Black African students and the art and design education space: *Narratives of journeys to Higher Education art and design*

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research, with a narrative inquiry approach, focuses on the Black African sector of our community and explores how Black African students access, enter and progress through HE Art and Design and what facilitates this progress. It also questions what limiting barriers are visible in the art and design educational journeys of the participants in the study and to what extent these barriers have had an impact on the participants' educational journeys. As a result, this study has included both students and graduates who studied art and design at Higher Education (HE) as well those who considered studying art and design at HE but chose not to.

Within this research I will define 'Black African' as all those who would situate their heritage as being sub-Saharan African as opposed to Caribbean. This study has analysed a range of narratives given by 14 participants of Black African heritage in regards to their experiences of access and entry to and progression in HE Art and Design. This is a small scale research project in which the focus is on depth of understanding and the production of rich data with thick descriptions. This research does not look to generalise to all Black African students, but to provide theoretical insight into the experiences of a small group of this population

Research on Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) HE art and design students overall and specifically Black African HE art and design students in the UK in terms of access, entry, progression, and overall HE experience is currently lacking in the field (Okon 2005), therefore this specific group is considered in order to bring it out of its anonymity within the field of HE Art and Design.

1   <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

This thesis is focused on understanding Black African students' participation in and experiences of HE art and design. Currently there is existing research looking at participation in and experiences of HE art and design for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students collectively, but none looking specifically at Black African students. The research has looked at this specific group as opposed to the wider BAME communities in order to bring it out of its anonymity within the field of Higher Education (HE) art and design. I would argue that this group deserves a more focused investigation than is generally offered to them, one that is sensitive to their cultural conditioning as well as their aspirations.

This study is a qualitative investigation into the educational experiences of a selected group of Black African art and design students and graduates (described throughout as students), who studied in a range of institutions across England. A total of 14 participants were interviewed and within this sample; 10 participants studied art and design up to Higher Education (HE), 2 participants studied art and design up to post-16, and 2 participants studied art and design up to GCSE (please see appendix 1 for participant demographics). All participants had experienced studying art and design in the UK in at least one of three levels of education; secondary, tertiary or HE (at HE the focus was on undergraduate level not postgraduate level).This research is a focused interpretation of participant voices and the experiences of unique individuals. There are limited generalisations to draw from this study; however there are recommendations that deserve consideration and interpretation.

My personal motivation for undertaking the research comes partly from having studied art and design at GCSE and A Level, and then completed an art and design foundation course and a degree in History of Art. It comes partly from having completed a PGCE in art and design and taught art and design at secondary school level for two years. I am therefore a Black African woman who has received an art and design education (my educational journey is discussed further on pg 100), and who has educated others in art and design. I was therefore very interested in hearing the educational experiences of Black African art and design students. In my art and design teaching journey I have seen and experienced the

challenges of working towards creating a more inclusive and diverse art and design educational experience for students. I recall during my PGCE year attempting to incorporate art and design from a diverse range of cultures into schemes of work. On the PGCE course we were encouraged and trained to challenge the pattern of largely 'dead white males' that were consistently taught in many art and design classrooms. One training school I was placed in appeared, on the surface, to be open to this, however in practice it proved much more difficult to deliver. This school had schemes of work that were predominantly Eurocentric in focus and the teachers were largely uncomfortable at the changes and interventions I wanted to make, preferring instead to continue to use their existing resources. This made it very difficult for me as a trainee teacher to include art and design from other cultures outside of the West, and instead I found myself consistently teaching *only* Western art and design to classes which had large numbers of BAME students. Despite wanting to challenge a Eurocentric curriculum I found myself adding to the educational experiences that these students could talk about, where their cultures were not recognised in the art and design classroom.

At the start of this research process, I anticipated that I would recruit research participants predominantly through emailing educational institutions (specifically art and design course leaders and subject tutors, student unions and Afro-Caribbean societies). I hoped to gain a large enough number of responses from at least one institution in order to do a case study. It was deemed practical and sensible to access my research sample from the universities where Black African art and design students were most likely to be studying (Bhopal 2010b). Therefore in the first instance when searching for participants, several HEIs which had been identified through HESA statistics as having large numbers of Black African art and design students consistently since 2006[i], were selected, contacted and asked to forward my research call for participants to their current students and alumni. However using this strategy revealed barriers to my research; in particular a refusal of access to potential participants. A number of institutions refused to send my research call to students; I recall one institution stating that university protocol deemed that they were not allowed to pass on my research call to students, another stating that my research call would distract students from their university work. Some institutions gave no response at all to my emails.

These issues regarding access to HE students, particularly the refusal of access, reflected experiences by Bhopal (2010b) when conducting research on Asian women in HE.

1.1   <u>**Rationale for study**</u>

Literature and research on BAME groups in HE has identified a tendency to treat BAME groups as one homogenous group, and highlighted that in order to better understand the HE participation of these groups they need to be seen as individual groups with different and varying cultural roles, identities and histories, and this needs to be considered when looking at patterns of participation in HE (Connor et al, 2004, Okon 2005, Mai Sims 2007, NUS 2011). As a collective group BAME students have often been referred to as high participants in HE (Connor et al, 2004, Runnymede 2010), and as a result of this it could be argued that there are no significant issues around BAME students' participation in HE. However closer inspection ascertains that there is a clustering of certain BAME groups in certain subject areas and a low representation of certain BAME groups in certain subject areas (Mai Sims 2007, Bhagat and O'Neil 2011, Connor et al 2004, Okon 2005). When statistics on BAME groups in HE are disaggregated it is possible to see patterns, and differences in and between groups emerging. For example statistics around Black students collectively, when disaggregated show that Black African students have a significantly lower percentage of participation in Creative arts and design courses at HE compared to the most popular, subjects allied to medicine (HESA 2010-11, 2011-12) (see appendix 4a and 4b).

Okon (2005) identified certain factors regarding low participation of BAME groups in HE art and design, these were; those of BAME backgrounds felt the arts were for the privileged few; there was a lack of BAME role models in the arts, and BAME students lacked encouragement from teachers and career advisors in pursuing careers in the arts. Connor et al (2004) looked at why there were differences in HE participation within BAME groups and also noted a number of factors which, can be taken into consideration when looking to understand participation rates for HE Art and Design for BAME groups. These were; due to the perception that BAME groups as a whole were over-represented in HE, Widening Participation strategies were not targeting them as a specific group, and for some BAME groups there appeared to be a 'parental steering' towards certain (professional and

vocational) courses. The work of Okon (2005) and Connor et al (2004) identified some key issues for consideration.

