continue to experience poor housing, discrimination in the workplace and racial inequality in the education system (Phillips 2007; Ball 2003; Mohood 2004, 2005; Reay 2004; Mitton 2011). The other dimension this thesis explores is a more positive discussion about the Black professional middle class. Despite existing barriers of racial inequality and unfair access to resources, the Black population does possess high aspirations for its children and over the generations an emerging established group of Black professional middle class parents have used mechanisms to overcome barriers and obstacles by navigating their way through challenges to support and shape the aspirations they have in mind for their children.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Introduction - Methodological approach

My research investigates why some Black professional middle class families make certain decisions to stay in London or move out of London. The research focuses on parents' aspirations for their children and whether differences between family locations, structures and social backgrounds have any impact, if at all, upon their aspirations. The research also raises particular issues about race, class and gender relations in order to further understand how families plan, manoeuvre and organise their lives. To address these issues about aspirations I conducted qualitative interviews to help understand the various trajectories of this growing Black professional middle class group in South East England. The research questions were:

1. How do Black professional middle class parents' experience the structures and intersections of race, class and gender in relation to aspirations?
2. How do Black professional middle class families use different forms of social, economic and cultural capital in planning for the future of their children?
3. What are the decision-making processes and strategies that may cause parents to either move to the suburbs or stay in inner urban areas?

This research interviewed 25 parents originating from Africa or the Caribbean as well as those with African and Caribbean heritage living in the South East. In order to select the most appropriate method of research I explored the advantages and disadvantages of both qualitative and quantitative

methodologies to sociological inquiry (Strauss and Crobin 1990; Patton 2002; Creswell 2011; May 2001). Qualitative research can be defined as

“...a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

Although qualitative research is thought to be context based, to include the researcher’s subjective perspective is an advantage as it enriches the quality of the research. “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Quantitative and qualitative methods both have their complementary strengths (Silverman, 2013). I used quantitative secondary data to provide useful socio-political context as to how views on race, racism and education had changed overtime particularly in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2). The straightforward questions of how many Black Caribbean people live in the South East region of London or what types of occupations come under the category of middle class occupations were easily answered by using ONS data. However, I wanted to search deeper beneath statistics and explore respondents’ nuanced sensitivities. I wanted to discover the meaning of events in parents’ lives in descriptive detail. To interpret those subjective meanings required more than statistical data; it required rich narratives from a small-scale sample. I believed that there were areas in my

study which quantitative methods could not justifiably measure, such as unexpected emotional responses (used in the empirical chapters) or implicit meanings (coded terms used to describe class) that could have limited my understanding of participants' descriptions. Silverman states that "the main strength of qualitative research is its ability to study phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere" (Silverman, 2013:97). I believed that a qualitative method was thus more suited to the study to provide me with the answers to the questions I wanted to know more about and that I was interested in. This quote helped me to decide my reasoning for adopting a semi-structured qualitative research design.

"We are not faced, then, with a stark choice between words and numbers, or even between precise and imprecise data; but rather with a range from more to less precise data. Furthermore, our decisions about what level of precision is appropriate in relation to any particular claim should depend on the nature of what we are trying to describe, on the likely accuracy of our descriptions, on our purposes, and on the resources available to us; not on ideological commitment to one methodological paradigm or another". (Hammersley, 1992, p. 163)

## Interviews

Over a period of seven months (January to August 2012) I conducted 25 interviews with professional Black professional middle class parents. The chosen method of research was face-to-face qualitative interviewing with the use of a semi-structured interview technique. Interviewing allowed me to gather live rich narratives about their experiences with the opportunity to probe deeper into issues that would help me not to explain their reality but to understand them

better. I was interested in the interviewees' points of view that reflected their priorities and concerns (Kvale 2009, Silverman, 2006).

Qualitative research interviews also seek to discover the meanings that participants attach to their behaviour, how they interpret situations, and what their perspectives are on particular issues. In qualitative research 'the researcher is the principal data collection instrument' (Anderson et al, 1998:123) and, as such tries to understand phenomena and interpret the social reality. This was significant in this study – the respondents had individual, heterogeneous, social relations based on their nuanced experiences of race, class and gender relations in society. I saw myself as an information gatherer that involved human interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. I had got a sense of underlying motivations or more implicit notions they refer to through the use of certain words; for example, some participants used the term 'the system'. 'The system' had an underlying meaning: it referred to the social structure that benefited some White middle classes and the wealthy in British society.

The semi-structured interview allowed the participant to explain themes that were important to them, thereby giving them some control over the interview process so that they felt more at ease speaking about their views. I myself wanted to stay close to the themes I had initially prepared on my checklist and to keep on the topics of aspirations, identity, parenting and mobility and school choice. Mason (2002) suggests that the evidence gained from qualitative interviewing is contextual, situational and interactional. While quantitative data can describe data numerically, it does not, as qualitative inquiry does, first make sense of what is being observed, then understand it, and lastly discover the meaning through detailed explanations that do not exist in quantitative studies.

The semi-structured interview provided an ideal research tool for the interview. Rather than weaken my understanding of 'phenomena' it added value to my research by giving me a greater understanding of my participants' interactions

with their worlds and a personal insight (Silverman, 2013) into how they navigated their middle class position in British society. I used a research guide with questions that were grouped thematically. It explored themes on cultural background, education, children, family relations, social networking strategies and race, class and gender roles (see Appendix 1). The questions were kept open to allow an in-depth discussion of their experiences, plans and hopes for the future of their child/children. It greatly improved the flow of the interview as I was able to ask questions that were deemed fit at the time to gain a clearer explanation.

I used a digital recorder to record the interviews. As time went on, this instrument proved beneficial to me as well as the participant. I was able to appear relaxed and engaged in conversation and build a genuine rapport by not appearing to be preoccupied with making extensive notes (although I kept a checklist of what needed to be covered). The participants were aware of the digital recorder but more importantly felt that I was interested in what they had to say which I felt gave them a positive signal to elaborate on their thoughts. I listened intently to what the participant was saying and made eye contact (it dawned on me how busy their lives were and that they were giving up their time for a postgraduate research student, so remaining interested was the least I could do (Rubin & Rubin 1995)). Then I asked further questions to follow interesting avenues of conversation that linked to my themes or perhaps formed new emerging paths which I did not initially consider. I was sensitive to the cues to move the interview forward such as an awkward silence or a long pause for reflection or an emotional moment, and this helped me to gain a level of trust and make a connection (Fontana & Frey 2000). Rapport building not only provided me with rich narratives (Kvale 2009; Cresswell 2007), but at the end of the interview I felt that enough trust had developed to ask about other professional parents whom they may know that I could possibly interview. In some cases (without me asking) they spontaneously offered to give potential interviewees' contact details.

The interviewing technique I used was as if the participant and I were having a friendly conversation and not a staged question and answer format. Burgess (1984) refers this style of questioning as 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess 1984, p. 104). By giving participants time to talk, it can also broaden their own horizons in terms of the topic.

My interview style allowed for some flexibility; it was not so much the questions I asked, but how I asked them; I slightly re-phrased questions and used prompts to suit the less formal relationship we had formed since speaking on the phone. Oakley (1981) elaborates on the importance of the one-to-one relationship between interviewer and interviewee, the personal meanings inherent in each social interaction, and the advantages in terms of rapport of responding to interviewees' questions within the interview (Opie 2004). By asking for their accounts, listening to their experiences and views, I was able to shed light on the social world of those who live and experience the phenomenon being studied. On some occasions I interviewed parents in their homes as some participants worked from home or preferred to be interviewed after work. This meant that I had to be aware of what was around me that could add value to their subjective descriptions of their lives (for example, books on the shelves and family photos) (Silverman 2006). Some preferred to talk over lunch in a quiet restaurant where the change of environment helped them to relax and talk at their own pace. Those who booked a meeting room at work were more conscious of time.

Taking essential notes during the interview had unanticipated benefits. It made me appear interested in what the respondent had to say and that they were taken seriously. It also kept me fully engaged with the narrative material. I wrote down key notes of particular phrases, sentiments, or aspects I may have found intriguing along with a description of certain personal characteristics and their emotional well-being during and after the interview. Following on from two or three interviews, I reflected on my performance and wrote notes about my

interview technique, such as the rapport I had gained with each interviewee, quality of the answers measured against the themes and any interviewer bias (such as questions being phrased in a leading way). Whilst some of the unplanned questions could be regarded as leading, particularly when asked spontaneously in response to participants' "accounts", they generally appeared to give considered responses.

## Sampling

The first part of the sampling strategy was to identify a sampling frame in the South East region within London and outside of London. This was the most useful procedure as the goal was not so much on representativeness within the 3.3 per cent of the Black population in England and Wales (ONS 2011). Black professional middle class families among the ethnic minority population are a small proportion of the 20 percent of the Black population that reside in South East England (ONS 2009). The fact that the Black professional middle class is a minority group themselves made me consider the value of interviewing a White or Asian middle class comparison group. On reflection I thought there was no need to collect primary data as there was already a considerable amount of literature in the field that I could refer to such as Gillborn & Mirza, (2000), Archer (2003), Reay (2004, 2009), Mohood, T. et al. (2005), Platt (2005, 2009) Crozier et al. (2008), and Butler & Hamnett (2011), (see Chapter 2 – the literature review). My main interest was the narratives and nuanced experiences of Black professional middle class parents who are the basis for my thesis.



Secondly, I then selected my sample frame and potential quota targets for each type of Black professional middle class household:

- At least eight two-parent nuclear families with one child aged five to eighteen
- At least eight two-parent nuclear families with at least two children aged five to eighteen
- At least four single-parent families with one child aged five to eighteen
- At least three single-parent families with at least two children aged five to eighteen
- At least two extended multigenerational families that have an elderly relative living with them from 60 years of age and at least one child aged five to eighteen
- There is also some flexibility in the non-traditional family quota with at least one child over the age of five where the target has not been specified, depending on the possibility of gaining access.

To gain access to families in the desired sample frame I was dependent on the 'knowledge of insiders' in order to identify initial respondents. I identified two gate-keepers who were well established in their own profession. The first was a Caribbean male financial consultant and business owner whose children attended the same school as my children and the other was a friend of my family, a Nigerian female doctor. After a detailed discussion about my research and sample criteria (age of children, gender of parents, cultural and professional background) they agreed to participate in the study and made contact with mutual acquaintances by way of email, phone calls and social network opportunities.

As part of the first level of sampling the urban and suburban locations were defined using the ONS 2001 Super Output Areas and data zones classification of locations. This complemented the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (i.e. 1.1,1.2 and 2 NS-SEC) for Black and White middle class populations and was the most appropriate fit for the research sample. Super

Output Areas (SOAs) and data zones (DZs) reported on small area statistics in the UK. An area classification was used to group together geographical areas according to key characteristics common to the population in that grouping. They were then grouped into clusters, see Appendix 2. The South East clusters for this research were the Super Output groups consisting of three layers: supergroup, group and subgroup. The '*urban fringe*' was described as an area where you would find far fewer terraced houses and more semi-detached and detached houses. In addition, more households owned two or more cars. However, the majority of dwellings in the '*multicultural city life*' supergroup were either flats or terraced houses and the proportion of detached houses was particularly low. Similarly, far fewer households had two or more cars and far more people used public transport to get to work nationally. The '*urban affluent commuter*' and the '*suburbia commuter*' were the two locations where the Black professional middle class sample was targeted.

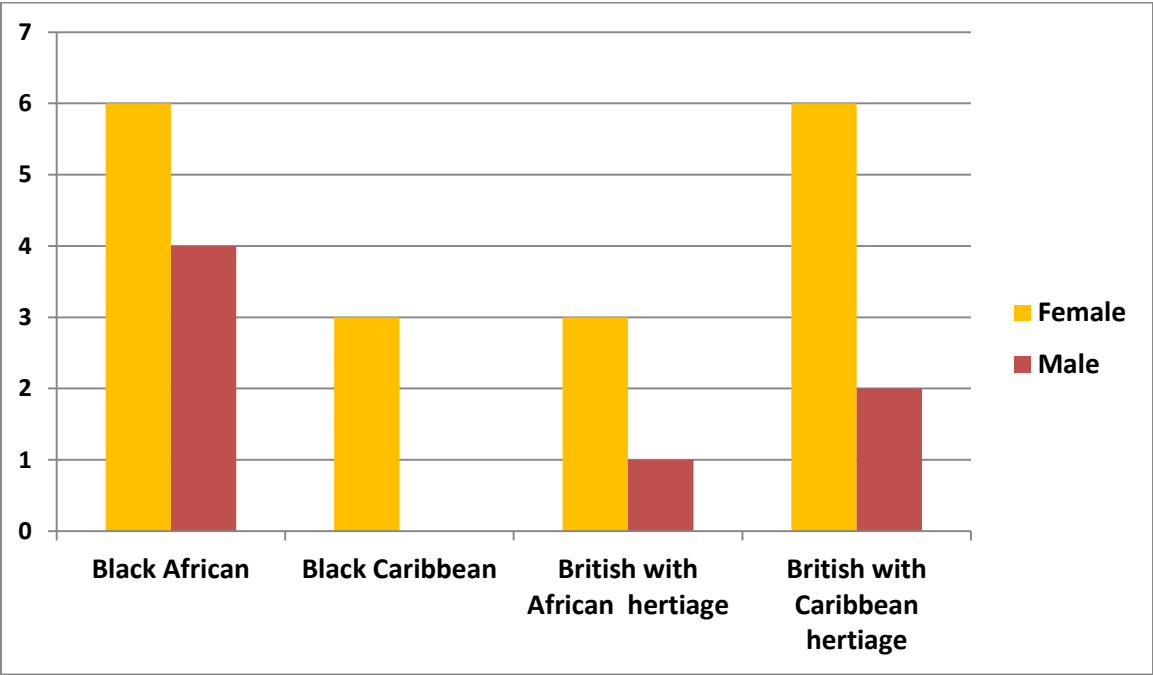
The data was collected from participants who lived in South East England. Seven parents interviewed lived in London, two lived on the urban fringe of London and the other ten lived in Kent, Surrey and Middlesex. Table 3 shows the final locations for my quota sample selection. I was able to get access to those who live in London and those in outer urban locations such as Croydon and Middlesex. Participants lived mainly in London and the South East, but I had also included parts of Kent that revealed the greatest increase in proportion for other ethnic groups particularly in Orpington, Bluewater and Medway towns. Many families lived in semi-detached spacious houses and others in detached homes with quiet tree-lined roads. Those out of London described their area as peaceful with safe areas for their children to play.

Table 3: Household residential areas

Type of place	Location	Number of parents (25)
<b>Urban</b>	Lewisham	2
	Tottenham	1
	Edgware	3
	Chingford	1
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Urban fringe</b>	Croydon, Surrey	2
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Suburbia</b>	Sudbury, Middlesex	2
	Luton	1
	Kent:Medway,Gravesend, Orpington, Greenhithe	12
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

The second levels of sampling were the quota targets (see Figure 3.1) selected from various family household types. The sample was a self-selected group of males and females with a quota from each of the diverse family structures. At least one parent of the family living in the household needed to define themselves as Black or Black Other either from African or Afro-Caribbean origin or through African or Afro-Caribbean heritage. I was also aware of the increasing number of Black Africans and Black Caribbeans who have a partner outside of their ethnic group. Families where one or both of the parents were self-defined as Black African or Black Caribbean or Black Other (mixed heritage) were included in the sample.

Figure 3: Ethnicity and Gender

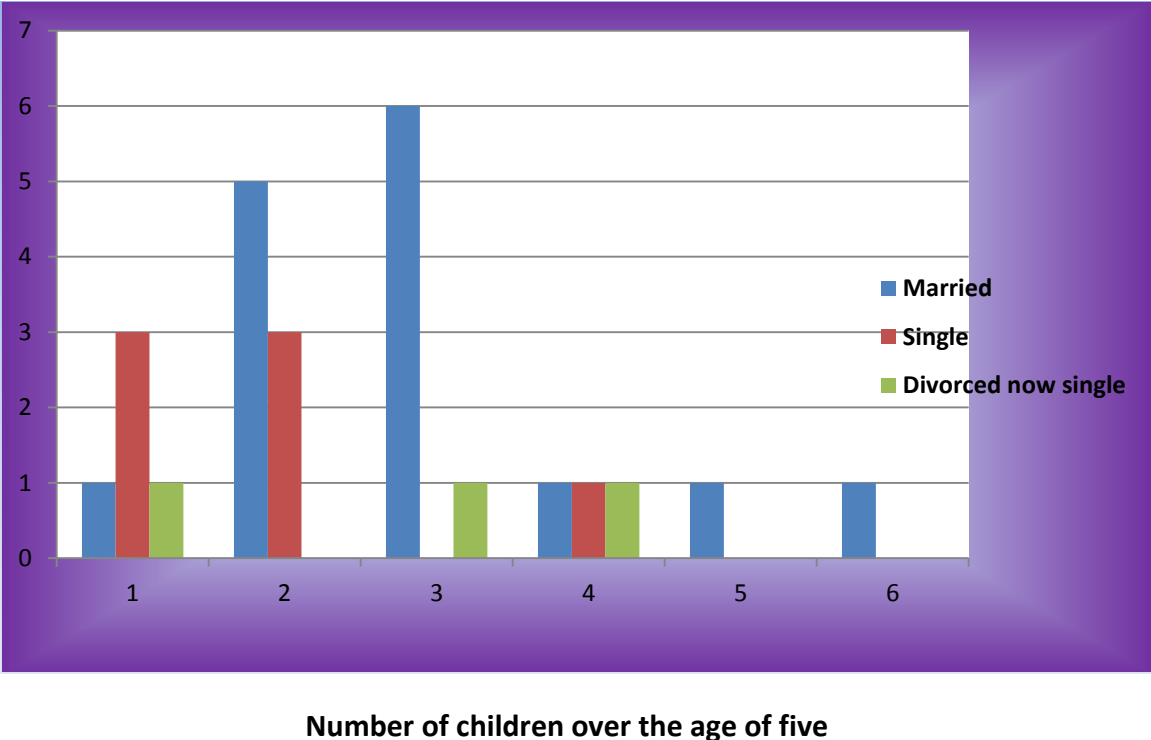


Number of parents from Caribbean islands or countries in Africa

Figure 3.2 shows the marital status of the 25 parents interviewed. This selection was made to achieve a relative range of family structures. Three of the single parents were divorced but none of the families I interviewed were cohabitating. I also sought a range of family sizes.

Figure 3.1 shows that on average all family types had more than one child and all married households had more than one child. Just under a quarter of those interviewed were single parents with just under half of them having only one child.

Figure 3.1: Size of Households



In Table 3.1, it can be seen that all the parents interviewed were from managerial and professional occupations within the top level two categories of the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) – the eight point scale used to measure class location in UK social science research.

**Table 3.1: Professional occupations by parent**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Professional level occupations</b>
1	Anthony	Entrepreneur /financial accountant	1.2 Higher professional
2	Anne	Writer and public speaker	2. Administrative/ professional
3	Sarah	Senior NHS health manager	1.Higher managerial & professional
4	Linda	Bank credit analyst	2. Lower managerial/ professional
5	Christina	Senior health advisor nurse	2. Lower managerial/administrative profes
6	Joan	Senior midwife nurse	2. Lower managerial/ professional
7	Tayo	Multi-site team manager in FE	1. Higher managerial & professional
8	Kate	Civil servant grade 7 in education	1.2 Higher professional
9	Matthew	Sales and marketing global manager	2. Lower managerial/ professional
10	Christopher	Bio-chemical science lecturer	2. Administrative/ professional
11	Luke	Youth worker manager and pastor	2. Administrative/ professional
12	Carmel	Chartered accountant	1.2 Higher professional
13	Roger	Social worker	2. Lower managerial/ professional
14	Carol	Senior community manager	2. Administrative/ professional
15	Mary	Marketing consultant	2. Administrative/ professional
16	Dawn	Private tutor and FE Lecturer	2. Administrative/ professional
17	Emma	Housing project manager	2. Lower managerial/ professional
18	Francis	IT HR consultant	2. Lower managerial/ professional
19	Rachel	Global IT management consultant	1.2 Higher professional
20	Claire	Solicitor	1.2 Higher professional
21	Thomas	Senior Science lecturer	2. Administrative/ professional
22	Jessica	Public affairs manager	2. Lower managerial/ professional
23	Maria	London community project manager	2. Lower managerial/ professional
24	Sharon	Solicitor	1.2 Higher professional
25	Jenny	Urban generation project manager	1.2 Higher professional

There were 18 Black middle class mothers and seven Black middle class fathers. As most of the parents interviewed were mothers there were narratives that related to gender specific parenting which could have been an artefact of the snowballing method where more women came forward and subsequently put me in touch with other women to be interviewed. I then had to be particularly attentive to the comments mothers made about their husbands especially in relation to their role as a father figure in the family and about the sensitive subject of Black boys being stereotyped in education and how that was dealt with by the father and by the mother as this topic was seen to be a common concern with the parents I interviewed.

These parents are comprised of several professional occupations concentrated in the service sector of the middle class, these include; nine managers, two accountants, two solicitors, one bank analyst, one public speaker and writer, two senior nurses, one civil servant, three lecturers, two IT consultants, one marketing analyst and one social worker.

According to the NS-SEC classification, the middle class categories are split into 3 levels of profession. In this study there were two parents in professional level 1. Higher managerial and professional occupation, seven parents in category 1.2 Higher professional and the remaining 16 parents were in category 2. Lower managerial and administrative level. The majority of parents in the lower managerial administrative level indicated that many made some gradual progress in upward social mobility from working class backgrounds to newer forms of middle class.

To determine respondents' social mobility, I asked each parent to indicate on a scale of one to five (one being the highest) their social economic position when they were aged 14 living at home compared to where they are now on the scale.

Their answers were transferred onto a social mobility scale for further analysis:

### Social background scale

[Name and Occupation] At the age of 14 years old?

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

In the present time?

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

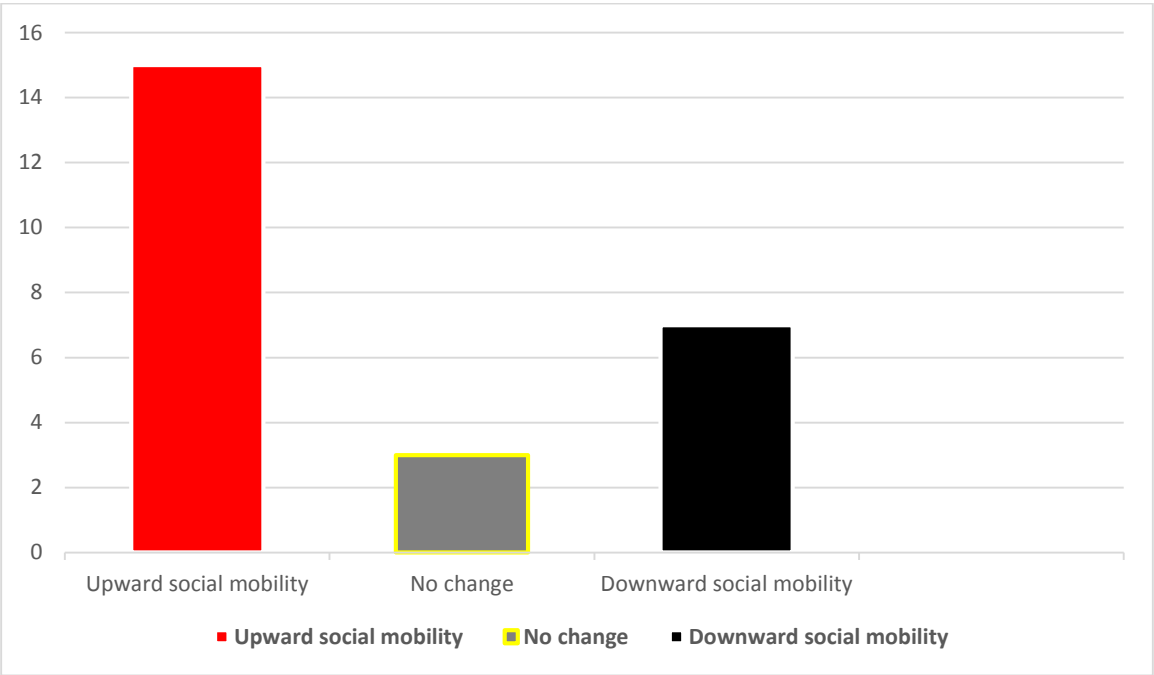
5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

The respondents described various levels of economic wealth and associated it with their class identity. Recollections about growing up and what was easily or not so easily provided by their parents was also linked to their class structure. For these respondents, class was described by their parent's occupation, whether they lived in a wealthy area, the size of their house and their family. They compared their earlier years with where they are now by referring to their current professional occupation, location and size of house. These were symbols of wealth.

Figure 3.2 provides a summary of the overall social mobility differences. Three-fifths of the parents interviewed experienced upward social mobility from working class to middle class categories based on their interpretation of a comfortable financial position in comparison to their childhood lives.



Figure 3.2: Social mobility differences between parents



**Changes in social mobility levels**

Those 15 parents who indicated an upward social mobility constituted three-fifths of the sample. Their social mobility and their socio-economic position refer directly to wealth and investments, type of accommodation – for example, moving into a bigger house, moving to a more affluent area of London or relocating out of London and gaining higher qualifications to obtain their professional occupation and salary. However just over a quarter of the parents experienced downward social mobility caused by rising costs, recollecting being more comfortable in their country of origin compared to high costs in Britain. Only three remaining parents claimed there was no significant change in their socio-economic position on the basis of having to spread their costs more thinly.

Figure 3.2 shows that over half the respondents in this study have made the transition from working class to middle class during a generation. The indicators of social class for the respondents is measured against their parents’ class status, level of education, social background as well as their identity. Values,

confidence and perceptions about class, race and racism were the most frequently talked about areas in the interviews and were coded as main themes. Three-fifths of the respondents experienced a working class identity during their childhood and described a generation of hard work, honesty, integrity and good will among their family. The other two-fifths with a middle class childhood identity spoke about wealth, knowing close family and friends in professional roles and belonging to a more privileged group associated with high social and economic capital.

### Gaining access to the sample

Consistent with the qualitative approach taken, I adopted a snowballing technique using my personal contact and professional contacts living in the South East region. The main problem I encountered was the length of time it took to find participants willing to be interviewed. Snowballing was a gradual process that took a long time to build trust and gather momentum. The gatekeepers made several attempts through email, phone calls and network meetings to endorse my research. Overall it took seven months (January to July 2012) to find a total of 25 Black professional middle class parents and an additional two months to complete the interviews.

A considerable amount of time was spent emailing and booking interview appointments. Many of the parents I interviewed worked long hours and finding a window of opportunity in their diaries was difficult (keeping in mind that my time out in the field was also limited). Rather than working independently from a blank canvas, I gained assistance from two main informants who were able to give me a list of contacts to call and make interview appointments. Being persistent as well as consistent in my method of making initial contact with individuals who fitted closely to the criteria enabled me to confirm interviews.

Unfortunately, one of my main informants was not able to provide me with participants that I could successfully follow up. This meant I had to make myself known more directly to professional audiences on various electronic networks and associations and I joined several online social business networks such as The Black Network group, The Knowledge Fountain, Black Business Magazine and the Windsor Fellowship Group. I also directly contacted groups such as the Black Solicitors Network and the Black Lawyers Association.

Interested parties who responded to my emails were keen for me to introduce myself and tell their network group about the research; this was a lengthy process but proved a worthy effort at Caribbean embassies and African and Caribbean forums. I also contacted university students through the African and Caribbean Associations and parents through private tuition centres, leaving a poster on the notice board and copies of my information sheet with my details (see Appendix 3). At first the title of the information sheet read 'The new face of suburbia – aspirations of Black professional middle class families', then I went against the idea of including the word 'class' as I thought it may create confusion or turn potential participants away, so I changed the word 'class' to 'professional' so that they could easily identify themselves with through their professional occupation.

To reassure participants and make them feel at ease I emailed my profile. As a researcher I thought that anyone being interviewed face to face would prefer some sort of initial contact or information about the interviewer and this would show good practice in the research field. I telephoned my participants and explained the purpose of the research and gave a general idea of the issues we would discuss to reduce any anxiety. A few noticed my Nigerian married name and asked questions about my cultural background. I spoke about my Caribbean heritage and how I spent my formative years over there. I also thought it useful to mention that I had children in order to make some sort of familiar connection to both male and female participants. The women developed a friendly exchange of information and spoke for almost ten minutes. There was

a variation of rapport on the phone with the male participants; some were friendly and wanted to know more about my academic background and others were conscious of time and spoke briefly. The rapport built during preliminary conversations became the starting point for my reflexivity. I began to be aware of the interaction between my inner-self thoughts and the interviewee. For example, there were moments when I shifted between my professional identity as an interviewer when participants described their occupation and then I returned to my personal identity as a mother of Caribbean heritage when they talked about their family commitments. It felt natural to talk to them in this way. These conversations also made me feel more confident about the forthcoming interview. I was able to build some level of knowledge of the kind of person they were prior to our meeting. As we spoke on the phone, I made notes about their background and family, which helped me to structure my interview guide in preparation for our meeting.

Researching parents of Caribbean and African descent and being of Caribbean heritage made me become part of the research process through my personal location. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to engage, break down barriers between the interviewer and interviewee to create, trustworthiness, empathy and a subjective connection (Oakley 1981; Riessman 1987). I believe that my ethnicity served as a key determinant of people's willingness to participate in the research. In that short time on the telephone I found that there were individuals that I could relate to due to familiarity with my background and others that were totally strange to me.

The sample group slowly began to take shape after three or four interviews. Our conversations stimulated lots of thought-provoking comments and several participants said they enjoyed the interview and it was an interesting topic to research. They suggested I contact one or two people they knew that came to mind now that they had experienced the interview process.

As I listened back to some of the recorded interviews I found that experiences with those born outside Britain were strikingly different from those who were born and educated in Britain. I wanted to compare the two groups and their decision-making strategies with those parents born in the UK so I made a conscious effort to gain further access and interview both family backgrounds. There were differences in terms of class positioning and intergenerational mobility. This presented itself with rich narratives on perceptions of aspirations and trajectories discussed in my findings in Chapter 4.

### Research limitations

At the beginning of the research project I was highly dependent on my two informants to endorse my research and build a level of trust. After all, what would interviewees gain from participating? Working with a small budget I was unable to offer any worthy incentives. Those who agreed to take part did so out of sheer interest in the research topic and the final research outcomes and expressed that more should be said about Black professional families. Even with the use of my informants, gaining access to the correct sample group was immensely time-consuming as I had to cross-check that my sample was not too skewed, by making sure I was getting a range of experiences across professionals that helped to further analyse themes discussed in the literature review.

The snowballing technique had created some skewed sampling. Some whom I had interviewed made their contacts and networks with their work colleagues within the same profession such as the public health sector, and I also found that the sample was skewed with people from the same country; Nigeria (13) and Ghana (1)<sup>7</sup> so I adjusted my profile to appeal to

---

<sup>7</sup> Despite several attempts to gather participants from other African countries through African and Afro- Caribbean Associations and other social media networks, the Black

both groups to gain a balance of both Caribbean and African families. The snowballing technique proved very time-consuming and required many hours of personal networking that I had not anticipated. This was essential to create an interest in the research as well as build a level of trust to a wider range of professional occupations from different African and Caribbean countries. However the Black West African professional middle class parents were not a homogenous group in terms of their socio-economic background, cultural adaptations, professions and strategies. Despite the limitation of the sample group the variations amongst the Black West African parents provided further understanding and an in-depth insight into habitus, parenting styles/values and aspirations has contributed to the field of middle class parenting and education in Britain.

The final sample was slightly gender biased. In regards to the married couples in the sample I was unable to achieve an even gender split. This meant I had a higher ratio of women interviewed than men (18 women to seven men); however, one needs to bear in mind that six of the 18 women were single Black professional middle class mothers who had either won custody of the child or the father remained absent.

There were occasions where I could only interview the mother because the father was at work or away on business during the months I had allocated for interviewing. Married couples had discussed the idea of being interviewed, read the research information and trusted their partner to speak on their behalf if they were absent due to other commitments. The women and men interviewed agreed to speak about their partner's views and background, and family issues were always shared and discussed. The parents claimed to have used each other's strengths interchangeably to resolve any issues. The level of validity could be questioned here as I had to trust the participant's view, judgement and

---

African parents who were willing to participate and were interviewed were all Black West Africans. This sample group was not representative of the Black African population living in the South East of London and no generalisations can be made in this research.

interpretation of their partner's role in the family. These views may have been slightly biased and the other partner may have had a different response to the question and I may have interpreted their response in a different way.

The sample was not a representative sample of the chosen population. The research data generated was from a small group of Black professional middle class parents whose interpretations and responses did not reflect beyond their own world. I was also reliant on their personal account of their actions and experiences; there may have been other factors that they ignored or did not consider, thus making their accounts inaccurate, ambiguous and contradictory in the society they live in. For example, my research required parents to talk about their own aspirations whilst growing up. This required a level of retrospective reflection and the participant to conceptualise and convey those thoughts to me as though they were a direct reflection of understandings that existed outside of the interview interaction.

## Ethical issues

As a researcher in the field I had to consider my professional and personal role. I constantly asked myself how I should get participants to open up and talk about their lives without appearing intrusive or politically biased. According to May (2001) ethics is concerned with the attempt to formulate codes and principles of moral behaviour (2001, p. 59). He argues that the researcher needs to be concerned about what is right or just, primarily for the participants in the research. Therefore, ethical decisions depend on the professional integrity and values of the researcher which influence the negotiations that take place between the researcher, gatekeepers and participants. I kept in mind the ethical procedures required when interviewing children, however, for the purpose of my research I made an informed decision to interview the parents. At the beginning of the research I had already formed a professional relationship with my

informants and had to take into account their interests when I gained access to the sample and informed consent by the participant.

The informants' reputations and trust within their social networks had to remain intact during and long after my research. To build assurance and understanding of the research I sent an email confirming our interview and reminding them what the research was about. Receiving and providing information in multiple forms with a different tone helped to engage their interest as well as making sure there were no misunderstandings or wrong assumptions prior to the interview. Finch (1984) states that qualitative methods promote a high degree of trust among research subjects, which in turn gives us a special responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse that trust. In addition, a research information cover letter or email was sent to the participant about the research topic, purpose of the interview and how it would be used, style of questioning and clarity on voluntariness in information giving (see Appendix 3). It was made quite clear to the participant that they were under no pressure or obligation to continue or answer a question that may be uncomfortable for them to personally answer and they should say if they did not understand the question during the interview. This was all part of building a rapport with the participant and good ethical practice.

Before the interview began the participant read an introduction to the study to remind them of the topic they willingly agreed to take part in. Then in accordance with the University of Kent's ethics committee, they were given a consent form (see Appendix 3) to read and sign, informing them of the interview process and the right to decline the interview or withdraw at any time, and that their identity will remain anonymous. For example, any identifying information about them will not be revealed, such as where they live. Any quoted extracts of the participant's words used in the data analysis were given pseudonyms and all children's names were changed for confidentiality. Some parents were reluctant to name the school their child went to and I respected that decision.

The amount of control I exercised over the research process influenced the ethical decisions themselves. As a researcher I considered the possible types of



situations I may have placed my participants in and how they responded. I also reflected on my own actions and decisions which I made spontaneously during interviews. There was one interview where the parents invited me to their house; I had not met them before. I interviewed the mother first, then her husband who was quite reserved in his answers at first. Then he mentioned an area in London I grew up in and his approach to the interview opened up and he really began to warm to the idea that someone was really interested in his journey.

Emotionally it is important to sustain a level of emotional control during the interview, but it is equally crucial to judge the lasting emotional impact an interview may have had and for me, as the researcher, to respond to it appropriately. I made it a point to recognise their sensitivities and I was also responsive and empathetic to their emotional message in what was said; not only did I hear what was said, but also how it was said, and noted down points that were not said.

For example, a mother became tearful when I asked her how her eldest daughter was getting on in her education. It was clear that she was proud of her eldest daughter who was about to embark on a medical degree and became slightly emotional about her daughter leaving home for the first time to study at university. It was my responsibility to manage the situation and respond accordingly. So we continued on a positive note.

In designing my semi-structured questions I had to think carefully about what I should and should not ask - for example, at no time did I directly ask about class or salary which they might have found intrusive. It may be the case that the partner does not know what the other earns so that could also lead one into a difficult situation in the interview. There was one question that was linked to money, but it was asked in a way that made them think about their experiences growing up and the current economic climate. I phrased the questions in a way that made them feel they could open up more and tell me about issues that I had not asked about directly. When I asked Mary about school choice she once again spoke quite openly about social class and the stigma of being a single

mother. By further probing, it allowed me to draw on my observations of her intonation, body language and pauses for thought.

Another important ethical issue was one of confidentiality which was underpinned by the principle of respect for participant's autonomy during the research process. This meant that identifiable information about participants collected during the interview was not disclosed at all to any other person such as names of places and specific career titles. Sections of transcripts text had to be filtered and all names were replaced by pseudonyms to maintain their anonymity. Once the audio recorded interview scripts were transcribed they were stored electronically in a secure manner with regard to the Data Protection Act. Transcripts were then transferred to Nvivo 9 data analysis computer package along with any interview notes and additional field notes. All raw data was coded to remind me of where the original material was obtained. The regulations of the University of Kent's ethical committee and adhering to the BSA statement<sup>8</sup> of ethical practice raised my awareness about the responsibility I had for all participants throughout and how to apply good ethical practice.

## Data analysis

Rather than adopting a method tied to a particular philosophical tradition, I believed the most appropriate method applied to my research was a thematic

---

<sup>8</sup> The British Sociological Association (BSA) states that: "the anonymity and privacy of those who participate in the research process should be respected. Personal information concerning research participants should be kept confidential....Where possible, threats to the confidentiality and anonymity of research data should be anticipated by researchers". (BSA 2004).

analysis found in many types of qualitative research found in discourse analysis, grounded theory and case studies (Creswell 2009). Thematic analysis allowed me to structure my themes based on the intentions of the research and the process of analysis. Thematic analysis helped me to get closer to the data and develop a deeper appreciation of the content for thorough analysis.

I firstly investigated previous literature on race, class, location and school choice. A themed based approach helped me to further contextualise socialisation – the processes through which personalities and self-concepts are formed, values and attitudes are transmitted, and the culture of one generation is passed to the next. Themes within the research linked to socialisation focused on the development of some aspects of the self (e.g. self-esteem, gender roles, and identities).

This method draws on cross-sectional analysis set out by Mason (2002). Cross-sectional/thematic analysis was useful in analysing the reasons for moving out of London and school choice preferences. The thematic analysis involved the following phases (Braun and Clarke 2006):

1. Familiarising oneself with the data: transcribing data, reading through the data and noting down initial ideas through a process of synthesis or data reduction. These became very useful interview memos.
2. Generating initial codes (also known as an index): coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire dataset; collating data relevant to each code. In some cases themes emerged bottom-up from the data but were mainly "theory-driven" based on the interview guide questions I had originally designed.
3. Searching for themes: collating codes into potential themes; and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Defining and naming themes: ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

The first three steps above are called the data management phase (Spencer et al. 2003). The function of the codes was to organise the retrieval of sections of text for the purpose of cross-sectional analysis (Mason 2002). For example, in analysing the data, the codes were arranged in a hierarchy under headings and sub-headings which reflected the basic structure of the topics discussed in the interviews (e.g. location, social background, school choice). This process was largely theme driven, as the process of coding text from the transcripts went on, more codes were added, some collapsed into others, and others were refined, resulting in around 100 codes. Each transcript was then coded sentence by sentence using the Nvivo 9 package. Description notes were kept on each code along with interview memos as ideas about the themes emerged.

The fourth step (defining themes) contributed to the second stage of the analysis, which Ritchie et al. (2003) termed “descriptive accounts”. This involved reading through the text assigned to each code, making comparisons between cases and looking for common themes, associations and contrasts. In the final stage of the analysis I then compared findings with those in other recent empirical studies and employed Bourdieusian and Critical Race Theory conceptual frameworks (discussed in the literature review) to tease out intersections of race, class and gender.

A key analytical category used in the study is that of aspirations, especially aspirations applied to education. In the four empirical chapters that follow, the notion of aspiration is intertwined with a complex of other responses to education and other aspects of parents’ experiences including attitudes to school and expectations of professional occupations for their children. These in turn were, at least potentially, related to ideas about race, class gender and parenting. In order to make sense parents’ narratives and other material, data was analysed both theoretically and empirically and was explored in terms of nuanced experiences of each parent. Adopting this approach was extremely

useful because, whilst in general a coherent set of responses emerged in terms of patterns in attitudes and ideas about their children attending good schools and going to university, there was also a complexity of responses that displayed nuanced sensitivities to social construction of race, class and gender. For example, not all parents experienced racism and not all parents thought university was the only route to their child being a 'success' in the world. The key themes that formed the main empirical chapters of this thesis were parents' perceptions of identity, Black professional middle class parents' aspirational ideas for their children, aspirations and parenting roles and education, geographical mobility and school choice.

## Reflections on the research process

The act of recording and reflecting on my activities in a research journal proved invaluable to the reflexive process. I kept notes on the research design, data collection decisions and the steps taken to manage, analyse and report the data. The journal included personal notes (reflexive notes and motivations) and expectations (predictions and intentions) as well scribbles of inspiration. Key moments of input were after the initial phone call to the participant, before the interview and a day or two after I had reflected on how well the interview went. This helped me to understand my assumptions, research bias, emotions and my reasoning for making subtle changes in the methodology. It made the research more transparent and honest in terms of where I positioned myself in the research process. I was conscious that I had to keep a critical distance and not appear to the participant that I knew what they meant because of my ethnicity. In addition I kept an audit trail of field notes and flow charts, I made connections to my research questions and then linked my ideas with themes, concepts, interpretations and relationships. The analysis of the data was more structured with the use of field notes, transcript memos and theoretical notes. I began to see patterns or recurrent themes in my data and was able to begin to link my analysis to the literature in my field.

When faced with an unexpected situation I felt the need to respond honestly and ethically. For example, I arrived at the door of a tall St Vincent lady called Carol (a senior urban regeneration community manager) who looked preoccupied. She explained that her daughter had been taken into hospital overnight. I said I would be happy to come another time but she insisted that I come in as it was her only day this week working from home and it was fine. I immediately thought her mind would be on her daughter and it would be a rushed interview. In fact, to my amazement she was very poised and was able to put matters aside and listened intently to my questions. However, her husband was abroad on business and rang twice, anxious to find out about their daughter's health. The

interview had to be paused three times. During this time I kept asking myself, should I conclude the interview and suggest another date? I glanced at my notes and it was going well (in terms of content), yet I felt I was intruding on her personal space.

When she returned she was more than ready to talk about her husband and how his children idolised him. So I decided to mirror her enthusiasm and asked about her husband's background and his role as a father. I presumed that talking about her children and her husband was actually helping her get through this situation with her daughter it was a way of reassuring herself that even though he was away often he loved them and was concerned about his little girl. She answered a quick business call and was so on the ball and concise with her answers to the caller seeking her advice.

I had assumed this interview would be filled with emotional distractions but I was the one that felt emotions of guilt. Was I valuing the interview more than the mother's feelings for her family? Nevertheless, her strong character showed her skills of being able to work under pressure yet remaining so focused on the outcome – to complete the interview to the best of her ability and not let the side (a fellow Caribbean female) down.

On another interview, when I met with Sarah (a senior health manager for the NHS) in her central London office, I did not expect her son to be carried halfway around London. But he attended private school and they were on holidays before internal exams so she had no choice but to bring him to the office that day. The office was very empty so he could not stay with a member of staff, so he remained in the interview room with us but was very respectful and quiet.

Prior to most of my interviews, I had made it a point to introduce myself by email or felt it was more appropriate to make a phone call to reassure the respondent of who I was and why I would like to interview them in particular. The phone calls and interaction I had made with participants did involve a level of self-disclosure to build rapport and trustworthiness. I was fully aware of this

interaction before the face-to-face interview. Without shared values and norms the interview may have suffered and lacked full richness of their lived experiences. However, during the interviews I acknowledged what was being said but was not all assuming or judgemental because I wanted to find out what underpins the participant's view rather than disclosing my own views on issues or agreeing with them. I remained professional by asking why they felt that way, or what they meant by that. Remaining neutral is an effective response argue Rubin & Rubin (1985). I was attentive, specific and timely and kept a professional distance during the interview to focus on the participant and their experience (I was also aware of the time limit they had agreed for the interview). My approach was to maintain a warm, interested but neutral presence which was a delicate balance.

My familiarity with many participants was already established from the first phone calls I had made and I recognised that mirroring and reflecting a likeness to them created a possible mental perception they had of me and had a direct influence in how the interview was conducted. I reflected some, though not all, of my participant's profile: a Black professional woman and mother, which raised some personal cultural, political and moral issues upon which I chose to do this research (discussed in the introduction). These issues have become clearer through me sympathising with the participants' experiences. I was able to talk to women at home in their workplaces and I also met them at public restaurants (not wanting to be distracted by the demands of work). As in Oakley's (1981) discussion of interviewing women she preferred to avoid creating a hierarchical relationship between the interviewer and interviewee and there was an informal style of interview. I was pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm of the participants to talk at length about their children and aspirations. I think that being of Caribbean heritage and married to a Nigerian had given me the opportunity to reveal some aspects of my own identity and background and the interview was a more reciprocal experience rather than one-sided (Roberts 1981).



As a female interviewer interviewing men, I was less aware of their thoughts and emotions as a husband, father, and a male role model for their children. Gender differences between my male participants and myself created opportunities for informative interaction. I was interested in finding out how gender, race and class interrelated in their daily lives and I probed into their role as a father and their parental responsibilities linked to father/ son or father/daughter relationship. The men I interviewed spoke openly about their past experiences and had insightful points to say about being Black professional males residing in South East England. They often referred to their own father's social and economic positioning and life-long words of wisdom. They spoke with a level of confidence and at some length about what they had achieved, particularly in terms of professional qualifications. In the case of male and female participants, both benefited from the initial phone call that helped to smooth away any possible anxieties and to provide a professional and courteous approach to the research process.

As I gained trust and self-confidence during the interviews I tried to remain non-judgemental. During the interviews, as I played my role as a professional interviewer, I was mindful not to make assumptions about their cultural experiences (even though I had lived and was educated up to secondary school in the Caribbean). I was conscious that too close a rapport and familiarity could cause interview bias so I deliberately asked them for clarity and probed more, encouraging them to explore issues further and explain their own experiences in rich detail. This provided me with interviews both with depth and detailed narrative text. In many interviews I was not familiar with their cultural background or experience such as single or divorced mothers or what it was like being a father. I was also aware that I needed to manage my own emotional responses, body language, and injected personality into conversations and appeared genuinely interested in what they had to say. This helped the interview to flow more naturally and participants opened up more.

Thoughts on my ethical and moral position helped me to come to terms with why and how I chose to do this type of research. Reading through literature on the middle class in the UK and America I found that not much was written about the development and achievement of Black professional middle class families in Britain. I was curious as to why because it was visible to me that there were Black professionals in British society yet acknowledgement of their existence was scarcely written about. Therefore the direction of my research was admittedly influenced by the ongoing media coverage of middle class being White middle class professional families, giving a false impression that Black professional middle class families were invisible and even non-existent. Nevertheless, some journalists have written or spoken on this issue, for example Connie St Louis (2006) *Black professional middle classes*, Radio 4, 10 January 2006. A few months into my field research in 2011 the Institute of Education (IOE) had just launched their findings on Black professional middle class strategies. Again journalists began to highlight the significance of the research findings, for example Joseph Harker (2011) "Being Black and middle class doesn't mean you face less prejudice" *The Guardian*, 5 June 2011. This reinforced my ideas that much more needs to be written about Black professional middle class families in contemporary British society. On reflection I recognise that my intention was to develop comprehensive dialogue about a growing Black professional middle class in South East England.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have described and reflected on the method for the field research phase. Semi-structured qualitative interviews proved most attractive for a small research sample. Silverman (2006) claimed that qualitative methods are selected on the basis that they can offer a depth of insight and a range of examples of the phenomena researched. Conducting semi-structured interviews had other advantages: it helped me to make associations and contrasts

between family structures, build conceptual links and uncover subtle differences between groups. It also provided an opportunity to hear the participant's original voice and to work productively with rich narratives. However, Black professional middle class parents were not studied in isolation; I also used previously published research (see Chapter 2 – literature review) relating to the sample group to uncover an historical and socio-economic understanding of the population I researched as well as provided information on White and other ethnic middle class groups such as groups within the Asian and the Jewish communities. The main findings that I derived out of the Black professional middle class parents' interviews will be analysed in the following four empirical chapters.

## Chapter 4: Identity and class status

### Introduction

This chapter contributes to our understanding of the intersections of race, class structures, cultures and practices by presenting a nuanced look at Black professional middle class parents in the UK. This section provides an examination of the lives of Black professional middle class parents and where they position themselves based on their personal views about their raced and classed identity. The chapter discusses how parents' aspirations for their children are constructed through their cultural norms and social identities as well as their class status. This has been formed from social reproduction of middle class values and also through upward social mobility from working class childhoods to middle class lives.

All the parents interviewed in this study believed their own identity to be a crucial element when imparting aspirational qualities to their children. Parents reported that they identified closely with their diaspora culture in order to maintain their cultural identity and use that as a basis for teaching their children about their cultural roots and ancestral history. The intersection of identity and class is central to the analysis of Black professional middle class parents I interviewed and is shown through a selection of parents' narratives. However, parent's identities went beyond being defined by their similar cultural markers of food, music, dress and speech (patois). Some parents attributed their identity to their recollections (or afflictions) of growing up in British society and having to deal with racial discrimination or those from parts of Africa such as Nigeria who came to find a professional occupation having just qualified from a Nigerian university also experienced racial prejudices and from these challenges a collective Black identity was created. Francis (a Nigerian father of two boys) remembered what his father told him when he first arrived in London in 1990 "well you are not the only Black people over there you got brothers [fellow Black men] over there so

you guys form a community”. In the beginning Francis experienced racism and isolation from the White majority but soon made a connection with other Nigerians in London found to be in a similar situation – just qualified and looking for work. He and many of his friends shared small room apartments and were forced to take low paying manual jobs (taxi drivers, kitchen staff) due to a downturn in the UK labour market (Aspinall & Mitton 2011).

For these interviewees, their racial experiences are the central component in the formation of their identity. However, class also plays an important role. Class has an important relation to some of these parents’ identity because of the notion of social class reproduction strategies as well as social mobility. The White middle class are seen to reproduce their social position from one generation to another and this reproduction of social class further legitimises their dominant status. This occurs in public spaces such as in schools, universities and in the workplace. In this chapter on identity and class my theoretical framework includes drawing from Bourdieu’s theory of class and social reproduction to assist in my explanation and analysis of findings, however Bourdieu’s work is limited as he cannot account for the subtle nuances of the Black middle class who do not operate from a dominant position as the White middle classes. Therefore I have also used the arguments from Critical Race Theorists to emphasise the importance of race, racism and the structural existence of Whiteness in the UK.

The first section of this chapter explores why parents feel it is imperative for their children to actively embrace their cultural identity to help them to be confident within themselves in being Black and embracing Blackness in order to play a full role in mainstream society as well as exist alongside the social constructions of race and class. Class constructions are linked to the historical and economic underpinnings of race relations in Britain (Modood 2005; Khattab 2003; and Portes, 1998) and racial barriers towards intergenerational upward social mobility among ethnic minorities (Platt 2003). The first section looks at the complex constructions of ‘race’ as a multi-dimensional phenomenon created from cultural

inheritance or from the merging of two cultural and classed hybrid generations (Black working class and Black professional middle class) (Gilroy 1997, Clark & Drinkwater 2007, Cornwall & Hartman, 2007, Butler & Hamnett 2011, Jackson & Benson, 2014).

The second section of this chapter focuses on CRT. CRT argues that in most cases, 'race' is more embedded in one's identity than class (this is not to say that class is not important). This is based on experiences of racism and marginalisation (Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Yosso 2005; Cole 2009). In my research, ethnicity and the experience of racism were spoken about more willingly to me than class by most Black professional middle class parents. CRT provides a context by outlining the impact of race upon the formulation of aspirations. However the UK's historical preoccupation with class makes it more prominent in British society today, so the relationship between class and race cannot be side-lined. CRT argues that when someone experiences racism of any form they tend to draw closer to their identity as a defence mechanism. As evidence in my research shows, parents have responded to racism by building their child's sureness about who they are and by taking them to their (parents') country of origin to help them reinforce their cultural worth and sense of belonging.

CRT is based on the understanding that race and racism are the product of social thought and power relations, meaning that in Britain power relations are based on the domination of the 'system' (a term commonly used by interviewees to describe social systems and social structures). Critical race theorists endeavour to expose the way in which racial inequality is maintained through the 'operation of structures and assumptions that appear normal and unremarkable' (Gillborn 2008). This view differs from those who simply see racism as a result of individual prejudices and hateful acts. CRT have developed a more structural and systematic understanding of racism – termed institutional racism that theorises racism as embedded not only in individuals' minds but also in social relationships, practices and institutions. In my interviews

power relations are referred to as the 'system'. The system consists of implicit practices of racial discrimination that, the parents claimed, operated in the socio-cultural and political realities of their lives. The notion of class is imposed upon them in terms of economic capital value but their identity is questioned or even rejected through racial discrimination. CRT posits that "race remains a potent symbol of difference, inequality and social injustice", (Ladson-Billings 2005). CRT helps to shed light on how inequalities are purposely created and recreated in the lives of these Black professional middle class parents. This can be used to explain how institutional racism within various structures operates and legitimises inequalities within the areas of race, gender and disability to maintain a social disadvantage among minority groups.

Insightful narratives from the respondents show how important cultural and social structures are and how they interact with their children and the essential wider structures of educational attainment, school choice and location. Parents' cultural identity meant remaining close to as well as authentic to their origins or roots, through defined cultural codes within their families or friendship groups demonstrated by Caribbean or African food, music, language and ethnic cultural arts and business networks. Alongside this, cultural identity also helped to shape their social identity – this being the association parents may make between their community and themselves such as political beliefs or values.

### **Bourdieu's forms of capital and the Black professional middle class**

Bourdieu's works (1970, 1977, 1984, 1990 & 1996) can be commended for extending the debates on class, education and inter-culture; however, his work was not complete. For example, Bourdieu does not give as much attention to social capital as he did to the other forms of capital – economic, cultural and symbolic – which are more economically determined and structured. However,

not all families have equal access to certain capitals or are valued in a particular field which is discussed further in this chapter on being Black and middle class.

Social capital should include emotional and family capital which are closely linked to supporting aspirations which Bourdieu fails to fully explore in his analysis (Reay 2008; Archer 2012). Coleman (1984) on the other hand posits that social capital could be the gap in achievement due to confidence and identity. In relation to my respondents it was more suitable to use abstract concepts of class to deal with economic power and use more concrete concepts to deal with the combination of economic power and status influencing lives and experience, or, in Bourdieu's terms, different combinations of economic, social, symbolic, cultural forms of capital. I used Bourdieu's forms of capital as a sort of 'tool kit'. I developed a distinction between socially constructed identity and identity of self-awareness, to provide an extension to Bourdieu's ideas of the forms of capital and habitus to the relations between race, class and gender (discussed further in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6).

Although Bourdieu's approach is helpful for understanding the subjective experience of class, there is no agreed standard of the conceptualisation of class (Bennett & Silva 2006). Therefore, Bourdieu's approach to class needed to be explored and taken further when tested alongside the discussions of race, class and gender. Black professional middle class individuals are not static, they actively create their class identities however inequalities persist between race, class and gender. Inequalities show how individual identities shape aspirations, identities and the need to be understood in relation to Black professional middle class biographical experiences.

Cultural capital was a key theme for all parents in my study when nurturing their children to achieve goals in life. This was heavily based on their cultural beliefs and how their own identity was socially constructed. There were similarities of values, culture and tradition. The type of cultural capital produced and transmitted in Black professional middle class families was somewhat removed from the Bourdieusian conception.



Bourdieuian cultural capital theory places too high a value on a very narrow range of assets and characteristics, namely wealth (income but stocks, savings, land, business ownership) and those in his book of distinctions and tastes (1984) linked to 'highbrow culture'. Cultural capital is further narrowly defined by White middle class values, therefore limited to just wealth – one's accumulated assets and resources. However, research (Lareau & McNamara-Horvat 1999; Matthews 2002; Trueba 2002; Monkman, Ronald & Théràmène 2005) has shown that the type of cultural capital produced and transmitted in minority ethnic families is somewhat removed from the Bourdieusian conception of 'highbrow' cultural participation. Race, on the other hand, has been found to promote different hierarchies of cultural value, not necessarily linked to those of White middle class privilege (Devine-Eller 2005). A case in point is how difficult it is to use Bourdieu's theory for every social agent. Bourdieu does not give a fair enough representation of class identity with reference to the Black professional middle class; with CRT, I was able to criticise Bourdieu's limitations on race.

While Bourdieu's reproduction theory informs the chapter on class, there are areas where again his concepts are less applicable to the social reproduction of Black professional middle class families interviewed compared to his studies of 20th century France. For example, Sarah (the upper middle class Nigerian) found herself unable to accept the middle class world within private education and found herself negotiating an identity between her upper middle class family and the middle class world of her peers and work colleagues. This supports the argument that it is difficult to make clearly defined connections with class reproduction. Bourdieu's study in France of the French bourgeoisie did not encounter the kinds of complex tensions or contradictions on a daily basis because his central focus was on high culture among high status Parisians which was accepted as a legitimate culture in Paris. His theory does not fit all agents in society and subsequently his concepts of capital needs to be applied more flexibly and sensitively with Black professional middle class families. Lareau & Lamont (2010) argue that cultural capital extends beyond familiarity

with high culture and knowledge of school system values, suggesting that good research must consider individual agents' perspectives on social values and status. Furthermore, Lamont asserts the need to see "pleasure, curiosity, and a need for community and recognition . . . [as] powerful engines for human action, certainly as powerful as the quest for power and maximization of one's position in fields of power that are privileged by Bourdieu" (Lamont 2010: 12). These perspectives extend the Bourdieusian framework in more useful ways when researching the Black professional middle class group.

## Parents' identities

" . . . cultural values are important, to be comfortable, to be who you are – your identity, without that it would be difficult to do anything else."  
(Thomas – Ghanaian born<sup>9</sup> – Senior science lecturer).

Gilroy (1997) speaks of a mixture of fusion of cultural identity in modern Britain. The present Black professional middle class identity represents social and cultural changes of the 1980s and 1990s as struggles for racial justice. Gilroy (1991, 1997) and Hall (1990, 1997) identified these periods as open-ended and variable in which cultural strategies were formed. These cultural strategies were an articulation of the meaning of Black identity and were informed by historical experiences of being a minority. The contemporary emergence of this identity affirms the principles of respect, confidence and self-determination and negates, questions and challenges of any White ideology that may undermine their status. Gilroy (1997), Hall (1997, 2013) and Solomos (2001) have written at length about culturalism and racism Britain and the newer emerging group of Black professional middle class families of the second and third generations in Britain are historically linked to the social constructions of race, class and

---

<sup>9</sup> In this chapter I name any respondent's country of origin as well as their professional occupation to quickly reference any comments they may have about their cultural traditions.

gender. It has been noted that only within the last 15 years social science is beginning to recognise the existence of Black professional middle class groups (Archer 2010) having been previously ignored- almost appearing invisible and not being seen as socially or economically significant enough to write about the sensitivity and detail of subtle nuanced experiences between Black middle class individuals. For example, on issues of gender and ethnicity Black feminists recognised and alerted other feminists to the differences of intersectionality of race, class and gender experienced by Black women compared to White women in society (Punwar 2004; hooks 1999, Crenshaw, 1989).

### Historically Black and middle class

For those parents who immigrated to the UK their social class position began to be repositioned. Drawing on data asking them about their social background the parents indicated the need to have an awareness of their status in the UK and compared it to their status back home. Thirteen families had made a transition from working class to middle class (based on this study's definition of class categories) and created for themselves a sophisticated use of the forms of capital to assist their class position in what they describe as a classed and raced society. Lacy's (2007) work was used extensively by Rollock et al.'s study on Public Identities (2011). Lacy identified that Black professional middle class families in America developed a range of resources – a cultural tool kit (Moore 2008, p. 498) such as language, mannerisms, clothing and credentials that allow them to create what she terms 'public identities' to minimise or mediate against discriminatory treatment.

In my research, parents' experience in their homeland, school, and at work had served to be a learning point for different stages of their formation of race and class identity in Britain. They too learnt how to intercede against inequality in Britain and wanted to prepare their children with a tool kit of wisdom. On some

occasions some parents spoke directly about their own parents' middle class background and later on about their middle class type attributes such as houses, capital investments, professional occupations and qualifications. The parents felt strongly that their children needed to know where they came from in order to gain integrity and tenacity to move forward and 'stand up' for themselves in wider British society. Twelve respondents defined themselves as upper middle class status and enjoying the expectations and privileges of a middle class lifestyle. The respondents were not preoccupied with being accepted by the White middle class; on the contrary for some families they had long historical middle class backgrounds. It was more about a fairer representation of their skills and talents as middle class professionals.

Eight out the 12 parents I interviewed came from very wealthy and highly educated Nigerian backgrounds:

“My mum was a lab chemist and scientist and we lived on the university campus. We lived in a very big house [with] about five rooms and four bathrooms. I grew up in a big household with seven brothers and sisters. My father was a wealthy person, we were all schooled abroad and are well educated. We have doctors, accountants and lawyers in the family and we were all brought up to believe we could be all that we want to be.”(Dawn, Nigerian – Private tutor and FE Lecturer).

In Nigeria there are well educated role models in various positions of power that are Black African, so race was not an issue. These professional parents openly talked about wealth, occupational status, property and business that defined their middle classness. They identified with class when they spoke of wealth and possession of cultural capital. This Nigerian couple spoke of wealthy upbringings:

“It was good as there was a lot of prosperity and growth and we discovered more resources so the country was strong and the naira was stronger than the pound so that would tell you straight away how our

parents lived. There was no need to go to the UK; it was only in recent years when things got really bad and they said, 'kids you know what you were born in, so you may be able to make a better life for yourselves out there' ". (Francis, Nigerian –Global IT consultant).

Rachel: "I really think that my parents had a good life. It was a middle class life and I don't think we have really quite made that here [in Britain]. I know we had the boys in independent schools but it's a different time now and I'd say it's more of a struggle than there. You know you always need to do a bit better than they did." (Rachel, Nigerian –HR IT consultant).

This section illustrates how respondents define their identity with reference to their cultural roots and history. Their social background helped to place into perspective who they were in contemporary middle class positioning in Britain. This included ways of life, food, family traditions and norms, and values that laid the foundation for a middle class lifestyle. Although 13 Black professional middle class parents were born in England all remain in touch with their 'roots'; these are their origins, where their grandparents or forefathers came from. These Black British parents possessed a mixed cultural identity, a hybrid culture which seemed to indicate a different level of engagement and appreciation for their cultural roots due to their time living in another country. For example, Anthony was born in Derbyshire with Jamaican parentage and went back to live in Jamaica after his parents divorced at the age of seven. He still maintains his links with Jamaica:

". . . there were some very great memories, my childhood was amazing. I go into these Jamaican modes every so often and play reggae music. I want to cook Jamaican food . . . I go to school reunions every four years in Florida or New York or Jamaica, the ones in Jamaica are just so nostalgic." (Anthony, of Jamaican heritage – accountant).

From this extract, Anthony has a strong connection as well as an extensive social network in America. His childhood experiences are a constant reminder of staying true to his cultural roots and transferring his culture to his children.

Parents emphasised that their children must know where they have come from in order for them to know where they are going in life. According to parents' views and actions, cultural traditions can provide an important thread of continuity that helps to build their children's character. They believe that this helps them to be independent and confident and to compete for their equal place in society. Ideally for these Black professional middle class parents, equality and place meant a well-paid professional career.

The narratives of Claire, Maria, Luke, Mary and Anthony have been chosen among others because they reveal ways of considering cultural and social identities. Their stories tell us about how the effects of racism and class positioning make each of them an 'astute' person. They express in their own particular way how they construct a unitary identity to allow them as parents to negotiate and meander within middle class spaces to seek an equal chance for their children's futures. The following extracts from Claire and Luke display elements of multiple identities whereby ethnic and social identity formation is distinguished between the content and process of ethnic identity – how people come to understand the implications of their ascribed identities and make choices about how it will be expressed in their lives. Defining their identity becomes more complex when some parents try to balance or bridge multiple social locations for example those who moved away from London into the suburbs visit their friends in London regularly and some of the parents still travel to London to attend church from the suburbs not wanting to lose their close networks groups.

Claire is a divorcee and lives with her three children in Catford, SE London <sup>10</sup>. She has two sons, aged 15 and 12 and a ten-year-old daughter. Claire is a

---

<sup>10</sup> Catford is located in the inner London Borough of Lewisham and is next door to Forest Hill and Grove Park. Most of Catford is part of Rushy Green ward and has a

solicitor and has always expressed a deep interest in her children's schooling, so much so that she transferred from criminal to educational law. She began to smile when she spoke about where she lives. It was an achievement for her to capture such a quiet pocket of suburbia located in Catford. Claire's family is the only Black family in the small neighbourhood. Her four-bedroom house with a 20-foot garden overlooks a large park. Claire had lived in Catford all her life and all eight of her siblings attended the same school several years. She grew up in a working class Jamaican family, her mother was a housewife and her father was a factory worker. The school disliked her family: "They would say, 'oh no, not another Jones this year' ".

Claire told of difficult times she had at school with her teachers who did not expect her – a Black girl – to be bright and have such a curious mind. Her racialised experience of school made her think long and hard about her achievements in life, despite the drawbacks of being an ethnic minority in school. Claire formed her identity through a barrage of torment and stereotyping from many teachers whom she described as overtly racist. Anyone would have thought she would just give up but she kept going and got stronger in terms of confidence and achievement to attend university to study law. Her strength, she said, came from her mother. She describes her as a bright, strong, determined woman always ready to fight her corner at the school. Claire had a mutual hatred for her school: "I had a teacher that never called me by my name and always called me Zimbabwe because he thought I was a rebel . . . a radical . . . he would say: 'What contribution do you want to make, Zimbabwe?' "

Despite the taunts Claire excelled and went on to become a criminal lawyer. She then spoke about how she was perceived by others as a Black professional woman:

---

multicultural population with 53 per cent White and 47 per cent BME residents. Forty-three per cent of residents are owner occupiers.

“I think race has a big say [in regards to aspirations]. I hate the view of the ‘exceptional Black woman’ and that means White middle class men and women have a perception of what Black women can do . . . when you walk into a court room they ask, ‘is she going to be exceptional?’, rather than ‘can she do the job?’” (Claire, of Jamaican heritage – Solicitor).

Her gender as well as her colour was measured against perceptions within the White middle class professional group that exemplify White middle class values. Claire’s location (positioning) within a highly White middle class and heavily dominated male profession is referred to by Punwar (2004) as ‘Black bodies in White spaces’ meaning that Claire as a defense lawyer is seen to be a novelty to her White peers – “an exceptional Black woman” presence and exists under the constant spotlight of surveillance and is out of place, being a Black professional middle class woman this involves both tacit and explicit forms of exclusion due to her race class and gender. Claire is placed in a situation where she is located within a dominated White space where Whiteness is associated as being the accepted ‘norm’ in the legal system. Claire claimed that she used her Black female presence in the White space of the legal system as a way of winning cases as the opposition who often underestimates her ability to defend her clients.

Despite all that Claire has been through in terms of getting equal respect in her field of law as well as the direct racism she had faced in school, I questioned why she would want to live in an all-White neighbourhood within Catford. She and her three children remain the subject of neighbourhood gossip. She told of a time when she took her family to attend the local street party:

“Where we live we are the only Black family in the street party and we are the only Black people in the village! The children are aware of it and don't see it as a negative thing and they can be quite funny about it. Our neighbours are small minded and insular and gaze at us. So the children see the real world and don't see it as a negative [being



different] but they are aware of it [racism] and find it fairly normal, either way it's really all credit to them.” (Claire- of Jamaican heritage-Solicitor).

This could have a detrimental effect on their relationship with other White students and neighbours. Claire uses her situation to play a game with her prejudiced neighbours that surprisingly she claims her children find amusing rather than personally offensive. I was curious to know what her children thought of the situation and she responded by saying, “If they can live with this [being the only Black family in the neighbourhood] they will gain the ability to tolerate anything that comes their way.”

Claire wants to make her children aware and be prepared for the challenges that may lie ahead. Yet it could place particular thoughts in her children’s minds about Whiteness which could create a permanent skewed image of ‘them’ and ‘us’. Claire believes that her children’s experience of not belonging or fitting into their neighbourhood is a way to build their racial resistance (Yosso, 2005) in the future.

On the other side of the river is North London – Tottenham – where Luke, a community youth worker lives and breathes. It is a very culturally diverse populous space. Luke has two sons aged six and two and a daughter who is eight years old. He lives in the heart of Tottenham, and works alongside young and vulnerable people, his other occupation as a Pastor complements his community work. Luke came from humble beginnings, selling corn and peanuts along the motorway in Lagos, so his brothers and sisters could be fed and attend school while his mother left at dawn to sell food at the market. His grandmother looked after the younger ones and Luke described her as his ‘guiding light’. His father left when he was very young and life was tough but Luke kept up his responsibility as the eldest son and now transfers that passionate level of responsibility as a father. His difficult experiences made him a strong and determined individual. Luke’s identification is intense; he describes Nigeria as his “real home” but he is in Britain “for his children to get a good

education". He takes his family back to Nigeria twice a year which is quite expensive, costing approximately £3,000 (excluding expenses). When I ask him why he takes his family back to Nigeria he sits up straight in his chair and replies assertively "knowing their roots and to understand the concept of being 'a Nigerian'. In order to survive they need to have a Nigerian mentality which is far different from a British mentality". Frequently visiting Nigeria and his use of the term "survival" in his extract illustrates that he really would prefer his children to choose the Nigerian culture over the British culture, but tries not to openly admit it, not wanting to seem too controlling over forming his children's identities.

Luke is not the only Nigerian father to hold this perspective about "survival". In fact this belief is passed down generations. Francis, a global IT analyst, says Nigerians need to first and foremost study hard then work hard. He claims "that this is part of the Nigerian culture that is hammered into them from day one." Luke is a community youth worker and has often had to deal with anger, racism and tension between the youth and the police, particularly before leading up to and after the 2011 summer riots. This is Luke's theory of how British society functions:

"Being Black in British society is hard . . . there is some institutional racism but it's a lot more about individual racisms. There are a lot of people out there who are angry Black, White, Indian and Chinese either at their parents or society and they are trying to unleash this on society. You've heard about the Taylor<sup>11</sup> murder right? Then you [parents] probably would be more sceptical about having your children in this society . . . there are wonderful children and good parents in society, but one bad person who can probably do a lot of harm (that you cannot

---

<sup>11</sup> Luke referred to 10 year old Black boy called Damilola Taylor who was found bleeding heavily on a stairwell on the north Peckham Estate south – east London in 2000. After a series of problems with the case in 2006 two Black brothers (The Preddie's) were found guilty of manslaughter. Luke used this high profile case illustrating his point that the social problems on the streets are not just about racist issues but it is also about frustrations among the youth of today that are embedded within the socio-political structures of British society which are not being addressed adequately - Luke used the example of funding cuts on youth projects.

quantify) then you have to protect your children from this.” (Luke, Nigerian – Youth Manager and Pastor).

Luke finds ways to negotiate and cope with the stigma attached to his identity and community, possessing a moral compassion towards young men like himself. Luke is also a Pastor and uses his Christian faith to arrive at subjective meanings to his identity. He explains:

“There are a lot of things that my cultural values add to me and unfortunately many of these values [respect for elders] are seen as archaic . . . I have two cultures: a Christian and a Nigerian culture that I fuse together. There are things which are nice and things which are not nice about this [British] culture.”

He recalls a time when he tried to assist an old lady with some heavy shopping bags and she refused his help until he showed her his council identification badge; only then did she allow him to assist her.

Luke’s story about the negative reaction of the old lady had disturbed him. Is this how all people viewed him (as a suspicious Black man) in British society? – as a dangerous member of society – which was in complete contrast to what he believes to represent. He concludes, “love your family, respect your wife, your children, respect yourself and your society – these are the things my mum taught me when I was a boy.”

It can be observed that Luke has multiple ties and interactions that link him across national borders to Nigeria known as transnationalism. This approach considers the importance of traditional borders and boundaries in defining who the person is. Extracts from Luke’s experiences illustrate how he tries to define himself both as a Nigerian and as a North Londoner. Luke has created a transnational identity for himself and identifies with more than one culture in more than one country.

He reflects back on his struggles and wants his children to have a 'normal' upbringing (not like his own experience of hardship). He is very focused on providing for his children in the future so that when he plans to leave and lecture in Nigeria they will be secure. He owns two houses, one in London and another in Nigeria. He reassures himself by imagining the scenario in ten years' time:

“ . . . I can see them growing with confidence and stand among their equals and say, yes this is who I am and who I want to be, and they are proud about it and sure and they will say these are the things my dad did for me.”

Luke is studying for a PhD in Psychology and would like to go back to Nigeria to lecture. He has certain expectations for his children and states that they would have to go to university. His sons are still young – one age six and the other only two years old – and do not know what they want to do later in life. Even though he wants his children to have a 'normal' upbringing he is prepared to leave his two sons behind at that age and return to Nigeria. Has he considered the emotional strain this may have on his two sons? He has certainly made sufficient arrangements in terms of economic security, but that does not guarantee that his sons will continue on the path he has imagined for them. What of the challenges and barriers they may face that other parents highlight? How would his children's experiences be any different? The summer riots of 2011 have more than illustrated the growing tensions and divisions in British society and restate the increasing neglect of Black British youth (Hall 2013; Sewell & Majors 2001; Modood 2005). Luke's choice to leave his sons and return to Nigeria is a conceivable risk.

For those parents who migrated to Britain, their narratives show where their bonds lay – with their motherland, where they grew up and believe they belong. For those Black professional middle class parents who have travelled to Britain to work have described themselves as never feeling fully accepted into British

society and this could be one of the reasons they choose to return to their country of origin to live and work.

### Cultivating' self-confidence in children and the need for Black professional role models

Part of the process in developing their children's identity (through guidance and encouragement) was the cultivation of self-confidence. All the parents I interviewed perceived confidence as a vital modern part of a child's identity if they are to do well wherever they choose to live and work. Are these children really happy or are they under pressure to live up to parents' expectations? <sup>12</sup> Parents are merely laying the foundations, they claim, but they may in fact be limiting their children's freedom of creativity and narrowing their choices to the professions when their other skills and strengths may be better placed elsewhere in society.

### The parent to child 'talk'

In order to nurture aspirations all the parents interviewed thought it best to start early – at school age. They believed that their child's identity needed to be resilient against any forms of discrimination. Parents had concerns about the well-being of their children and endeavored to portray a positive cultural identity because parents felt that their children needed to know who they were, meaning, being Black in a largely White society, they needed to be aware of this positioning earlier rather than later on in life. The parents would have a special

---

<sup>12</sup> To find out whether these children are happy or under pressure by their parents to perform I would need to carry out separate interviews with the respondents' children. Interviewing the children was a suggestion for future research in the concluding chapter.

(the Black/White conversation) about Black identity which they called the 'the talk'. Parents believed it was their responsibility and duty to defend and protect their children from racism especially against instances of racist bullying and stereotyping at school. Drawing from rich qualitative data about parents' educational histories there were stories of racist teasing and more implicit manifestations of discrimination by teachers. Dawn told of what she found to be a harrowing time with one teacher in her school who called her names and frequently questioned her above average intelligence (Dawn went on to be a criminal lawyer). Parents believed that 'the talk' meant it was time for their children to mature in the context of being clear about colour ('Blackness') about race and the forms of racial discrimination in the education system. One parent said "the talk is like one of the facts of life" when your child is seen to be different from the majority. Anne has four sons and is very aware of the stereotyping of young Black males that is created in education and by the social media she shows concern about her sons' interpretation of the meaning of Black and White: "I remember when one of my sons Bob went to nursery and would not play with the Black doll and I cried because I thought am I not pushing the 'Black thing' enough? I just had a meltdown and thought I must be more culturally aware and being Black is fantastic and don't throw away the Black doll". (Anne- writer and public speaker).

For Anne the rejection of the Black doll by her son signified a direct rejection of her son's Blackness and acceptance of White as being the 'norm'. This was a wake - up call for Anne to take action and talk more about her culture and the meaning of being Black:

"I would say I need to do more in getting my kids much more aware culturally so one of my desires and goals well (if I was living in my ideal world which I'm not no) I should not say that if I was looking at my ideal life my kids would be home schooled what I would do is 6 months out of the year I would take them to different places around the world to experience different culture you know, how my parents took me to Jamaica I would take them out for a year. I would take them to Africa

because I believe that exposure is PRICELESS so in terms of culturally yes!” (Anne of Jamaican heritage- public speaker and writer).

Anne saw the social media as a powerful communicator of stereotypes and misrecognition of Blackness:

“Once we were watching American Idol [US singing talent show] and the Black guy [Nick Cannon] then married to Mariah Carey [R & B singer] was hosting the show and one of my sons said mum a Black guy is hosting!”