Research around BAME groups in the UK and their participation in and experiences of HE art and design is limited; the research in this area includes Okon (2005), Hatton (2009, 2012, 2013) and Theuri (2015). Okon's (2005) research compiled a comprehensive literature review which identified that as well as an under-representation of BAME groups in HE art and design, actual research and literature within this field was also greatly lacking. The review identified a gap in research on all BAME students and HE art and design and proposed clear recommendations based on current evidence at the time. The recommendations which highlighted the specific need for my research were; a need for qualitative research looking at factors influencing BAME participation/non-participation.

Hatton's (2009)[ii] research identified that art education had presented itself as Eurocentric, there was an existing 'whiteness' in the conceptualisation of art which had been transferred to the art curriculum, and Black students in the research had identified instances of racism and cultural stereotyping in their art educational experiences. Hatton (2012) investigated the development of a more diverse and inclusive HE art and design curriculum as a solution specifically to BAME participation, retention and in particular poor attainment by BAME students. Hatton (2013) looked at diversity and art and design education focusing on educational achievement, poor attainment by BAME students on art and design degree courses and the curriculum. The most recent literature in this field has been Theuri (2015) which has looked at art and design education through a Critical Race Theory framework[iii] as a method to highlight issues around race and inequality in the field, and within that it addresses the effects of racism on BAME student participation and experience. However none of the identified literature has focused specifically on Black African students, but rather on the BAME group as a whole. As yet there appears to be no work looking at *individual* BAME groups and their participation in and experiences of HE art and design in the UK.

Within this research the aforementioned findings, statistics, factors and recommendations have been considered in specific relation to Black African students and HE art and design.

The previous research findings discussed have lent to the notion that participation in and experiences of HE art and design is challenging, with a number of barriers affecting BAME students. Within this context, through exploring the underlying historical, cultural and contextual circumstances, and from the perspective of Black African art and design students who had to gain access to and then negotiate within the art and design higher educational space, this research considers and aims to understand; the extent of the complexity of participation in and experience of HE Art and Design , and the ways in which Black African students were able to enter, manoeuvre and negotiate into and within this educational space. This research has focused specifically on exploring the selected participants' journeys to studying, as well as not studying HE art and design, investigating how they found the experience and what could be learnt from their experiences. The research explores the barriers that have impeded participation in and experience of HE art and design for the research participants in this study, as well as the strategies that have facilitated their participation in and navigation within HE art and design.

It seeks to be a study that contributes much needed research on the experiences and participation of one of the BAME student groups in HE art and design. As a study it aims to amplify Black African student voices and to utilise qualitative research methods as a necessary tool in understanding the experiences of Black African students, because there is an understanding that they hold a lot of agency despite the disadvantages they face, and therefore have a lot of insight to share that could help improve experiences for themselves and other BAME groups in art and design education.

1.2   Research aims

The research aims are as follows:

- To gain understanding of the art and design educational experiences of Black African art and design students

- To provide a forum whereby Black African art and design students could narrate their perceptions and conceptualisations of their participation in and experience of

HE art and design, and thus to amplify the voices of Black African art and design students

1.3   Research questions

This study asks the following research questions;

- Have previously identified barriers within the process of recruitment and education impeded Black African students' participation in and experience of HE art and design?

- Are there unidentified barriers within the process of recruitment and education which have impeded Black African students' participation in and experience of HE art and design?

- Are there strategies within the process of recruitment and education which have facilitated participation in and navigation within HE art and design for Black African students?

- Is there advice and are there strategies which have been offered to Black African students which are fit and suited for the purpose of their participation and progression in HE art and design?

1.4   Outline of thesis

The thesis is organised into the following eight chapters.

Chapter 2 first begins by locating the research within it social, political and historical context, followed by an exploration of cultural diversity strategies in the art and design sector, as well as a focus on the understandings of art and design from within Black and

Black African communities, and lastly a review of the literature within the field of HE, HE art and design education is undertaken.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical frameworks that this research draws on which are primarily theory of reproduction, Critical Race Theory, theory of Multiculturalism, Afrocentrism and Post-Black theory. The theoretical frameworks discussed in this chapter present what have been identified as central understandings and explanations of the societal, political, cultural and economic elements that underline the experiences of Black African art and design students. They are deemed relevant because utilised collectively they bring to the forefront the intersectionality of issues around race and ethnicity, culture and class that exist within our society, and which ultimately affect Black African students.

Chapter 4 is the methodology chapter which outlines the research design; discussing and justifying the utilisation of a qualitative methodological approach with a focus on narrative research. This chapter also discusses the sampling of participants, data collection techniques, and the analytical approach taken to analyse the data.

Chapter 5 is a chapter which gives space for some the narratives of the research participants to be heard in their entirety through the creation of a summary synopsis of the participants' interviews. The function and the importance of this chapter is that it allows space for the participants' stories to be heard as more than quotes taken from the data, giving space for this is a key part of narrative research.

Chapter 6 presents research findings from the collected data. This section focuses on the key themes which emerge from the participants' narratives in regards to the barriers which impeded their participation in and experience of HE Art and Design. The findings are discussed in relation to the existing theory and literature within the field.

Chapter 7 also focuses on discussing research findings. This section focuses on key themes which emerge from the participant narratives in regards to the strategies that facilitated their participation in and navigation within HE Art and Design. The findings are also discussed in relation to the existing theory and literature within the field.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter and focuses on a discussion of the key findings from the data collected, closing with the study's contribution to new knowledge, its limitations and implications for future research.

1.5   Definition of key terms

Within this thesis the term *Black* is used to denote people of African heritage and Caribbean heritage. The term *Black African* is used to denote people who would situate their heritage as being sub-Saharan African as opposed to Caribbean. *BAME* is the term used to refer to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people collectively, whilst other known terms used to refer to BAME people, such as 'minority groups', 'minoritised groups', 'people of colour' are referred to when utilised by participants, writers and researchers respectively.