Anne did not like her children watching television because of the stereotypical roles given to Black men in the media of which her boys could eventually be exposed to such roles depicting rap artists, absent fathers, gangsters and other criminal parts in shows. She felt disappointed that her son would be so surprised that a Black man in entertainment could host such a highly rated talent show and not just be the one of the singing contestants. Anne told me that she was then driven from then on to prove to her sons that “Black people do great things”:

“..of course there are lots of Black people doing things. We went on the internet and I said look see there are lots of Black people doing great things. I don't think it's [the media] doing that [promoting Black achievements] and that's something I should be out there doing - I would love to. It's one of my goals to do that.”

Anne's experiences have engaged her to have 'the talk' with her boys she needs to make them more aware of their Blackness and she needs to improve on showing them positive roles for Black men “kids will only aspire to what they can see so they can't see it they won't think it's possible but if they see it they know it's possible to achieve it.” Here the word “it” is used to refer to Black male achievement something that she feels passionate about and wants to actively promote through her job as a motivational speaker and writer. She makes a

strong connection to what great Black men have done (President Obama, Marcus Garvey and Martin L. King) in the past to pave the way for future young Black achievers.

Critical race theorists (Ladson & Billings 2005) claim that this 'construction of Blackness' is the norm in mixed or Black professional middle class families. Parents went on to reflect on their experiences of discrimination from a young age which is why they wanted to prepare their children for that inevitable time – a time when their child's integrity would be contested and challenged. Stereotypical views and assumptions about behaviour and performance, intellect and capability of Black and minority ethnic groups persist within British society. Kate believes that discrimination will be hard to eradicate entirely and gives an example of racism in her area:

“Yes I do all the time..I think that the children need to be aware that there is racism out there and there will always be a situation out there it maybe a job or at university there is going to be obstacles and it's not they are not capable of doing the job or what's required but simply because of their skin colour which is sad sometimes we take a step forward then three steps backwards I get really annoyed when I see the BNP [British National Party] and certain groups getting votes and do notice that in certain areas around here it used to be mainly a White area and now the more non-Whites move in and more Whites move out.”(Kate – Saint Lucian heritage - Grade 7 civil servant)

Cultural theorist Hall (2000, 1997 & 2002,), Panayi (2014), Back & Solomos (2006) contributed to the political debate about how Blackness needed to be defined and represented in a more progressive and positive manner for British society to move forward as a multicultural nation. There remains an underlying issue of a fairer representation of Black leaders or professional Black people in positions of power. For some second generation parents in this study they named parents and friends of parents as their role models during their



childhood. For example Figure 4.3 (page 136) shows that up to 15 of the first generation (respondent's parents) attended university and held professional posts in their own country. Parents who arrived to the UK and those Black British parents who spent some formative years in their country of origin (Anne, Anthony and Maria) spoke about being fortunate enough to see Black professionals; bank managers, a Black president, governor and head teachers. They saw positive images of Black people in the Caribbean and parts of Africa doing a range of professional jobs without their Blackness being questioned as part of the socio-political structure. Being Black, middle class and successful is also part of the Black family habitus for these parents in the study especially for those who came from an already established middle class background, it was 'natural' for them to think and behave in particular ways. For those parents who came from a working class background their family habitus becomes far more a conscious effort in terms of deciding what to do with their capital (in practice). Parents admit to seeking out people like them - well educated, good careers and their children go to good schools to raise their own children's aspirations and remind them as a Black person 'can do great things' Black professional middle class parents are consciously forming new identities and modern versions of Blackness in the UK despite the ever present hidden threat of racism in a White dominated society.

### Pervasiveness of racial discrimination

Parents' stories of school reminded them of the constant daily battle to legitimise their racial identity – one of positive existence and intellectual recognition. In terms of context one must remember that all the parents interviewed did attend school in the mid-1980s. This was a time in British popular culture marked by racist literature by the National Front fascist group who also faced fierce opposition by anti-racist movements; there were the Broad Water Farm riots in North London and racist football taunts on the terraces as Black footballers such

as John Barnes and Ian Wright played for England. Hall (1997) describes it as a time when multiculturalism was on the political agenda. The respondents were well informed of the stories their own parents told them about facing discrimination when they arrived in the 1950s and 1960s. Even though the parents I interviewed did not experience such hostility in the 1980s and 1990s, racism was still manifested in other forms and remained subtle, but there was an underlying current of racism that existed among teachers during their education (Gillborn 1995) and continued in other identifiable forms during their professional careers.

Black British parents have commented on ways and systems that have made it very difficult to progress in their desired professional occupation. They have a growing concern about the lack of role models in professional careers and believe Black people are under-represented. Therefore, the majority of the parents see it as their duty to be their child's role model, with over half the parents indicating that their own parents and members of their extended family were professionals, business men and women and were their role models while growing up, whereas in modern Britain they observed only a few professionals of the kind they encouraged their children to aspire to be. These role models still tended to be close professional associates rather than high profile Black professionals at the top of their field (within the wider general public). Several interviewees made reference to American high flyers: President Obama and Michelle Obama or Oprah Winfrey. Britain's growing Black professional middle class seems a long way away from being a collective group, although the growing social networks help to bring some professional individuals together.

Sharon, a solicitor whose husband is a White corporate lawyer in the City, raised the issue of male role models. She purposely took her children to her motherland Barbados because "they needed to see Black people in all positions in society" and she felt they needed "to have that exposure". Sharon's two children are of mixed race yet her son has experienced some Black racial

stereotyping. She thinks it's a good thing that her husband takes such an active male role in his life as it has helped to boost his son's self-esteem. She describes her son's experience of school to be "non-stimulating and he has almost been forgotten about in state education".

As mentioned in previous chapters, there is a common feeling by the respondents in this study that teachers hold low aspirations for Black students particularly Black male pupils regardless of their parent's social background. This area of contention has been researched (Gillborn & Mizra 2000, Modood 2000 and Archer & Francis 2007), ) and recommendations have been integrated into education policy to remove the culture of stereotyping by teachers, yet schools remain an issue for parents Rollock et al 2014 and Gillborn (2008) asserts that race is still institutionalised in our schools (Gillborn & Mizra, 2000). Dawn is a private tutor and lectures at a London college during the week. She spoke about racial discrimination many times and was concerned that it was affecting African male students at different schools.

"Parents would bring their sons to me for extra tuition and complained about their teachers not giving their son enough attention in the class room as their White male peers. From my one to one tutoring I could see for myself [from test papers] that they were not given a fair chance to reach their potential". (Dawn, Nigerian – Private tutor and FE Lecturer).

Dawn, originating from the United States was not aware of the history of racism and discrimination against Black young pupils coupled with a pattern low academic attainment in UK state schools particularly by Black boys. Speaking from her own experience with her two boys aged 15 and 18 years old she noticed that assumptions were made about their capability as Black male students. Her sons had spent a few years in the American education system, achieved high grades and came to settle in the UK. Dawn tells of her frustration and difficult experience of trying get her son to sit the higher exam papers:

“He wanted to be – an engineer . . . So I researched the degree requirements on the internet and he needed additional science but he [Shane] was placed on a BTEC science course. This would not allow him to take the degree! Oh, I went crazy and confronted the teacher. Then the teacher said he was wondering why he was on the BTEC course. Then they changed him to the GCSE. He did pass.”

Despite her son’s high grades from his US schooling, he was automatically placed on a BTEC course. The fact that the teacher was ‘wondering why’ and did not feel the need to consult with the parent had created tension between the teacher and the Dawn – herself a Maths lecturer. In Dawn’s case the key focus was to closely monitor her sons’ work and keep up with requirements for university applications. Her account of how parents negotiate and challenge schools by asserting concern for their child’s level of education. It was interesting to note that all the respondents in this study claim to being in regular contact with their children’s school’s to make sure they are keeping ‘on top of things’ so that the teachers did not get the impression that ‘this parent’ is not interested in their children’s education. These parents paid close attention to their children’s progress in school by monitoring their class sets, target grades, relationships with their teachers and peers groups.

As well as parents having to battle with low expectations of Black boys and stereotyping. Black girls are sometimes faced with misrepresentation and lower expectations pertaining to their femininity and intelligence. Sarah has a daughter who attends a private school. She gives an example about her daughter who is a keen athlete as well very academic being declined for the position of head girl for her school. Sarah gave her own reasons why this happened:

“She would be too much of a challenge for her teachers. She is just too clever and not the puppet they are looking for. I think a lot of young Black aspiring people are like that because they have to be to get to where they are so they are forward driven go getters . . . they [teachers]

do not see it as a strength but as a threat. They do not have the ability to embrace it so they rather not deal with it.” (Sarah, Nigerian – Senior health manager).

This quote contains the intersection of race, gender and class tensions between the parent and the educational system. A Black girl being ‘too clever’ means that teachers again have a lower expectation of Black students in private school and not only in Britain’s state schools. Sarah has many subjective views about her daughter not being selected as head girl. The position of head girl is very well respected and the role means that she represents the school and her whole class year. ‘Not the puppet they are looking for’ means that her daughter cannot be easily manipulated by teachers or peers as head girl but has her own mind and has the assertiveness to challenge traditional views about the way the school should be represented and her how her role can benefit her school year. Her daughter’s assertiveness and intelligence is seen’ as a threat’ to White hegemony and positions of unquestionable power. Sarah’s daughter contradicts the White middle class view of education and contradicts the racial and gender stereotypes of being a Black female student in a middle class private institution. In other words, Sarah’s daughter goes against all the low expectations that are embedded in the education system.

The notion that a Black person who is overtly confident can create a problem for him/herself sends out mixed messages to the child. On the one hand Sarah is advising her daughter to be self-confident and know who she is in relation to her identity and on the other hand she is advised not to appear overly confident or assertive to her teachers as this may not work in her favour due to teachers having a lower expectation from a Black female student – one that would not be representative for the head girl position of a prestigious private school. Here is another example where the parent Sarah tries to use her cultural capital to advantage her daughter to apply for head girl in order to in Bourdieu’s terms ‘play the game’, however the rules governing the field of education as well as

the relative positions of player in this field i.e. the teachers illustrate the level of discrimination and lack of educational opportunity to be fairly recognised in the school.

These experiences have had a profound impact on the role of parenting as shall be shown in Chapter 7 (Education is key). Parents have learnt to craft (e.g. 'the talk') a form of resistance against the unseen or subtle forms embedded in institutionalised racist practices that they believe their children as young adults will potentially face. As Rollock (2011) states, they are able to deploy forms of cultural capital which they have learnt how to have status and legitimacy within the context of a dominant White middle class society. Parents' professional occupations also resulted in discrimination.

### Transmitting diaspora culture - connecting with their past

The research learnt of further subtle differences between Black professional middle class families' characteristics constructed around their level of exposure to their parents' country of origin. Twelve of the 25 parents were born abroad and their children were born in the UK, whereas just over half (13 parents) of the second generation were Black British parents. Most only went to their country of origin on a holiday though there were a few who spent some of their formative years in their parents' country and others spent some of their private schooling or higher education overseas.

A practical experience of their origins (by living in the 'motherland') had an influence on how they informed or involved their children in their culture. For example, Anthony, Anne, Maria, Sharon and Tayo reflected on their childhood where they were all able to spend time in the Caribbean or Nigeria. Cultural experience of food, music, local art and festivals and being educated abroad helped them to reproduce their cultural ties and enrich their cultural capital by educating their children about their country's food, music, art and literature and

oral history alongside traditional norms and values (see Chapter 6). Other parents felt it was important to take them to the country where they were born and brought up or where their grandparents came from to form an ancestral link. They claimed that their cultural ties would be embedded in their child's identity.

Maria was born in St Vincent and is married to a Nigerian. She comes from a middle class background and identifies her class roots with her private schooling in Britain, her father owning vast amounts of land and commanding a leadership presence in his Vincentian community as well as speaking and travelling around the world. Maria lives outside London in the suburban region of Greenhithe with her two children aged 14 and five. Maria has been able to construct a multiple identity that benefits her children in various ways. She believed that England was not the “be all and end all of the world” and her children needed to see other places and experience different cultures, especially those of their ancestors. There was a need for connection as she believed her children would feel displaced and disconnected from their kinship:

“Again, it's knowing who you are. I wanted my kids to embrace Nigeria and Ivory Coast, that melting pot, and embrace everything at home. They will have West Indian or Nigerian food. My five year old is more African than Jim because she has been around him [her father] more . . . her whole self-confidence is connected to her dad. We spent six months in Africa... friends said you are absolutely crazy and then they ask: what it is really like? So you need to get [understand] people from different cultures and not just that one way thinking of living in the UK.”  
(Maria, Saint Vincientian – Community project manager).

Those who were born abroad identified closely with being ‘Nigerian’ or ‘West Indian’ (in their formative upbringing) implying that this had a significant impact on their culture compared to those brought up in Britain. There was an intricate multi-layering of class structure, culture and values, placing great importance on education, tradition, respecting your elders, studying and working hard, all of which were seen as good traits:

“I have got culture both from my parents and a bit from England. Spending time here we mix that together and their own aspirations and that time in Nigeria. Many wanted to be a doctor, accountant or engineer; they were the main ones. Everyone wanted to go to university even though those who were not wealthy wanted a BA degree or PhD. It was another way of life and community, our exposure and tolerance played a strong part in growing up and also our aspirations. If a parent had a child that did not want to go to university it would be an issue and would be resolved eventually”. (Francis, Nigerian –Global IT consultant).

These Black professional middle class parents illustrate that there are several identifiers where culture, belonging, class and values come together to forge an identity that is not straight forward but complex. Claire, Maria, Luke, Mary, Anthony and Sharon have social, cultural, historic, raced and classed patterns of identification beyond objective consideration. While some parents identify with a hybrid culture, their identities have experienced interruption, disturbance, tensions, dynamic shifts in boundaries of self-definition and comparisons to Whiteness. The significance of Black middle class nuanced differences adds value to cultural, social and emotional capital (defined by Reay 2008) measurements or considerations which were in the past ignored. Differences also revealed that Black professional middle class parents are negotiating in different ways that presents alternative trajectories. It also tests the claim that the so called ‘Black experience’ in Britain is a collective ‘Black experience’. Respondents (excluding one parent – Christina) narratives illustrate nuanced paradigms of distinct and sometimes subtle diasporic experiences through varying intersections of racism and classism and some have been fortunate enough to claim they have not experienced any such thing. The Black population in Britain cannot be grouped together as “one fits all” (Mitton & Aspinall 2010; Hall 2013; New Ethnicities, Berry 1997).



## Being middle class

Mary is a British-born Nigerian with a daughter aged 11. She is a single mother and is very aware of class divisions in British society. She rejects being associated with working class and constantly referred to middle class values for her daughter:

“We moved into lower [omitted] and then to upper [omitted] after two years. The lower is the lower class part of town. I explained to her [daughter] we have not come here to be like them....We are Londoners ultimately and we are only here for her education. I don't intend this to be our permanent home, I don't intend to die here . . . I would move her to a more middle class area at least she would be around middle class children getting A and B (grades), that is what it boils down to.” (Mary of Nigerian heritage – Marketing consultant).

Out of the 13 new middle class parents that emerged from working class backgrounds, eight of them were from the Caribbean and five were African. However, due to the history of immigration in the UK, Black professional middle class families would be labelled as ‘Black working class’ even though this study has shown that 12 parents were established middle class living in South East England. Thousands of Black manual and semi-skilled members of the Caribbean population (but not all) came to work for the NHS or London transport. British society assumed that because you were Black you were working class, so a question of their class was less of an issue and race became a political preoccupation of many British institutions from schools to the police (Hall 1997; Gilroy 1987; Solomos 2001).

Parents expressed the view that pervasiveness of racism meant that mainstream White society would always place more significance on their race than their class. Parents’ accounts of forming an identity encompassed tensions, ambiguity and dynamic shifts in boundaries of self-definition and comparisons to

Whiteness. Black professional middle class parents have to legitimise their position with sufficient economic leverage in which they can be 'Black professional middle class professional parents' in several negotiating ways against White resistance to a Black professional middle class presence.

Other forms of marginalisation and isolation are experienced in gendered and raced ways in British society. This contributes to the historical negative construction of Blackness towards Black professional middle class fathers and mothers. Claire is a solicitor and came from a working class background her comment serves as a useful point at which to draw attention to how gender intersects with race and class resulting in a perception that a Black female working class person is seen to be "uneducated and lacking in the ability to intellectually converse". Claire, a professional career woman, observed this as not about being labelled as working class but the assumptions related more to her intellectual resourcefulness against a room of White middle class men dominating the legal system:

"I love it and I enjoyed it a lot of when I did it. [Gave an example of a criminal trial she won]. When you are the only Black woman around the table they will automatically underestimate you and that's *your thing* so it's harder for them." (Claire, of Jamaican heritage – Solicitor).

Mary also demonstrates the intersection of race and class with being a Black woman as she did not want to associate herself with the local White or Black working class community in Kent. Mary was a single mum with a mixed-race child and felt that she was stigmatised as a Black working class mother who had a child to get a free council flat. In the school playground she reports that she was often glared at with curiosity and slight enmity. She recalls a time when she picked up her daughter (still wearing her office suit) straight from a day at the office and the middle class mothers were intrigued by her appearance. One of the mothers boldly questioned Mary:

“A mother in the playground asked me where I had been. I said I had a meeting and came after work. “Oh! What do you do?” “I am a marketing consultant.” “Oh so you've been to university then?” “Yeah, sure I graduated back in 1995,” and that sort of thing so I think I was able to excel in the profession but I shouldn't have gone through that in the first place. I know that England is class driven anyway but when I got to the school it was quite clear with her about the type of children I wanted her to associate with and I myself am quite adamant that I would not have any social dealings with people in our neighbourhood.” (Mary, of Nigerian heritage – Marketing consultant).

Mary dislikes where she lives because she thinks it's too working class and does not reflect the type of aspirations she has started to build for Shelly. Mary complains about being stereotyped as a single mum but she too looks down at the community she lives in by not wanting to interact or be seen to be part of the local neighbourhood. This indicates that Mary wants to distance herself from being labelled as a working class single mother and tries to do this by using her economic capital and education as a marker of her class status. Skeggs (2004a, p.142) asserts that “it is the woman's role to convert economic capital into symbolic capital” and maintain status. The conversion of economic to symbolic and cultural capitals is quite important, particularly in the formation of Black professional middle class identity as shall be shown in Chapter 5.

Out of the seven fathers that were interviewed only Anthony directly spoke about his experience marginalised and being stereotyped in the White world of corporate banking. Anthony worked for a stock brokers in the City and realised he had to create his own wealth as he was not gaining much respect despite his portfolio of clients and professional status.

“My bosses were very subtle so you won't notice it until you get to the top if you get to the top you notice it very quickly umm... if you are very good at what you do they will allow you [to push you] providing you are not a threat and when I say they I mean the system will allow however

that is no excuse if you have the mental attitude and discipline...”  
(Anthony of Jamaican heritage- Accountant).

Here remains a complex interplay between racialised and gendered inequalities. A heightened concern by respondents for their sons and young Black men in particular indicates ongoing issue of racism and institutional racism remains hidden in schools (Gillborn 2008) of which my study has touched upon.

### High aspirations versus high costs – is it worth it?

Another barrier for all but three of the parents I interviewed related to various financial costs that placed pressure on their resources. Many experienced high financial costs with mortgage payments, private property investments in the South East and abroad as well as running their own businesses. For the majority of parents interviewed, private school was not a viable option. Only three parents sent their children to private school. A good grammar school<sup>13</sup> was the preferred option or a very good comprehensive school.

Due to financial constraints or having more than two children, private schooling was seen as too costly.<sup>14</sup> With an average salary of £45,000 many parents were prepared to pay for private academic tuition and private music and sports

---

<sup>13</sup> Grammar schools are state secondary schools. Kent has 34, Lincolnshire has 15 and Buckinghamshire has 13. Some local authorities have a few and others have only one or two. They are allowed by law to select all their pupils on the grounds of high academic ability using the 11+ test. The 11 Plus (also called the 11+ or Eleven Plus) is an examination taken by some school pupils in their last year of primary school to get into a grammar school of their choice. It may be the case that 20 - 30% in a year 6 primary school actually pass the exam in a given year.

<sup>14</sup> The average cost per term for private primary school for example, King's in Rochester is £7,000 and a private school boy's secondary school is £9,000 per term (ten weeks).

lessons. The average cost for private tuition was £25 an hour per subject. Roger, a father of three, spoke about why he was willing to pay:

“For the one in year 10 I spend £50 a week for her English and Maths. For me to teach her to get a grade A I spend a lot of money. When my little boy was doing the 11+ sometimes I would take him three times a week. It’s good for me so all of them know that I am investing in their future and there is no one that does not know that this family is different including the head teacher. When it comes to child care and supporting my children it’s over my dead body that my children will be falling back. I don’t bother with people but if somebody plays or toys with their future I will get on the phone or register my complaint ” (Roger, Nigerian – Social worker).

“Oh yes, we are saving for that [university fees] for both [children]. Like my wife said we need to buy land in Nigeria so by the time these children get to university we can sell some off to support them and I have spoken to them. I’m working for them and my wife, now she has changed to go to study at university and occupation because we want to prepare and support them and this is the time to have enough for them in the future.” Roger also indicated his holiday with the children.

### Parents’ careers advice

Out of the 25 parents interviewed 16 parents had a clear idea about what their child wanted to be. There was a clear preference (one in ten) across all the parents for their children to find work in the managerial, professional, and technical professional occupations in the SOCs 1–3 categories used by The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC).

Nine parents have a professional occupation as well as their own business. These businesses are partly an investment for their children's futures and for the parents' twilight years. The money is used to contribute to the university nest egg. Going to university was an assumption for most which they believe will give a good return.

The idea of paying these high costs is a parental commitment to increase their life chances and give them the opportunity to choose. Some parents see beyond the UK and are thinking about professional jobs abroad in Europe, America or parts of prospering African states. The ultimate aim for these parents was to use these early investments to ensure their children are financially independent professionals and would not have to rely on them to rescue them out of a financial crisis. The talk of money was not really an issue for most as they were confident that they were able to manage the home and their child's aspirational career needs or the opportunity of going to university. Tayo, similar to other parents, aided her son's aspiration to be a vet and was confident that she could shape this choice in what she saw was a promising career:

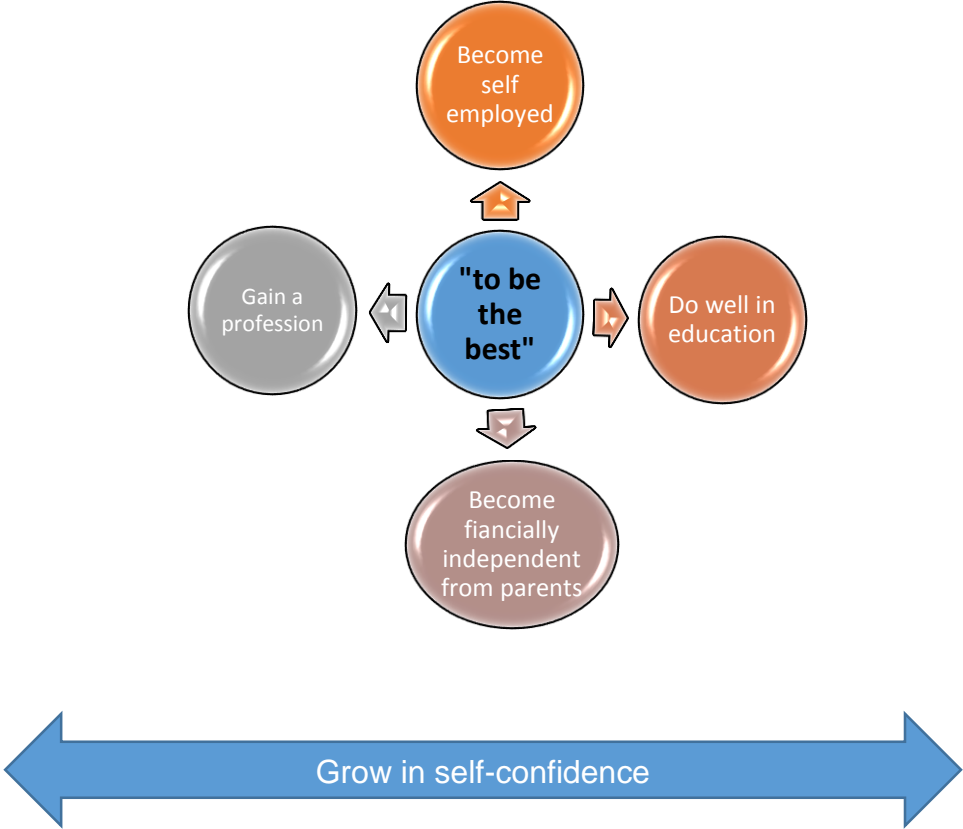
"We talk about careers and what they would like to be. One of them wants to be a vet and we have a pet shop in Borehamwood and I encourage him – if you want to be a vet you can be a vet, you love animals."(Tayo, Nigerian - FE Manager).

Parental involvement in education and careers advice contributed to the idea of wanting their child to 'be the best'. Parents giving/providing the 'best' for their children was motivated by their personal (racial) experiences of being educated, living and working in Britain. Their experiences were reflected in various family dispositions and habitus. Parents' narratives provided clear accounts of their long-term planning, tutoring or moving house to get their children into preferred high performing schools or moving into an area where there are lots of 'good'

schools anticipating their child's later needs. Kent grammar schools were one example for the 'Movers'. Most parents (23) shared a family habitus of intense focus on academic achievement and parental involvement at home and collaboration with schools so that the parents and the teachers had high expectations of the child. Parents felt that being a Black professional in Britain still meant managing the uncertainty of success and being in a system where misrecognition and stereotyping remain a constant threat for their children.

According to the parents, 'best' essentially meant that it was more of wanting a better life for their children than they had experienced in Britain. There was a limitation of trust in the school system (often because of their own experiences) and some spoke about their perception that state schools were too prepared to accept levels of 'mediocrity' in levels of attainment. In this study, parents believed that over a number of years this issue of mediocrity had become an entrenched expectation of Black children in state schools. Whilst in contrast to this environment, Black professional parents through strategic mobilisation of their capital and constant communication with the schools insisted on their child achieving highly and the teacher having high expectations of their child. The family habitus (of these parents) included a drive for success of good parenting, good education with the long term anticipation of a professional career. Parents made it clear that they wanted to utilise opportunities available to them by providing their children with a steer in the right direction with relative priority of schooling and academic achievement. To be the best has evolved from a combination of parents' economic, social and political experiences intertwined with hope for their children's futures. Parents' strategies (through the utilisation of economic and social capital) have been formed to provide transformative spaces of action in order that aspirations might be realised through their children's educational achievements.

Figure 4: Achievements children should aim for 'to be the best'



These perceptions about being the 'best' were closely associated their children becoming high achievers. Thomas, for example, mentions the term 'best' several times in his interview – he appears to be highly competitive. Thomas, his father and his wife are all in academia and his daughter is expected to do very well in her education. His career in science could have narrowed his personal view that the only way to define being 'the best' was through high academic achievement. He spoke about his daughter's future in a very calculated way and imagined her to be a doctor. He clearly overlooked what she might actually want in terms of other career choices.



These parents had high expectations for their children and made the assumption that with sufficient resources and through close parental monitoring their child will achieve a professional career. These parents want their children to be highly ambitious individuals and steer them towards middle class 'professional' roles. One way they do this is to encourage them to gain academic rather than vocational qualifications. Roger, father of three, is completely focused on education, and he is adamant that his children will get high grades and then attend university. "They are going! All of them! They are going to university to study good courses, not the ones that would *not* set them up in the future."

Roger is steering his children's way of thinking about their lives by not showing them alternative routes of achievement. His children have aspirations to be a teacher, a civil engineer and a lawyer. I question whether they have been groomed to believe that those are indeed their career choices and have not been predetermined by Roger at such a young age.

To 'become financially independent from parents' contributed to 'being the best' was an interesting cultural insight into how parents find it important for their children not to depend on them financially in their adult years. This contradicts the idea of the protective and anxious middle class parents (Ball, 2010) who go out of their way to provide extra resources to help them get a head start in adult life. Their style of parenting (discussed in detail in Chapter 6 – Aspirations and parenting) is a mixture of moral and social responsibility and economic independence. Research has shown that White middle class parents tend to be quite anxious about their squeezed position. There is an anxiety about middle class parents who believe that they need to fight for their position and reproduce their middle class status (Reay 2008; Reay 2004). As for Black professional middle class parents this anxiety is amplified, having to contend with race. Parents are under the impression that their child is not recognised for their ability unless they are getting the highest grades. This then helps to dispel the stereotypes and false impressions created by the educational system.

Parents' high aspirations could create negative effects upon their children who may feel under pressure to live up to their parents' expectations of being the best. The family habitus was to succeed, and for the children to become -motivated to do well in education. Black professional middle class parents raised the awareness that their children were placed in a different position in terms of levels of privileges compared to their white middle class friends. For example scenarios of 'the talk' may have made children feel it was detrimental to their futures if they did not perform well in education.

Roger struck me as totally preoccupied with success that interlinks with social and cultural reproduction, not only for the sake of his children's future prospects but for his own reputation as a successful father and role model. "I would be a failure . . ." (If his children did not pass their exams). Roger is concerned about what other parents 'like him' may think about him as a father; he says "others will say, 'well done Roger' ". He also idolises another family's success and wants to reproduce that outcome for his own family and advises others to take a similar path in selective testing and tutoring to produce high results.

My research however did not interview the children to form an idea of alignment between what parents said they wanted for their children and what young people aspired to be. The voices of the children were at times heard through the parents' bond and close communication with them. Parents viewed their role and strategies as a way of supporting their child's needs (see Chapter 6). Other studies have shown that where middle class parents had high involvement with their child such as helping them with homework, collaboration with schools and teachers and supporting their child with extra-curricular activities, studies have shown that children have had a positive understanding and active involvement with aspiring to be successful and supportive in their learning (Cox 2005 and Majorbanks, 2002).

Another indication of success by the parents for their children was to 'become self-employed' was an alternative view (to 'be the best') of achievement. In London and the South East there are 18,000 ethnic minority run businesses. The biggest and traditional sectors for these ethnic groups are building and construction, mechanics, hairdressing, retail (especially clothing, food and DVD's/music), restaurants, dressmaking and computing. However, second-generation Afro-Caribbean's are moving into 'non-traditional' sectors such as business inprofessional and ICT services. As Caribbean food becomes increasingly popular within London, new restaurants and takeaways specialising in this cuisine are being opened up, particularly in central London (LDA 2003 report). 'Being your own boss' was accepted to be another way of seeing their children become a high achiever, by not working for someone else, the key advantage would be accumulating their own wealth.

Finally Figure 4 also shows that in order to help their children to 'be the best' in any of these categories they would need their child to 'grow in self-confidence'. As examined earlier in this chapter, gaining confidence and self-esteem was found to be something that had to be embedded in their identity as they grew up in British society as a mechanism to help them to achieve their aspirations.

Parents' interpretations about their child being the 'best' originates from the personal dispositions of the families and their subjective ideological conditions formed from their values, culture and educational experience. These varied experiences of socio-political influences formulated personal trajectories on behalf of their children's imagined futures.

Professional occupations paid well and gave parents more choice and opportunity to invest in their child's education, some parents had begun saving funds for their child's university education. This focus on education is explored in depth in Chapter 7 – 'Education is key'. There was a primary focus on education because they see it as the most coherent way to gain economic opportunity for their children. They strongly believe that this in turn will lead to

'success'. However, 'success' is not only linked to educational achievement, its meaning also relates to emotional and social issues such as confidence and social capital (Bourdieu 1984). Parents were keen to create opportunities where their children will gain greater choices in life, particularly relating to professional career options. To help those to begin the journey, parents thought strategically about how to remain competitive in the job market and private tuition was a popular choice in achieving high grades and test scores to enter the top schools and universities. Out of the 25 parents interviewed, nearly three-quarters paid for private tuition. The remaining quarter did their own extra tutoring at home. Knowing their children had the best possible opportunities open to them through gaining social, and economic capital, paying for tutoring was not an issue. They believed that private tuition was one of the 'best' methods to assist their child in their education with the long-term gain of acquiring a professional occupation.

Anthony, who is a wealthy businessman, and his wife Anne, who also runs her own business, believe success is about creating ones' own independent wealth. According to Anthony, "you could control your future and not let anyone or any system dictate what you should do with your life". He believed that this was to be achieved through self-improvement and self-employment. To be really successful meant you had to be financially secure and totally independent. Anthony sees no limits to what can be achieved financially. He himself wants to be a self-made millionaire and would like his children to follow in his and his wife's footsteps.

Kate (the civil servant) on the other hand was less driven by money and more concerned about getting the right exposure. She thought that rubbing shoulders with the right people in the right places would change their perception of you and help you through life. "They see beyond your race, class and gender" (Kate – Grade 7 civil servant). Kate was also pro-university. She herself did not attend university and admitted regret; for most parents the opportunity to attend university was a popular choice for Black professionals seeking specialised

career choices. Table 4 shows intergeneration university attendance across two generations.

**Table 4: Intergeneration university attendance**

	<b>First generation</b>	<b>Second generation</b>
<b>Attended university</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Did not attend university</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>

The respondents' parents of the first generation shows that three-fifths had at least one parent attend university, and the table also shows that the respondents who are the second generation almost all attended university to gain their professional qualifications. Overall, 49 per cent of people aged 17 to 30 participated in higher education (HE) in the 2011-12 (HESA). The Governments strategy for widening HE participation has contributed to the growing intergenerational encouragement for successful acquisition of professional occupations and could also be a motivation for second-generation parents to send their children to university.<sup>15</sup>

However, this sample has shown that just because the first or second generation of parents attended university this does not automatically suggest

---

<sup>15</sup> BME students are well represented in the higher education (HE) sector overall. There are now 14.3 % of Black students attending HE. (HESA). However we need to put this into context, BME students are distributed unevenly across the HE institutions. In total they are represented higher at new (post 1992) universities and within particular subject areas that are professionally oriented such as medicine, IT, business studies and law. While more BME working class are entering HE they are attending the less top layer or elite institutions which remain more White and middle class.

that all the children in all the families studied will choose to attend university. A third of those second-generation parents in contrast to the other two-thirds thought university was not the only way for their children to achieve their aspirations. For example Linda, Anne, Anthony, Claire and Jenny did not necessarily see higher education as the only option for their children. These five parents had attended university and found it to be “overrated” and now “too saturated”. Sarah and Linda were the only parents that had their children attending private school. They were both from very wealthy backgrounds though had different opinions about their children going to university. Sarah desires both her children to go to university while in Linda’s case there was no real pressure for her children to take the traditional higher education route.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on the processes through which professional parents develop identities in what remains an unequal White middle class society. Many respondents displayed notions of resistance capital, deployed forms of capital to strategically figure a way to contest racial discrimination and other inequalities (within class and gender issues). Such issues involving gendered and particularly raced and classed experiences between the 25 individual parents highlighted nuances of differing perceptions of aspirations, what it means to them to ‘be the best’ or to be ‘successful’ as well as the level of importance placed on higher education and the need to be self-employed, such intricacies within these categories demonstrate the trajectories of cultural, social and economic capital between the group of parents in this research.

The explanation of relations between identity and class status is difficult to neatly separate, its analysis needs to show understanding and explanations of inequalities in a way that reflects social and cultural practices, including the political structures imposed upon them which have contributed to shaping some

first and second-generation parent's experiences of themselves. As Waquant (1991) argues, "social class is profoundly a relational concept" and this relation was clearly evident within parents' constructions of their class status as professionals and the new formations of their multiple identities. The parents' middle class identities meant that participants engaged in multifaceted discursive negotiating in an attempt to position themselves as both acceptable and authentic due to their complex positioning situated somewhere between racial subordination and class privilege.

My interpretations of my respondents' in-depth accounts of their social background illustrated how and why they developed a self-tailored set of capitals to draw upon, to firstly indicate their structural class positioning and identity (of their race) to others in society and to aid their children with self-confidence, a sense of what they can achieve with strategic use of capital and by "playing the game". Parents such as Anthony, Claire, Maria and Thomas and others have arrived at an understanding, albeit through different ways and means of racial resistance. The Black professional middle classes have made strategic use of a variety of resources including financial investments, property and business investments, occupational status, preference for residential area, information and support networks to assist their children and to establish a foundation for future generations that attempts to minimise racial discrimination. The research shows that despite the tensions, imbalances and disruptions in their daily lives they have used strategies to establish and construct their identities. Black professional middle class parents are very aware of their advantaged class position and are conscious of the steps they take based on their subjective meanings of the political system and within the educational system in order to suppress race inequalities and protect their children from possible future raced and classed or gendered experiences.

## **Chapter 5: Black professional middle class expectations and aspirations**

### Introduction

The previous chapter looked at how the respondents perceived their own identity as Black people and how their cultural norms and social identity was conveyed and realised through their children. Their narratives illustrated ways they used their diaspora links to impart their cultural capital to their children. Overtime it was shown through raced, classed experiences how Blackness was re-configured in complex nuanced ways for both the Black working and middle classes and that becoming part of a new Black middle class in Britain was not straightforward in terms of the historical to modern socio-political context that is embedded in their middle class status. (Rollock et al, 2014, Harker (2014), Mohood, 2005). These parents in the study want their children to perform and to be the best without having to experience the pervasiveness of racism in their schooling.

This chapter looks at how these Black professional middle class parents have maneuvered to gain advantage in being socially mobile and minimise the risk of a degree of downward social mobility (Butler & Hamnett, 2011, Platt, 2007) according to their particular sets of values, aspirations and concerns. What's new about this group is that they have survived the impact of deindustrialisation and, at least until recently prospered from the growth of the service and business sector in post-industrial economy as opposed to those particularly among the working class White and Black groups who have suffered under the fate of 2008 and 2009 recessions, (Jackson & Benson, 2014, Butler & Hamnett, 2011, Keer 2011).

This section looks at respondent's accounts of aspiration and social mobility. There is a concentrated focus by the majority of these parents to provide a good



education and monitor their well-being. For most parents there is a heightened concern that they should do what they can to avoid their children from experiencing what “they had to go through” in terms of being stereotyped at school, being the subject of cultural racism or biases in wider society. It’s within these situations, education takes on a central meaning for the future of their children whether they are the first or third in their generation to be upwardly mobile and to the intergenerational maintenance of privilege. Education is a key indicator for the kind of lives they hope their children will be able to live (Chapter 7). Getting their child into a ‘good or outstanding’ school and away from ‘less preferred ones’ is a key measure of their success as parents and their sense of purpose.