The research has concentrated on the generations who were either born or have grown up in the UK, as it is focused on specifically exploring the notion of Black African communities whose identities are located within the British context (Adu –Poku 2003).

This research is concerned with the place of race; that is being Black, and ethnicity; that is being of sub-Saharan African origin, within Black African students' participation in and experiences of HE Art and Design. Gunaratnam (2003) defines the two term as follows; 'race evokes a biological and genetic referent, and ethnicity refers to cultural and religious difference and kinship' (Gunaratnam 2003:4). The intersectionality of race and ethnicity is a key factor in this research, whilst being very much aware that Stuart Hall has argued that 'contemporary diasporic ways of life, and multiculturalism in particular, have served to disrupt the binary opposition between the biological and the cultural in the meanings of 'race' and ethnicity' (Hall in Gunaratnam 2003:4). Gunaratnam (2003) highlights that Hall does not see race and ethnicity as two separate categories, but as 'racisms two registers' (Gunaratnam 2003:5). However, this recognition of overlap between race and ethnicity can be problematic for researchers who need to consider and deal with 'specific relationships between our analytical categories' (Gunaratnam 2003:5). Gunaratnam poses key issues based around this challenge asking; how can we do research on race and ethnicity which is not 'reductionist' and which does not 'reify' the complex lived experiences of race and

ethnicity, yet also decide when to 'fix the meaning of racial and ethnic categories in order to do empirical research?' (Gunaratnam 2003:5)

With these questions in mind, which identify the challenges of the research I have conducted, the work of Gillborn (2008) becomes useful. Gillborn (2008) argues that when considering inequalities in education it is important to note that different minority ethnic groups can face racism and inequalities at different times and in different ways, highlighting that it is important to focus on similarities and interrelations, but also to be simultaneously aware of differences, amongst minoritised groups, in educational inequalities. This study therefore focuses on Black African art and design students, and whilst taking on board the contestations around race and ethnicity, the place that being Black *and* being African played in their participation in and experience of HE Art and Design. As Ashcroft (2006) argues despite its 'ubiquitous social category' race is a reality in contemporary life and ethnicity is important as a 'useful extension and complication of analyses of race' (Ashcroft 2006:5).

Within this study the term *art and design* includes both theory and practice based work, and the term *art and design education* covers fine art, design, craft and written theory.

2 <u>LITERATURE REVIEW</u>

2.1 <u>Introduction</u>

The purpose of this study is to explore Black African students' participation in and experiences of HE art and design. This chapter sets the social, historical and cultural context that Black African students' participation in and experiences of HE art and design are situated, and then outlines the existing research literature in the fields of HE and HE art and design in relation to Black African students.

The first purpose of this chapter is to contextualise and provide a background commentary of the cultural condition and history of the Black African sector of the British community. It is argued that these are factors that very much underline the current position of Black African communities and thus their educational aspirations. It is by understanding this area and the history behind it that one can begin to develop better insight as to Black African art and design students' participation in and experience of HE art and design.

The second purpose of this chapter is to provide an appraisal of the key literature in the field of Higher Education and Higher Education art and design in relation to Black African students, identifying relevant findings and recommendations and within this elucidating where the gaps in the field exist.

This review will be split into the following sections:

Section one will be a summary and discussion of the wider-context within which Black African students and their aspirations to HE art and design are situated. And within that it will explore; the historical, cultural and contextual circumstances affecting the Black African communities in Britain; cultural diversity strategies in the art and design sector and their impact on Black African communities; and the sociology of cultural participation of Black African communities.

Section two will consist of a summary, discussion and critical evaluation of previous and existing work in the field of HE and HE art and design, and consider within this issues around race, ethnicity and culture with an underlying focus on class. This section will concentrate on; existing research on Black African students' participation in and experience of HE, HE art and design, and Widening Participation strategies in HE art and design.

It should be noted that reference has been made to literary fiction in this literature review. It was felt necessary to utilise fictional literature to draw out issues around identity and belonging affecting Black and specifically Black African communities in Britain, such as that of Zadie Smith (2000) and Diran Adebayo (1996, 2005). It was deemed that limitations existed in academic literature in this field in that they did not fully address issues of identity and belonging for Black African students. Given these limitations it was necessary to expand the selection of sources for this literature review to include contributions of fiction and imagined narratives where such issues are addressed. Seeking out information around the experiences of African students within fictional literature has been employed by Manyika (2001) who found similar gaps in literature when researching experiences of African students studying in Britain and America. Renowned writers such as Toni Morrison have also demonstrated a use of academic studies with fiction and poetry as a way in which to give a more nuanced and perhaps more authentic reflection of the reality of the human condition and the Black experience. The important function of fictional literature in reflecting the realities of lives of migrants, such that it goes beyond being a creative outlet, has also been deliberated by McLeod (2004) who argues that

> 'Aesthetic practices are not confined or fully determined by the social circumstances within which they emerge. The resources which cultural creativity may offer the pursuit of political and concrete change are extremely valuable and can too quickly be dismissed as solipsistically poetic and experiential'. (McLeod 2004:15).

In addition fictional literature also gives evidence of the 'cultural dissidence of racially subordinated peoples', rather than being seen as creating utopian, imaginary and unrealistic examples of migrant experiences, it should be viewed as a space of 'tranfigurative politics' in which migrant groups contrast new and better possibilities against their current realities in which societal inequalities exist (McLeod 2004:16). Thus there is great interpretative value

in fictional literature of writers such as Adebayo and Smith as they demonstrate the human and socio-cultural conditions of immigrant and minoritised communities through their literature.

2.2   Historical, cultural and contextual circumstances affecting Black African communities in Britain

This section will examine what it means to be Black African in Britain by paying particular reference to the historical contexts that have shaped the Black African communities. Black Africans in 21st Century Britain are also greatly affected by what can be defined as the trans-generational impact, complexities relating to generations of Black Africans caught in and between cultures.

Over the years the contested and problematic terminologies of 'Black' and more recently 'Black African' (Daley, 1998, Aspinall 2011), have been used as indicative terms to try and define various groups. It is with an understanding of the problems related to the terms; that both 'Black' and 'Black African' have been used in the research when discussing those of African heritage. Within this review, literature will be explored and analysed in order to gain a clearer understanding of what it entails to be 'Black' and living in Britain, and more specifically to be 'Black African' and living in Britain.