This chapter looks at why parents want to “make great things happen” through their children with the expectation of gaining a professional career. Going to university has become particularly important now in a time where a much larger proportion of that age group now go on to university. A university degree is now an essential requirement for many kinds of middle- class and professional jobs they desire for their child’s future. Aspirations and its close relation - high expectations is central to this study because it lies at the heart of many respondents accounts of the hopes and strategies articulated by this Black professional middle class group. (Rollock et al 2014, Archer 2013). Despite the sometimes classed, raced and gendered constraints, many of the parents were enthusiastic about hopes for the future, often to be realised through their children and, in spite of the disappointment of the last 15 years, many felt they are finally making progress (however small) in terms of social mobility compared to the struggles and challenges their parents and often their grandparents had been subjected to since coming to Britain in the 1950s, 60s and 70s from the West Indies and parts of West Africa. (Hammond, 2014, Rhamie, 2009). Many of these individuals who came from parts of West Africa often enjoyed a relatively high social status in their home country and had witnessed a decline in their social and occupational status when they arrived in Britain (see Figure 3.2 in Chapter 3).

Their aspirations, expectations and hopes are intensely invested in their children and specifically their children making it through the high echelons of university education and onto the professional jobs such as civil engineers, doctors, accountants and lawyers. There is an acknowledgement that there is never the less a belief in the possibility of progress among this group of respondents. Many of the respondents were characterised by a notably quiet and unassuming confidence that their children would perform to their desired levels academically in school and then onto higher education.

There has been little qualitative research on the making of Black professional middle class parents' expectations and aspirations even though their contribution has been considered as being influential for their children (Rollock et al 2014, Archer 2013, Lareau 2010). There are links between familial class positions and the kinds of expectations and aspirations articulated for their children (Ball 2003). This chapter demonstrates how these parents carefully planned for their children's future education and aspirations and how they talked about being engaged with their children in getting them to think about professional career paths. The evidence suggests that parents' expectations were high and this was illustrated by the way they planned and shaped their children's futures. Whilst intensity of engagement with their children's prospective futures was a key feature, there was further evidence in parents' narratives with regard to the way they expressed their expectations, particularly through their experiences of race and class. A focus on parents' subjective narratives throughout this chapter highlights the uneven playing field (Bourdieu, 1986) within educational institutions and in some professional occupations.

Parents' had common beliefs about what constituted 'successful' futures for their children. Following on from Chapter 4, this chapter begins with a discussion about parents' strategic approaches towards aspirations and the important role mothers play in realising high expectations through their children. The second part of the chapter explores parents' expectations of their children attending university with the hope and expectation they will choose a professional

occupation such as becoming a doctor, lawyer, civil engineer or an accountant. However not all parents agreed to a traditional route of becoming successful and this section examines why and what are the alternatives for their children. The third part of the chapter explores Black professional middle class parents' perception of an uneven playing field in British society and in institutions because they are part of a minoritised middle class group within a minority ethnic group in Britain. Black professional middle class parents demonstrated explicit strategic ways of investing and working very hard (Rollock et al, 2014) in supporting and protecting their children's interests. The intensity of aspirations would also be realised through a good education along with access to resources such as social, cultural capital and not just economic capital. The study identified differences between the parents interviewed through their use of resources, priorities, support and how they actively engaged with teachers and other parents. It was noted that all the parents in this study had a deep concern for the future prospects of the next generation of Black youth in Britain in terms what opportunities and choices would be available once they leave the education system, alongside these comments by respondents' there was evidence of cultural moral values being used in an attempt to encourage the well-being and academic development of the next generation of young Black middle class professionals.

### **Make it happen – realising aspirations**

“I personally think Sean would be a good aeronautic engineer or a good military pilot. We talk about it all the time on the way to school.” (Sarah, Nigerian – Senior health manager).

Aspirations are parents' hopes of 'success' for their children. Parents' aspirations were not about distant dreams partly because they themselves have achieved a middle class status that now symbolises a new set of aspirations about who they were who they have become and what they might achieve or be

realisable both for themselves and, importantly, in the expectations that they might harbour for their children. This was to be achieved through the meritocratic achievement through the education system with the expectation that, if they did well, it would be recognised in professional employment with high levels of status and independent material well-being (financial stability). In this sense a time as well as being suggestive that respondents had some unassuming confidence that it would be achievable.

My focus in this chapter is therefore less on the general notion of aspiration and the respondent's articulation of it and rather more on the number of key concerns about the way in which they have set out to achieve an aspiration - particularly through strategic choices about schooling and location for their children. For some it has meant building on their existing capital privilege whose background were already middle class and for others, a majority of the respondents, it has meant planning their children's education in order to get onto the upper rungs of a middle class profession or at least on the professional ladder that signify better economic security and social recognition than remaining in a working class occupation.

Parents all spoke confidently about immediate to medium-term strategies to achieve goals they have set out for their children, such as preparing investments and savings for university fees, extra tuition costs and private school fees. Some parents changed their line of occupation or worked part time to facilitate their children's next few years of learning, the purpose of this being to accumulate social, cultural, symbolic as well as economic capital to place their children at an advantage and to closely monitor their children's academic progress.

Throughout this study the desire for social mobility are invested in their children. The physical moving out from inner London is a representative of a wider strategy of aspiration as well as illustrating that a group of parents within this study had some confidence that it was achievable. Findings in this study highlights that there are specific choices made for the children in order to

achieve particular outcomes. For example, moving from London to the suburbs for 'better' schooling.

Notable amongst most parents was a sensitive alertness to the complexities of class and race boundaries which appeared central to the way parents chose certain routes to 'success'. Respondents unanimously agreed that there were boundaries or barriers to getting what you want but some of the parents believed that if they planned very carefully they could find ways within or around what they referred to as the 'system' in order to break down barriers and stereotypes by teachers in schools and in work establishments and gain recognition for their efforts from the wider society (Gillborn, Rollock, Vincent & Ball 2012). Despite stereotypes and low expectations of their children by teachers Black professional middle class parents remained positive about a 'successful' future, like all other middle class parents (Butler & Hamnett 2011; Reay 2005; and Devine et al 2005), Black professional middle class parents want the best for their children.

### Professional career expectations

Twenty - one out of the 25 parents I interviewed expected their children to obtain a professional qualification from a good university. For the majority of Black African parents, higher education is seen to raise the social status for the family name and says something about the commitment and successful cultivation of the children. They often aim for the highest level in a profession. The goal is to achieve wealth and recognition for their credentials. Wealth offers a level of security that also allows them to pursue other avenues for private investments in property or a chance to purchase land in the UK and abroad (possibly to build their retirement or holiday home). A steady salary from a profession allows for more flexibility with their income and an opportunity to do other activities, for example travelling and extra-curricular activities to improve their child's cultural

and social capital. Roger wanted his children to be ahead in their school work rather than remain at the UK's national average expectations of achievement.

Investing in their future started when the children were very young. Strategic methods were chosen: for example, their jobs had to be adaptable and suitable to enable them to spend more time with their children in terms of close monitoring and support with regard to their school work.

“They are going! All of them! They are going to university to study good courses, not the ones that would not set them up in the future . . . Mathematics, so she is thinking of doing languages to be a teacher or to study electrical engineering or economics for finance; these are three courses in mind.” (Roger, Nigerian - Social worker).

Roger's comment, like those of many other parents I interviewed, kept a very academic focus on their child's aspirations and were keeping a close eye on the requirements needed to get into one of the top ten universities in the country. Roger, for example, has done extremely well and has high expectations for his children. A very strategic father with a university background, he is preparing his children and especially the eldest one (11 years old) for a prestigious university, to follow in his footsteps. He says he knows the rules (meaning the ordered path) in order to succeed. Roger commonly referred to the word 'competitive' wanting his children to go to an Oxbridge university to be the 'best', not only academically but to include extra-curricular activities, which he believed would help his daughter “get on in life”.

Participants in this study who were born outside of Britain appreciate the value of opportunities when their children are born in Britain. Many look to role models (including themselves) from members of their extended family to prove to their children that you can make it to university and be a 'success' subsequently. They are prepared to invest in their future and have high aspirations for their children against the odds of being a minority in the UK. Some Black professional middle class parents have a slight advantage over others (as experience and salary do vary in the middle classes). Thomas moved out of inner London to

Kent, he quickly identified the best schools in the area accessed valuable knowledge on how the 11+ selection system worked. Cost remains an issue for him due to another recent addition to his family but he speaks numerous times about his daughter attending a top university to study medicine. He sees his professional networks as key contributors for his daughter's progress into the medical field as he explained how he was already planning a placement for her in a GP's office and spending time with him in his university laboratory. His role as a father seems very instrumental and he claimed to be being "very active coming up to exams", suggesting he was not one to leave exam support to just his wife, and was very engaged in his daughter's future.

Evidence from the data illustrates how parents are preparing girls and boys for many years of higher education to be followed by what is hoped to be a middle class salary from one of the preferred professions. Extracts from Thomas and Emma demonstrate the encouragement they give their children to become high career flyers:

"We have talked quite a lot about education so I tell her about what are the best subjects to take in secondary school. These are A levels and then you could do a degree then a Masters then a PhD . . . maybe when she is in sixth form or just before I will help her find work experience in a GP's practice; things like that. For example, if she wants to read medicine it will give her the exposure." (Thomas Ghanaian – Senior science lecturer.)

"Well I know a couple of barristers and a solicitor and I worked for a famous company called Trowers & Hamblins [law firm], but she is not interested in becoming a solicitor – she wants to become a barrister. She is looking for a leading role. She is focusing on her exams right now and then we will get back to a new direction [to be a barrister]." (Emma, Jamaican – Housing project manager.)

Thomas would like his daughter to follow in his footsteps as she has a keen interest in science. His intention to help her find work experience shows the close level of involvement he has in her future career as well as a routine expectation for higher education. Emma has been supporting her daughter in her first year law degree and now her daughter shows a particular interest in becoming a barrister. “We will get back to a new direction” indicates the close engagement and openness Emma has in planning the best ways of supporting her daughter’s aspiration.

These Black professional middle class parents, in some cases, explicitly strategise to instill a sense of high performance with the possibility and indeed the expectation – of being a success by acquiring a well-paying professional occupation. Professional occupations pay considerably higher salaries (sometimes 10% more if you graduate from a red brick university)<sup>16</sup> and so it was a common desire from many respondents for their child to become financially independent from their parents. Many parents wanted their children to be responsible and monetarily established in their adult years.

---

<sup>16</sup> Graduate recruiters rank ten Russell Group universities in the top 30 universities worldwide, and Russell Group graduates typically receive a 10% salary ‘top-up’ over others. Because the combination of teaching and research excellence creates the ideal learning environment which produces ‘work-ready’ graduates. Wendy Piatt-Director General Of The Russell Group. Source: Which, 2014.



“If you think about it, when your kids get older they will end up looking after you so it’s almost an investment. If you bring up a child and they have no aspirations, or job or whatever do you think they will look after you so it’s almost an investment for you so they will leave you alone because otherwise they want to do something mummy I want to buy a car can you just lend me the money for it and they will continue doing this but if they could stand on their own two feet 12, 19, 20 years old or whenever they leave from university they will get their own place and sort themselves out they will end up looking after the baby for me by the time they are 25 they will looking after my 15 year old she will be able to stay in their house”. (Sarah, Nigerian – Senior health manager).

Sarah’s comment shows an expectation that there will come a time when she and her husband will not have to work so hard navigating between the complex intersections of race, class and gender issues or keep providing their children with money or use all their available resources. It is expected that their children’s professional careers will help define them as person in their own right – being recognised for their skills, qualifications and competency as well provide a salary large enough to be independent as well as reciprocate funds to their ageing parents.

Luke is another example of a parent that used all his available resources to secure their children’s futures. Some parents have built or bought houses back home or in London, providing children with a choice to study and live in London or to sell the property to invest further into their future. Luke, for example, tells of the little empire he is building for his sons:

“I want to give them a choice and freedom to decide what they want to be and have the materials or the pipelines set up to be what they want to be . . . I started selling food at home [Nigeria] and having to fend for myself and I now have a house of my own and houses in Nigeria and have my own life and my small empire where the children can actually go to. This is the difference between me and my dad and what he did not do for me.”  
(Luke, Nigerian – Youth manager and Pastor).

Luke indicates that because of his difficult childhood experience he wants to do better for his sons. The idea of a failing father in their lives troubles him and is reflected in his high priority for his sons through his economic capital investments in the hope that his sons will possibly have a successful future.

### Mothers raising aspirations

“They [teachers] don't actually realise that that child would not be where she is if that mother had not done the preparation for them . . . It's all about preparation – not that you are pushy. It's about preparing for what might be.” (Linda, Nigerian – Bank credit analyst).

Even though I invited both parents to be interviewed, most of the respondents that were available were mothers. I interviewed 18 mothers and 7 fathers. As a result there were certain themes concerning gender that pervades this study such as parenting roles shared between married couples in the home, mothers taking on a more proactive role concerning extra-curricular activities than fathers, mothers and fathers having a concern for their son's well-being with mothers adopting a more emotional role than the father but both had high expectations for their children's educational attainment. Although the men

interviewed illustrate support and assert strategic ambition, it's the women that continue the role of social reproduction. They remain responsible for implementing them, by gathering 'hot knowledge' at the school gates about, preferred school and communicating with teachers at the PTA and parents evenings and even volunteering their time to be interviewed about this study shows their deep interest in raising aspirations for their children. Thus gender is important as it is usually the women who are instrumental players when it comes to "making it happen".

These examples illustrate that gender is interwoven within parts of the study of parents' aspirations and expectation for their children. The mothers in my data played an important role in driving and encouraging aspirations, although not all of the time; for example, fathers such as Roger, Luke and Thomas were all fully engaged in motivating and providing opportunities for their sons and daughters to pursue professional occupations. Although Bourdieu has been criticised for his lack of acknowledgement of gender in the concept of habitus, Reay, an adherent of Bourdieu's work, particularly relating to habitus, has revised his work in this area. Reay's (2000) study uses the concept of emotional capital and concludes that expanding habitus to include race and gender differences is equally important in relation to smaller research contexts, such as by the school gates and in workplaces, and should not be excluded from empirical research. Butler & Hamnett (2011) claim that, even though the men spoke of their ambitions for their children and how they would go about it, it was the women who implemented the plan and made it happen. They were the ones who would inquire in the playground and gather intellectual capital about the best schools, the excellent private tutor and timetable and execute the weekly extra-curricular activities to gain cultural capital. (Rollock 2012; Reay 2004).

Evidence from my data suggests a heightened expectation for single mothers. Claire described her years as a young career mother as a "military operation" in terms of the way she chose strategies to give an advantage to her children and organised the social and cultural capital cultivation for her children. For women,

taking the strategic approach towards finding and providing a good education for their children is an indicator of their confidence with class and gender issues. For example, this research highlighted the fact that mothers Maria and Dawn had to deal with low expectations in schools, particularly regarding their sons. This illustrates how gender infiltrates and influences every other category discussed because of its shifting and relational nature to class and race and from low to high emotional capital (Reay 2000). The 18 mothers I interviewed were all aware of the importance to social and cultural capital as a tool subtly used at the school gates when conversing with other parents. Black professional career women played a key role in their children's social interactions and were highly attuned to their children's peer groups. The interview transcripts from the mothers indicated that educational attainment was important, but they also suggested that other skills such as sports, acting and playing classical instruments, were also of some value in order to build on their children's social and cultural capital:

“My daughter is a good athlete and has competed for Harrow County. It sounds really good on paper [sports scholarship application]; she also performs drama, plays piano, all this looks wonderful for her personal statement about her aspirations.” (Sarah, Nigerian – Health Director).

“Now there are no women members on the board they are all White middle aged men . . . I go into a meeting and I will be the only person of colour, in some departments there are no people of colour and I think, why is that? That is really surprising me.” (Kate, Saint Lucian heritage , Grade 7 senior civil servant).

“When I'm challenged at work my dad says, ‘well you just have to tell them’. As a West Indian you are taught to speak up and to challenge the system and the school. Sometimes it is a detriment to your own career (if you challenge) because they see you as a threat.” (Maria, Saint Vincentian – Community project manager).

Sarah's comment shows the strategic approach parents adopt to place their children in the right clubs, groups and social networks to widen their choices and to "gain exposure". Extracts from Kate and Maria illustrate how observant mothers are about the class, colour and gender divisions that persist from the playground to the boardroom. The Institute of Education's research on extra-curricular activities (Rollock 2012) revealed that Black professional middle class parents have increased the events in extra-curricular activities in the past 20 years for art, music, sport, drama and literature and other clubs – at a price. Bourdieu (1984) concludes that this adds to their cultural capital and expose them to middle class activities such as art museums, appreciation of classical music, sport and literature. There is a belief that these investments in their children will reproduce the desired social class they need to enter into a professional career. For these parents it's an opportunity to network with those who firmly believe have middle class status and forge links for potential professional opportunities. The parents are trying to widen their cultural capital links with those who are in influential circles of opportunity and a level of status. Some parents spoke of evening dinners with professional friends and introducing their children to professional families at parties and functions.

Tayo is a single mother and her children are the central point in her life. She is very strategic and resourceful with her contacts and has a tight network of people. Like Sarah, she has a middle class background and spent her former years growing up in Nigeria. Her mother is a lawyer and was portrayed as her real role model. She relocated, just like Joan, Maria, Anthony and others to the outskirts of London. The experience of working in London on a daily basis and being around the local school children in a further education college exposed her to bad behaviour. She spends many hours taking her children to different activities and has found networking to be a bonus:

“Special networking I do a lot. I do not have a lot of friends because of work and I want to spend time with my kids I never see them so weekends and evenings. I'm terrible at communicating on the phone. So when I go out swimming and I chat with parents about what's going on in Borehamwood, anything and get to know about schools and talk about things.” (Tayo, Nigerian –FE manager).

Black professional middle class parents see the usefulness in equipping their children with additional skills through achievements in sport, music and performing arts and world travel school trips and family vacations. Some secondary schools are known to give preferential spaces for children who have an aptitude (passed graded pieces of music) for playing instruments (e.g. Rochester Grammar School for Girls). The majority of the parents engaged in cultivating a range of weekly activities saw it as a positive approach to ‘good’ parenting that would gain some advantage.

“My son goes to Scouts and Tuesday he has a tutor for Maths and English and Wednesday its athletics. Thursday and Friday nothing, Saturday they go swimming and he also plays tennis. When he is older I will try and get him into the club in Hertfordshire. (Linda, Nigerian – Bank credit analyst).

However, this was not the only reason for out-of-school activities. Black professional middle class parents also sought to equip their children against subtle forms of racism or sinister remarks about their social background or knowledge (Gillborn and Youdell 2000; John 2006). Parents would make an extra effort to expose their children to more Black managed activities such as Black student Saturday schools or taking their children abroad to the place they were born to teach them the customs and cultural values:

“Education is very important but I want my son to know who he is and what he wants, then he will know when he's being treated differently

and make a stop to that; and education is also not about formal education. My husband has travelled so his education has been different, you know people who study don't have common sense”.

(Maria, Saint Vincentian- Community project manager).

Having carried out a comparison with Lareau's (2003) study on concerted cultivation, Lareau came to the conclusion that middle class childrearing or parenting styles were based on class privileges or classed strategy. However, findings from my research show that race does differentiate Black professional middle class families' approaches, strategies and values towards 'good' parenting and not only class. The activities that the children are enrolled in are both a marker of middle class high knowledge but they are also used as a strategy for arming Black professional middle class children with the skills and knowledge needed to live in British society where they may encounter racism. However, it would be inaccurate to suggest that extra-curricular activities were just an indication of their middle class status because the parents want to offer and expose their children to different types of knowledge that is valued in society (in education and in the workplace) (Vincent et al. 2013).

### Other ways of being successful

“Let's even say my son gets his A levels, goes to university – so what is he going to do with it? He and millions of others? I'm waiting to see where his strengths lie and then start taking it from there.” (Linda, Nigerian – Bank credit analyst).

Out of the 25 parents interviewed there were two parents who had an alternative view about higher education and did not believe that attending university was the only route to a successful future, even though they themselves had attended university. Linda a high flying credit analyst in banking and Anthony a self-made

wealthy business man and both believe that university was highly overrated. Linda is strategically planning and making sure her children have multiple skills that may be required for the future rather than just the traditional university route. She is trying to expose her children to a range of extra-curricular activities and explains, "I want them to do different things and obtain life skills for a highly competitive world".

Firstly, Linda's comment above about university is based on her own university experience. She was educated alongside students from wealthy families and was puzzled as to why most of them are (as she sees it) "nowhere in life now". Those with functional skills have survived and done well, so acquiring the right life skills is what is important to her, not the class structure itself. Drawing closely with Savage's (2000) line of thought about the ambiguous notion of class, identities are produced and reproduced within relations of protest, uncertainty and anxiety.

Linda is particularly strategic about aspirations and has a sympathetic concern for children growing up in modern Britain, she believes that some of that traditional childhood she had experienced has been eradicated and children now need far more guidance from their parents and role models than ever before. "I just sense a loneliness in themselves. Sometimes when you speak to young people (some of them) they don't know what they want to do".

Secondly, Anthony adopted a more interventionist approach. Academic achievement is important, but for him the family habitus is one of self-improvement. Anthony and his wife Anne appeared to give more space to their children's natural gifts and talents rather than just encouraging high expectations through the academic route. He monitors all his children's abilities closely and fosters and nurtures their talents' cultural and social capital in order to strengthen their position in the business world. Anthony, who said openly "I am close to being a self-made millionaire", intends to help his children carve out future careers that would allow them to develop entrepreneurial skills and possess and control their economic capital. He spoke about aspirations, but in



the context of individual power to make your own choices with “self-improvement and self-employment”. He emphasised the need for his children when they reach adult hood, to take control of their lives and “not have some other person (boss) telling them what to do”. This comment relates to his concern about young Black men being dominated by white hegemonic power structures which he defines as the “system”. Anthony (who has four sons and one daughter) wants his children to gain a level of financial and social independence from what he refers to as the “system” which serves the privileged and the interests of the White middle class and creates explicit and implicit barriers for the Black professional middle class. Such barriers and challenges pertaining to the negative stereotypes of Black boys in particular are deep issues and concerns many other respondents have about how Black boys will make their way in British society. Anthony and his wife Anne, whom we have discussed previously in Chapter 4 have a particular way in cultivating Blackness and in Anthony’s case class identity. Anthony displays high amounts capital similar to a White middle class professional, however being middle class does not mean they need to be similar in interests and values as the White middle class. (Rollock et al 2014). Black professional middle class parents’ social background influenced the way parents cultivate their children’s aspirations. What they value in society is subjective; they do not subscribe to White middle class identity. Anthony and many other parents place a high value on their Black African history and Caribbean heritage as their embodied identity. bell hooks puts it into context:

“In the past separate space meant downtime, time for recovery and renewal. It was time to dream resistance, time to theorise, plan, create strategies and go forward. The time to go forward is still upon us and we have long surrendered segregated spaces of radical opposition.” (bell hooks 1995: 6).

In terms of Anthony's class values it is important to him that his children make a moral impact with the money they make:

"You cannot live in this life without making an impact – it would be a shame, what a waste. You must get it all out before you go [die]. So the important thing is that my children are nurtured to realise that becoming a millionaire means: 'I can do what I want' because that gives you choices. If you want to go and serve in Africa for four years and not worry about money you know that money is there in your bank account. If you want to build an orphanage for someone or give a million to charity you cannot do that on £2000 a month; that just about pays your bills and mortgage . . . you can make a difference when you make the money." (Anthony, of Jamaican heritage – Accountant).

Anthony's position as a relatively affluent father living in an upper middle class area allows him to use his economic, social and cultural forms of capital to cultivate and engage fully with his children and his definition of success leans far more than other parents to self-employment. Anthony and Anne demonstrate explicit strategies in relation to the sort of social capital for what they want their children to aspire to be, mainly because they both work for themselves and are able to navigate flexibly in what they believe to be specific social class fields.

"... The what I call the "system" is not a secret society it's not a ... well it is a secret society but it's not a conspiracy it's just the way these guys run the country and this is the way they do it.. You just find ways and they will accept you, [being a Black professional]. You deserve to be here."

Drawing from the respondents' narratives, being positioned as the 'other' meant there were implicit subtle forms of racism or exclusion that are not even recognised as discrimination or racist by the White middle class because of their privileged position. The so called "system" does not want to be threatened by

difference. For most of the Black professional middle class parents in this study they are dealing with institutionalised racism alongside and within the system. Gilroy (2000) and other newer writers, such as Gillborn (2005, 2006, 2008), Hylton (2008) and Preston (2010), have claimed along with CRT that the situation for the Black professional middle class families is one of a challenging existence of maintenance. The burden not only exists within a volatile global economy, but in their own personal way participants have described having to change mind-sets of White middle class groups through recognition and merit in order to compete for top professional jobs. Such racialised subjective elusive nuances are overlooked by Bourdieu with regard to race.

In relation to Bourdieu's theory of habitus, Anthony's embodied habitus along with his cultural, social and economic forms of capital are utilised in a far more flexible and transformative way than other Black professional middle class families I interviewed (this further supports the idea that the Black professional middle class are not a homogenous group because they are a minoritised group within the middle class. While the habitus is the product of early experiences received from family and school, Bourdieu argues that it is continually 're-structured by individuals' encounters with the outside world' (Di Maggio, 1979 cited in Reay et al, 2007:434). In other words, 'the structures of the habitus are thus not set but develop overtime and during different encounters. Also through different encounters and participation in, the 'White world', to use Rollock et al's (2011:185) terminology; which has been made possible through their education, professional networks and financial positions.

Chapter 4 outlined social class and distinctive cultural values held by these Black professional middle class parents. Their perceptions can be linked with the approach of CRT that race is embedded (through barriers and boundaries) in all parts of normal daily life. By creating your own (material capital) and through self-representation of Blackness, it means you can now effectively jump over the complex hurdles placed in front of the you (being marginalised) (Delgado & Stefancic 2012). For Anthony his *self-employment* is a form of

status by beating the “suppressive system” or racist practices – “you earn respect, they (being the White upper middle or elite groups in high positions) take you seriously and treat you differently”. This comment by Anthony suggests that his middle class position is recognised and not misrecognised as being “Black working class”. In addition, by moving out of London to the suburbs into a six bedroom house is also a symbol of Anthony’s accomplished status.

### Belonging: White privilege and the Black professional middle class

“ . . . I think that children need to be aware that there is racism out there and there will always be a situation – maybe a job or at university – there will be obstacles and it’s not they are not capable of doing the job or what’s required, but simply because of their colour which is sad. Sometimes we take a step forward then three steps backwards.” (Kate – Saint Lucian heritage - Grade 7 civil servant)

Traditionally, White middle class identity in the UK has been idealised as the one class looked up to by others (namely, the working class masses) to aspire to be (Casey, 2011). The term White middle class privilege is linked to this chapter because the complex layers of race equality can be quite distinct from the class struggle. Privilege refers to the White middle class who have an advantage in social, political and economic fields and they can hold explicit and implicit advantages over marginalised groups. The White middle class are more firmly positioned in society with an extensive history of middle class generations in British society and presumed to be the primary signifier of middle class norms. This means that the White middle class would label others as different whilst perceiving their own Whiteness as recognisable or familiar compared to non-White as being different or unfamiliar. For example, Ball (2003) along with Oria et al. (2007) claims that within the field of education, contemporary education policies promoting parental choice, competitive school enrolment, performance

league tables and school specialisms all generate a framework that encourages and legitimates self-interest in the pursuit of competitive familiar advantage. The Black professional middle class in Britain are a newer minority group that have at their disposal more forms of capital resources and privilege relative to the more deprived Black and White working class and other ethnic minorities in British society (Butler & Hamnett 2011). Despite their Black professional middle class position this does not remove the ongoing damage that subtle nuanced forms of racism causes today in the daily lives of some of these parents interviewed in this study. There are complexed relations between race, class and gender throughout the history (Daye, 1984, Archer 2003) and contemporary daily lives of the Black professional middle class individual, (Rollock et al 2014) those who stay alert to the fact that being Black and middle class does not necessarily mean you are recognised as “one of them”:

“People of colour always have to prove ourselves in education, in the workplace and prove you are of some substance.” (Jessica, Trinidadian – Public affairs Manager).

“You have to prepare your children for society.” (Kate, St Lucian heritage – Grade 7 senior civil servant).

“I remember when I left school looking for a job and when I applied I always got down to the last three and never got the job. I did not think about it at the time but when I look back it’s this [Matthew points to his skin colour] . . . I think it’s worse for boys than girls. I think for Black children it will be difficult because they can't get jobs so I think it’s harder in society . . .” (Matthew, of Jamaican heritage – Global Marketing Manager).

These extracts show the intense focus Black professional middle class parents place on high expectations of their children measured by their strategic planning, implying there is not much room for deviation, the parents interviewed

strongly believed from their experiences that they needed to work twice as hard “to prove ourselves” to earn their deserved position in society.

The majority of the respondents admit a harsh reality of being Black in Britain as there will often be a situation with regard to the colour of their skin and no other reason. A few parents highlighted society as a place where structuring factors work against aspirations but nevertheless, they remain confident for their children’s futures. Furthermore, the classed and gendered realms of social networks are constructed around Whiteness and White middle classness because they are ‘normalised’ into social and cultural capital constructions. Would a Black professional middle class person ‘fit in’ and be part of the White middle class circle of friends? Maria lives in a suburban part of Kent and are the only Black family on her street. At the time when they first moved to the area, her son Jim was one of the very few Black boys in his primary school year. She recalls a teacher being pleasantly surprised about their family trip to Europe:

“Schools like to see that you are engaged and doing things for your kids. I remember at Jim’s school we went to Spain for a holiday and the teachers and parents response were “*oooh* YOU [Maria’s emphasis] went to Spain”- Like you then become part of ‘them’ [middle class] and you are not so different after all and so you are doing things like ‘their’ [White] community (Maria, St Vincentian – Community project manager).

Maria’s extract illustrates that while newer Black middle class parents may enjoy ‘appropriate’ capitals (education, qualifications and holidays) and seek to deploy them to their advantage, recognition and acceptance (by Whites) that their capital carries legitimacy is not guaranteed. Maria questioned their genuine understanding of each other’s cultural distinctions.

Social capital (networks) as well as cultural capital can be quite distinct along class and race lines. Rachel admits to her deliberate separation of social networks:

“. . . my life is very compartmentalised. I have my church friends and work friends and my outside friends and I tend not to mix them . . . It just brings colour and variety . . . there is quite a wide spectrum [of friends]. For example, in the boys' school you know the parents believe in a good education for their children but that is probably where the similarity ends.” (Rachel, Nigerian – IT Consultant).

For parents such as Rachel and Christina, belonging to the middle class group, high educational achievement and forms of social and cultural capital are regarded as indicators that allow Black professional middle class respondents to signal their class status to White middle class and as a way of differentiating themselves from the Black working class. They associate themselves with family and friends who were from Black professional middle class backgrounds. Christina makes a connection between acceptance and recognition of her middle class status this was quite common with other respondents. She came from a middle class family in Nigeria where her father was a well-paid engineer and her mother was a nurse. She went to boarding school, and university in Nigeria and went on to study at King's College of Nursing. Her social status reflected a common pattern of belonging to a high middle class in Nigeria due to the quality of life in the 1960s and 1970s during the period of the oil boom in Nigeria. Her social networks in Nigeria are again very high middle class with her family knowing many doctors and other professional families. This has instilled high aspirations in her own life as she has finished her Master's degree and is looking forward to doing a PhD:

“I have lots of friends that are doctors and from different professions . . . Yes it has helped me but also my parents are well educated and always encouraged us to do the best and it really helped me do well . . . so being with like-minded people has helped me to encourage my children.” (Christina, Nigerian - Senior health advisor nurse).

This illustrates that there was an underlying feeling felt by many Black people moving in middle class circles that their social status needed to be recognised or else they would be treated differently to their White middle class peers. Parents' sense of acceptance and recognition (within middle class professions) created a sharper focus on their children, and they are particularly scrupulous when it comes to the influence of their peer groups. Christina has six daughters:

“Yes my daughter is also aspiring like them [her peers] so that at secondary school they are all in the top sets. Her friends (and her sisters' friends) affect them academically and socially.”

Christina openly suggests that the way she measures her daughter's status is against the schools prestigious reputation for high academic performance. Christina's comment is an example of Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital: education is a key method of transferring this power in social reproduction and leads to transfer of specific beliefs and behaviours that assume symbolic capital.

However, Bourdieu's forms of capital are not completely compatible with the Black professional middle class. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, for example, falls short in relation to the Black professional middle class parents I interviewed. The cultural capital that Bourdieu refers to is primarily based on White society, therefore when using Bourdieu one has to be cautious about using his interpretation of cultural capital and the privileges that are linked to being White (Rollock et al. 2011; Bryne 2009). Literature on the White middle class in Britain emphasised the monopolisation of economic and social life as the preferred (as opposed to a working class) lifestyle by Ball (2003) and Reay (2004, 2005, 2007). Overall, 32% of those born into working class families made it upward to the service class. As might be expected, structural changes (in the service sector) are partly responsible for this improvement in the position of all: “the expansion of service and intermediate classes and the reduction in the working class meant that a certain degree of absolute upward mobility was inevitable” (Platt 2005, p. 452). The White middle class majority may often



presume an entitlement of many areas such as education and high educational attainment, whereas the Black professional middle class do not assume any of this entitlement in British society. Those parents in my study were from already established Black professional middle class backgrounds or had entered into the middle class strata (Chapter 4 – Figure 4.1 – ‘social mobility differences between parents’, p. 24) and have been met with levels of unequal treatment by the White middle class. This is likened to many of the Black professional parents I interviewed as being the source of tension because they believe they have earned their middle class position and also believe that their professional qualifications should be as equally acknowledged as their White professional colleagues’ qualifications.

Studies by Reay et al. (2007) looked at the issues of the White middle class parents and their school choice and found more liberal type parents wanting their children to mix with Black children in the schools. Reay admitted that their first impressions of the respondents were of good will for equality in schools; however, when Reay and her colleagues enquired further, they were shocked to find a neo-liberalist ideology. One parent they interviewed explained the benefits of a good social mix of a school: “If the world is going global so should we to stand a better chance of competing for that job that requires working with others from all backgrounds.” Reay concluded that “their choice of school was really based on economics not on human kindness”. (Reay 2007).

### There are no guarantees . . . create your own

“It exists [racism] and you have to fight it and the best way is to create your own. Now if you have your own business and when you meet with your bank manager he treats you differently from the guy who has a regular [account] and wants to draw and beg for an overdraft, you are treated differently because you have taken charge of your life . . . that is what you need to instil in them [children].” (Anthony, of Jamaican heritage – Accountant)

It was notable from the current data that parents wanted to attain a high value of economic capital to own a business and be in control of their own lives in order to shape their children's aspirations. Nine of the parents I have interviewed also own a small to medium-size business to generate further income and another two are planning to set up a small business to supplement income. Linda, for example, was planning to start a global banking credit system from Nigeria to the UK. This strategic choice of running your own business reflects the desire for reproduction of economic capital and assets, but there is a point that underpins this need for more economic capital by the Black professional middle class. Bourdieu (1996) would argue that reproduction of capital opens up opportunities for a wider system of exchanges whereby assets of different kinds are transformed and exchanged within complex networked or circuits within and across different fields. However, from the Black professional middle class perspective, this is an opportunity for them to firmly reproduce their class position for the next generation (hopefully their own children) of Black professional middle class in the UK. If we examine further what the Black professional middle class are doing, it is building their own security not only for economic security but also because of the fragile position that they hold in society because they are in the minority. Anthony suggests "if the Black individual is not in possession of their own capital they are not in possession of their own lives or destiny; it remains in the hands of the establishment" (the White middle class and the elite). This unstable economic position is not something that the White middle class has to consider in such depth in terms of their firm history of middle class existence in this country. Anthony believes that the survival of Black professionals such as himself depends on Black professionals' ability to build their own economic capital and produce revenue from capital investments.

## Conclusion

In this chapter respondents in this study have spoken about their aspirations and expectations for their children through their own racialised and classed experiences which drive their expectations for their children to achieve. Despite parents hard efforts to provide opportunities barriers including gender inequalities remain. Mothers and fathers are concerned about their sons being marginalised and stereotyped in school looking at several cases in this study it has been the mother who has been actively involved in monitoring the well-being of her children, mothers with son's were on 'high surveillance' (Rollock et al, 2014) when it came to how their sons were perceived and taught by their predominantly white middle class teachers. Realising aspirations and expectations through their children is a constant challenge because it requires explicit strategising and structuring to 'make it happen' as one parent claims "there are no guarantees" in 'being' a Black professional because of the inequalities to the privileged in society benefit the White middle class group. (Vincent & Ball, 2007)<sup>17</sup> it has meant planning their children's education in order to get onto the upper rungs at least on the professional ladder that signify economic security *and* social recognition.

Research carried out by Archer (2012, 2011) included interviews of ethnic minority parents, pupils and professionals and found that there were reports of "impermeable boundaries between White and Black professional middle classness". She explained that her respondents did not feel accepted as fully or properly middle class. This reinforces a belief of Whiteness as privilege and accepted as an ideal family structure amongst the wider White society, with little

---

<sup>17</sup> Although I did not interview a 'control' group of White professional middle class parents to make comparisons with my group of Black professional middle class parents. Vincent & Ball (2007) and Rollock et al 2014: 138 when 'making up the child' it was stressed that even though there are some similarities in terms of the work and strategising involved in class reproduction there are considerable differences in privilege, entitlement and experiences of race between the White and Black middle – class groups.

consideration or understanding of values of other ethnic minority middle class groups.

Having had a far less hostile reception than their parents (of the first generation of Black African and Black Caribbean population), second generation parents appear to be more equipped to handle the boundaries their children may face and in the interviews of this study how they negotiate and use strategies to maintain their functional middle class existence, and, by making small steps forward, they can navigate through the complex challenges within British society. The differences are the more complex nuances of class and race that are socially constructed in society with Black professional middle class parents having to negotiate their way through structuring factors of race in order to be on a level playing field with their White counterparts.

The subtle distinctions between the Black professional middle class struggles of the social field go beyond the pursuit of interests and power relations. By looking through the lens of race (Gillborn 2008, Leonardo, 2005) parents work hard to equip their children to be knowledgeable and skilled enough to manage racism. (Vincent & Ball, 2007). This current research shows that Black professional middle class parents are more concerned about the race, class and gender inequalities which served to be the most problematic for them to progress within the middle class structure. Inequality in the possession of different forms of capital remains racialised as well as classed. Black middle class strategies were based on choices and resources that were constantly met with constraints. The Black professional middle class parents I interviewed were placed between structural forces that could destabilise their middle class disposition and the choices they make for their children's future. There was often a risk of the Black professional middle class being marginalised depending on the socio-political context. For example as Gillborn (2012) highlighted young Black men are at risk in education due to racist stereotyping despite coming from a new generation of middle class backgrounds. From this perspective Bourdieu's focus on habitus is reductionist because it ignores the influence of certain discourses about race

and gender which transcend particular habituses. This in turn leads to less acknowledgement of Black professional middle class parents resisting racial inequalities and thinking, and thus possessing a consciousness within habitus which has direct influence on their children's situation.

Again when theorising the reproduction of class differentiation, one needs to take account of mechanisms by 'looking through the lens of race' to gain a deeper sensitive insight to race and class identities and to understand the interactions between these. As a useful framework Bourdieu does well to resolve the determinants of social position into different kinds and volumes of capitals – economic, social, cultural and symbolic – and then to explain the specific combinations of these held by individuals in different parts of the social field and its effects and combinations. Developing along the lines of Bourdieu's work on social class we can see race, gender and class as factors that influence subjective social positioning and life chances. Thus, this treats race and gender as integral elements of embodiment rather than additions. For example, the struggle of the social field involves cross-cutting struggles of all three - class, gender and race. To begin to make sense of the subjectivity of Black professional middle class parents, research needs to identify individuals' various components dispositions and how they may differ, particularly through race, class and gender inequalities to help social scientists to map parent's trajectories.

Privilege, Whiteness and advantages of the White middle class involve not merely differences in wealth, income and economic security, but differences in access to expressing valued situations – practices and ways of life that are 'normalised' values (Carter, 2003) that generate White middle class recognition. Cultural and social values of the Black professional middle class are produced and shaped by struggles and competition, domination and resistance to the 'system'. CRT brings to the surface the intricate relational links and overlapping between race, class and gender through subjective narratives. This chapter

highlighted the deeply hidden nature of these links when trying to build aspirations and expectations for their children's future. The barriers and constraints towards Black middle class entitlement and privilege continues through latent forms of racism. The aspirations and expectations parents have for their children continue to be challenged by unequal manifestations of their social position as Black professional middle class parents in relation to Whiteness, White middle class privilege and advantage. The following chapter focuses on parenting practices that help steer parents' aspirations and further defines gendered parental roles within the family.

## Chapter 6: Aspirations and Parenting

### Introduction

This chapter explores the important roles Black professional middle class parents play in the socialisation of their children. In the UK, studies on ethnic minority parenting tended to focus on working class groups of the first generation of people immigrating to the UK, (Phillips, 1998, Goulbourne, & Chamberlain 2001, Butterfield, 2005, Clark & Drinkwater, 2007, Goulbourne, 2010), and very little British empirical research has considered Black professional middle class parenting with the exception of Daye (1994) and more recent insights by IOE (Vincent et al; 2011, 2012, 2013). Evidence from my data of Black professional middle class parents uncovers the importance of particular activities parents participate in order to cultivate high aspirations. Having discussed parents' experiences and identities in Chapter 4 and developed a clearer understanding of race and class positioning in Chapter 5, it is at this instant valuable to know the practices and means by which Black professional middle class parents adopt such strategies to encourage aspirations for their children. This chapter specifically addresses parental involvement, their parenting styles such as responding to a child's needs with emotional support or providing financial resources and teaching values. It captures the processes and practices that matter most to Black professional middle class parents.

Firstly, I will give details about parental sense of necessity through their various parenting practices. Secondly, I will explore parents' dispositions that lend subjective meaning to values associated with cultural traditions and expectations. What leads to 'success' in parents' lives also influences the ways in which they try to raise their children. Specifically, middle class parents want to reproduce and mobilise their social and economic middle class position and this may be at the emotional cost of the parent and child relationship (Reay 2004). A critical view of this approach will be discussed along with the felt need for Black

professional middle class parents to reproduce social and cultural capital within a very individualistic frame of mind. Black professional middle class parents hold high expectations for their children and expect high levels of performance. This expectation is closely monitored through distinctive parenting styles and so thirdly, I consider the broader issues of parental duties between preferred parenting styles including different family configurations between married couples or single parents. I also demonstrate the importance of different parenting styles between those parents with a Christian faith used as a guiding tool to nurture values and I look at whether faith makes any difference to how values are formed compared to non-faith families.

The discussions in Chapter 4 regarding identity and social positioning raised the need for further analysis about parenting and moral beliefs which are closely associated to the meanings, motivations and values parents' link with aspirations. This helps us to provide a clearer idea of any parental orientations and style of parenting. The aim was to explore motivations and rationales behind aspirations for their children and to research values in parenting, parents' perceptions of what matters and expectations for their children's future and education. To identify their parenting criteria I questioned their practices to gain a better understanding of distinctions between families and between mothers' and fathers' parenting roles, and more specifically different ways of coping, strategising and nurturing their children's aspirations through their social and cultural constructions.

In this chapter I develop Lareau's (2003) work on the effect of social class and race on childrearing and extend the research conducted by Vincent et al. (2012) on the strategies of Black professional middle class parenting and school choice. Lareau (2003) points out cultural differences in family norms can be most clearly witnessed through parents' interactions with their children and with institutional authority figures (teachers) on behalf of their children. She observed that middle class parents whose style she calls 'concerted cultivation', a childrearing approach of making and finding the child, ensures that talents and



abilities are located and enhanced. Parents tend to focus on developing their children's verbal skills, individual talents and sense of entitlement in the world. This parenting style is particularly highlighted with this Black professional middle class group and includes negotiating openly with children over rules and regularly intervening on children's behalf with authority figures acting as their advocates in situational settings.

From my data there is evidence of a similar pattern found in Lareau's work, that while Black professional middle class parents do attentively cultivate their children, they have heightened social concerns about the role racial inequality plays in their children's lives, which can determine their specific parenting beliefs and practices. With the additional issue of race within middle classness, Lareau's study also recognised how middle class parents transmit cultural and social capital that addresses "double-consciousness" – a term she adopts from W. E. B. Du Bois' psychosocial theory of race "An American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings" (Du Bois, 1994) adopted by CRT describing how African Americans are able to navigate through life when one's moral agency is truly constrained by internal and external forces (social structures).

Lareau posits that African American parenting styles have had to consider how to cultivate a set of emotional strategies to combat racial discrimination as well as cultivate a positive attitude directly to their children (Lareau, 2003). Similarly in the UK, Black families are frequently portrayed as working class and encounter racial prejudices in education and the labour market. Black middle class parents diligently go about cultivating their own children to help equip them with extra skills (besides their academic qualifications) to assist them in finding their way through a White dominated society. Examples of cultivation are provided by my participants' narratives in Chapter 4 referring to the parent to child 'talk' and nurturing a tool kit of wisdom to prepare their children for possible challenges of concerning the colour of their skin.

## Parenting practices

According to Bourdieu, parenting practice reflects an existence of habitus. Bourdieu (1984) postulates that as an internalised social structure, the habitus – itself shaped by the differences in volume and composition of capitals – not only regulates, but also generates distinct lifestyles choice and preferences (Bourdieu, 1984). This means that for middle class parents, it is fundamental that these practices are transmitted to the next generation. However, the agents' actions (individual parents) are not totally determined by structures in the field of education per se. Bourdieu emphasises the “sense of the game” in social actions, for example when playing, agents develop the ability to adhere to the rules of the field in which they are in; but the moves cover only a set of alternatives which may be extended to possible realistic changes generated by habitus. McClelland asserts that: “it (habitus) can easily be applied to the analysis of gender (or racial and ethnic) disadvantage as well”. (McClelland, 1990, p.105). Reay (2004) supports this point and argues further that “habitus can be used to focus on the ways in which the socially advantaged and disadvantaged play out attitudes of cultural superiority and inferiority ingrained in their habitus in daily interactions” (Reay,2004,p.436).

The mounting importance of race in the analysis of my participants' perceptions of aspiration and importance of education has also highlighted the limitation of Bourdieu's theory of social practices, which neglects race as a structuring factor within the habitus, suggesting that race only co-determines habitus. However, as Jenkins (1992, p. 141) suggests, despite limitations, Bourdieu is “good to think with” because he is concerned with the manner in which the routine practices of individual actors are determined. My contribution in this chapter is a conceptual development of Bourdieu's ideas of habitus (first discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review) and social, cultural and economic forms of

capital to gain a deeper understanding of Black professional middle class parental values.

Bourdieu's understanding of social and cultural capital has been widely used and should be given credit for his analysis of the dominant elite class over subordinate groups. Yet his work does not effectively extend far enough to fully explore other cultural and social capitals of diverse groups. The subtle nuances of faith, culture and traditional ties are not explored adequately or appreciated in his work (see Chapter 2). These limitations give my research the opportunity to assess to what extent Bourdieu's social and cultural capital concepts are valuable in the discussion of Black professional middle class families. This chapter does not seek to compare Black and White middle class parenting practices. The aim of this chapter is to get an insight into the divergences within the group in relation to parents' practices towards aspirations and discuss how they are identified and analysed. The differences between parents' practices, perceptions of aspirations and the factors which indicate the importance of education are used to explain the idea of Bourdieu's habitus (meaning was first used in Chapter 2, page 40) as a factor which influence parents' perceptions and practices. Bourdieu posits:

“...habitus is neither a result of free will, nor determined by structures, but created by a kind of interplay between the two over time: dispositions that are both shaped by past events and structures, and that shape current practices and structures and also, importantly, that condition our very perceptions of these” (Bourdieu 1984:170). In this sense habitus is created and reproduced. . . without any conscious concentration” (ibid: 170).

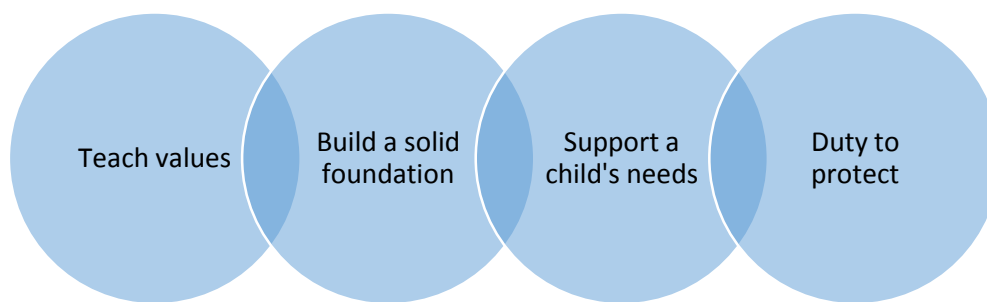
With that in mind, I argue that the structure of race in these parents' lives is also an integral contributing factor to how Black professional middle class parents' practices and strategies are played out. These practices and strategies are conducted with 'conscious concentration' (Bourdieu, 1984:170) because of race

and are not merely reproduced unconsciously, therefore needs to be fully respected.

I now go on to discuss the levels of parental involvement through parents' reports of support, values, protection and discipline during schooling. Strategies are the plans parents put into action and practices are the mechanisms by which they choose to use to achieve an objective (goals towards aspirations). Parental strategies are based on parents' perceptions of the opportunities, risks, and barriers Black professional middle class parents believe their children are likely to confront in British society. This suggests that parents must be especially vigilant in boosting esteem and confidence in their children. Race, class and gender are the central forces that influence the socialisation processes of Black professional middle class parents in this research.

There is much evidence for example that the power to define what is 'good parenting' forms part of the cultural capital of the middle classes (Gillies 2005, 2007; Skeggs 2004a). My research looked at the mothers' and fathers' contributions to parenting and showed that parents wanted to spend what they called 'quality time' with their child, meaning one-to-one attention, positive conversations and making their children feel valued. Although tradition and culture were prevalent in Black professional middle class parenting modern methods of parenting were considered to be important if that was what their child needed to develop; this is because their environment and subculture exposed parents and children to different sets of cultural tools. This section focuses on parental practices towards encouraging children's aspirations. Figure 6.1 shows all the key themes that parents raised. I will now discuss each of these four practices.

Figure 6: Parenting practices



### a) Teach values

The first of the practices was creating (what they regarded) as good and honest values; parents believed it was the beginning of transferring beliefs of respect, manners, doing good for others, as one mother explained values to be “hard work being able to take responsibility; you can be poor and still have good values; you can be rich and still have good values; it’s to do with the family set up.” (Dawn, Nigerian – Private tutor and FE Lecturer). The key words that arose out of the data when it came to norms and values were respect, conduct, doing good for others and discipline. Table 6.1 below links key values to parents’ traditions. Such values were perceived to be morally correct during their childhood and are socially transmitted to their children in British society.

Table 6: Essential values for Black professional middle class parents

Values	Examples of traditional cultural norms
Respecting others	In Nigerian Yoruba culture, you must prostrate in front of elders
Good conduct	Display good manners such as offer your seat if an elder comes into the room to sit with you
Doing good for others	Helpful and caring
Hard work	Study hard to be an ambassador for the family name
Take responsibility	To achieve good grades in response to your parents’ love
Having hope	Through a faith/belief in God
Discipline	Must be obedient and respectful of their parents, extended to family and school teachers

The table shows the importance my respondents placed on cultural norms and values. Although there are cultural differences among Black African and Black Caribbean people in the UK, with many Black parents aspiring to raise their children to be responsible citizens while adapting some of their parenting practices to those of their new home country (Rogoff 2003). In fulfilling the obligation of producing respectable, responsible and productive young adults, many migrant parents are faced with challenges of immigration; economic stability, finding employment, and educational difficulties that can create parental anxieties (Omotayo 2008). Evidence from my data found that some parents, such as Luke, Francis and Rachel, with professional qualifications, were at the beginning forced to take on jobs below their skill sets such as care workers or taxi drivers just to settle in and begin to earn a wage.

In my research fourteen non- British born parents cherish the values of respect, hard work, honesty, and strict discipline. Bornstein (2005) suggested that certain parenting beliefs and behaviours may be universal. However, there is increased awareness that “parenting is not uniform in all communities, groups, or cultures; in practice, parenting is multi-vocal and diverse”. Studies have documented the influence of sociocultural factors on parenting for families whose children were born in Britain (Chao 2011) known as ‘acculturation’ – adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group. This ‘acculturation’ may have a significant impact on those from abroad, original cultural values and eventually become internalised (Kanya 2005; Melendez 2005). Often, individuals are between the cultural values and practices of their country of origin and those of the UK; in this case, the Nigerian, Ghanaian, Caribbean island cultures as discussed in Chapter 4. For example, parents may decide to adapt to specific parenting values and practices in the host country, while retaining some of their home country’s parenting practices and values:

“being African, people relationships and respect is quite important so I try to instil these things into them [pause] . . . and we go to church”.  
(Thomas, Ghanaian – Senior science lecturer).

“. . . from where I come from you don't say 'Hi' you greet properly . . . we say uncle or aunty. Again, not calling people by their name because they are older than you. There is also no sitting down when an adult is standing you must get up . . . When I have finished eating my older son would take my plate to the kitchen. Or when I'm talking to him he would wait until I have finished speaking”. (Tayo, Nigerian - FE manager).

These extracts are about cultural values and suggest that in some cases parenting (in an African context) is based on autocracy, not democracy, especially during the formative years of a child (Owolabi 1999). Parents try to raise their children to become good ambassadors of their family wherever they find themselves. A common biblical proverb saying was quoted by Luke (father of three); it says “Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). The fourteen parents who lived outside the UK remain in touch with the cultural values they were taught by past generations. Upholding moral values, meaning things held to be right or wrong, desirable or undesirable in terms of code of conduct in society is a growing concern for more than four-fifths of parents from my research. They spoke of traditional norms and values (such as respecting your elders) that they grew up with and compared their childhood conduct to contemporary British society and believe that Britain is suffering from a lack of respect for anyone and not just their elders. Luke stayed close to his traditional Nigerian roots and thinks highly of the norms and altruistic values he was taught as a child.

“There are a lot of things that my cultural values add to me and unfortunately many of these values are seen as archaic but I think if the world is moving away from them it is very unfortunate.” (Luke, Nigerian – Youth manager and Pastor).

Other parents similar to Luke claim that being exposed to another way of life besides the British way has opened up their eyes as parents now living and

working in England and experiencing the education system through their children. They have the advantage of comparing the moral good of British society with the not so good and can weigh up the most effective strategy for their children. Jessica had similar thoughts to Luke and others; she says “the values and principles they hold as adults are the ones they now try to project on their children”. Evidence from Table 6.1 and narrative extracts suggest that Black African parents lean to a stricter upbringing for their children in England knowing that many children in their town or village were not as fortunate to have so many resources available to them, therefore their children’s schooling in England was a valuable investment.

As well as moral values, teaching their children how to be disciplined in British society was very important to all the parents interviewed. They claimed it was mainly due to racial stereotyping of their children in schools. Black professional middle class parents feel it is an essential role to keep their children “out of trouble” through close monitoring of their activities and being able to detract peer pressure or any other forms of distraction. A study by Ball, Bowe & Gerwitz (1995) looked at parental school choice and found that different social classes tend to conceptualise and then settle in different secondary schools which they called “circuits of schooling”. They found a largely Black ‘circuit’ based around faith schools. Parents favoured the school’s disciplinary ethos and the fact that they were far enough away from what was seen as the “bad influence” of working class boys. Butler & Hamnett (2012) also found in their recent study that Caribbean parents preferred to send their children to an all faith school rather than a non-faith school because they believed they instilled good levels of discipline that would encourage obedience and respectful behaviour – an essential value (Table 6) essential values for Black professional middle class parents). Teaching high standards of respect for elders and for their teachers improved communication. Parents wanted their children to be



aware that they knew who their teachers were and the first sign of trouble the child's parent would be informed by the school.

Evidence from the data showed that up to sixteen parents attributed their Christian faith<sup>18</sup> as a way of instilling obedience and discipline in their children. Parents gave numerous references to the importance of having their children "learn about the Bible", attend church on a weekly basis with their children and be involved in church based activities that instill "Christian values" or teach their children about the Ten Commandments.

The various forms of discipline that were referred to were loss of privilege (being deprived of something that was of value to the child (for example one parent deprived her daughter of her mobile phone and allowance); instructional value (giving the child an opportunity to learn about the consequences of their behaviour – for example a parent grounded their son from going out for a week because he was "mixing with the wrong crowd of boys and could easily get into trouble with the police"); being consistent (delivering discipline in a regular manner and following through with appropriate action) was more common with primary school age children in the family by demonstrating their parental authority through fairness. Parents tried to instill a sense of justice with their older children of teenage years by adopting discipline strategies that were "fair but firm". There was no evidence of gender differences with both parents in my current research tending to deal with a situation requiring discipline as and when it manifested.

---

<sup>18</sup> During the time of finding interviewees the snowballing method did not find any other Black professional middle class parents of any other religious faith.

## b) Build a solid foundation

As previously examined in the literature review, South East England in particular has seen a steady increase in church attendance by ethnic minorities (Christian denominations of Pentecostal has risen the fastest). A study carried out by the evangelical group The London City Mission showed that 230,000 people attended Pentecostal services in 2012 compared to 198,300 at Catholic masses. Based on the Churches Census for 2011, in 2012, Pentecostal churchgoers now make up 32% of Sunday worshippers in London that is 1450 churches compared to 27% for Catholics and 12% attending Anglican churches. The only other denomination with more than 1,000 churches in London is the Church of England.

Smith (2005) argued that Black Christian churches play a strong role in some families' parenting practices similar to other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism and Sikhism. Sixteen parents believed passing on their Christian faith is an important part of parenting and emphasised that Christianity was a way of life that remains a significant influence, particularly in the child's early years. Parents in the research saw the transmission of religious values as a way of providing direction for their children and creating a strong base or 'foundation' on which they could build the rest of their lives, while parents generally equated 'good' parenting with being warm and loving while still appearing to be authoritative by setting boundaries and standards (morals and values) for their children.

Being religious was interpreted in different ways by my sample of participants. Two parents held a belief but were not connected to a place of regular worship. Another nine parents had no religious belief. The other sixteen parents belonged to a faith community and engaged in religious activities such as attending church at least once a week. These parents have grown up learning the basic principles in values (respecting others, having hope and accepting responsibility). First, this section gives detailed accounts of parents who have a

Christian belief. Christianity was used as a guide for raising children in modern British society and their Christian belief system helped parents to set boundaries, meaning giving the child advice as to what was morally wrong or right within the Christian faith. For example, the Ten Commandments were used as guiding tool for their method of parenting. The Holy Bible was used to support and justify their Christian beliefs, values and provide what parents called a “solid foundation”, meaning a belief system that could stand firmly against adversities such as bullying in school or facing discrimination in the class room by teachers and students. Luke wants his children to be happy and for them to make society a happy place by adding meaning to someone’s life, for example contributing to society in a positive way.

“I want them to have the best job and holiday but they can't have it if the foundation is not there. They need to know that if they don't build the house they can't live in it”. A solid foundation is able to hold values in place.” (Anne, of Jamaican heritage - Life coach and writer).

Anne (married to participant Anthony) is a strong believer of building her children’s values from the foundations of their Christian belief system and believes that its strength overrides the present negative energies that surround her children in her children’s current generation, and she gave the example of negative media influence. Anne feels strongly about this issue and believes the media is partly to blame for the problems we (society) have today:

“Especially in this day and age we need to lay the foundations in the minds of our kids. It is imperative, we are fighting with things that are not congruent with our moral standards”

It was interesting, from a strategic point of view to get an insight into how their faith was used to guide, motivate and influence their children. For example, one mother has a daughter who attends a mixed school and she applies her Christian values to explain that she can be friends and chat with boys in her

school, but she made it clear to her daughter that she should not be tempted to have a relationship with a boy in the school “they have different kinds of backgrounds” meaning that those who did not have a Christian background may try to date her daughter. She went on to explain, “our faith guides them [her daughters] in the ‘do’s and ‘don’ts of society, and they know they should respect their teachers and respect older people, so you guide them to be polite”.

Parents have an important part to play in shaping the faith identity of their children and engaging them in religious activities through for example Sunday school and Bible study at home. Sixteen parents interviewed saw religion as a way of guiding them through life and that faith was transmitted between generations. These parents believed that it was through their faith in God that the aspirations they held for their children would materialize and it was through their belief in God that “all things were possible”.

Luke used the Bible as a moral compass in his way of parenting. He believes that hope breeds aspirations and he referred to men in the Bible how through hard work and determination became great people – leaders such as Moses or Jesus Christ- the son of God. He then relates that determination to his son when talking about his son’s aspiration to become a doctor and that he would have to study very hard at university. Anthony also believed that there is hope of progress through faith: “I learned that I could be anything because I was a child of God and this meant that I could manifest that into a material or any other context”. Evidence from this research shows that those parents with a Christian belief structure used their faith as a tool to combat adversities in life, race and class issues or whatever challenge they faced and the notion of hope was a motivational aid. Their action of praying to God and believing in their faith would be their first means of assessing and finding ways deal with rejection and to resolve life challenges.

The meaning of faith for Anne (the life coach and writer) was different in terms of how she applied it to her children’s lives. She is enthusiastic about her faith and models her parenting around her Christian belief system.

“Because my primary goal is to get them all to have a loving and consistent relationship with God if my kids at 18 years old can say ‘my mum introduced me to God and it transformed my life’ that will be phenomenal. The second goal would be their character . . . my ultimate goal is making them stand out as individuals”.

Anne’s views on her children’s aspirations are quite different from many others I interviewed in relation to educational attainment. She is more concerned for her children to have a loving relationship with God and gain key life skills to develop their confidence and responsibility (to plan for the future). From the father’s perspective Anthony explains the practical daily use of the Christianity in the family:

“. . . we have morning devotions most days in addition to going to church so it plays a large part in what I do . . . Well I get them to learn scriptures from the Bible as we believe it is the central foundation to our faith so we get them to learn that and we make them participate in church and they participate in different activities but we also foster that around the house as well, like watch a Christian film.”

Sarah chose an evangelical church because of her children “they are teaching them about morals, Jesus Christ’s life and behaviour; how to be good to each other, how to be nice and how to be friendly and welcome people, how to embrace people, not to cheat yourself and to be confident in your faith.” Similar to Sarah, Dawn teaches her boys morals through the use of the Bible. “I do bring up the Bible [laughs]; there was a time I had to tell the youngest that he ought to stand in the presence of kings – you want to be well known you need to be diligent.” She explains how it has had an effect on aspirations: “my son asked me if you could be a Christian Lawyer. I said there is no profession you can’t do [laughs] but do it in an honest way and you will enjoy it better. It is also a good way of life, it’s the way you do things”.

In this sample sixteen of the twenty-five Christian parents perceived that their faith helped them to build a close supportive relationship with their children and played an important role in their daily parenting practices. Family activities such as reading Bible scriptures together, praying at home as a family and attending church regularly helped parents to transmit their religious beliefs onto their children. As well as in the home and family structure, their faith helped to develop a level of social capital.

Faith communities are capable of contributing to the organising of the bridging and linking people together for necessary or shared purpose and action. Shared purposes could come in the form of their shared interests, motivations and outlooks. This is sometimes 'organised' in networks or shared activities that are often consolidated by the trust and confidence that faith communities can inspire. People are able to come together pool their skills over time and achieve things that they as a group may have failed to do by themselves:

"They helped me and the children they had a very good children ministry we normally go for retreats once a year and financially, they supported you in every aspect of life." James, John, Colin and Karl, they have young male mentors at the church who work together in Christianity with them." (Joan, Nigerian - Senior Midwife nurse).

"I guess you could say we are staunch Christians... It's walking distance from here and my husband is the honorary Treasurer so we are very much involved in the day to day life of the church. Our church has definitely helped mould my daughter since she was very young she's been going to Sunday school and I think they guide the children and show them a good way of life, teach them lessons that are important, she has a close friend who is in her class and church choir. Almost all who go to church [from her school] are in the choir." (Carmel, Trinidadian - Accountant).

“I am a Christian and I go to a reasonably large church that has a lot of very significant people in our church from actors to singers to writers, business owners, philanthropist ....most of us are established in our profession but we use each others networks. I've been in that church for 18 years so people have come and gone and I been in connection with them for over those years. People I've known from 15 years ago are still people I use in my network. I have very wealthy clients and they are my network.” (Anthony, of Jamaican heritage - Accountant).

These extracts suggest that ‘trust’ which can be both a cause and a consequence of social capital. For some faith communities existing trust may prompt the formation or further development of networks. On the other, where networks are sustained and people find that they are developing some common understandings and values so that they can rely upon each other, trust is established. Gilchrist (2004, p4) finds social capital broadly defined as ‘a collective asset made up of social networks based on shared norms and trust and mutuality’.

In reference to the seven parents who had no religious affiliation, they spoke about parenting practices in a more direct way, meaning when a situation occurred they would not turn to spiritual guidance to help deal with the situation or provide comfort but would use their perceptive reasoning skills. For example, Sharon spoke admiringly about the way her husband dealt with her son who she described as having low esteem during his first year of secondary school:

“My son went through a phase of not wanting to eat at school and I thought, ‘he’s going to get anorexia, he has got to eat and I should take him to the doctor.’ I had the appointment booked, and my husband said, ‘don’t do that, let’s wait and see what happens,’ as I would be giving him those negative images and focus and attention plays a part in this, which then might make it worse. So my husband is very reflective in thinking, ‘why do it that way?’ He is also quite gentle with them and talks to them and he is very good actually.” (Sharon, of Barbadian heritage – Solicitor).

Parents' hopes about high aspirations for their children were not regularly referenced by great leaders from holy prayer books. Instead these parents used their own life achievements as testimonies that it is possible to make things happen and make a positive contribution to society. Maria, for example, made use of her family and close network of professional friends that she trusted and respected as good ambassadors for her son Jim to follow:

“My father has a background in youth work and he used to travel the world from Barbados, Jamaica, and Kenya to do his work. That's why I said to Jim, 'you have a lot to live up to.' My sister is a barrister in Jamaica. The person who employed me to work on a project knew my father and said, 'you come from good stock' . . . so in terms of Jim's confidence, I think Jim is totally aware of what he can potentially do.”  
(Maria, Saint Vincentian – Community project manager).

Maria is an example of a parent that effectively used her social capital she had developed through her family's higher education successes and through her family network both abroad and within her community contacts in London.

### c) Support a child's needs

This research has seen the importance placed on education by the parent for the child. Caring for the Black child involves for many not simply school choice and educational attainment but also making an effort to understand what the child needs and actively supporting them to hopefully develop to become a responsible, confident individual. Roger, for example, clearly stated that he wanted to “make a difference in his child's life”. The support methods and forms of capital used to try and ‘make a difference’ illustrated some interesting interpretations in the meaning of supporting a child's needs. For example, Linda claimed to treat each of her children as an individual “project” and constructs strategies to create what she hopes to be a model for success. “Some people have asked me why I have three children in three different schools and I say to



them because I have three children with three different needs”. This illustrates Linda’s role as an educationalist as well as providing emotional support.

Other parents were seen to be spending time and money trying to understand their children’s personalities. They realised that they were unable to get very far with their child when they tried to work against their natural abilities and style of learning. One family sought professional help (through a coach) to understand how to parent their children better and nurture their talents. Anne and Anthony, parents of four boys and one daughter (from Anthony’s previous marriage), felt they needed to engage more with their children and base their parenting skills on their knowledge of each child’s personality to cater for their individual needs rather than treat them all the same. Methods (described by the parents) of identifying and responding to a child’s needs are becoming more ‘cultivated’, a term used by Lareau (2003) and further researched by Irvin & Elley’s study on expectations of children’s future occupation and analysed within and across social classes (Irvin & Elley 2013). Given that parents want their children to be successful, views about what leads to success in their own lives influence the ways in which they try to raise their children. Specifically, middle class parents are more likely to value self-direction in their children. However, evidence from the sample illustrates that although Black professional middle class parents certainly encouraged their children to exercise self-direction, they also carefully monitored their choices to remain within professional occupations. For example, Christina’s daughter is a gifted short story writer and poet and has had her stories published and won several writing competitions. Her daughter wants to be a writer and a doctor and asked her mother how she could combine the two. Christina responds by advising her daughter, “writing is what you enjoy doing but does not have to be your primary job; write in your spare time or as a hobby and you can still get your books published”.

This extract demonstrates the emphasis parents place on the economic value professions can provide rather than other careers that may not appear to be as financially secure. In addition to this general middle class desire, many parents

view high achievement as a way of reducing disadvantages in the future- that offers social economic advantages- capital to their children as a means of survival where the Black middle class are a minority in a newer minoritised group (Rollock et al; 2014).

Another level of support by parents indicated an awareness of choice and the opportunities involved in leisure activities or extra activities such as art, drama, sport or music lessons. Extra-curricular activities are also thought to be a useful addition to academic performance (Vincent & Maxwell 2015). Children are encouraged to participate in activities that validate parents' choices and complement essential skills needed for professions. Activities such as sports and playing classical instruments stimulate other kinds of social learning, behaviour and responsibility embedded within an element of fun. These non-academic activities were also acknowledged to be useful by these middle class parents because they were aware of their value to the child as well as another way of accessing cultural and social capital advantages.

“My daughter has a County placement, plays for a club, 10th or 20th in the country, it sounds really good (it's not that wonderful) but actually it sounds good on paper, but people who don't know the system or how it works you know say how regularly she performs. Anyway, you can formulate when you write it up it looks so wonderful and they write a personal statement about their aspirations in sports, drama or music”  
(Sarah, Nigerian - Health Director).

Although parents' chosen narratives reflect middle class experience that preserve advantage (Savage 2000), there is a cost. Complex and, often painful pressures face middle class parents and their children as a result of this meritocratic ideal. (Gillies 2005). For example, Mary, Thomas and Tayo moved out of London specifically for school choice. Mary was aware of the risk she was taking with her daughter's happiness as well as sacrificing her own career path. Analysis of parents' accounts reveal high levels of concern associated with

middle class perceptions of choice and risk in relation to educational attainment (Reay 2008; Gillborn & Mizra 2000).

While many had conveyed a strong belief in their children as exceptional selves deserving of every opportunity to maximise their potential, this evoked an intense sense of personal responsibility as parents to enable this development and make the right decisions. Choices, particularly around academic issues such as schools, tuition or subjects, (linked to professional careers) also presented apprehension. Such levels of parental responsibility of mobilising their children placed pressure on the children themselves to comply as they are in no real authoritative position within the family to deviate from their parents' decisions (which are sold to be in their best interest).

“Children are like computers: what you put in them is what you get out of them, they can process it, but actually if you don't guide them and sort of set them up and do stuff for them then you are dealing with a . . . you know out of control teenager kind of kid then later on in life you look back and say, ‘what did you do wrong?’ ” (Sarah, Nigerian – Senior health manager).

Although parents conveyed opportunities that allowed their child autonomy, choices were carefully managed through subtle negotiation and at the same time the child was intensely monitored and given attentive self-direction towards middle class advantage. For example, developmental progress was tightly monitored and frequently fretted over by parents with particular emphasis placed on school attainment and performance, thus evoking immense pressure on their child to consistently deliver good grades. For example, Kate and Matthew wanted their child to do well in her sciences so she could pursue a career in medicine, they were able to get her work experience on the wards through her brother in law who was an anaesthetist. Yet she was struggling to get the grades needed for a degree in medicine:

“I was trying to get her to see the connection that if you are not putting in the effort here you will not be able to follow the career that you focused on. So then she deferred to go to university and wanted to repeat the year so we got her extra tuition for another two years in order to give her a better chance.” (Kate – Saint Lucian heritage - Grade 7 civil servant)

This illustrates how Kate, as a middle class parent with the use of her of social and economic capital, could promote their children’s decision-making abilities. Melanie had decided to try and better her science grades for two more years rather than immediately choose an alternative degree course. Middle class parents frequently maneuver their forms of capital in ways to structure choices so that a particular outcome would appear attractive to their children.

#### d) Duty to protect

Parents provided emotional and at times financial support for their children, believing it was their duty and obligation to support their child to achieve high aspirations the best way they knew how with the resources and parenting skills they had. Francis, like Roger and Sarah, compares what they could have done with the money they have given to educate their children: “Well that money paid on their education could have done many things because you could buy more houses, cars, holidays three times a year, but we made a decision to do that. If I was going to do it all again I would do it again.”

Being supportive meant encouragement – providing a shoulder to lean on when their children were faced with trying issues. This has two meanings: firstly, when academic work becomes more difficult and more time is spent with them on homework or they are given a private tutor. The other meaning is in regards to the barriers and challenges that they may face being Black. This is also associated with the social class circles they begin to mix with when entering secondary and higher education. For the mother and the father support comes

in the form of emotional support from the mother mainly because of the time spent with the children. Maria reflects on a time when her son recognised her moments of encouragement:

“Jim is a young man and trying to find his way . . . he sees the benefits of all the work I do and I encourage him to grow and he says, 'you always believe in me', and I say, 'I am being supportive and a lot of people have supported me and I am passing the baton on in supporting you' ”. (Maria, Saint Vincientian – Community project manager).

The other dimension of emotional support was in the form of protecting their children from racial discrimination. Parents were very protective emotionally over their children because they wanted their children to be aware that even though they are Britain's second Black generation – Black British children are still in the minority and are not treated the same as their White peers, (Archer 2012; Vincent 2012 and 2013; Reay 2007, 2008, Gillborn 2008). Parents recalled their past experiences of discrimination at school during the 1970's and 1980s (those schooled in Britain). Many faced offensive behaviour (such as bullying by White pupils) and others had memories of subtle forms of discrimination by teachers. For example a teacher telling only the Black pupils in the school “you lot will never amount to anything”. One parent who wanted to go to university recalled meeting with her career officer who calmly said, “perhaps you should consider hairdressing, dear”. Another past pupil (parent) who progressed quickly into the higher subject streams remembered her teacher saying “you're not like the rest of them – you are a bright girl”.

Interviews suggest therefore that teachers during the 1970s and 1980's had lower expectations of Black pupils as inferior and gave the impression that they would not amount to much in the future. These school memories had a long lasting effect on most parents interviewed and became a constant concern about what their own children could face at their own school. A minority of parents claimed that similar experiences of racism and stereotyping were

happening to their own children in the current education system (also discussed in the following chapter, Education is key). Maria's son Jim was picked on at school because he was one of three Black boys in his year and was an easy target. This suggests that being Black and middle class does not automatically protect you from the lower expectations by some teachers or racist bullying in British schools that research in education has highlighted (Crozier, 2005, Gillborn & Youdell, 2000, Richardson, 2007, Rollock 2007a, 2007b, 2007c Vincent et al 2013a). Therefore, the majority of respondents believed there to be an underlying threat to their children's schooling experience.

Parents having to contend with subtle and more direct levels of racism also show concern about the people their children associate with in their local area. Roger clearly pointed out that he wanted to protect his children from the local environment (Medway, Kent). He believed his children's aspirations and achievements could be affected by others around them who were "failing in the school system". He chaperones his children around the area to avoid peer pressure when attending sports clubs, for example, so they would not have to interact with the wrong crowd:

"Well I do believe that training them at this age is important which is why I do not introduce them to certain principles or practices . . . children are not achieving in this country because of the environment".

(Roger, Nigerian – Social worker).

Anthony, who initially lived in London was also concerned about the impact the surrounding environment (outside of the home) might have on his children particularly relating to gang culture in parts of London. He specified that he needed his four boys to remain focused and moved to Kent by the time his boys were the age of five. He continues a level of close monitoring over his boys and his only daughter and his intention for all his children (including his teenage daughter who had experienced living in London) to "reverse the London life".

The data also shows that over half of parents believed that their children are not safe outside in built up parts of North and South East London and further out in South East England where there are smaller numbers of Black families and they spoke about certain areas where their children or themselves experienced harassment. They talked about not wanting them to mix with the wrong crowd, peer pressure, and were particular about the children they associated with. Roger and single mother Mary were very protective for fear of 'contamination' of working class behaviour and negative peer influence. Their perception of peer groups were associated with the negative stereotypes of working class as Gilroy claims: "Black youth as society sees Black families (from whatever class) as 'all the same' " (Gilroy 1987). That is not because they do not trust their friends and peer groups but they are more quickly labelled as the 'trouble maker' in the group and are more likely to be singled out within their peer group if they are Black. Therefore parents tend to remind children to be careful about their conduct and behaviour in and outside of school, and this is also linked to being protective of their children because of the 'system'. Parents claimed that some schools had preconceived ideas of Black students underachieving (as shown in Chapter 5) and are seen as the weaker students lacking in highbrow culture.

## Performance

"I do not want to see a C [exam grade]. For me it is not a good grade for him; he is much better. I want to see more of 'A's and less of 'B's and I want to see not good but excellent." (Dawn, Nigerian – Private tutor and FE Lecturer).