The epochs of slavery, colonialism and imperialism have resulted in continuous connections between Black African people and Western countries. This connection namely in the form of migration, has facilitated the creation of Black African communities in the UK. The migration of Black African peoples has resulted in movements across borders and with new cultural landscapes being established. As a result, for immigrant groups, questions in relation to identity and belonging, as well as how host or mother countries have nurtured these groups' historical, cultural and emotional connections are not only developing in their pertinence but also in their complexity (Emecheta 1989, Oyedeji 2005, 2009, Vertovec 2010).

The diversity of the UK has resulted in a wide range of research looking at immigrant groups over the years. One of the key questions which is often debated is around the

representation of groups and cultures. Edward Said (1995) critiqued the West's dominance and implementation of power through looking, analysing, categorising and speaking for those who were considered too 'weak' and inferior to resist. Said referred to his book as a 'project' that questioned;

> 'How does one *represent* other cultures? What is *another* culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilisation) a useful one…? (Said, 1995: 325-326)

Said forced many to question what it meant to represent and speak for a culture, which had the right and authority to do so and what it meant for the group being 'represented'. He problematized 'the notion of a distinct culture' and the meaning behind such distinct groupings and coding. As mentioned earlier the terms 'Black' and 'Black African' have been and still are to some degree contested terms; questions such as those discussed by Said have also been debated by cultural critics Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy in relation to using the term 'Black' as way of defining a group of people. Hall and Gilroy have talked of a shift from identifying people as 'Black' in order to show an all-encompassing positive representation against the stereotype created by a European world into understanding that the term can and does have a complex range of positions, identities and experiences (Hall 1989, Gilroy 2004).

The complexities of identity and representation explored by Said, were also part of an interest in understanding the traces upon himself, 'the Oriental subject', by considering the 'the culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Oriental subjects' (Said1995: 25). Said talked of having been educated in the British colonies of Palestine and Egypt and in the United States, but despite his Western education he was always very much aware of 'being an Oriental and therefore aware of the 'traces' left upon him by the West. Similarly Frantz Fanon (1972) in *Black Skin White Masks* talked about the negative and painful emotions of becoming aware of oneself through the eyes of other races (as transparent and invisible). Said's awareness of the traces left upon him by the West and Fanon's awareness of self through the eyes of others, identify the problem faced by many who have been defined as 'other'. More specific to this research are Black Africans

in the UK who are dealing with the historical traces of 'other' bestowed upon them as a result of slavery, colonialism and imperialism as well as an awareness of the self as perhaps not belonging to the place they call 'home' and at the same time not belonging to the place that another may see for them as their 'home'.

Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* deals with the complex issues that are a part of the life of those who are 'second generation'. Smith (2000) describes an incident where one of the characters in her book, 'Millat' in a conversation with his primary school teacher is told to describe the type of music he likes. Millat identifies Bruce Springsteen, and his teacher's response is to ask Millat to identify instead a different type of music, one that is more in keeping with his 'culture'. In the novel the character of the primary school teacher assumes that she can define Millat, but is surprised to find that the 'culture' with which she thought Millat would relate to is not the one Millat had in mind. This results in Millat, who is of Bangladeshi origin but born in London, left feeling confused and uncomfortable unsure now what his culture should be. It could also be said that Millat, still a young boy, is in requirement of a complex set of negotiating roots he has not yet thought about. Smith (2000) cleverly articulates, framed within a specific educational context, the complicated feelings and emotions that minority ethnic groups including people from Black African backgrounds may experience as they try to negotiate in this in-between space.

In relation to this, when discussing Black Africans in Britain, Oguibe (1994) refers to their experience as 'our condition as perpetual outsiders' (xxiii), outsiders in a society that continually asks 'so where do you originally come from?' (xvii). By questioning certain groups in regards to where they originally come from, there lies a 'common assumption that Britain was ethnically homogenous before the major post-war migrations from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent in the mid-twentieth century' (Gillborn 2008:70). Whilst in fact BAME groups and Black African groups have been a part of Britain's landscape for many centuries (Daley 1998, Oguibe 1994, Gillborn 2008, Aspinall 2011). Oguibe (1994) identified and talked of a long African presence in the UK, specifically disclosing a historical Black African presence in Britain, arguing that 'archaeological and literary research indicates that Africans were in Britain long before the Anglo-Saxon incursion into the Isles' (Oguibe 1994:x). Literature such as that of Aspden (2008), further identifies stories of Black African

immigrants entering the UK during the 1950s, and provides a counter narrative to that which has tended to focus predominantly on the entry of Black Caribbean immigrants on the Empire Windrush with little mention of the entry and place of Black African immigrants during this period. When there is a focus on minoritised groups as one collective these histories are often neglected and therefore go untold.

According to Mitton (2011) between 1993 and 2003, 10 per cent of immigrants entering the UK came from sub-Saharan Africa. 'Official recognition' of this increased population and permanent settlement of the African population in Britain came in 1991 with the introduction of the ethnic category of 'Black African' to the census, although as discussed earlier Africans have been a part of British society for centuries (Daley 1998, Aspinall 2011, Oguibe 1994). Between 2001 and 2007 Black African communities had the second highest ethnic group population increase (Apsinall 2011) and according to recent population statistics (Office of National Statistics) the Black African population has surpassed that of the Black Caribbean population (Mitton 2011, Pears 2012). Yet despite this, literature on this group and their experiences in the UK compared to that of the Black Caribbean community is limited (Daley 1998, Lam and Smith 2009)[iv]. This was noted by Daley, in 1998, as partly due to a lack of data but that does not explain the lack of more current research, whilst Aspinall (2011) discussed the lack of research as due to the complexities of gaining data on such a wide and diverse group. Research on the Black African communities has often been generalised and subsumed within research on the Black Caribbean community, because of what has been seen as, according to Daley (1998) 'racial and cultural similarities', although exactly what these racial and cultural similarities were was not made clear by Daley.

Research around identity with African and Caribbean adolescents highlighted that there was a need to 'depart from conventional notions that equate each racial label with one culture and one identity' (Lam and Smith 2009:1248), and the importance of being aware of the historical and cultural factors that distinguished the two groups (African and Caribbean). The term 'Black African' has also been problematized as a limiting category in understanding the multitude of experiences and issues faced by this group (Aspinall 2011, Mitton 2011 and Parekh 2000). Aspinall (2011) called instead for research that explored how Black Africans defined themselves separate from census categories, identifying literature which discussed

issues relating to the use of the term 'Black' in reference to Africans, with some instead calling for Africans in Britain to use 'distinctive ethno-geographic identities such as Nigerian and Somali' in order to 'capture the wealth of diversity within the African-British community' (Aspinall 2011:45).These contestations around categories, labels and terms bring to the forefront the complex nature of this topic but also justify the proposition that Black African communities need to be understood as diverse and heterogeneous, encompassing many people from a range of different countries in Britain for numerous reasons (Daley 1998, Aspinall 2011, Mitton 2011).

One of these differences is around migration to the UK. Compared to the Black Caribbean community, whose biggest wave of migrants came largely for employment following a recruitment drive in the 1950s, the migration of Africans to Britain has been identified as more in response to political, economic and educational changes in their home countries (Daley 1998, Oguibe 1994). Although Africans had been in Britain from much earlier periods, it was in 20th century that their numbers showed a substantial increase as seafarers and seamen who then settled or as students 'seeking to further their education with the prospect of improved circumstances on the return home' (Daley 1998:1704). Initially the primary source for Black African migration to Britain was for educational purposes (Daley 1998, Lam and Smith 2009). The 1950s saw this migration for education increase in momentum, and according to Daley (1998) the most popular subjects among African students during this time were law, engineering, medicine and nursing, recent HE statistics show that Black African students are studying very similar subjects today. A second wave of migration for education came about in the 1970s mainly from Nigeria, where the oil boom meant many students were able to afford to study abroad. According to Daley (1998) a substantial proportion of these students settled in Britain due to a demand for their skills.

The majority of the early migrants coming to Britain for educational purposes were men, but by the 1990s the number of women migrating and settling in Britain had increased (Daley 1998). The emphasis and importance placed on education by Africans, where it is seen as 'the main route to higher social status', with many continuing with education into their adulthood longer than other ethnic groups, could be seen in the nineties where Black Africans were the most qualified ethnic group in Britain (Daley 1998)[v] and is still shared

today with Black Africans having high participation rates in HE. Lam and Smith (2009) noted the high educational expectations of Africans due to their history of migration for education, in contrast to 'young Caribbeans, especially boys' who they contended had 'a long history of educational underachievement and school disaffection' (Lam and Smith 2009:1251)[vi].

 As a result of political instability and human rights abuses, Africans also entered Britain in the 1970s, 80s and 90s as refugees, from countries such as Eritrea, Ghana, Uganda, Somalia, Angola, Congo and Nigeria. As noted by Daley (1998) the refugees who arrived first fared better than the later arrivals, often granted full refugee status and better equipped educationally and economically. The more recent arrivals often ended up forming some of the most deprived sections of the community, housed in undesirable locations, affected by 'changes in the immigration and asylum laws which aimed to restrict or deny welfare benefits, leaving many homeless and housed by charitable organisations' (Daley 1998:1705). Resulting in what Daley (1998) referred to as an 'underclass' of the unemployable and unskilled, with a poor command of English and very few job prospects (Daley 1998), this has also been discussed by Aspinall (2011) and Mitton (2011) with particular reference to Somalis. For many Africans whom previously had never seen the UK as a place of permanent settlement[vii], the political and economic instability of their home countries left them 'contemplating for the first time the prospect of retirement in the UK' (Daley 1998:1723)(Oguibe 1994). Lam and Smith (2009), similar to literature by Oguibe (1994) also noted differences in the way Africans identified with their host country, highlighting that African adolescents were less likely to identify with being British than Caribbean adolescents[viii]. Lam and Smith (2009) alluded to the longer permanent settlement of Caribbean community compared to the African community as a possible explanation, whilst Oguibe (1994) highlighted that in-fact few Africans came to Britain with intentions of permanent settlement .

The areas of settlement for Black Africans have close similarities to the Black-Caribbean community, mainly in areas separated from the white population and from other minority ethnic groups such as Pakistani and Bangladeshi (Daley 1998). Daley (1998) noted that the concentration of the Black African population to certain parts of the country was less to do with social status and more to do with ethnicity, with Black African communities

congregated particularly in London and in traditional working-class areas known for poor quality housing, industrial decline and high rates of unemployment (Daley 1998). Similarly to Black Caribbean groups, racism was also a major factor in determining where early Black African migrants lived with private landlords and public housing allocation restricting 'non-white groups to areas of low-quality housing' (Daley 1998:1716) with many perhaps seeing the locations where the Black Caribbean community had resided as a space in which they were welcome. Mitton (2011) on discussing the settlement of Black African groups together noted that this was often seen by governments as problem for integration, and both Mitton (2011) and (2009) were research endeavours concerned with the integration of Black African groups in the UK. However, given the racism and exclusion faced on arrival in Britain, living within the same areas provided much needed support networks, financially, socially and spiritually[ix].

As historically, there was no direct labour recruitment of Africans there are few traditional industrial sectors of Black-African employment, the exception being the National Health Service where many occupied low-status positions as support staff and caterers (Daley 1998) and more recently as nurses. Although many Black Africans were in professional occupations favouring in particular teaching, health, science and engineering (Daley 1998), a large number were unemployed or underemployed despite their educational qualifications (Oguibe1994, Daley 1998, Nzira 2011). However of all sub-Saharan African groups in the UK, the Somali group has been highlighted as the most disadvantaged both socially and economically with the lowest level of education and employment rate (Aspinall 2011, Mitton 2011).

Issues to do with identity and belonging are still prevalent and problematic as can be seen in reactions to the 2011 riots. The riots in the summer of 2011 initially started as a result of the death of Mark Duggan, who was shot dead by police; peaceful family protests against this were disregarded and this escalated into riots across England. Research has shown the riots escalated across the country as a result of anger at the death of Duggan, but also as a result of anger at government cuts and racist stop and search police procedures (Gillborn 2013). The aftermath of the riots saw Black people being negatively referred to in mainstream media as having intruded and created problems within British society by historian David

Starkey (BBC News 2011)[x] and in general as having caused unnecessary violence and disturbances (Gillborn 2013) with their initial concerns disregarded (Gabriel 2014). These negative opinions revealing perhaps that despite years of settlement the Black community and in this case Black Africans, are still dealing with issues related to being seen as 'outsiders'. A perception that extends and is evident, not only in reactions like the riots, but also in the educational experiences of Black Africans students.