In this research all the parents agreed that they wanted their child to have more choices and opportunities in comparison to their own choices. For example, Jessica did not get the opportunity to attend university and her eldest daughter is about to embark on a medical degree. Luke's experience of poverty and late entry into education made him more determined to provide for his children. The

respondents in this sample expect their children to attend very good or outstanding schools and be in the top sets and more importantly to maintain that standard and not let other external factors (peer groups) affect their performance as that will lessen their chances; also perceptions of Black students soon start to form by teachers. Parents were fully aware also of the competition coupled with barriers within what was called the 'system'. Through parenting practices parents have attempted to mobilise and deploy cultural, social, and economic capital in matters relating (mostly) to their children's education. This was illustrated in the previous chapter through parents' habitus and their investment of forms of capital. As a group whose progress is 'mainly' (but not exclusively) acquired through education' (Bourdieu 1984 p. 133), these parents now have to increase their investment in education so as to avoid the prospect of generational decline.

Parents are highly aware of what is at stake and were very conscious that race could still be a factor even though they were utilising their capital. Parents were grooming their children to mediate with the 'system' as they assumed their children were going to face racism in subtle forms or even more direct forms of discrimination. Once again Bourdieu is unable to provide a deep insight into the issue of race. CRT is valuable at this particular point to help understand what Black professional middle class parents are reacting to. As Lawrence posits, "in its first decade, CRT described and critiqued not a world of bad actors, wronged victims, and innocent bystanders, but a world in which all of us are more or less complicit in socio legal webs of domination and subordination." (Lawrence 1987).

These respondents (mostly of the second generation) have overcome personal challenges to succeed as Black middle class professionals. It was interesting to note that some of these parents were also continuing to pursue their own goals thus projecting aspirational qualities upon their children for example, five parents



interviewed are studying for a postgraduate degree.<sup>19</sup> Another achievement parents were keen to talk about were their own businesses. Ten parents ran their own business with another two parents planning to set up a business in 2010. This was another example of symbolic capital which Anthony in Chapter 4 had described as being able to “remove yourself from being under the control of the system”. Despite parents’ personal aspirations this study is unable to predict whether the children will mirror their parents’ expectations.

### Gendered roles and parenting styles

As mentioned in Chapter 2 issues pertaining to gender interconnect with the race and class particularly in the home in relation to social and cultural capital formations. (Archer 2013). Of the eighteen married couples I interviewed all expressed an equal role in their parenting practices. When asked about their specific roles and responsibilities a more culturally tied and traditional view emerged, particularly within Black African families compared to the Caribbean families. Some second generation parents adopted norms and values from the first generation. Parenting ideals and practices across a number of themes such as discipline, financial provision, guiding and monitoring relationships and encouraging children to learn about parents’ culture and religion were influenced by cultural values from their past generations but remained in the minority. However, all married parents (excluding Sarah) believed that parents of either gender could fulfil most parenting roles if required or if called upon for support. Other research on male–female roles in Black professional middle class professional families found this view to be the case and are generally described

---

<sup>19</sup> Participation in HE by students from ethnic minorities continues to increase overall and accordingly the most with a new entrants level of 20.1% (18.6% in 2011/12) of all UK domiciled first-year students of known ethnicity are from ethnic minorities. (HESA, 2013).

as egalitarian and flexible (Pattillo-McCoy 1999, McAdoo, 1993). Decisions were identified as shared, as are the responsibilities for financial support, the household, and child care, according to abilities and opportunities rather than gender.

To further identify differences between the mothers and fathers, I asked them to define their role in the family structure. The beliefs and attitudes of mothers and fathers from this research suggest that parenting roles are not strictly defined, meaning there are no clear divisions of labour or parenting roles assigned to the mother or father, and are becoming more flexible (there is evidence of traditional patriarchal roles as the financial provider while the mother took care of the home and family; however, there is also evidence of some fathers adopting an emotional and supportive role when it came to their child's education).

When asked the question about their role as a mother or a father the aim was to find out gendered parental involvement and what values and aspirations were linked to their parenting. It was important to note that the mothers in this research were the majority of respondents. The eighteen mothers represented a protective role. With only seven fathers questioned, the father's role varied when they talked about their contribution to extra-curricular activities, and the amount of quality time spent with their children was less than with the mother. In this sample one reason for this was that some mothers made a decision to reduce their working hours to spend more time at home with the children. This signifies that in some cases the traditional matriarchal role remains in the home and therefore remains a gendered process. In Reay's (1998) study of mothers involvement in schooling, she talks about what mothers do with the quality time they have with their children, such as having time to monitor a situation and if there is a problem taking the initiative to put things right such as through one-to-one conversations with their child, or interventions with the parent and the school teacher. Here she argues that cultural capital is most clearly visible in a

mother's ability to choose between a range of practices to find a solution to the problem with the use of her own educational resource experience.

Evidence in the current research suggests there were two slight differential socialisation instances where the mothers had a more protective attitude towards their sons more than for their daughters and both instances were to do with racial discrimination. Black male pupils are often excluded for challenging what is perceived to be institutional (e.g. teacher) racism and individual racism (e.g. racist verbal bullying – see e.g. Mac and Ghail 1988; Sewell 1997). Evidence suggests that schools perceive and respond to the behaviours of Black children more harshly than to other ethnic groups, and that this treatment is also differentiated by gender (Blair 2001b; Osler and Vincent 2003). There is also evidence that these differing expectations are reflected in the racial socialisation messages that children receive.

According to research by Taylor et al. (1994) black male adolescents were more likely to be cautioned about racial barriers, whereas young women were more likely to be socialised with reference to racial pride (Taylor et al 1994 cited in Thornton, 1997). Similarly the ten mothers who were born outside the UK and came from middle class backgrounds were familiar with gated communities, security and personal drivers and were shielded from surrounding crime and poverty. This meant that mothers like Rachel and Tayo set a certain standard of living for their children with a secure environment.

Figure 6.1

Variations of parents' roles

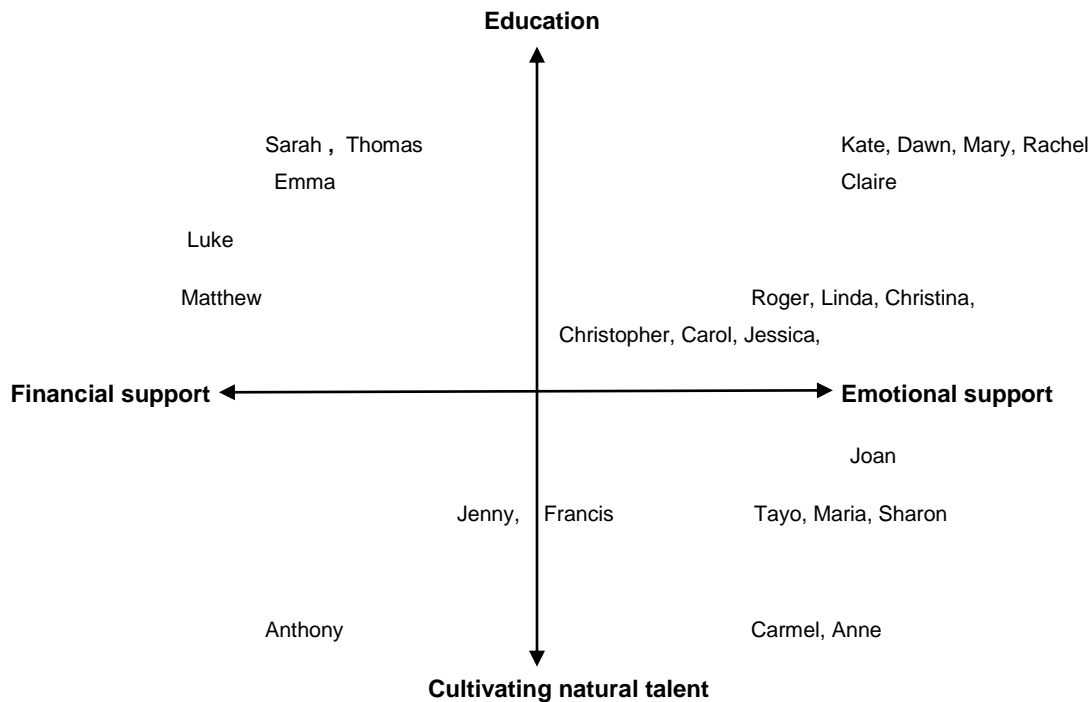


Figure 6.1 shows the multiple roles in contemporary Black professional families carried out by mother or father. From the data, education, emotional support, cultivating natural talent and financial support were coded and identified as the most important contribution to their parental roles. One needs to take into account that seven males were interviewed compared to eighteen females. At one end of the axis the main clusters are towards education, signaling that parents (such as Sarah and Thomas) expect very high academic achievement for their children. Differences between parents are fairly subtle but need to be acknowledged and differences tend to be based on cost, time constraints or parents' past experience of racism, making parents such as Joan wanting disciplined well behaved boys who will all attend university.

Roles such as financial provider and protector continued to be seen as predominantly the responsibility of the father. In particular, economic provision

still tends to define the role of the father and remains linked to conceptions of 'good fathering'. This one-dimensional approach might have been sufficient to fulfil the parental role, especially in their homeland; in contrast, fathers today who are part of the Black professional middle class in Britain are expected to be more than just financial providers, they are expected to provide emotional as well as financial support in the home. In my research, although the parents possessed the capital to prevent possible external distractions – for example moving out into the suburbs – many parents believed that a lack of parental involvement by disciplining children could lead to detrimental outcomes for children and young people that may become more apparent during adolescence, such as lack of respect, delinquency and possibly eventual criminal behaviour. The fathers in my sample appeared to want to shape a new role of fathering. Fathers described having experienced a fairly traditional style of parenting from their own fathers, like Luke, Anthony and Christopher who described very low levels of paternal engagement and nurturing in their own childhood; they are similar in that they are all motivated to increase their involvement with their own children. For example, after four years Anthony realised he did not really know his sons and decided to create one day in the week which he calls 'daddy time' with his four sons.

Roger felt that he needed to focus more time on his three children than on work. He describes (with disapproval) parents he knows who spend more time at work than with their families "some of them [professional parents] eventually are able to buy ten houses and the children are not well educated. Will they be able to look after what their parents have left for them?" Roger opposes the economic capital-driven method of investing in the future for one's children and prefers to be involved in their educational development. "If I don't leave a house for them I leave an education. If you are able to study very hard and maybe become a professional or a medical doctor then would it be difficult to get a house of your own?" This extract demonstrates the view that education is key for most parents in this research and while investing in their future is a good thing to do, Roger believes that parents should not lose sight of the child's well-being when

considering their child's educational performance. In this sense his view suggests that the well-being of the child privileges in cultural capital outweighs economic capital.

The current data set showed there were no major defined gender roles in the socialisation of the children in this research. Both girls and boys were encouraged to be authoritative, individualistic and confident, to be economically self-sufficient. There were also no obvious differences between a single parent's or married parents' relationships with their sons or daughters that can reasonably be attributed to gendered belief systems that support gender defined practices (Pattillo-McCoy 1999; McAdoo 1993; Thompson and Walker 1989; Barbarin 1983). In my research there were only two parents (Sarah and Sharon) who highlighted their sons as 'needy' individuals requiring pastoral guidance at school or a strong male figure to further help boost their confidence.

## Conclusion

To gain an in-depth analysis of aspirations and parenting it is important to understand the context in which parenting of children or adolescents occurs and consider how gender and social class intersect with race. The research looked at what was important to that particular parent in accordance with the child's needs and in the context of how they constructed their lives. We should also recognise that groups change and parenting styles and practices evolve over time and differ according to that changing context in society.

One should be aware that different parent groups attach different meanings and outcomes may be attached to the same parenting behaviours. For example, with regards to discipline, the outcome is for a child to behave according to the desired norms and values which may differ from one family to the next determined by parental configurations; for example, single parents needed to ensure they instilled strict discipline so when they do display good behaviour it's a good reflection on the mother. Another example is that Black African families were more inclined to follow the traditional values and were more likely to belong and attend church regularly compared to other groups. The examples in this chapter of parenting practices and styles have deepened the complexity involved in addressing aspirations and parenting since they differentiate people within the same group – for example, Black African or Caribbean – also showed some commonalities and distinctions across the sample group. For example, defining what is 'best' or what indicates 'success' in Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4 showed a range of sub-categories.

This chapter has demonstrated that middle class parenting practices are not homogeneous. Historical, cultural and social influences all play a part in parents' habitus. While the habitus is the product of early experiences received from family and school, Bourdieu argues that it is continually "re-structured by individuals"

encounters with the outside world” (Di Maggio 1979 cited in Reay et al., 2007 p. 434). This has been made possible through their education, professional networks and capital accumulation. I would also add that these parents’ habitus have been re-structured to also factor in race.

This research suggests different aspects of identity such as social class, religion, race and gender combine in different ways to create unique parenting experiences. Parenting roles are shaped in complex ways by their race and class gender and faith (in some families). Whether through constraints, opportunities, or culture, class also shapes what Black middle class professional parents understand they can and must do for their children. However, this is not entirely determined by their economic capital or accessing middle class privilege. This may be because of the parents’ past experiences of racial discrimination in school that makes them more aware that racism makes their class position insecure, and because they are bringing up their children in a social structure that has previously failed and is failing to fully meet the needs of Black children, and they are having to find other methods and give additional support to schools. They draw on the values they learned from their own families and communities which have been marked by the interactions of race/class boundaries and gender dynamics. For example, what counts as ‘success in life’ varies across the parents interviewed from passing the 11+ test to attend grammar school, attending university to study medicine, to being your own boss. This sample provided interesting nuanced differences of parenting roles even though they are in the same middle class group and possess high levels of capital. Therefore Black professional middle class parenting needs to be understood as a particular rather than general account of middle class.

Findings in this chapter show differences between the groups of parents such as those who are single parents and those who are married, between those of a working class background or middle class background, those from Caribbean or African heritage and those who were born abroad. There were also different



cultural mixed experiences from those parents who had spent some of their childhood either in the Caribbean or parts of Africa.

In this chapter I have discussed that factors concerning race, class and gender are all interlinked as Black middle class parents try to teach their children how to 'perform' in British society. Parenting practices or styles are determined by the structure of the family and often draw upon their cultural, class and gendered experiences over time that has overlapped between their country of origin and the UK (like Anthony, Anne, Rachel and Luke). In order to help further understand the variations in parents roles and draw out further subtle differences embedded in their experiences (see Figure 6.1 page 177) parenting roles were labeled as focusing on education, financial support emotional support of cultivating natural talent and were used to describe some clustering of roles by mothers and fathers. However as mentioned through preceding chapters, parents experiences and motivations for their children's aspirations are not straightforward or fixed over time parenting practices can also be based on cultural understandings of Black professional middle class families and not entirely on middle class values of the White majority, regardless of possessing social, economic or cultural capital. Each parental role represents different family dispositions and consciously changing habitus. In the next chapter I look at how most Black professional middle class parents in this study see education as way of navigating their way through a White dominated society.

## Chapter 7: Education is key

### Introduction

This thesis considers the challenges Black professional middle class professional parents encounter at various stages in their lives when raising their families in the UK. In this study it has been evident that parents go to great lengths to see that their children have choices and opportunities available to them despite the social, cultural and structural barriers that continue to prevent a more equal playing field in education. Parents held high aspirations for their children's education in terms of high grades, wanting them to attend a Russell Group university with the aim of becoming a well-paid professional. Black professional middle class parents saw themselves accountable for their child's success in early adulthood. The responses of Black professional middle class parents clearly exemplified the paramount significance of education they placed on giving their child a good foundation to begin to build their lives on.

Previous chapters 4, 5 and 6 have drawn attention to the intricate interweaving of race, class and gender that define these parents' being. The primary focus of this chapter is to investigate parents' perceptions of the value of education and how education is used by these parents to construct strategic approaches for school choice and university selection criteria. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of Bourdieu's theory of class in education and then goes on to describe the value placed on education. The second half the chapter analyses the strategic approaches to school choice. This in turn helps give context for the factors which influence their perception of providing a good education for their children as a mechanism for social mobility and reproduction.

This chapter builds upon previous empirical chapters which identified ways in which identity and class-specific Black professional middle class aspirations are formed through the social, cultural and economic structures, with race being a

structuring factor weaved into all three societal structures. The drive for educational attainment amongst the study group is vigorous and highly strategic in the belief and hope that current members of each generation (being their own children in this study) will positively contribute to society as well as participating in it. The majority of the respondents are quite directive in the choices they make for their children because they are trying to place their children in an advantageous position that they hope will benefit them later on in life. There is a common belief among the respondents that high standards of education can work as a springboard to better opportunities. Evidence from the data shows school choice often involved attention to particular features, such as high quality performing schools, schools that instil a firm learning discipline and the location of the school. In this study there were two types of parental approaches to school choice: there are the 'Stayers', referring to families who remain living in London; and the 'Movers', or the geographically mobile, those families who purposely move out of the London geographical area to the outskirts of South East England as part of their strategic plan to gain educational attainment for their children. Just over half of the parents (15 out of 25 parents) had intentionally chosen to relocate out of London to the outskirts in the South East and out of those 15 parents, eight parents moved to try and place their children into a grammar school (this is detailed in Table 7). The remaining seven parents wanted their children to attend a 'better' school or have a better quality of life. In this chapter I analyse the reasons for geographical mobility and school choice, and compare the 'Movers' to the Stayers, who still live and work in London.

Literature on middle classes and school choice has focused on White middle classness (Ball and Vincent 2011; Devine 2004) and this has been seen as the norm or 'the middle class way' (Skeggs 2004). Evidence from the current data shows Black professional middle class parents' sensitivity to this perpetuated norm and is noted from their experiences and is given greater consideration in this chapter. Parents' narratives showed evidence of hope and desire, displaying emotional tensions between ambiguity and a sense of parental

determination that informs much of the decision-making process about schooling.

## Bourdieu, education and class

Bourdieu can be credited for his work on social reproduction and education because he makes known what is hidden, and his attempt to argue for a greater balance between individual choice and structural constraint agree somewhat with my personal view on equity and my interpretation of the findings of my research. Bourdieu is concerned with complexities and those processes which, though given status (legitimacy) quite subjectively by dominant groups within society, form the hidden tools of assessment or the rules of each social space (field). Inequality exists because these rules are never made recognisable, they remain unacknowledged. His work in the field of education is both a useable and a valuable framework of which I refer to in the second half of this chapter.

However, Bourdieu's perspectives on education can be overly structured as he is criticised for systematically prioritising social class in his representations of social field, habitus and cultural capital over race and gender. Bourdieu's original work does not include race so it is difficult to initially see how Bourdieu's status group theory based on the notion of class can accurately and usefully be applied to racial distinctions and patterns of domination within specific fields. It is further argued that social and cultural capital are set at a White middle class standard – the privileged group (Lovell 2000) and therefore race and gender are side-lined. It is important to now highlight that the idea of aspirations involved more than a discussion about class and economic capital. It was also about race and gender which in turn rested more on the importance of social and cultural capital. We still await the time when Black professional middle class professionals are entirely accepted by institutions within the White world; at this moment they are gaining awareness and positions within some professional

occupations such as science and engineering, medicine and teaching (Rollock & Vincent 2011). First, it is my intention to place a critical lens on Bourdieu's approach to education to enable a more engaged analysis of classed, raced and gendered practices directly concerning Black professional middle class professional parents, school choice and education.

I argue that social science perpetuates an incomplete and distorted view of the UK Black professional middle class and can be seen as cultural deficit interpretations of Bourdieu's social capital theory (Bourdieu 1997). A study conducted by Rollock et al looked at how Black professional middle classes navigate public space marked by class and race discrimination through normative constructions of Blackness. Rollock et al. posit that Black professional middle class status is "racially minoritised and their middle classness enables them to access a set of capitals to perform a unique, classed form of racial resistance" (Rollock et al; 2011:12).

Bourdieu (1997) asserted that privileged groups in society possess and inherit an accumulation of knowledge, skills and networks. He explained that acquisition of cultural capital (i.e. education, language), social capital (i.e. social networks, connections), and economic capital (i.e. money and other material possessions) occurs through family socialisation practices and/or formal schooling. Dominant groups within society maintain power and restrict social mobility by limiting access to these forms of capital. Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction of hierarchical power relations has since been interpreted through a deficit lens. A deficit interpretation of Bourdieu claims that the cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and networks of Black professionals, if any, are not given value. Some applications of Bourdieu uncritically view White, middle class culture as the standard and dismiss forms and expressions of cultural knowledge that do not match this 'norm' (Skeggs 2004). The argument follows that if Black professional parents acquire and exhibit the social and cultural capital of the dominant class, they too can enjoy social mobility. Whiteness remains unquestionably the centre of this assertion. In the case of the Black

professional middle class in the UK, Bourdieu's model describes how society replicates White, middle class culture by rewarding very specific forms of knowledge, skills, abilities and networks. This chapter explores the value of Black professional parents' experiences in education and school choice and helps to validate often overlooked forms of cultural knowledge forged in a heritage of resilience to racism by focusing the analytical lens on the experiences of these 25 parents.

Bourdieu asserts the need to understand the workings of the social field beyond economics, particularly in the realm of culture. For Bourdieu, class is about ways of being, distinction of tastes and lifestyles (Bourdieu 1986). In the field of education it can be important in ensuring the transmission and acquisition of qualifications, but also class codes and cultural capital are reproduced in education (Bourdieu 1994). Whilst this approach to class has been very productive in aiding the analysis of the reproduction of class inequalities in education, it ineffectively attends to the questions of race especially absent in the emergence of Black professional middle class families in South East England.

Within the Bourdieusian framework of capitals it is argued that the requirements in emotional, social and cultural capitals allow parents the ability to maximise school choice, get a 'feel for the game' and utilise their networks (Reay 1998). However, what Bourdieu's framework fails to tap into is the additional 'resistance capital' (coined by Yosso's 2006 study on 'cultural capitals in communities') – the ability to gain the tenacity and skills to resist challenges such as institutional racism. In so doing Black professional middle class parents develop multiple dimensions of cultural wealth to challenge oppositional behaviours of inequality, both overt and covert (Carter 2003, Yosso 2006). CRT argue that resistance capital is used to minimise a mixture of implicit barriers in order to establish a more equal playing field in education.

## Valuing education

“He knows not having a good education is *not* an option and not doing well at school is *not* an option. He comes from a very long line of established people with high levels of education.” (Rachel, Nigerian - IT consultant).

“Parents have a very big impact in the life of a child. When we [the parents] are talking about aspirations, we introduce them into that environment – higher education that will affect their future. We [the parents] give them *that* education so we must make sure we are giving them something they can build on.” (Carol, Nigerian – Community manager).

Black professional middle class parents do value educational attainment and perceive it to be significant in terms of the contribution it can make to their child’s future. Rachel comes from a wealthy family in Nigeria and is able to provide private education for her two boys. In deciding to move house and place her two boys in private education, they have invested money into their children’s education and Rachel expects excellent results because she knows how challenging it is back in Nigeria to study and be provided with all the resources. She said: “there are children who would give an arm and a leg for what our kids have over here” which illustrates that she wants to take advantage of the opportunities that a private education can offer. High expectations are upon the family name. In Nigerian culture it would be a shame on the parents’ family if their child dropped out of university, because a university education was a symbol of success and the starting point for a professional occupation. Historically, there have been well-established Black professional middle class wealthy families in Africa and the Caribbean. In the case of Black Africans these well-established middle class families existed from large land ownership, kinship rights to land and chief or royalty kinship titles. These leaders of communities (large villages or kingdoms) were considered as the long established aristocracy

or the upper middle class groups who exercised social, cultural and economic privilege because of their class status (legitimacy). The accumulated inherited wealth is still creating and generating wealth or economic capital and a level of symbolic capital for Black professional middle class families today such as those I interviewed. Sarah, Linda, Francis, Rachel and Tayo were all born of highly qualified professional parents (belonging to wealthy Black upper middle class generations) whose parents had come to Britain to study in higher education and then went back to their homeland and maintained very wealthy and comfortable upper middle class life styles. Generations who attended university represented the family's high expectations and in Rachel's case education formed part of their (family) identity: "you were not doing anything groundbreaking. It's life [a university education] so get on with it".

Carol, a community manager, believes that parents' guide their children's aspirations in education: "we introduce them into *that* environment". The main objective of education for Black professional middle class parents interviewed in this study was to unlock the opportunities available to them and provide children the opportunity to be competitive and to be able to successfully acquire professional occupations in law, medicine, business and finance. These professions were particularly favoured for income, security, independence and status as discussed in Chapter 5. From the interview transcripts it was notable that the parents' children were surrounded by positive role models as well as their own professional parents. Parents reported that their children commonly identified with professional careers and told their parents what they would like to do when they get older such as being a lawyer, a doctor, plastic surgeon, civil engineer, business owner, music teacher and a pilot.

Families were also a very important source of occupational ideas to 'tastefully' motivate or persuade their children in building and imagining themselves in that profession. According to Keer et al (2014) role models were hard to find, particularly in media, utilities, construction and the legal sector, but were common in medicine and teaching professions. Most parents cited family



members as giving their children ideas for their preferred job; either there was someone in the family who already had a professional job, or the exact job their children aspired to was often influenced by members of their extended family, such as an aunt who was a lawyer, or children were influenced by the respondents mixing with other professionals.

“There is a family friend and they live in Buckinghamshire. He is a medical doctor and the wife is a senior nurse and they have five children and the first child graduated with a first class and there was a party and we do let our children go and see and say you can also get a first class.” (Roger, Nigerian – Social worker).

Roger’s strategy was to develop social capital by networking at parties with the Black middle class professionals and to attempt to ensure his children believe that they too can be a professional. He admits that he only networked with people who are like him (therefore deploying his social capital) – going places and investing in their children’s education. Overall, the relatively uniform picture of parents is that they want their children to do well, and they support them as much as they can. The majority of all respondents held very concentrated preferences for their children to achieve high academic qualifications. “Nigerians never miss a good thing. They know that if they have children there are things they are pushing them to do. There are a lot of Caribbean parents who also do it. I’m speaking more about using your finance to help your child’s education”. Maria’s comment showed some emphasis about having sufficient economic capital that protected a cultural necessity (my emphasis) for education. Perhaps her perception comes from being married into the Nigerian culture and seeing how other families operate around her. Maria was also privately educated in England. Here again parents seen to be channelling funds into their children’s education as a cultural ‘norm’. As a professional parent this is expected of you and the success of your children’s academic achievements is reflected by the investment you choose to place in your children’s future.

Having a good educational foundation gives Black professional middle class children the choices and opportunity to compete and be recognised by the mainstream middle class culture. Some are maintaining their position (from past middle class generations), while others are learning how to play the game in the field of classed education. There is no shortage of aspiration amongst the Black professional middle class as shown in this study. Many of the children indicated to their parents that they wanted to be a professional, for example in medicine, teaching, science or business. Overall in Britain, Keer et al (2011) found that the proportion of BAME attending university almost doubled from 8.3% in 1995-96 to 16% in 2007-08.

### School choice - a strategic approach

“It’s a fact that sometimes universities look at the secondary school you put on the application [UCAS forms] as they are part of the selection criteria. Some of the independent schools are preferred to state schools which is why we want a school (if they don't get to grammar school) for their ‘A’ levels to be a school that *they* [Russell Group universities] *will like* on the form.” (Jessica, Trinidadian – Public affairs manager).

Jessica has made her own assumption about how the academic HE selection process works. This illustrates her heightened concern about the competitive game of school choice. Jessica has high expectations for her daughters and is using her ‘*system knowledge*’ to place her children at an advantage. Black professional middle class families who have the ‘*system knowledge*’ along with ‘*hot knowledge*’ (meaning parents’ playground information about school performance) are able to pay for the economic resources and private tuition to attain high grades to help their children enter high achieving schools. Private tuition was utilised by 19 out of 25 parents and out of those 19 parents and out of the eight parents that moved out of London (see Table 7.1 page, 222) seven parents paid for private tuition to help their children pass the 11+ test and further

advanced tuition to increase their chances of entering into a Russell Group university. These universities require high 'A' level grades and have a world class reputation for providing high quality higher education required for professional occupations. A range of respondents (Sarah, Christina, Roger and Thomas) had a desire for their children to enter into one of the elite universities because they believe it would give their children a critical route to prosperity. The majority of the respondents held a belief that some Russell Group universities (such as Oxbridge or those in the top five) were being a bit too demanding and were highly competitive when it came to their entrance criteria. Recent research into 'fair access' in terms of making an application and getting a firm offer from a prestigious university has reported that Black and Asian young people are much less likely to receive offers of admission from a Russell Group university in comparison with their equivalently qualified peers from private schools and the White applicants (Boliver, 2013 and Williams & Filippakou 2010). This evidence suggests an instrumental strategic approach to cultivating elite classed aspirations for the very few.

Christina, a Nigerian mother of six girls went to university and all her family attended top universities in England. Her eldest daughter attends youth parliament for debating skills and is the brightest student in her class. Her mother was encouraging her to apply to Cambridge.

"My daughter recently went on a trip to Cambridge university to see what university life was like, I would most defiantly encourage her to go there. She [the daughter] thought it was very nice but she said she would "stick to London [London top universitites] as there are not enough Black people around there" [on Cambridge campus]. I remember when our parents used to live here [UK] my brother and me would be the only Black people in the class room. I told her it was simply the location and that race [being Black and being in the minority] - it's everywhere my dear and that should not stop you going to Cambridge" (Christina, Nigerian – Senior health advisor nurse).

Christina was disappointed in her daughter's reaction assuming she would want to attend a prestigious British university, "there are not enough Black people around there" meant that her daughter wanted more of a cultural mix and would not want to experience being isolated or appear to be different from White majority - what Rollock refers to as experiencing White spaces of university life (Rollock 2014:167).

The majority of the respondents in this study stress a great concern about getting their children into a good school and then their children being accepted into a reputable university. Other parents went on to discuss in detail about the sorts of opportunities or "lack of opportunities" that are available or may not be within the higher professional occupations. Kerr et al, 2014 found that in the UK today, one in 10 employed people are Black, Asian Ethnic Minority (BAME), yet only one in 16 are in top management positions and one in 13 management positions are held by BAME people. They state that many UK sectors continue to be closed off to people when it comes to leadership opportunities. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of management positions held by BAME people are clustered in just three sectors: banking & finance; distribution, hotels & restaurants; and public administration, education & health. Yet the majority of management positions within the energy & water, construction, legal, media and political sectors continue to be held by White middle and upper middle class people (and mostly men). Some of the respondents are beginning to look elsewhere for their children's futures having been met with similar experiences of closed doors.

Two respondents who had a global perspective of opportunities (global cultural capital) were able to look beyond aspirations that kept their children limited to the UK. Francis worked in Europe and saw that the UK was limited in terms of opportunities. He wanted his boys to be knowledgeable about the world, speak several languages – what he called business languages. He said: "I recognise in life you need to have something to offer others, if you speak a different language you can go there to work."

Linda went as far as to say that there was nothing here for young Black educated males to do and it would be more sensible to think globally and travel elsewhere for a professional career. Linda is referring here to the embodiment of race (Rollock, 2014) and the dominant privilege of Whiteness within the British middle class structure. “There is a perception your education can only get you so far in the UK.” She and Anthony refer to a “concrete ceiling” (referring to both race and gender barriers against career progression) working against the Black professional middle class in the UK.

### Choosing the right school

I will now examine parents’ motivations when it comes to choosing a school for their children, be it primary or secondary school, setting out to explore what their narratives tell us about intensive parental involvement and knowledge; this includes both classed, raced and gendered issues that intersect in the parental expectations of schooling and the schooling system and the mitigating strategies managing their children’s education. The act of choosing a school for their child is interwoven in the parents’ desires and acts as a moral imperative ‘to do the best’ for their child.

Evidence from my data showed highly strategic decision-making processes of parents towards various types of schools: faith schools (parents’ values are commonly linked to faith schools (linked to the previous chapter), grammar schools and private schools. Each type of school chosen by respondents was mentioned alongside the parents’ comments (perceptions and personal judgements) and what makes that chosen school unique for their child is analysed through parents’ nuanced narratives.

The current data shows that making the preferred school choice has two strands. Firstly, the pragmatics of choosing a school which could result in middle

class parents literally 'buying in' to the independent sector, believing a better 'service' will be provided. Secondly, re-locating into the catchment area of a school perceived as offering 'better' educational provision – or otherwise manipulating the system and managing the game. Reay (1998) asserts that the ability to make such choices and perform what are essentially acts to compensate for perceived failings within state education such as in lack of support and motivation requires material and educational resources commonly located within middle class families. However, as the data illustrated, forms of capital were sometimes disproportionately deployed between single parent families compared to dual income families.

The parents' process of school choice required them to understand differences between schools – deploying cultural capital. The publication of examination results, which show differences in attainment between schools serving communities with high levels of deprivation compared to those located in more affluent areas (provided by Ofsted's annual reports) contribute to parental understandings of school position. In the game, securing a place in a school perceived to be good is a class-based practice. Parents with access to 'hot knowledge' (Ball and Vincent 1998), actively seek out their information either through politically legitimate league tables or through information that is "socially embedded in networks and localities" (Ball and Vincent 1998, p. 377). Thus children are dependent on the knowledge, guidance and actions of their parents in the process of school choice.

Parents such as Luke, Tayo and Christina chose faith schools because the religious affiliation of a school was also taken as an indicator of "good discipline" and academic quality. These two qualities were thought to pertain to Church of England affiliated schools, as well as Roman Catholic schools and desire for religious instruction (faith based school assemblies) or reference to a religious community were common among the Christian faith based parents. Luke, for example, closely identified a faith school to be important to their family values and Luke is a practicing pastor at a small local church. "First of all we are

Christians and we wanted to give them a background in our beliefs so they can make their minds up when they grow up and the [Church of England] school was one of the highly rated schools in Edmonton.”

Personal experience of the British education system, especially for those parents born in the UK, is used as an important form of knowledge or information to parents and helps to set a scene for guidance. This is why there was a concern for race discrimination or institutional racism within the transfer process from primary to secondary school. The data also suggests that families were particularly keen to identify schools at which ethnic minority children were encouraged to do well and were reflected in their school results. A school’s ability to deal with racism and racist bullying was also frequently raised by parents.

In addition to hot knowledge, once a school has been chosen parents have claimed the need for engagement and interaction with the school is a continuous struggle for some and parents believe that they have to remain vigilant and active as they cannot rely on the system to effectively “meet the needs of their children”. Kate, who works for an education department and was educated in London, sees the weaknesses when it comes to delivering a high standard of teaching for her children. She and her husband have started saving up to get their 12-year-old daughter through higher education as they know it will be more expensive than seeing her previous daughter through university. They are also going to pay for private tuition and I asked her why it was that important to achieve a high standard of education.

“To be honest my experience has taught me not to put too much faith in the teachers – not to say they can't teach, but what they consider to be fine is not necessarily what I consider to be fine; for example, we were always told that she is doing very well at school and when we looked at the predicted grades it was not OK – it was a predicted C grade, so we had to consider what tools does she need to get her up there?” (Kate – Saint Lucian heritage - Grade 7 civil servant)

“A supportive parent can help create small successes and that breeds confidence in the child. You need to spend time with your children. You must monitor your child in the education system as they do not do enough.” (Dawn, Nigerian - Private tutor and FE Lecturer).

Kate’s and Dawn’s comments suggest that Black professional middle class parents adopt a dual partnership (at home and with the teachers) in tutoring at school and in the home as well as tightly monitoring their child’s performance at school. At home their parental practices were particularly dedicated to the factors that will keep the child focused on school/home performance and high achievement.

### Making the move to a better school

“I started networking at work and outside and found out that it would be better to move for their education – that was my main decision to move.” (Tayo, Nigerian – FE college manager).

“Stick by those children who are in the top sets and get top marks and talk about having aspirations to go to a grammar school. Position yourself amongst that group – you know like-minded and thinking people”. (Mary, Nigerian – Marketing consultant).

A key argument in my thesis was that some parents were prepared to move house or be more geographically mobile as part of their aspirational strategy for educational attainment for their children, particularly those who wanted their child to attend a grammar school. In this small study it was clear that not only are Black professional middle class parents prepared to move to another London borough but they are also willing to relocate outside of London altogether – to the outskirts of London or to South East England suburbs.



Although this study is not a representative sample of the entire Black professional middle class population in South East England, one is able to identify up to 15 parents – described in this study as 'Movers' 13 of these parents decided to be geographically mobile because they believe this would widen their choice of highly rated schools. The other two parents moved out of London for attractive job opportunities whilst their children were under the age of five.

Tayo moved to the outskirts of London. The experience of working in London on a daily basis and being around the local school children and working at a FE college environment sometimes exposed her to other children's bad behaviour. She looked for "peace, calmness of the suburbs with less crime". Many of her White middle class colleagues commuted into London from Essex, Gravesend and Grays and told her about the calmness they experience living in these parts of the South East. She grew up in Nigeria. Her mother was a lawyer and was portrayed as her role model and upholds high aspirations for her two sons: a single mother whose children are a central point in her life.

This section of the chapter is a key finding in my research and looks at the main reason for moving out of London and the degree of importance parents place on education and school choice. Just over half of the parents (15 out of 25 parents) chose to relocate out of the urban London areas and over half of those (eight out of 15 parents) who relocated moved when their children were under the age of 11 with the expectation their children would pass the 11+ test and attend grammar school. There are 164 grammar schools in South East England; their aim is to 'select' the top 25% of academically able pupils. Competition remains high as there is an annual over-subscription for children to attend a selective high-performing school.

Table 7 illustrates the 'Movers' who are defined as the parents that moved house either for future 11+ testing in the hope of their child will be successful and then enter grammar school, or those parents who had moved house but their children were not attending grammar school at the time of the interview. It was observed that 15 out of 25 of parents (over half) were 'Movers' and relocated further out of London to the suburbs in South East England, and 13 out of the 15 'Movers' became geographically mobile for school choice, apart from two parents Roger, a social worker manager and Christina, a senior health advisor nurse who moved out of London for better job offers.

Table 7 also highlights the eight parents that moved specifically for grammar schools. What was interesting was that they did not necessarily move when the children were in year five (aged 10) but most were planning a few years earlier than that to relocate outside of London (Francis and Rachel, Mary and Thomas). Five children attended grammar school at the time of the interviews and another seven children were already selected to attend a local grammar school having passed the 11+ test in October 2011 prior to January 2012 when I interviewed the parents.

Table 7: Parents that moved out of London to be nearer to a wider choice of grammar schools.

Participant	Number of children	Ages of children at time of moving house	Currently attending grammar school
Dawn	2	15 & 17	2
Joan	4	10, 10, 18, & 18	Not known
Carol	4	1, 6, 8 & 10	Not known
Mary	1	5	Not known
Thomas	3	1, 4 & 11	1
Maria	2	2, & 8	Did not pass 11+ plus test
Francis & Rachel	2	3 & 7	2

Parents needed to acquire disposition and competence to maintain social capital which was proven to be testing at times during geographical mobility changes; nevertheless, those who were geographically mobile saw the change as an “educational investment”;

“I know grammar schools around here are disciplined. I know some of my friends’ children are serious about their books [studies]. There are a lot of things they do there are better: sporting facilities; they call you [the parent] about assignments and engage them. They are not like other schools they are serious. That is important because if a pupil does not have a solid foundation that maybe why you see many children going into gangs [as] they are not orientated in such a way that they value their future”. (Dawn, Nigerian - Private tutor and FE Lecturer).