Lam and Smith (2009) noted that in contrast to Caribbean groups whose longer settlement in Britain meant that they were more likely to have fostered a 'British or English Caribbean identity', young people of African origin as a result of the recent settlement of Africans were able to' trace their origins more directly to Africa through their African born parents' (Lam and Smith 2009:1264), thus strengthening their ties with Africa, particularly the adherence to cultural traditions (Nzira 2011). However, as the settlement period in Britain grows for African communities there may develop a group of young people who, similar to Caribbean generations in Britain, feel less of a connection to Africa (Emecheta 1989, Oyedeji 2005, 2009). This notion was highlighted by Mitton (2011) in regards to African adults being concerned that their children would be linguistically disconnected from their country as a result of speaking more English than an African language.

Young people of African origin living in the UK have been identified as being in a complex position, able to trace their origins more directly to Africa through their African born parents, resulting in expectations to adhere to cultural traditions but at the same time to also take on British cultures, British traditions, British education and ways of being which are seen, as a result of the legacy of colonialism, as the proper way to do things (Lam & Smith 2009, Mitton 2011, Oyedeji 2005). In struggling to find academic literature which deals with these issues I draw from literary fiction and the analysis of fictional literature. Diran Adebayo's semi-autobiographical *Some Kind of Black* explores the journey of Dele, British born and of Nigerian heritage as he manoeuvres the complicated terrain of identity and belonging in mid 1990s Britain. This is one of few texts that deal with the issues of being both British and African in great depth. The character of Dele comes from a home where he is expected to be the traditional African boy and thus maintaining African (Nigerian) traditions. Dele's father is portrayed as a parent struggling to comprehend his son's

'complexes' and wanting him to 'understand that (he is) African…It were better that (he) spent some time in Africa then (he) would know' (Adebayo, 1996:5). Similar to research findings by Mitton (2011) Dele's father worries about the disconnection between his child and his Nigerian heritage (Adebayo 1996).

Through Dele's reflections of his time at school and living within his local community, Adebayo (1996) invites the reader to contemplate issues around what it means to be Black African in the 1990s. In these environments Dele is required to take on Jamaican mannerisms in order to fit in, Dele reflects that 'where he was living almost everybody – Africans or Small Islanders – spent at least part of the time as a kid acting Jamaican. Life was easier that way' (Adebayo 1996:47). Whilst at school the idea of being African is one that is at times up for ridicule, Dele narrates that '…some Jamos (Jamaicans) used to dish out abuse about dark, ugly Africans' (Adebayo 1996: 47). But simultaneously Adebayo (1996) also presents the complexity of the situation through Dele's close friendship with the character of Concrete who is of Jamaican heritage, and forces the reader to see beyond a simple reading of the issue as Africans and Jamaicans in opposition.

Nine years later Adebayo's literature of 2005 then speaks of 'Post-Black' (Adebayo 2005). Post-Black is seen as the space where the fixed categories of Black, many of which were addressed in *Some Kind of Black,* become ever more fluid and intermingled, questioning the terms and the limitations of what it means to be Black. Adebayo (2005) alerts us to the contemporary relevance of the limited boundaries that can and have been placed on Black people, in regards to how they should act, speak and dress, as well as the cultural interests they should have (discussed further in chapter 3). And in questioning the term Black and what it means in terms of identity it then also becomes important to consider the multiple layers and variations that therefore make up what it is to be Black African, and within this, to question what limitations and boundaries are placed within the category of Black African. There is a need to talk to the Black African communities whose identities are located within the British context, and within this to develop deeper understandings of the historical, cultural and contextual circumstances affecting them as these factors very much underline their current position and thus their educational aspirations.

2.3   Engagement and Participation in art and design

2.3.1   Cultural diversity strategies in the art and design sector in the UK

'One of the important things accomplished by *The Other Story*[xi] was that it made clear that for many years, black artists have made significant though, often unacknowledged, contributions to modernist art. Young writes : The notion that it is somehow new that black people are immersed in artistic production is still very prevalent and must be a constant source of frustration to those who have been significant participants in the history of art without being credited' (Doy 2000:24).

'The average UK designer remains male, white and 38 years old. Only 7% of UK designers are from ethnic minority backgrounds' (Design Industry Research 2010:3)

The ways in which the Black African sector of our community engages with the art and design sector outside of formal education is a part of the wider context within which the aspirations, participation in or experience of HE art and design of Black African students are situated. The art and design sector and industries are the spaces that Black African art and design students will look to enter upon completion of their degrees, and also the spaces where they can gain information about future careers and progression in the art and design field. Therefore this part of the literature review will debate where cultural diversity strategies in the art and design sector currently fit with the Black African communities in relation to the formative experiences of past and currently practicing artists and designers as well as the pattern of attendance, participation and overall interest and engagement in art and design. This section will also discuss the ways in which cultural diversity strategies have been implemented in regards to increasing access and engagement, and the extent to which they have affected the Black and Black African communities. Part of the discussion in this section is focused on Black and Black African communities and their involvement in, and knowledge and understandings of the art and design sector. The significance of a discussion on the involvement in, and knowledge and understandings of art and design, is to identify that there is a real need to understand art and design from the perspective of Black African communities. It also allows one to question whether there is a lack of recognition of current engagement and a lack of recognition of other ways that Black African communities engage

in art and design or the types of art and design they engage in. Recognition of this is a preliminary step towards capacity building for Black African communities.

In 2005 the Arts Council published a report (Okon 2005) which noted that there have been

> 'concerns within the sector regarding the under-representation of Black and minority ethnic artists, curators and administrators, and a perception that this may be related to patterns of participation in, and experiences of, Higher Education Art and Design' (Okon 2005:8)

The report went on to identify that there was an under-representation of BAME students in HE art and design. However the issue of under-representation could also be considered from a different perspective; rather if Black African art and design students are under-represented in Higher Education art and design, to what extent could this be seen as a reflection of the limited and marginal space which has often been afforded to BAME artists and designers within the sector.

The discussion in this section will show the ways in which the achievements of Black artists and designers in the UK have been both rendered invisible and marginalised, allowing only a few artists and designers space to enter whilst leaving the majority lying at the peripheries, and thus further highlighting the difficulty of access and engagement for Black communities and as such for Black African communities. It has been argued (Theuri 2015) that

> 'The invisibility, lack of recognition, discrimination and marginalisation of BAME people within the arts in the UK has been acknowledged and discussed over a number of years to varying degrees, and with different emphases, by a number of key writers in the arts field (Khan 1976, Owusu 1986, 1988, Mercer 1990, Araeen 2008, Hylton 2007, Chambers 2012). Their underlining contention, that such groups face prejudice and unequal treatment in the arts, has not changed significantly despite the considerable time between the publications of the texts. (Theuri 2015:59-60)

And within the design field, the Design Council undertook a major survey of the design industry and found that the industry lacked diversity, with only 7 per cent of designers coming from a BAME group. The report questioned the industry's ability to compete internationally as a result (Design Industry Research 2010). It has been recognised that there is a lack of research and literature looking at diversity issues in the UK design sector

and so this report is taken as evidence that similar problems facing the art sector may also affect the design sector.

Historically this partial and subsidiary space given to minority ethnic artists has resulted in some BAME artists, such as Frank Bowling, Avinash Chandra and Francis N Souza, who initially had some success in the British art world (although this was not long lasting) leaving Britain in the 1960s for America (Araeen 2010b). And in the 1980s, the subsidiary space was a catalyst for first generation British-born Black artists such as Sonia Boyce, Keith Piper and Eddie Chambers rising from art colleges and having to create a place for themselves within the British art world through small privately organised 'Black art' exhibitions. And thus along with other Black artists they created what is now considered as 'The Black Arts Movement'. Over time Piper and Boyce in particular gained more prominence in the art world, but despite the wealth and range of work Piper and Boyce and their predecessors and contemporaries were and are producing, they were and are still not considered as equals in the development of art in Britain to their white counterparts (Araeen 2010a, Araeen 2010b, Chambers 2012).

The twenty-first century has also seen a select few Black artists namely Chris Ofili, Steve McQueen and Yinka Shonibare come into significant prominence and are highly acclaimed within the contemporary visual arts sector[xii] much more so than any of the Black artists that came before them. But the majority of Black artists (Black female artists especially) and their artwork have yet to be shown consistently in the public domain or receive acclaim to a similar extent (Chambers 2012). There are exceptions such as Lynette Yiadom-Boakye who in 2013 was the first ever Black female artist to be nominated for a Turner Prize[xiii].This promotion of a few Black artists who are seen to have 'made it' also allows for the refusal of a deeper engagement with issues around racism in the arts (Araeen 2010b). Araeen (2010a) however, has also argued that the issue of marginality and invisibility in the art world extends beyond acceptance into galleries and the winning of awards, into the realm of art history where the efforts of Black artists over many years have not been given their rightful place in the mainstream art history, but are instead moved to the margins and racially segregated. Araeen notes

> 'If the history of art in Britain is the history only of white artists – as it is institutionally recognised and promoted – then Britain is a society defined by these artists. If this is what should be accepted wholeheartedly and without critical thought, then what is expected from Britain's non-white population? To remain at the margin of this society without any active and equal part in its formation or definition? Has this not created the problem of a culturally divided Britain?'(Araeen 2010a:30)

In regards to the segregation of BAME groups in the arts both Hylton (2007) and Araeen (2010b), identified the work of Khan (1976) as the point in which the words 'ethnic minority arts' emerged, as the report concluded that Black people felt excluded from mainstream British society because 'their own traditional cultural forms' were being ignored' (Araeen 2010b:48). Araeen (2010b) saw this as having lain 'the foundations for what was to become a minority discourse separated from the majority mainstream context' (Araeen 2010b:48). Araeen (2010b) then further comments in regards to the success of Anish Kapoor and his acceptance into the British art establishment, that Kapoor was initially successful because he made connections in his artwork to his Asian culture. This then became the basis for success for BAME artists within the arts establishment; they had to show connections to their 'culture' in order to lay claims to authenticity (Araeen 2010b)

This perspective of the acceptance from the British art world of only a certain type of artwork from BAME artists is also critiqued from a slightly different angle by Chambers (2012) when discussing the significant success in the early 1990s and onwards of Shonibare, Ofili and McQueen. Chambers (2012) however, saw these artists work as differing from the Black artists of the 1980s as they were dealing with issues around race and ethnicity but without the political dogma seen to encapsulate the work of the Black artists of the 1980s. Theirs was a more light-hearted take on issues of race and ethnicity and therefore seen as a breath of fresh air, within the arts establishment, from what was considered the overly serious and overtly political artwork of the Black artists of the 1980s. Artists such as Ofili, Shonibare and McQueen could be seen as embodying more of a 'post-Black Art' – coined by curator Thelma Golden and artist Glenn Ligon – where they felt able to explore and utilise themes around race and ethnicity but free to do this with a lighter hearted stance (Toure 2011). Both Araeen (2010b) and Chambers (2012) identify the boundaries set with regard to

the type of artwork expected to be created by BAME artists. These boundaries and limitations of acceptance for artists of colour within the art world can be considered as one aspect of the 'minority discourse' that Araeen (2010b) highlighted. Another segment of this discourse can be seen in the way in which the Arts Council has approached its cultural diversity policies.

Curator and writer Richard Hylton (2007), has argued that art by Black artists has in fact regressed rather than progressed, as a result of policies driven by bodies such as the Arts Council promoting 'cultural diversity' within the visual arts in Britain. Hylton (2007) contends that these policies have resulted in Black artists being segregated further, particularly with the openings of specific spaces for art by Black artists[xiv]. Similarly Araeen (2010a) noted that the early 2000s saw the government funding 'the Arts Council England, to the tune of twenty-nine million pounds in setting up *ethnically based separate organisations* (author's emphasis) and projects' (Araeen 2010a:31) rather than working towards inclusion in the mainstream.