This is an important point that Dawn makes about some parents' perceptions about grammar school. Such views on grammar school education are so strong that parents physically move house. Their choice of school would be one that was in line with their values, such as schools that were enormously focused on success for all students, and young people were highly confident, mainly aiming for high status professional occupations where the school had connections with Russell Group universities.

“The grammar schools made us move here . . . we thought the criteria had to be the best school in the area. They are both in grammar school now that was a mental task!” (Francis, Nigerian - IT consultant).

Other reasons for moving out of urban areas to the suburbs were for a better environment for their children, including counter urbanisation – suburbanisation – for a better quality of life, more space (house, garden), freedom, less distractions. London society was seen as being ‘toxic’ with congestion, crime, gangs and the London riots. These reasons are linked to the parents' wider family aspirations as well as more focused aspirations for their children.

Many spoke of the need to distance themselves from crime spots and youth gang culture and other distractions. They wanted to detach themselves from the stereotyping of Black youth, particularly young Black boys. The issue of ‘Whiteness’ in the suburbs was flagged up through concerns of placing their child in a school where they would be in the minority. This created some ambiguity of where best to place their child. Many asked the other minority parents what was their child's experience (hot knowledge), how the school dealt with any issues on equality and bullying, and how did the teachers act towards ethnic minority students in terms of expectations and encouragement in the classroom. Parents had to weigh up the risks in sending their child to a less socially mixed school. Although they may attend a more ethnic mixed school in urban areas, unlike the predominantly White schools in the suburbs, Black children still run the risk of encountering racist bullying in schools. All together

there were seven out of 25 parents that reported incidences of racism and racist bullying in the schools their children attended. They all reflected on the times they had to take up these racial issues with the school to show how serious they were about how their child was treated by other children in the school as well as the teachers. Examples of racist bullying were identified for a minority of parents interviewed in this study;

“At his school they called him brown and he came home and called me brown and I said where did you get that from? ‘That is what they say in my school’ ”. (Tayo, Nigerian – FE college manager).

Teachers stereotyping Black children, particularly Black boys, was mentioned a few times in the interviews (Dawn, Maria and Joan). One particular parent spoke in detail about her son Jim who was subjected to racist bullying at his new school. Maria lives with her two children in Kent and her husband was away on business most of the year building a business and house in the Ivory Coast. Maria wanted to send Jim to a grammar school but he did not pass the 11 + test and was forced to attend the local state non-mixed school. Maria speaks of the victimization her son faced because he was the only Black African boy in his year. She spoke of her frustration in the lack of communication by teachers to intervene:

“the school did not deal with it [the racial incident] well and it was over managed and sometimes it can be over managed however it did have an impact on Jim. Having not passed the grammar exam (we did not put in a lot into it financially we had a lot of money invested in Africa) he missed it [the pass mark] by about 15 points. We were expecting him to do well but the teacher did not know we were supporting him [at home] to pass the test and the teacher quickly advised him to go to the local community school. Jim was separated from his friends [who now attended grammar school] and felt isolated. Without me and my husband even knowing, he was constantly called racist names. I did not

know this was going on until there was a fight and he got expelled”.  
(Maria, Saint Vincentian – Community project manager).

In addition, Maria strongly felt that the education system was failing her son by not getting to the core of the problem that caused the fight and felt that the teachers overreacted to the situation and he was treated unfairly by making Jim look like a threat to his White school class mates when it was Jim who was the victim. She explains:

“I said to the school your role as the school is to contact the parent so I felt let down because the school knew [about the racist taunting] and I noticed Jim was uneasy and he said he hated school.”

Such racist incidences (or more subtle forms of racism by teaches and children) in a child’s education is a concern which underlies most of the parents’ anxiety about whether their children would feel comfortable in a less socially and ethnically mixed school. This has led to parents taking a close look at what the teachers are like and how they approach and communicate with their children as well as parents. They are trying to find out if the teachers make an effort to understand what it is like to be different and to be stereotyped. Parents needed to consider what impact would have on the child and his or her emotional well-being on a daily basis. Maria felt disappointed and felt that the education system had failed her son and knocked his confidence by expelling him from the school:

“I felt that if the school is responsible for your child 8 hours a day I would be on their side but I felt that the school appeased me. I feel schooling is a combination of formal education and confidence and it’s about who you are and for me you can have every part of education for example top grades but if you don’t know who you are forget it, if you don’t have that confidence in you and that sense of who you are somewhere along the line its going to fall apart...”

Maria's son's experience illustrates that no matter how much social, cultural capital you possess as a Black professional middle class parent, in some cases unforeseen situations can occur along the way and in this case aspirations they had for their son Jim were not being fulfilled.

Other parents told of smaller incidences that reminded them of how delicate the position they are in as Black professional middle class individuals. One father said that the teacher asked his son in class what job his dad did as he seemed to be quite knowledgeable in race and youth justice issues. He told the teacher his dad was a lawyer and many of the boys in the class started laughing with disbelief, mocking him that he was not telling the truth because he was a Black male student suggesting that Black fathers do not possess professional occupations as lawyers or solicitors. His younger brother also experienced being threatened in the playground. The White boys taunted him and said they would call the KKK to kill him. Anne's son was likened to a chocolate bar and the male White student was asked to write a letter of apology and was put at another table for the rest of the school term.

Despite the thought of similar above experiences by their own children. Black professional middle class families were found to apply to selective schools – which report substantially higher point scores than state schools – in their attempts to access high-performing schools. By moving to residential areas in which they form a distinct minority, Black pupils and their families face the prospect of isolation and disengagement from their communities. Support networks of family, friends and through churches, both local and in London, were widely used. Support networks were one of the ways some parents' learned to cope especially single parents or recent individuals to the UK trying to find a good school in their local area, a job or a place to live. There is an increased likelihood that children from these families might experience racism at school, or indeed struggle to find representations of themselves among their peers or teachers, yet through "resistance capital" (Yosso 2005) the parents are prepared to take that risk for social progression. However, they are not prepared

to take a compromised risk and use their resistance capital to change perceptions of themselves and the capabilities of their children in predominantly White middle class schools.

### The significance of geographical mobility and education

This group of respondents consisted of highly ambitious parents, many of whom had a clearly defined ideal future for their children, mainly involving professional occupations. Some went out of their way to provide them with the material and academic support they needed to achieve them. These aspirant parents held high ambitions for their children, which often extended beyond what would happen to them whilst at school. Their decision making therefore was based upon overall academic achievement for their children without feeling restricted by catchment area boundaries.

Parents were also concerned about the overall educational and social disadvantage they perceived their children would experience. However, the ability to accumulate hot knowledge (Ball & Vincent 1998) about school reputations – the visual witnessing of pupil behaviour, or the collating of press reports which refer to isolated incidents – plays a significant role in the overall knowledge aspirant parents gather about an individual school.

This study shows that there is an inevitability surrounding middle class progression to university: the first generation of Black professional middle class parents and second generation of parents who attended university was equal. This is in part due to family experiences of education. Only two parents (Jessica and Kate) had not attended university themselves, but this did not deter them from either supporting the decisions of their children or prevent them from actively encouraging them to go to university, as already established in Chapter 6. The attitudes towards education were expressed in terms of advancement the



parents wanted their children to achieve more than they had – to have increased opportunities and jobs that had secure futures far beyond schooling. This is clearly articulated by Kate who did not attend university, but acknowledged that going to university would enhance her daughter’s employment chances:

“We have tried to say to her: ‘please appreciate where you are because it costs a fair bit of money to go to university. Your goal is to get a degree and I don't want you coming back with less than a 2:1. I felt that it would be better for her job prospects if she got 2:1 rather than a 2:2. Having seen what my sister went through it is a hard slog and my sister made it clear that you have to put a lot of effort into it”. (Kate – Saint Lucian heritage - Grade 7 civil servant).

Kate’s knowledge of the opportunities university life could offer is an example of wanting to gain cultural capital. How these attitudes were developed may be in part due to wider family experiences of university. Kate wished she had gone, like her sister had done so in later years to university, and this may have contributed to her perception concerning the benefits of attending higher education. This in turn may have led to her own desires concerning her children and her aspirations for them to do well and have the opportunities that she herself had missed out on.

There is a sense in which the parents in this study had some similar understanding or perception that going to university would result in better employment opportunities in the professions on graduation. However, there were two parents (Linda, the bank credit analyst and Anthony, the business and finance expert) who had been to university but thought that it did not fulfil such expectations and there were alternative routes to academic professional qualifications.

## Avoiding negative peer group influences

“I saw the distraction in London when I was trying to get them to study. I struggled with my older boy who nearly went the wrong way. I thought if I stayed in London it would be the same struggle for my younger boys growing up and kids are growing up faster now.” (Joan, Nigerian - Senior midwife nurse).

“No we are not staying in London after the Tottenham riots, were looking at a property in Broxbourne and it was just above our budget. Yes we are still looking because I do not want the children to grow up in London now... it is too violent and I think we are privileged to have them at this age where they are not going out by themselves (to mix) so they are 100 percent covered so to speak.” (Luke, Nigerian -Youth Manager and Pastor).

Another contributing push factor for the ‘Movers’ in my study were the distractions in and around London based schools. Some perceived there to be a lack of norms and values with the London youth. London’s Black professional middle class parents worried about their children being influenced and distracted from their education by undesirable peer groups, meaning groups who did not have similar aspirations or middle class values that their children would benefit from. Parents avoided schools that had bad reputations of peer group pressure in certain areas of South and North London and where they would engage with growing rates of residential and educational movement despite their own awareness of the risks associated with educating their children in predominantly White schools. Nonetheless the effect that a prospective pupil’s peer group had on parental choice greatly influenced those parents choosing schools within the selective/independent sector. Middle class parents tended to select institutions

in which their children would be comfortable and less distracted by peer groups who do not reflect their values and aspirations for their children.

The views of Joan, whose extract emphasises the constant “struggling” between distractions and studying, were echoed by parents Anthony, Anne, Rachel and Tayo, who wanted their children to avoid the influence of peer pressure already discussed in detail in the previous chapter with Joan and her four sons. Parents desired space and a sense of unobtrusiveness. Tayo had a daily experience of working within the further education sector and passed by the local schools to get to work. “I wanted to move away to where there is less crime and more peace and quiet. Education within the local schools in London – the children lack morals”.

### Choosing to stay with London schools

For those who remain in London – the ‘Stayers’ – independent schools are still another option. Luke, who frequently works with youths in North London, is concerned for his own children’s safety as he does not see the situation (meaning funding provision and education policy in London) improving fast enough to have a positive impact in the local schools. He is fortunate enough to have resources to make a strategic choice for his children and explains why he chose a private school:

“That is one reason we are sending them to private school – the racism will still be there but, they will have better control over it, rather than being exposed to too much racism in state secondary schools. These schools have mechanisms to monitor these things.” (Luke, Nigerian-Youth worker and Pastor).

With these parents' extracts we see a common situation where parents are trying to get their child to stay away from certain type of children – whether Black or White working class – described as notoriously ghettoised and estate type areas that attract crime and delinquency. Black professional middle class parents know (through experience) that living in London, for example, that they are going to have a better education. As parents continue to battle with the challenge of racial stereotypes in London schools, moving to an area with less of a social mix in schools outside of London could create another challenge for their children attending a predominantly White school.

These are parents who live and work in London and have gone to great lengths to choose the 'better' (highly rated) schools for their children. Some wished to be more geographically mobile but have commitments such as their social networks for family, child care support, business, their occupations and their own studies in London. Parents allow their children to travel longer distances to high-performing state schools or board at private schools.

In this study parents actively chose to travel a bit further for their child to attend a more highly rated school, pay for tuition and ensure their children have extra lessons and enrichment activities, with the knowledge that it will provide significant advantage in school choice and in developing the cultural capital that is so important to social mobility and later success. Education is about more than what happens at school, and providing a more level playing field in school choice and out-of-school activities is essential if every child is to achieve his or her potential.

The different features of those 10 parents who lived in London were that Linda sent their children to private schools (one child in London and the other outside of London); Kate, Matthew, Luke and Jessica chose schools outside their neighbourhoods and did not mind their child travelling a little longer as there was frequent London transport available to them. Sharon, Claire, Carmel, Emma and Christopher chose highly rated schools by results in the area (though none were any of their local schools).

Some of the parents who lived in London were prepared to identify a school miles away from their home as their preferred choice, and it is perhaps instructive to consider that school characteristics were considered “essential” when making that choice. These families had the means and willingness to travel substantial distances in order to avoid their child attending a poorly rated local school.

All the parents were likely to consider discipline as an essential characteristic and also the school homework policy. They were particularly interested in a school’s ability to stretch able pupils as an essential factor and one that gains good examination results, as they were expecting their children to obtain high educational aspirations, such as passing ‘A’ levels and going on to higher education. As Lareau posits, this is an example of “a high use of cultural capital with strong parental participation with teachers” (Lareau 1987).

## Education and social class

Mary’s view on school choice by Black families can be connected with the wider theoretical issues that relate to class, race and gender. Mary visited a range of selective and non-selective schools with her daughter and observed that there were a third less Black students in non-selective schools and more Black students in the grammar schools that she visited. I asked her why this was the case:

“For me that signifies that a lot of Black parents are in line with *my* thinking that we need to create a competitive advantage and a factor of differentiation for our kids in order to give them a path they can work on without being held back or discriminated against.” (Mary, Nigerian - Marketing consultant).

Mary's comment suggests that Black professional middle class parents are trying to gain a "competitive advantage" over others so they are given a chance to perform to their full potential and not, as she sees it, "be held back" by forms of discrimination within the education system.

Selection of and attendance at good schools involves a series of dispositions and practices which draw on different classed capitals. At this selection stage economic resources come into play. This occurs at the basic level of the ability to visit schools that are further away and also to contemplate sending a child to a more distant school. Economic resources can work at the extreme level where moving house in order to fall into the catchment area of a 'better' school is realistic. Cultural and social resources are important in giving parents the ability to access and assess the 'hot' and 'cold' information on schools – from appraising Ofsted reports to using social networks to evaluate schools. This is likely to translate into confidence in negotiating the possibilities of choice. For example, Roger was able to make more vigorous and successful use of the appeals system, and did so for his daughter so as not to jeopardise his aspirations of her getting a professional career.

Some of the parents closely monitored the teachers and the higher education system due to mistrust and mis-perceptions of their children's ability. Some parents were quick off the mark to argue that their child is specifically gifted. Ball argues: "For such middle class families, class, race and gender continues to be a critical mediation of being, of who they are." (Ball 2003, p. 76). Parental explorations of a school's social mix is particularly significant in the examination of what parents also look for in schools. For example, some of the respondents talked about having dinner with friends who are professionals, admiring other colleagues whose children are doing very well and asking their children what their friend's parents do for a living. This illustrates that Black professional middle class parents want a sufficient number of other middle class parents, 'people like us' or whose children have similar aspirations to their children and

they must be in the right circle of friends. This highlights that many Black professional middle class professional parents have a classed desire as part of their preferred social mix.

The main theoretical issues raised in this study are the intersections of social class and race in shaping parents' strategic approaches for school choice as shown in Table 7. Also underlying some of the narratives of the parents was an equivocal relationship between the desire for a 'mixture' in terms of race and questions of class (Skeggs 2004). Parents such as Roger and Rachel shared a hesitation around mixing with a classed other, particularly the 'White working class':

“Schools in the area were not very good and the local children attending the local schools. It would be fair to say it was not a group I wanted to be around. When my eldest boy started school we chose a school outside [area omitted].” (Rachel, Nigerian – IT consultant).

It did appear that class was of important significance for education where choice amplifies the chosen parental action, particularly when it came to thinking about secondary schooling. Rachel's two boys went to a private primary school. She expressed a positive desire for a multicultural mix, but she also said she was concerned to “keep her sons away from the local kids” (a code used for families on support benefits) and decided to place her children in a private school another thirty minutes from her neighbourhood to avoid “that group” of working class children and families.

The majority of the Black professional middle class parents conveyed a similar avoidance to working class neighbourhoods and their main concern was the influence it may have had on high expectations, cultural values and symbolic capital. Another example of class bias was illustrated by Mary who moved from London to Kent (to enter her daughter for the 11+ test), referring to the area she lived in as “lower” [location omitted] (a code she used for lower-working class families). She was quite clear that she did not want her daughter to mix with

anyone from their neighbourhood and told her daughter what was expected of her:

“We have not come here to be like *them*. We are only here for your education. I don't intend this to be our permanent home. I don't intend to die here and once you have graduated from university you would want to position yourself back in London and ultimately to educate yourself and position yourself with children and families that think like me [middle class] and try to avoid the rough people.” (Mary, Nigerian – Marketing consultant).

Mary appeared frustrated, feeling stuck between her dream of that perfect career in London and the aspiration for her daughter to attend a grammar school in Kent, and that led to her frustration of living on the wrong side of town.

### Bourdieu, education and race

Bourdieuian notions of distinction in class and fields have been productive in my analysis to a certain extent. I have given my adaptation rather than full adoption of Bourdieu and education in relation to an analysis of social reproduction in action from the parents' perceptions of high academic achievements for their children. Nevertheless, there needs to be more recognition of the intersections between race, class and gender in the making of White or Black professional middle classness in Britain. This requires a more nuanced understanding of changes within middle classness on which the idea of “people like us” or “wanting similar things” for their children is constructed alongside privilege and legitimacy. As Rollock (2011) argues, while Bourdieu does not make explicit mention or acknowledgement of the way in which race intersects with class (in the formation and reproduction of class capitals) he does so subtly when race is contextualised in the form of White identity and



Whiteness. Rollock et al., using CRT, further explained that skin colour acts as a form of embodied capital that disrupts and lessens the worth of the cultural capital held by Black professional middle classes. Evidence from my interview transcripts have illustrated that Bourdieu's approach on race has been largely invisible in his research, and consideration of other middle class groups should be acknowledged. A study by Ball (2003) looked beyond the 'Whiteness' of White middle class practices, and this helped to open up the exploration of the practices of the Black professional middle class in the UK around school choice and its relationship with parents' aspirations (Rollock 2011).

Although Bourdieu's approach to education understands the inequalities of social reproduction of class via structure, agent and the relevant fields, he fails to fully extend the debate to those who are marginalised irrespective of their middle class status and that this presumption itself (by Bourdieu) misses the opportunity to address the issues of genuine struggles and barriers regarding social mobility.

## Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated that the value of education requires a strategic approach to simultaneously guarantee social reproduction. In relation to their children, the choice of preferred high-performing schools allows these parents to provide a type of education for their children which will not only help "build a foundation" to start their adult lives but one that will also enable their children to acquire "positive identities" such as "confident", "cultured" and "moral" young people, as well as helping to legitimise these parents' social and economic positions.

The intersections between economic, social, cultural, emotional and "resistance capital" (Yosso 2005) all require further attention in the study of education. More central to the argument was the geographical mobility of families for a preferred

school choice outside of London. The 'Movers' described London as a place of distraction for their children and there was a need to move away from influential peer groups and it is understood that race, class and gender are interwoven throughout the mechanisms used by Black professional middle class parents who want the best for their children.

When theorising about the importance of education through the views of Black professional middle class experiences, one needs to be reminded of the relational and shifting existence of race, class and gender. In addition to this point, it should be appreciated that when considering race and class, one should not supersede the other because of their multiple intersections in education (Lovell 2000).

## Chapter 8: Discussion: Re-considering Bourdieu, Race and Class

In this chapter I address how I have engaged with Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks habitus, field and forms of social, cultural, economic capital. His theories particularly helped to build a more complete analysis of the second research question '*how do Black professional middle class families use different forms of social, economic and cultural capital in planning for the future of their children?*'

Essentially I have explored how capitals are used by parents for their children's futures. From the study we already know that Black professional middle class parents possess high levels of capital. But the question I posed involved 'how' parents deploy different capitals to benefit their children's futures. How then do parents effectively mobilise their capitals within a specific field? In considering the relationship between identity, class and aspirations of the parents in this study, Bourdieu's theory of social, cultural reproduction was useful to a certain extent. Bourdieu helped to reveal the hidden processes of class distinctions and how it was only accepted as distinct if it was only related to a particular field. Bourdieu writes:

"Fields present themselves systematically as structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants"(1993, p. 72). And while there are general laws of fields, those being the necessity of commonly understood stakes of the game and players willing and able to play the game (Bourdieu, 1993), each field of interaction has its own system of valuation and practice."

The field in the education system is governed by normative White standards that tend to go unchallenged (Gillborn 2008). Other examples of class capital in

operation was through Sarah wanting to place her daughter at an advantage by her becoming head girl of the school year at the fee paying school. Sarah's daughter fitted all the criteria (astute student, responsible, organised and a keen athlete with good leadership qualities) and was equal to White counterparts at this paying school but their efforts were unsuccessful and also Marie (Jim's mother) wanting teachers to communicate with her and she would support them and work together to see her son progress. However, she was disappointed and felt let down by the teacher's low level of expectation of her child seen as the 'Black child' creating a disturbance in his school year. Throughout their experiences in the field of education, what they thought were entitlements from their forms of capitals were instead met with excuses, appeasement and rejection which ultimately devalued their capitals. With these cases, whilst Bourdieu does not refer his concept of the field to race directly, his theory can be applicable to race and racism when placed in the context of legitimation of capital and its value when only recognised by White middle class measures.

Although Bourdieu fails to discuss the nuanced intersections of race and class in the reproduction of social class capitals his ideas about those in the field who 'fit' can be compared to those Black middle class who are seen to be a 'misfit' of the middle classes. This could explain the reason why Black middle class parents are constantly aware of misrecognition or stereotyping of their children or possess a heightened surveillance of their child and of their position is one that must be diligently managed to gain the required recognition in a White dominated society. Therefore the inequalities of racism could be explained in a similar way - only that Bourdieu did not conduct any in depth research on the Black middle class and their distinctions of cultural capital being equitable to White middle class cultural capital. In other words Bourdieu's conception of what was cultural capital was structured and in the form of White identity and Whiteness. Therefore Black capital (albeit cultural, economic or social) was not valued as being the same level as White capital. However, I concluded that his theory could not fully explain the relationship between the class background and

classed ambitions of Black professional middle class parents because of the lack of depth in his analysis of race.

I chose to also engage with CRT to help uncover the intersubjectivity of the parents' experiences of race during their lives and how the importance of race resonates in their role as Black professional middle class parents (Chapter 4). Their experiences of racism in education, for example, illustrate the need for theories like CRT that intentionally look through the lens of race to help explain how power relations between the dominant group and the less privileged group create inequalities (Ladson – Billings, 2005). Such inequality was perceived by parents as being orchestrated by the 'system' and described incidences of racial discrimination during their own schooling or at their child's school. The 'system' was also associated with the long-running debate of institutional racism in the field of education as well as the ongoing tense relationship between young Black youths and the Metropolitan Police.

### Cultural capital

Evidence from my data suggests that only some parents were more aware of class than others and had developed 'sophisticated' ways of adapting their social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital to suit their class position and use forms of capital to give advantage to their children. Examples were using their economic capital to pay for extra tutoring and to be involved in extra-curricular activities that they believed would enhance their child's cultural capital (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). These examples helped to further answer the research question (on page 244). However, Black professional middle class cultural capital was found to be removed from the Bourdieusian concept of cultural capital participation (in art, music and literature) which tended to be defined by White middle class values which were directly linked to wealth. Instead, cultural capital wealth was defined not by assets and money but by an array of

knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts (known as 'non - dominant' cultural capital) possessed and used by those with similar interests (or communities). Bourdieu does not then recognise the nuanced differences between multiple identities where the social and political historical differences among many Black diaspora people hold different perceptions of White domination. For example the experience, perceptions and social background of respondents in this study differ between parents who voluntarily immigrated to the UK (Christina, Thomas, Roger and Luke) compared to those who are second generation of African or Caribbean heritage (such as Kate).

Thus, while class and economic capital specifically may indicate what economic resources parents have available to make strategic decisions, they do not reveal the more subjective nuanced reasons why parents believe it is important to take their children on frequent holidays to their motherland, prioritise school choice, closely monitor the quality of education and performance or become geographically mobile.

## Habitus

"Habitus is Bourdieu states, 'a socialised subjectivity' and the social embodied" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992a: 127, 128).

Bourdieu asks how the 'outer' social, and 'inner', self-help to shape each other. He summarises this relation using the following equation:

$[(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}$ . Bourdieu (1986:101).

This means that practice results from relations between one's dispositions (acting in a particular way) (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field). Therefore practices are not simply the result of one's habitus but rather of relations between one's habitus

and one's current circumstances. In other words the physical and social spaces we occupy are (like the habitus) structured and it is the relation between these two structures that gives rise to practices. In relation to Black middle class habitus is created from historical social backgrounds and can determine how they cultivate identity in their children. Simply put, habitus focuses on our ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being. It captures how we carry within us our history and how we bring this history, into our present circumstances and how we then make choices to act in certain ways and not others through our sub-consciousness. Yet Bourdieu denies the charge of determinism on the grounds that the same habitus will produce different practices in different social fields, that habitus can be changed by changed circumstances (Bourdieu, 1990, p116), and that the notion of habitus solves the conflict between structure and determinism on the one hand and agency and individualism on the other. The structures of the habitus are thus not 'set' but evolve-there are durable and changeable but not permanent. If this is the case, CRT writers would ask why then do subtle forms of racism persist or continue to go unnoticed within social fields? Solomos (2005) would argue that it is to do with the level of 'everyday embeddedness of White entitlement' (Solomos 2005:157) Vincent & Ball (2007). White entitlement essentially means that Black professional middle class parents understandings of social mobility and aspirations are commonly shaped by race and racism (Rollock et al;2014).

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

The previous chapter discussed where Bourdieu's social reproduction theory and relevant concepts of forms of capital provided the theoretical framework for the thesis however, there are limitations in Bourdieu's theories and a diversion of race in his thinking. Throughout this study I have been 'thinking with Bourdieu' and with CRT. In the sense of understanding how inequalities are reproduced through the social class structure, Bourdieu has been valuable however Bourdieu can be criticised on the basis that he has largely neglected race in his theoretical frameworks of habitus, field and forms of capital social class structures. Equally 'thinking with CRT' helped me to gain a deeper insight and more intricate understanding of the experiences, trajectories and strategies of the Black professional middle class making my contribution a conceptual development of Bourdieu's ideas as well as bringing to light important knowledge of Black professional middle class educational attainment.

### **Key findings**

The key contribution of the thesis was to provide an in-depth analysis of social and cultural dimensions of aspirations by Black professional middle class parents and an analysis of the strategic approaches Black professional middle class parents chose to use to nurture their children's futures. The research explored the concept of class positioning, as well as recent research on social class, Whiteness in education and the privileges that are linked to being White and middle class. The key findings of this research add qualitative narrative richness to the few existing studies on the impact of race, class and gender upon the growing Black professional middle class in Britain.



## Education and Geographical mobility

Parents placed a very high level of importance on education and educational attainment was one of the key expectations by parents in the hope that it would help their children gain a professional occupation. Relocating from London to the suburbs was of particular interest in my study, 15 of the 25 parents I interviewed had made the decision to move out of London primarily for school choice. These findings have helped to answer the research question '*what are the decision-making processes and strategies that may cause parents either to move to the suburbs or stay in urban areas?*'

Some parents identified as 'movers' were those who decided to relocate away from London to other parts of the South East such as Kent. This meant moving away from support networks, their culture and familiarities of a multi-cultural London to a place where they were seen to be different. They had thought about the effect it may have on their children who had to attend a school with an overwhelming White majority. There were various motives for moving out of London: some parents spoke about the need to get away from London boroughs that had deteriorated and were experiencing levels of crime and troubled youths (see Joan Chapter 7). One father (Anthony, in Chapter 7) was concerned about his children being distracted by negative peer influence. For the majority of the 'movers' school choice was the main reason for relocating and was seen a "worthy investment for their child's future".

The high aspirations they had for their children came before anything else. My data suggests that not only were 'movers' considering protecting their children from crime, peer pressure and the negativities of urban dwellings, but it was also about opening new doors of opportunities for their children such as possibly attending a grammar school. Parents saw this as a way of giving their children (what they perceived to be) the 'best' start in education. They believed that good

quality education was a significant factor with the underlying perception and conviction that high quality education would lead to a highly paid professional career.

## Identity

All parents felt it was their duty as a Black parent to undeniably confirm their child's Black identity as something to be proud of. Many parents spoke of 'the talk' they had to have with their child to raise their awareness of racism particularly in education. This suggested that Black professional middle class parents through their own past experiences had concerns about stereotyping and institutional racism. Forms of micro-racialisation in education and in the labour market as well as legitimate class identity positioning were key issues that were of considerable relevance to parenting practices. Other ways were used to shape and reinforce self-identity, for example: emotional support, teaching values, being attentive to a child's needs, and a parent's duty to protect and build a strong foundation. Mothers were seen to be particularly instrumental in these areas. Some parents applied their belief system – in the case of this group, many parents used their Christian faith to build confidence and instill hope in their children for achieving set goals as well as teaching them moral values and the importance of respect for others. Parenting methods were also used to develop a child's self-esteem, self-confidence, independence and responsibility in order to survive in a White dominated society. These findings and the following key issues helped to answer the research question 'how do Black professional middle class parents' experience the structures and intersections of race, class and gender in relation to aspirations?

## Parental strategies

Key parental strategies were reflected in parents' experiences, definitions of social reality, and their active efforts to equip their children with the beliefs, values, and resources needed for (what the participants called) 'success' – (see Chapter 4). By exploring parents' aspirations for their children and what shapes them, several factors have been identified to answer the main research question about *'how Black professional middle class parents experience the structures of race, class and gender in relation to shaping aspirations? (for their children within a White middle class structure)..*

Social forms of encouragement by parents in terms of emotional support, as well as trust and autonomy within the family were at times related to cultural, traditional values (respected opinions of family elders) and attitudes (Chapter 4). This appears to matter in terms of creating the right environment for their children 'to be the best' (a common expression used by parents) the importance of education for future career opportunities was also seen to represent what parents labelled as 'successes'. The data suggests what constituted 'success' was measured in different ways. For example in the lives of single parents (see Mary in Chapter 4) also highlighted a heightened awareness of concern for mothers who through meticulous planning – needed to navigate through various challenges of stereotyping and racism. This current research offers an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the body of knowledge of education, race and parental aspirations in Britain's Black Caribbean and Black African middle class population.

## Future research

I would suggest that there are possibilities for future research that will make a contribution to Black professional middle class groups. This study only provides us with a snap shot of parents' experiences and strategies of parents and not the children's views, (whose voices are absent from my study). A suggested longitudinal study of eight years – from children in Year Six about to embark secondary school, right up to the end of post university education – a key stage when young adults make decisions about their future would provide valuable insights. Different variations of aspirations such as HE attendance, courses and professional career choices could be observed over time. This would offer a greater range and depth of analysis of young Black professional middle class aspirations measured and compared to what parents aspired them to be.

There is also scope for a comparative study of White middle class and Black middle class professional parents aspirations looking at the equality of access and privilege to forms of capital that help to place their children at an advantage in education. This could contribute to future studies examining the social origins of legitimised privilege, Whiteness and class positioning of the White middle class compared to the Black professional middle class in Britain providing a broader appreciation of Black middle class experiences.

It would be worth researching how children navigate, not only the terrain of different school cultures, but manage the emotional world of relentless choice-making and investments about their futures by parents. I suggest that future research on aspirations ought to be gathered nationwide with detailed biographical data in mind as well as quantitative data to provide a more common understanding of experiences of inequality, constructions and reproduction of

class and choices made by parents alongside social mobility research in order to make a wider impact on government and educational policy.

The Black population in the South East of England has witnessed changes in class formation of the last 10-15 years with a growth of aspirations and upward social mobility among Black middle class professional parents who attempt to secure privilege through their engagement with their children's education.

Despite being Black professional middle class parents, inequalities persists although in more subtle nuanced and latent forms for some Black individuals who adapt and navigate through White spaces. Bourdieu has revealed hidden forms of class status and the way the game is played. This study has brought to light a more nuanced understanding of the deeper complex social relations of race, class and gender experienced in the short histories of Black people and the relative newness of Black professional middle class parents in South East England.

## References

Adkins, L., & Lury, C. (1999). 'The Labour of Identity: Performing Identities, Performing Economies', *Economy and Society*, 28(4). 598-614.

Adkins, L., & Skeegs, B. (2005). *Feminism After Bourdieu*. Oxford Blackwell.

Allen, R. (2013). Fair access: Making school choice and admissions work for all cited in IPPR's publication '*Excellence and equity: Tackling educational disadvantage in England's secondary schools*' <http://www.ippr.org/publication/55/10897/excellence-and-equity-tackling-educational-disadvantage-in-englands-secondary-schools>. Accessed 10/12/14.

Anderson, G., & Arsenault, N. (1998). *Fundamentals of Educational Research* (second edition) London. Routledge Falmer.

Appadurai, A. (2004). The capacity to aspire. Culture and the terms of recognition. In Y.Rao., & M. Walton. (Eds), *Culture and public action* (pp59-84). Standford,CA: Standford University Press.

Archer, L., & Francis, B. (2007). *Understanding Minority Achievement in Schools: Race, Gender, Class and 'Success'*. Routledge.

Archer, L. (2003). *Higher education and social class issues of exclusion and inclusion*. Routledge.

Archer, L. (2012). Between authenticity and pretension: parents', pupils and young professionals. Negotiations of minority ethnic middle class identity. *The Sociological Review* 60(1):129-148.

Archer, L., DeWitt, J., & Wong, W. (2013). Spheres of influence: what shapes young people's aspirations at age 12/13 and what are the implications for educational policy? *Journal of Educational Policy*, 29(1):1-28.

Aspinall, P.J. & Mitton, L. (2011). *The Migration History, Demography, & Socio-Economic Position of the Somali Community in Britain*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

BBC hi magazine. [www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4595072.stm](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4595072.stm)  
Black, middle class and invisible accessed 15.02.2014.

Back, L., & Solomos, J. (2007). *Theories of Race and Racism, A Reader*. Routledge.

Ball, S.J., Gewirtz, S., Bowe, R., Markets, (1995) *Choice and Equity in Education*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Ball, S.J., Bowe, R., & Gerwitz, S. (1995). 'Circuits of Schooling a Sociological explanation of parental choice of school class contests'. *The Sociological Review* 43 (1):52-78.

Ball, S.J. (2003). *Class strategies and the educational market: the middle classes and social advantage*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Ball, S.J. (2008). *The education debate*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ball, S.J. (2010). "New Class Inequalities in Education: why education policy maybe looking in the wrong place! Education Policy, Civil Society and Social Class", *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 30 (3/4), 155-166.

Ball, S.J., Vincent, C., (1998). I heard it on the grapevine: Hot knowledge and school choice, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 19 (3) 377-400.

Ball, S.J., Rollock, N., Vincent, C., & Gillborn, D. (2013). Social mix, schooling and intersectionality: identity and risk for Black middle class families. Research Papers in *Education*: 1–24.

Bankston, CL., III & Zhou, M. (2002). Social capital as process: the meaning and problems of theoretical metaphor. *Sociological Inquiry*, 72(2), 285-317.

Barbarin, O. (1983). Coping with ecological transitions by Black families: A psycho-social model. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 11, 308-322.

Benson, M., & Osbaldiston, N. (2014). *Understanding Lifestyle Migration*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Bennett, T and Silva, E.B. (2006) Cultural Trends: An introduction to cultural capital and inequality. *Cultural Trends*, 15(2-3): 87-106.

Blackburn, R. (2003). The concept of capital: Sense and Nonsense', paper presented to SSRG Conference, Cardiff 2003.

Bodovski, K. (2010) 'Parental practices and educational achievement: social class, race and habitus'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 31 (2):139-156.

Boliver, V. (2013).How fair is access to more prestigious UK universities? *The British Journal of Sociology*, 64 (2): 344-364.

Bornstein, M.H. (2005). *Positive parenting and positive development in children*. In Lerner, R.M., Jacobs, F., & Wertlieb, D. (Eds.) pp 155 -83.



Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The State Nobility Elite Schools in the field of power*. Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed), *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp.241-258), 2005. New York: Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*. Standford: Standford University Press.

Bourdieu, P., and Passeron, J. (1977) cited in Fowler, B. (1997) *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations*.(London: Sage).

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1999) *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bowling, B. and Phillips, C. (2002) *Racism, Crime and Justice*, Harlow: 8 Longman.

Branven, J. and Nilsen, A. (2007) 'Young people, time horizons and planning: a response to Anderson et al', *Sociology*, 41,(1):153-60.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2):77-101.

Burgess, R G. (1984). Autobiographical accounts and research experience. In R. G. Burgess (ed.), *The Research Process in Educational Settings: Ten Case Studies*, pp.251-270. Lewes: The Falmer Press. Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Burt, R. (1992) *Structural Holes*. Cambridge MA Harvard University Press.

Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. USA: Routledge.

Butler, T and Hamnett, C. (2010) 'You take what you are given: the limits to parental choice in education in East London', *Environmental Planning* 42:2431-2450.

Butler, T and Hamnett, C. (2011) *Ethnicity, Class and Aspiration*. The Policy Press.

Butler, T. (1996) *Gender as performance*. In Osborne P (ed), *A critical sense: interviews with intellectuals*. London: Routledge.

Butler, T and Hamnett, C. (2007) The Geography of Education: An Introduction to urban studies: *Special issue on The Geography of Education*, 44, (7): 1161-1174.

Butler, T and Hamnett, C. (2012) Praying for success? Faith schools and school choice in East London. *Geoforum*, 43, 1242-53.

Butterfield, Sherri-Ann. "Black and British, but Definitely not English: Race and Racism in British Immigration." Conference Papers – American Sociological Association (2005): 1-28. SocINDEX with Full Text. EBSCO. 3 Jan 2010 <http://search.ebscohost.com>. Accessed 28.11.2014

Byrne, B. (2009) "Not just class: towards an understanding of the whiteness of middle-class schooling choice." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32, (3): 424-441.

Carter, P.L. (2003) Black Cultural Capital, Status Positioning, and the Conflict of Schooling for Low-Income African American Youth. *Social Problems*, 50, (1):136-155.

Casey, J. G cited in 'Deconstructing aspiration' UK Policy debates and European policy trends by K Spoher, in *European Education Research Journal* ,10, (1) Accessed 28.11.2014.

Cashmore, E. (2003) "Ethnicity" *Encyclopaedia of Race and Ethnic Studies*. Ed. Ellis Cashmore. London: Routledge.

Chao R. K and Clutter M, O. (2011) Racial and Ethnic Differences: Sociocultural and Contextual Explanations *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 2011 Society for Research on Adolescence.

Champion, T. (2005) *Population movement within the UK. In Focus on People and Migration* (ed. R. Chappell), pp. 91–113. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Christian Research Think Tank (2006) *Minorities prop up church going* <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5349132.stm> accessed 14.6.2011.

Clapson, M. (2003) *Suburbanization of Blacks, Asians and Jews in Suburban Century: Social change and Urban Growth in England and USA*. Oxford.

Clark, K and Drinkwater, S. (2007) *Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market: Dynamics and Diversity*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Coleman, J. C. (1984). *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Belnap Press.

Coleman, J. C. (1988). 'Social capital in the creation of human capital' *American Journal of Sociology* 94: 595-5120.

Cornwall, S. and Hartman, D. (2007 2<sup>nd</sup> ed) *Ethnicity and race: Making identities in a changing world*. Finge Press.

Cox, D. D. (2005). Evidence-based interventions using home-school collaboration. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 20(4), 473-497.

Crenshaw, K. (1989): 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', University of Chicago Legal Forum: 139-167.

Croll, P, Attwood, G (2013) Participation in HE: Aspirational Attainment and Social background. *British Journal of Education Studies*, 61, (2).

Crozier, G. Reay, D. James, D. Jamieson, F. Beedell, P. Hollingworth, S. Williams, K. (2008) White Middle Class Parents, Identities, Educational Choice and the Urban Comprehensive School: Dilemmas, Ambivalence and Moral Ambiguity. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. 29 (3):261-272

Daye, S, J. (1994) *Middle class blacks in Britain: a racial fraction of a class group or a class fraction of a racial group?* St Martin's Press.

de Certeau, M. (2002) 'Walking in the City, in chapter 11 in. *The practice of everyday life* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) University of California Press.

Delgado, R and Stefancic, J. (2001) *Critical race theory: an introduction*. NY University Press.

Dennis, N, Erdos, G and De-Shahi, A (2000) *Racist Murder & Pressure Group Politics*, London: Civitas.

Devine, A. (2005) Rethinking Bourdieu on race: A critical review of cultural capital and habitus, *The Sociology of Education Qualitative Literature*, May 2005.

Devine F, Savage M, Scott J, Crompton R, (2005) *Rethinking Class, Culture, Identities and Lifestyles*. Palgrave Macmillian.

Devine, F. (2004) *Class Practices. How Parents Help Their Children Get Good Jobs*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

DfES 2004a; Youth Cohort Study (YCS) 2004.

DfES 2005a; Youth Cohort Study (YCS) 2005.

DuBois W.E.B (1961) *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays & sketches*. New York: Fawcett World Library. Educational Attainment and Race in the United States. Stanford, CA: Stanford.

Evans, S. (2010) 'Becoming somebody': working-class girls and higher education' Thesis from University of Kent

Evangelical Alliance <http://www.eauk.org/church/one-people-commission/stories/black-and-ethnic-christians-lead-london-church-growth.cfm> accessed 8/12/2014.

Fanon, F. (1967) *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Press.

Field, J (2003). *Social Capital*. London: Routledge.

Finch, J, (1984b) It's great to have someone to talk to, the ethics and politics of interviewing women, *Social Policy* 13 1:1-120

Finney, N. and Simpson, L. (2007). 'Internal migration and ethnic groups: evidence for the UK from the 2001 Census'. Report, Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research.

Finney, N. and Simpson, L. (2008). 'Internal migration and ethnic groups: evidence for Britain from the 2001 Census'. *Population Space and Place*, 14:63–83.

Fontana, A. and Frey, J. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N.Denzin and Y.Lincoln (Ed.s), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd Ed.), and London: Sage: 645-72.

Foster, J. (2005) Assessing the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Home Office Research Study 294 Development and Statistics Directorate.

Fowler, B. 1997 *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations*, London: Sage.

Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. NY: Free Press.

Fuller, C, (2014) Social capital and the role of trust in aspirations for Higher Education , *Educational Review*, Vol 6, Issue 2.

Fuller, C. (2009) *Sociology, Gender and Educational Aspirations*. Continuum International Publications.

Furstenberg, F. & Kaplan, S. (2004) Social Capital and the Family. In Scott, J.Treas, M. Richards, J. Scott and J Treas (Eds) *Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Families*, Sage.

Gibbs, G. (2007) *Analysing Qualitative data, part of the Qualitative Research Kit*, ed. U. Flick, Sage, London.

Gilchrist, A. (2004) *The well-connected community: A networking approach to community development*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

Gillborn D and Youdell D (2000) *Rationing Education*. Buckingham: OU Press

Gillborn, D (2002) Inclusive schooling in Multi Ethnic schools. In: *Developing Inclusive Schooling: Perspectives, Policies and Practices*. Institute of Education, University of London, London, pp. 54-71.

Gillborn, D (2008) *Racism and Education: Coincidence or conspiracy?* Routledge.

Gillborn, D. & Gipps, C. (1996) Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority Pupils. Report for the Office for Standards in Education. London, HMSO.

Gillborn, D. (1995) *Racism and Antiracism in Real Schools: theory, policy, practice*. Buckingham: OU Press.

Gillborn, D. (2005) Education policy as an act of white supremacy: whiteness, critical race theory and education reform, *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(4): 485-505.

Gillborn, D. and Mirza, H.S. (2000), *Educational Inequality: Mapping Race, Class and Gender: A Synthesis of Research Evidence*. Office or Standards in Education.

Gillies, V (2005) 'Raising the meritocracy: parenting and the individualization of social class', *Sociology*, 39(5):835-853.

Gilroy, P (1987) *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*. Routledge Publications.

Gilroy, P (1995) "Diaspora Crossings: Intercultural and Transnational Identities in the Black Atlantic." *Negotiating Identities: Essays on Immigration and Culture in Present-Day Europe*. Ed. Aleksandra Ålund and Raoul Granqvist. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 105-130.

Goldthorpe, J. (2003) *'The Myth of Education-Based Meritocracy'*, *New Economy*, London IPPR.

Goulbourne, H. and Chamberlain, M. (2001) *Caribbean Families in Britain and the Trans-Atlantic World*, London and Oxford: Macmillan Press, Caribbean Studies.

Goulbourne, Harry. "Exodus? Some Social and Policy Implications of Return Migration from the UK to the Commonwealth Caribbean in the 1990s." (1999) *Policy Studies* 20 (3):157.

Grenfell, M (2008). *Pierre Bourdieu, Key Concepts*. Acumen Publications.

Guillen, R. Collins, P. England, & M. Meyer, *The new economic sociology: Developments in an emerging field* (pp. 303-329). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Gutman, L.M and Akerman, R. (2008) Determinants of Aspirations. Centre for Research on the wider benefits of learning research. Report 27.London IOE.

Hall, S (1978) *Five Views of Multi-Racial Britain*, CRE London.

Hall, Stuart. (1992) *'New Ethnicities' in 'Race', Culture and Difference*, James Donald, James, and Ali Rattansi, eds. London: Sage.

Hammond, P. *Black Britain and the Politics of Race in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. *History Compass* 2014.

Hart, C (2014) Aspirations, education and social justice: applying Sen and Bourdieu in *British Journal of Sociology of Education* vol 35, 1, 2014. Accessed 28.11.14.



Harker, J. [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jun/05/black-middle-class-prejudice](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jun/05/black-middle-class-prejudice) accessed 10.6.2014.

Hays, S (1996). *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Higher Education Statistical Agency  
[www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1897/239/](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1897/239/) accessed 10.04.2014

Hodkinson, P. and Sparkes, A. C. (1997) Careership: a sociological theory of career decision making. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18, 29–44.

hooks, b (1989) *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. South End Press.

hooks, b (1992) *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

hooks, b (1996) *Killing Rage Ending Racism*, London: Penguin Books.

hooks, b (2000) *Where we stand: Class Matters*, Routledge.

Hughes, C. *Key concepts in Feminist theory and research (2002)*. Sage publications Ltd.

Hylton, K. *'Race' and Sport: Critical Race Theory*, (2008), Taylor & Francis

Ignatiev, N and Garvey, J. (1996) *Race Traitor*. New York: Routledge.

Irwin, S and Elley.S (2013) Parents' hopes and expectations for their children's future occupations. *The Sociological Review*, Vol 61, Issue 1, pp 111-130.

Jackson,E and Benson M (2014). Neither 'Deepest, Darkest Peckham' nor 'Run-of-the-Mil' East Dulwich: The Middle Classes and their 'Others' in an Inner-London Neighbourhood. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38(4):1195-1210.

Jenkins, R (1992) *Key Sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu*. Routledge.

Jones EL & Snow SJ (2009) *Against the odds: Black and minority ethnic clinicians in Manchester*, Carnegie; 2010.

Johns.L (June 2011) The Telegraph.  
[www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/8590456/Will-we-ever-have-a-black-prime-minister.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/8590456/Will-we-ever-have-a-black-prime-minister.html)

Kamya.H. (2005) African immigrant families. In M. McGoldrik, J. Giordano & N Garcia-Preto (eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (35th ed, 101-116)

Kerr, Sandra et al. (2010) 'Aspiration & Frustration', Race for Opportunity, London: RfO.

Kerr, Sandra et al. (2011) 'Race into Higher Education': 2011 Update, Race for Opportunity, London: RfO.

Kerr, Sandra et al. (2014) 'Race at the top', Race for Opportunity, London: RfO.

Khattab, N. (2003), Explaining Educational Aspirations of Minority Students: The role of Social Capital and Students' Perceptions. *Social Psychology of Education* .32 (2).

Khoo, S.T. and Ainley, J. (2005). *Attitudes, Intentions and Participation*. LSAY.

King, P.E & Furrow, J. L. (2004) Religion as a resource for positive youth development: Religion, social capital moral outcomes, *Development Psychology*, 40, 703-713.

Kotchick, B.A, Forehand, R. Putting Parenting in Perspective: A Discussion of the Contextual Factors That Shape Parenting Practices *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 11, (3): 255-269.

Kvale, S. C (2009 3<sup>rd</sup> ed) *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Sage.

Lacy, K. (2007) *Blue-Chip Black: Race, class and status in the new Black middle class*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Ladson-Billings, (2005) *New Directions: complexities, Boundaries and Critical race theory*. In JA Banks & Banks Eds Handbook of Race, pp50-65. San Francisco: Jossey Bass

Lamont, M, and Lareau, A (1988) "Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Gilissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments". *Sociological Theory* (6)2: 153-168.

Lamont, M. (1992) *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper – Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lamont, M. (2000) *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and Boundaries of Race, class and Immigration*. Harvard University Press.

Lareau, A, (2002) Invisible inequality: Social class and childrearing in black families and white families. *American Sociological Review*, 67(5), 747-776.)

Lareau, A. (1987) 'Social class differences in family-school relationships: the importance of cultural capital', *Sociology of Education*, 60:70-75.

Lareau, A. (2003) *Unequal childhoods: Class, race and family life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lawrence, C.R. III, The Id, The Ego, and Equal Protection: Reckoning with Unconscious Racism, 39 STAN. L. REV. 317,322 (1987)

Lees, S. (1993) *Sugar and Spice: Sexuality and Adolescent Girls*. Harmondsworth Penguin.

Leonardo, Z. (ed) 2005 *Critical Pedagogy and Race*. Malden, MA:Blackwell.

Li, P. (2004) Social Capital and Economic Outcomes for Immigrants and Ethnic minorities. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 5 (2), 171-190.

Lievesley N, The Future Ageing of the Ethnic Minority Population of England and Wales, CPA / Runnymede, 2010.

Lin, Nan, Walter M. Ensel, and John C. Vaughn. 1981. "Social Resources and Strength of Ties: Structural Factors in Occupational Status Attainment." *American Sociological Review* 46: 393-405.

Lovell, T. 2000 'Thinking Feminism with and against Bourdieu', *Feminist Theory* 1(1): 11-32.

Mackintosh, M. (2005) 2001 Census: The migration patterns of London's ethnic groups, DMAG Briefing Paper 2005/30, Greater London Council Data Management and Analysis Group, Greater London Council, London.

Macpherson, W. (1999), The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, Cm4262-1, London: Home Office.

- Majorbanks K (2002) *Family and school capital: Towards a contexts theory of students' school outcomes*. Springer science & Business Media Dordrecht.
- Mann, M (1993) *The Rise of Classes and Nation States, 1760-1914 of classes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mason, J, (2002) *Qualitative Researching*. Sage Publications.
- Marx, K. and Engels, F. ([1859], 1969) *Selected Work*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Matsuda M L, Delgado C, K Crenshaw (Eds) (1993) *Words that wound: critical race theory, assaultive speech and the first amendment* Boulder CO Westview Press.
- Matthews, J. (2002) Racialised Schooling, 'Ethnic Success' and Asian-Australian Students. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23, 2, 193-207.
- Maxwell, C., & Vincent, C. (2015). Parenting priorities and pressures: furthering understanding of 'concerted cultivation'. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*.
- May, T, (2001) *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*, The Open University Press.
- Maylor, U. & Williams, K. (2009) Black middle-class parents' accounts of managing their children's education. Paper presented to the British Educational Research Conference. University of Manchester.
- McAdoo, J, L. (1993) The roles of African-American fathers: An ecological perspective. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 74 Services, 74(4): 28-35.

McCall, L (1992). "Does Gender Fit? Bourdieu, Feminism, and Conceptions of Social Order." *Theory and Society* 21: 837-867.

McClelland, K. (1990) Cumulative disadvantage among the highly ambitious. *Sociology of Education*: 63 (2):102-121.

McNay, L. (2000) *Gender and Agency: Reconstituting the subject in Feminism and Social Theory*. Wiley.

Melendez L. (2005) Parental beliefs and practices around early self-regulation: the impact of culture and immigration. *Infants and Young Child*.18 (2):136-46.

Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mirza, H. (1992) *Young, Female and Black*. London: Routledge.

Mitton, L. and Aspinall, P.J. (2010). Black Africans in England: A Diversity of Integration Experiences. Stillwell, J. and Ham, M. van eds. *Ethnicity and Integration*. Springer, London, pp. 179-202.

Modood, T (1993) The number of ethnic minority students in British higher education: some grounds for optimism, *Oxford Review of Education* 19:167-182.

Modood, T., Berthoud,R., J., Nazroon, J Smith, P Virdee S and Beishon, S (1997). *Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage* (London, Policy Studies Institute).

Mohood, T. (2004) Capitals, Ethnic Identity and Educational Qualifications. *Cultural Trends*,13 (2), No 50 (June).

Mohood,T et al, (2005) *Ethnicity, Social Mobility and Public Policy, comparing the USA and UK*. Cambridge Press.

Moi. T (1991), "Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture" *New Literary History* 22.4:1017-1049.

Monkman K., Ronald, M. and Théramène, F. D. (2005) Social and Cultural Capital in an Urban Latino School Community. *Urban Education* 40,(1): 4-33.

Moore, K. (2008) 'Class formations: competing forms of Black middle class identity' *Ethnicities*, 8 (4): 492-517.

Morgan (2005), Morgan, S. L. *On the Edge of Commitment*: Stanford University Press.

Morrow, V. (1999) 'Conceptualising social capital in relation to the well-being of children and young people: a critical review' *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 47(4):744-765.

Muller C and Ellison C (2001) Religious involvement, social capital and adolescent's academic progress: Evidence from the National Longitudinal study of 1988 *Sociological Focus* 34:155-83.

Murji, K and Solomos, J (2005) *Racialisation: Studies in Theory and Practice*. Oxford University Press.

National Audit Office (NAO), *Widening Participation in Higher Education in England*, January 2002

National society guidance. Briefing for local authorities and other partners on Church of England involvement in secondary school and academy development and improvement. February 2008 Revised October 2008 <https://www.churchofengland.org/.../academy%20dev>. Accessed 10/12/14.

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing feminist research* (pp. 30-61). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Olwig, K and Sorensen, N (2004) *Work and Migration: Life and Livelihoods in a Globalizing World*. Taylor and Francis.

Omotayo, D.M. (2008). The state of university education and academic excellence in Nigeria. *Journal of qualitative education*. 4(4), 14-19.

ONS (Office for National Statistics) (2001) NS-SEC classification Available: <http://statistics.gov.uk> accessed 14.6.2011.

ONS (Office for National Statistics) Office for National Statistics (2001) The Super Output regions Available: <http://statistics.gov.uk> accessed 14.6.2011.

ONS (Office for National Statistics) (2004a) The national statistics socio-economic classification.

Opie, C (2004) *Doing educational research*. Sage publications.

Oria, A., Cardini, A., Stamou, E., Kolokitha, M., Vertigan, S., Ball, S. and Flores-Moreno, C., (2007), 'Urban education, the middle classes and their dilemmas of school choice', *Journal of Education Policy*, 22 (1): 91-106.

Osler, A and Vincent, K (2003) *Girls and Exclusion: Rethinking the Agenda*. Taylor & Francis.

Owolabi, R.O. (1999). *Effective parenting: strategies that works and mistakes*. U.S.A Bob & Bob Publications.

Pahl, J (1989) *Money and Marriage*. New York. St Martin's Press.

Panayi, P. (2014) *Fish and chips: a history*. London: Reaktion Books.



Pattillo-McCoy (1999) *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class*, The University of Chicago Press.

Patton, M. Q. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Sage Publications.

Payne, G (2006) *Social divisions*. Palgrave Macmillan

Phillips, D. (1998) Black Minority Ethnic concentration, Segregation and Dispersal in Britain *Urban Studies* 35:1681-1701.

Platt, L. (2005), *Migration and Social Mobility: The Life Chances of Britain's Ethnic minority Communities*. Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Policy Press.

Platt, L. (2009) *Ethnicity and family. Relationships Within and Between Ethnic Groups: An Analysis using the Labour Force Survey*. London: EHRC & Institute for Social & Economic Research, University of Essex.

Platt, L. (2007) Making Education Count: The Effects of Ethnicity and Qualifications on Intergenerational Social Class Mobility. *The Sociological Review*, 55 (3).

Platt, L. (2009) Nandi, A. Developing Ethnic Identity Questions for Understanding Society, the UK Household Longitudinal Study. Understanding Society Working Paper 2009-01. (44pp)

Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: its origins and application in modern sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 1-14.

Portes, A., & Mooney, M. (2002). Social capital and community development. M. F. Guillen, R. Collins, P. England, and M. Meyer. Sage.

Power, S., Edwards, T and Whitty, G (2003) *Education and the Middle Class*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Preston, J (2007). *Whiteness in Education*. Springer.

Quaglia, R.J and Cobb, CD (1996) Toward a theory of student aspirations. *Journal of Research in rural education* (12) :127-132.

Reay D (2004a) 'It's all becoming a habitus': Beyond the habitual use of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus in educational research Special Issue of British *Journal of Sociology of Education* on Pierre Bourdieu 25,(4): 431- 444.

Reay D (2004b) 'Mostly Roughts and Toughs' Social class, race and representation in inner city schooling *Sociology* 38(5):1005-1023.

Reay D (2006) The Zombie Stalking English Schools: Social Class and Educational Inequality *British Journal of Educational* 54(3):288-307.

Reay D (2008) Class out of Place: The White Middle Classes and Intersectionalities of Class and "Race" in Urban State Schooling in England in L Weis (ed) *The Way Class Works*, New York: Routledge.

Reay D, Crozier,G, James D, Holligworth S, Williams K, Jamisen F, Beedall P (2007) 'A Darker Shade of Pale?' Whiteness, the Middle Classes and Multi-Ethnic Inner City Schooling *Sociology* 41 (6):1041-1060.

Reay D, Crozier,G, James D, Holligworth S, Williams K, Jamisen F, Beedall P (2008) Re-invigorating democracy? White middle class

identities and comprehensive schooling, *Sociological Review* 56(2), 238-256.

Reay, D (2004c) Gendering Bourdieu's concept of capitals? Emotional capital, women and social class in L Adkins and B Skeggs (ed) *Feminism after Bourdieu*, Blackwell.

Reay, D Gendering Bourdieu's concept of capitals? Emotional capital, women and social class, in Adkins, L., & Skeggs, B., (2004) *Feminism After Bourdieu* Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

Reay, D. (2004d), Education and Cultural Capital: The Implications of Changing Trends in Education Policies. *Cultural Trends*, 13 (2):1-14.

Reay, D. (1998a) 'Always knowing' and 'never being sure': familial and institutional habituses and higher education choice. *Journal of Education Policy*, 13, 519–529.

Reay, D. (1998b) *Class work: mothers' involvement in their children's primary schooling*. London: University College Press

Reay, D. 1997 'Feminist Theory, Habitus, and Social Class: Disrupting Notions of Classlessness', *Women's Studies International Forum* 20(2): 225-233.

Reay, D, Crozier, G., & James, D. (2011) *White middle-class identities and urban schools*. London: Palgrave

Reay, D, M David and Ball, S (2005) *Degrees of Choice: social class, race and gender in higher education*: Trentham Books

Rees P. and Phillips D. (1996) 'Geographical spread: the national picture' in Ratcliffe P. (ed.) *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census - Volume 3: Social geography and ethnicity in Britain: geographical spread, spatial*

concentration and internal migration, Office for National Statistics, London, 23-110.

Regnerus, M., & Elder, G.H. (2003). Staying on Track in School: Religious Influences in High- and Low-Risk Settings. *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion*, 42, 633-649. *Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-10). Research Report no 41. Melbourne: ACER.

Rhamie, J, (2009) *Eagles Who Soar, How Black Learners Find Paths to Success*. Stoke-on-Trent. Trentham.

Richards (Eds), *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Families* (pp218-232), Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Riessman, Catherine Kohler. 1987. "When Gender Is Not Enough: Women Interviewing Women". *Gender and Society* 1:172-207.

Rikowdki, G (1997) *Higher education aspirations: a study of two colleges in Birmingham*, University of Birmingham.

Ritchie, J, Spencer, L and O'Connor W (2003) *Qualitative research practice*. Sage publications.

Roberts, Helen (ed) (1981) *Doing Feminist Research*. London: Routledge.

Robinson, RL. (1996) *Race, Myth and Narrative in the Social Construction of the Black Self*. Howard LJ, Heinonline.

Rogoff, B. (2003) Cultural ways of learning: Individual traits of repertoires of practice. *Educational Researcher*, 32(5):19-25.

Rollock, N (2007a)'Legitimising Black academic failure: deconstructing staff discourses on academic success, appearance and behaviour' *International studies in the Sociology of Education*, 17(3): 275-87.

Rollock, N (2007b) 'Why Black girls don't matter: exploring how race and gender shape academic success in an inner city school', *Support for Learning*, 22(4):197-202.

Rollock, N (2007c) *Failure by Any Other Name? Educational Policy and the Continuing Struggle for Black Academic Success*. London: Runnymede Trust.

Rollock, N., D. Gillborn, C. Vincent, and S. Ball. (2011) 'The public identities of the Black middle classes: Managing race in public spaces', *Sociology* 45 (6): 1078–93.

Rollock, N., Vincent, C., Gillborn, D and Ball, S (2013) "Middle class by profession": class status and identification amongst the Black middle classes', *Ethnicities*, 13(3): 253-75.

Rollock, N., D. Gillborn, C. Vincent, and S. Ball. (2014). *The Colour of Class, educational strategies of the Black middle classes*. Routledge.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2001 : 407) *Research methods for social work* (Fourth edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Savage, M. (2007) *Changing Social Class Identities in Post-War Britain: Perspectives from Mass-Observation*, University of Manchester Sociological Research Online 12(3)  
<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/12/3/6.html> accessed 12/12/14.

Savage, M. (2000), *Class Analysis and Social Transformation*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Savage, M. (2005a) 'Revisiting Classic Qualitative Studies', *Historical Social Research/ Historische Sozialforschung*, 30 (1): 118-139.

Savage, M. (2005b), 'Working class identities in the 1960s: revisiting the affluent worker study', *Sociology*, 39, 5, 929-946.

Savage, M. Bagnall, G., Longhurst, B.L., (2001), 'Ordinary, ambivalent and defensive: class identities in the North-West of England', *Sociology*, 35, 875-892.

Savage, M et al. A New Model of Social Class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment. *Sociology* 2013, 47 (2): 219-250.

Sayer, A, (2005) Class, Moral worth and Recognition, *Sociology* December, 39(5): 947-963.

Scott, D (1990) School experiences and career aspirations of Afro-Caribbean 15-30 year olds. CEDAR, University of Warwick, The Voice Newspaper.

Sewell, T. (1997), *Black Masculinities and Schooling: How Black boys survive modern schooling*, Staffordshire, Trentham Books.

Shiner, M and Modood, T (2002) Help or Hindrance? Higher Education and the Route to Ethnic Equality, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23(2): 209-232.

Silverman, D, (2006, 3rd ed) *Interpreting qualitative data: methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*. London: Sage.

Silverman, D. (2010), *Doing Qualitative Research*. Sage Publication Ltd.

Silverman, D. (2013) *Doing qualitative research* (Fourth edition). Sage.

Simpson, L. and Finney N (2009) spatial patterns of internal migration: Evidence of Ethnic Groups in Britain, *Population, Space and Place* 15:37-56.

Skeggs, B (2004b) *Class, Self, Culture*. London: Routledge.

Smith, G. (2003) Religion as a source of social capital in the regeneration of East London. *Rising East*. Vol 4.

Solomos, J. (2001) and Schuster, L, New Perspectives on Multiculturalism and Citizenship. In Special Issue of *Patterns of Prejudice*, 35(1), Solomos,

Solomos, J. (2003). *Race and Racism in Britain*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Solórzano, D. G. & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Critical Race Theory and Transformational Resistance: Chicana/o Students in an Urban Context. *Urban Education*, 36(3).

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Dillon, L. (2003) Quality in qualitative evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence. London: National Centre for Social Research.

Stevens, A. J (2007) *Review of Educational Research* June 2007, 'Researching Race/Ethnicity and Educational inequality in English Secondary Schools: A critical Review of the research literature between 1980 and 2005'. 77(2): 147-185.

Stillwell, J and Duke-Williams, O, School of Geography, University of Leeds. Paper prepared for the British Society for Population Studies Annual Conference at the University of Kent at Canterbury, 12-14 September 2005.

Stillwell, J. and Hussain, S. (2008). 'Ethnic group migration within Britain during 2000-01: a district level analysis'. Report, URL: <http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/wpapers/index.html> School of Geography, University of Leeds.

- Stillwell, J., Hussain, S., and Norman, P. (2008). 'The internal migration propensities and net migration patterns of ethnic groups in Britain'. *Migration Letters*, 5(2):135–150.
- Strand, S. (2007) M.E Pupils in the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) Department of Children, Schools and Families Research Report 002.
- Sullivan, A. (2002) Bourdieu and Education: How useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers? *Netherland Journal of Social Sciences* 38(2):144-66.
- Tate, W. F. (1997). Critical race theory and education: History, theory, and implications. In M. W. Apple (Ed.), *Review of Research in Education*, 22: 195-247.
- Taylor, B. (2005) The Experiences of overseas nurses working in the NHS: results of a qualitative study. *Diversity in Health and Social Care*, 2:17-27.
- The Economist (June 2006) [www.economist.com/node/7008651](http://www.economist.com/node/7008651)  
Kosher in the country accessed 14.07.2014.
- Thompson, L, and Walker AJ, Gender in Families: Women and Men in Marriage, Work, and Parenthood *Journal of Marriage and Family* .51, (4)(Nov1989): 845-871. Published by: National Council on Family Relations.
- Thornton, M. C. (1997). Strategies of racial socialization among Black parents: Mainstream, minority, and cultural messages. In R. J. Taylor, J. S. Jackson, & L. M. Chatters (Eds.), *Family life in Black America* (pp. 201–215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tomlinson, S. (2008) *Race and Education: Policy and Politics in Britain*. Berkshire: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill.



Trueba, H. T. (2002) Multiple Ethnic, Racial, and Cultural Identities in Action: From Marginality to a New Cultural Capital in Modern Society. *Journal of Latinos and Education* 1, (1): 7-28. University Press.

Unterhalter, E, Ladwig, J & Jeffrey, C (2014), 'Aspirations, education and social justice: applying Sen and Bourdieu' *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 35, (1):133.

Vincent, C. Rollock, N, Ball, S. and Gillborn, D. (2012) Being strategic, being watchful, and being determined: Black middle-class parents and schooling. Centre for Critical Education Policy Studies, Institute of Education, and London, UK Published online: 25 Apr 2012.

Vincent, C. and Ball, S. (2006) *Childcare, Choice and Class Practices*. London Routledge.

Vincent, C. and Ball, S. (2007) "Making up" the middle class child: families, activities and class dispositions', *Sociology*, 41 (6):1061-77.

Vincent, C. Rollock, N, Ball, S. and Gillborn, D. (2013a) Three generations of racism: Black middle class children and schooling', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34 (5-6):929-46.

Vincent, C. Rollock, N, Ball, S. and Gillborn, D. (2013b) 'Raising middle class Black children: parenting priorities, actions and strategies', *Sociology*, 47 (3):427-42.

Wacquant, L. (2008) *Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Wacquant, L. (2009) *Punishing the poor: The neo-liberal government of social in, insecurity*. London: Duke University Press.

Waldinger, R. (1996) *Still the promised city? African –Americans and new immigrants in post –industrial New York*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard, University Press.

Watt, P. (2008) 'Moving to a better place? Geographies of aspiration and anxiety in the Thames Gateway', in P.Cohen and M. Rustin (eds) *London's turning: the making of Thames Gateway*, Aldershot:Ashgate, pp149-167.

White, P (2007) *Education and Career Choice: A new model of decision making*. London Palgrave.

White, P. (2009) *Developing Research Questions*. London: Palgrave.

Williams.G. Filippakou O. (2010) Higher education and UK elite formation in the 20th century. *Higher Education*, No 59:1-20

Wohland. P. Ethnic population projections for the UK and local areas. University of Leeds School of Geography, 2010. .

Wright, C (2010) 'Othering Difference: framing identities and representation in Black students' schooling in the British context.' in the *Irish Education Studies Journal*, Special Issue, Race, Migration and Education, Vol,29, No3, September, 305-321.

Wright, C. Understanding Black academic attainment policy, discourse, educational aspirations and resistance. *Education Inquiry* , 4(1):87-102.

Yosso, T. J, (2006) "Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth". *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8, (1):69-91.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Interview research guide

#### Section A: Stories about where they live.

**Interviewer: I would like to start the interview by asking you about where you live and about your family**

1. How long have you been living in this area?

1.1 Where did you live before then?

2. What sort of accommodation do you live in compared to where you used to live? [*prompt: rented, mortgaged house or a flat*]

3. What were your main reasons for moving to this area?

4. How many people live in your house?

5. What are their ages and relationship to you? [would you mind telling me their names]

**“I would now like for you to tell me about your family history, family origin and their work patterns over time”.**

**Section B: Family history and social mobility and family origin:**

6. Were you born in the UK?

7. Are any of your extended family still living here?[where in the UK]

8. Why did your parents immigrate to the UK?

9. Where did they first live when they settled in the UK? [where are they now]

10. What was it like growing up in [country of origin]

11. What sort of links do you have back in [country of origin]? [*prompt*; are those links to do with family, business or professional]

12. [*Show card*] Indicate on this card where you believe you are now (your socio-economic position) compared to when you fourteen years old?

**“Thanks for pointing that out to me. Let us now focus more on you and your educational background”**

**Section C: Education and work**

13. What did you want to be when you were a child?

14. What is your current profession?

15. Do you use your place of work to network professionally? [for CPD/other business opportunity]

16. Do you pursue network opportunities outside your work place?

17. Do you have role models? [identify if professional or personal]

18. Has your family background contributed to your (helped you to) progress in the UK? [prompt: in what ways?]

19. Have you had to make sacrifices in achieving your goals?

**“I would like to now ask you about your family role”**

**Section D: Class, ethnicity and gender roles:**

20. Do you consider your cultural values to be important in your parental role? [Prompt- How do you apply them? ]

21. Describe to me your family role in relation to the children?

[Prompt-do you think you make the key decisions about your child’s education?]

22. Between you and your partner who is more involved with extra curricula activities with your children? In your home, what sorts of issues are discussed in relation to the children? [prompt; example; housekeeping allowance, tutoring and leisure responsibilities]

23. Since moving to this area, do you feel your family role has changed in any way? [identify urban and suburban differences]

**“I am going to ask you some questions about your children and their education”**

**Section E: The Children and school choice**

24. You said you had X children what school do/es your child/ren go to?

[ages name of school (primary/secondary, comprehensive/grammar/private

FE/HE]

25. Do you think that moving here has benefited towards your children's

education?[urban /suburban preferences]

26. What are your aspirations concerning your children's future?

27. How are you encouraging your children to achieve their goals?

**“ I would like to ask you about your religious faith”**

**Section F: Religious faith:**

28. Do you practice a religious faith?

29. If yes where do you worship and do you use (name place of worship) to

network with members?

30. What role (if any) does your religious faith play in relation to your

child/ren's aspirations?

[If no, was that because of your family background /were you brought up in a non-faith family home or did you decide for yourself it was not for you?]

**“I have no further questions. Is there anything else you would like to raise or ask about before we finish the interview?”**

**Closing Comments:**

**Thank you and it has been very interesting finding out more about you and your family living (say the area). I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Can I just make sure that I spelt your name correctly?**

-You were born in (name the place)

-You have been living in (state the area) for (state the length of time)

-You have (state how many) children and their ages are (reconfirm ages)

-You and your partner's professional occupation is (reconfirm title of occupation)

-If I were to require more information on an answer you have kindly given would it be ok with you/your partner to call you at home or email you? What details would you prefer me to contact you on?

Thanks again for your time.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Identifying urban and suburban areas using the Super Output Area groups and clusters classification table**

There are seven supergroups, 20 groups and 53 subgroups which make up the classification. Table 3.1 shows us that each of the supergroups are divided further into groups and subgroups.

Particularly relevant to this research is **Supergroup 2**

This supergroup comprises three groups:

- Educational centres (two subgroups)
- Young city professionals (two subgroups)
- Mature city professionals (four subgroups)

As the name implies, SOAs and DZs in this supergroup can be found in most UK cities, with the largest concentrations in London, Birmingham and Manchester. Nearly eight per cent of the UK population lived in this supergroup in 2001, making this the supergroup which contained the fewest people. As might be expected, more people live in the young and mature city professional groups in London than in any other region of the UK.

**This supergroup** comprises two groups:

- Urban commuter (two subgroups)
- Affluent urban commuter (two subgroups)

16 per cent of the UK population lived in the urban fringe supergroup in 2001, more people who live in this supergroup live in South East England than in any other part of the UK. Likewise, this is the most common supergroup in South East England, and can be found, as the name implies, on the edges of towns and cities such as London. More people in the urban commuter group lived in North East England than in any other region of the



UK and South East England is the area in which to find people who live in the affluent urban commuter group.

**This supergroup 2** comprises three groups:

- Multicultural inner city (three subgroups)
- Multicultural urban (two subgroups)
- Multicultural suburbia (three subgroups)

Nine per cent of the UK population lived in this supergroup in 2001 and SOAs and DZs in this supergroup can be found in large cities in the UK, particularly in London, Birmingham and Manchester. Unsurprisingly the majority of people in this supergroup can be found in London and it is the most dominant supergroup in the city, particularly in north east, and parts of south and west London. Because of this strong London connection, it is also the region in the UK with the most people in each of its groups, although the West Midlands contains more people than London in two of the eight subgroups in the supergroup.

This supergroup contains much higher proportions of people of Black Caribbean, Black African, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicity<sup>3</sup> than the UK average. Population density is high, as is the number of people per room, the proportion of unemployed and the proportion of households who rent their home from the council or housing association. The majority of dwellings in the multicultural city life supergroup are either flats or terraced houses and the proportion of detached houses is particularly low. Similarly far fewer households have two or more cars and far more people use public transport to get to work nationally.

## **Appendix 3a**



School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research

### **Research information sheet**

#### **Research Title: Black professional parents' aspirations for their children**

My name is Barbara Adewumi and I am conducting a piece of research on aspirations for my PhD study. I would like to interview you about where you reside, your resources and networking process and how that might help you to plan and strategize your goals for yourself, family and for the future of your child/children.

I would like to ask you some questions about your background, your education, some experiences you have had and issues that are important to you for your child/children. The purpose of this research is to help me learn more about how families plan for the future and how families make use of their social networks and resources.

I hope to use this information to gain a greater understanding of the differences within Black minority groups in the South East in relation to aspirations.

The interview will be digitally recorded so that I do not overlook any information whilst taking notes. Once the study is finished this recording and transcript will be stored and protected in the UK Data Archive collection or other research collection for any further research. You will not be identifiable in any part of the study and you will remain anonymous. It is entirely up to you whether or not you want to take part there is no obligation on your part. If you decide to take part but change your mind you are free to withdraw your consent at any time. The interview will be approximately one hour. If after the PhD research study you would like to know the key findings I would be happy to send you an executive summary or an abstract.

**Researcher's contact details:** For any questions or more information concerning this research you may contact me, Barbara Adewumi by email call on.....

### **Appendix 3b**

University of  
**Kent**

School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research



# **Do you encourage your child to aspire?**

**Professional African and Afro-Caribbean PARENTS  
NEEDED to participate in a face to face interview  
about building and planning their child's aspirations.  
It will only take one hour or so of your time.**

**For more information: \*\*\*\*\* or call me on**

## **Appendix 3c**

### **Interview Consent Form**

**University of Kent, Department of Sociology- Social Policy and Social Science Research.**

**Informed Consent for Participation as a Subject in a Student Research Study**

**Title: Black professional parents' aspirations for their children**

#### **Introduction:**

You are being asked to be in a research study. Please read this form and ask any questions before agreeing to be part of this study.

#### **Purpose of Study:**

The purpose of this study is to learn more about black professional families living in and outside the City of London. Do families living in these two areas use the same strategies and social networking methods to achieve their goals and help create ways for their children to aspire?

The total number of subjects is expected to be 30 participants.

#### **Description of Study Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, I will arrange with you an agreed interview time and venue (this can be at your home or a quiet alternative venue). The interview will be approximately one hour. The interview will be digitally recorded and will remain confidential.

#### **Risks to Being in Study:**

There are no reasonable or expected risks from participating in this study.

Benefits of Being in Study:

There are no expected external benefits of participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

The audio digital recordings of the interview will be kept in a secure office your name will be replaced by a pseudonym and all transcripts will be destroyed once completing this study.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:

Your participation is voluntary and you are able to refuse to continue during the interview if you feel it is no longer appropriate.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Barbara Adewumi. For questions or more information concerning this research you may contact me on \*\*\*\*\* or email on \*\*\*\*\*.

Copy of Consent Form:

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records and future reference.

Statement of Consent:

Consent/Assent: I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form. An explanation of the research has been given to me and I have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form.

Signatures/Dates: Study Participant:

Print and sign your name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_