The Black artists who are included in the mainstream are perhaps often seen as the ones to bring with them a larger Black audience than perhaps would normally be present in an art gallery. In a conversation between artist Grace Ndritu, who was born in Britain and of Kenyan heritage, and American Brendan Wattenberg director of exhibitions at Walther Collection Project Space in New York, Ndritu discussed Black audiences in art galleries. Ndritu commented on the number of Black people who came to see Chris Ofili's exhibition at the Tate Britain in 2010; 'it was amazing to see that many Black people in an art gallery you just never see that', to which Wattenberg responded 'Well, Tate really tried. They were aggressive about it' (Wattenberg 2013:119). Ndritu's response to Wattenberg is of particular interest as she stressed the point that the Black audience came specifically for Ofili's exhibition but they did not often then become regular attendees, the galleries were not able to 'keep the audiences...they'll build it up and then they will go away. And that's a big issue, even for the Tate' (Wattenberg 2013:119). Ndritu and Wattenberg's conversation in one sense problematized the strategies around cultural diversity in the arts, their overall conversation alluded to a strategy whereby a large gallery 'aggressively' targets *Black* audiences to come and see the artwork of a *Black* artist, whilst Ndritu's comments further

emphasised that this type of superficial targeting, which implies that Black audiences are only interested in the work of Black artists, does not then lead to regular gallery attendance for Black communities. Lack of BAME audiences in museums and galleries compared to white audiences has also been noted by various other literatures (Taking Part Survey 2014-15, Araeen 2004, Dyer 2007, Hooper-Greenhill 1997, Whitehead 2005). And although the museum and gallery attendance of BAME audiences and engagement with the arts has been noted as rising, it is still lower when compared to white audiences (Taking Part Survey 2014-15).

This next section examines what literature has to say about the relationship between Black communities and art and design. There is limited literature on this topic particular in the UK, however literature from America including the work of bell hooks (1995) offers challenging and profound perspectives on the issue.

2.3.2   Art and Black communities

'Recently at the end of a lecture on art and aesthetics…I was asked whether I thought art mattered, if it really made a difference in our lives…I asked my audience to consider why in so many instances of global imperialist conquest by the West, art has been appropriated or destroyed. I shared my amazement at all the African art I first saw years ago in the museums and galleries of Paris. It occurred to me then that if one could make a people lose touch with their capacity to create, lose sight of their will and their power to make art, then the work of subjugation, of colonisation, is complete. Such work can be undone only by acts of concrete reclamation.' (hooks 1995: xv)

In the above quote hooks (1995) identifies her perspective on the importance of art in society through a discussion of the appropriation of art from other cultures by the West during 'imperialist conquests', and therefore the great significance of reclaiming the power to make art that has been lost by those who have been subjected to colonialism and imperialism. It is her understanding of the substantial place of art in society, which she feels is not shared by Black people in America that underlines hooks discussion around the lack of engagement with art by the majority within the Black community of America.

Much like the discussion in the previous section, hooks (1995) has also highlighted the discrimination and marginalisation that is within the art world, ASSERTING that the art world is 'rooted in a politics of white-supremacist capitalist patriarchal exclusion' which 'Black artists and critics must continually confront'(hooks 1995:xii). hooks (1995) talks about this in the context of Black artists and critics at times putting in such an enormous amount of effort to change the current structure that a focus on art and aesthetics can become stifled. She also highlights that the existing discriminating system in art is not only sustained by white people but also by all 'who internalise and enforce the values of this regime' (hooks 1995:xii), arguing that Black people should be made accountable if they do not make vital changes in order to challenge the inequities of the art world (hooks 1995). Part of this challenge is the need to unearth 'subjugated knowledge in black communities that relates to art and aesthetics – all too often it is simply assumed that visual arts are not important' (hooks 1995:xii-xiii).

The idea of people excluding themselves or being excluded from a love of art is an area that has received a great deal of focus through the work of Bourdieu and Darbel (1991). However whilst Bourdieu and Darbel's discussion focuses solely on class, hooks (1995) adds to this debate through an analysis that intersects race and class to the issue of access and engagement with art. In discussing subjugated knowledge in the Black communities where the visual arts are not seen as holding value, hooks maintains that there are a number of reasons for this.

Based on her own personal experience hooks (1995) notes that Black people do not see art as something that is real, it is not a way of making a living. Art had to be documentary a direct reflection of real life, it needed to look like the familiar world within which Black people lived. There was disbelief that 'black folks could be artists…why, you could not eat art' (hooks 1995: 1). hooks comments that her life had taught her that to be an artist was a dangerous calling, and she gives the example of her father's cousin who as an artist was seen by her family as a solitary, sad and impoverished figure. Adebayo (1996) in his semi-autobiographical novel portrays a similar attitude in the father of his main character Dele (British born and of Nigerian heritage). Dele's father is shown questioning the ability of his friend's son to make a living as an artist and hoping that '…if Tayo was so good with his

hands, he had taken the precaution of training as a doctor as a decent living to fall back on' (Adebayo 1996:211).

The 'absence of representation' of Black artists to the Black community - the privileged and especially the working class - meaning that they do not see and are therefore not able to engage with diverse art by Black artists is an argument that is put forward by hooks (1995). This is echoed in research by Banks (2010) who looked at Black art consumption by Black people of upper-middle class status in America, where research participants noted that it was not until the 1960s and 70s when Black art became more visible to the American public, that they felt they and a larger proportion of Black people were exposed to it, previous to this they were unable to engage with it due to its invisibility. The participants in Banks' study acquired Black art as they wanted to see representations of themselves and their culture in artworks, they perceived this representation to be missing in European artworks. The earlier discussion in this section highlighted that Black artists have yet to be given their rightful place in art and design history, thus adding to their invisibility within wider society and also within their own communities. Research in America by Banks (2010) argued that Black communities are looking to redress this invisibility, noting that 'increasing diversity in the art world is being driven in part by black cultivated consumption among middle-class black' (Banks 2010:3). Banks also identified that other than collecting and viewing artworks, upper-middle class Blacks also participated in patronage through collecting and loaning Black artwork to art institutions and thus changing the 'racial representation within the art world' (Banks 2010:95).

That how one perceives art and its importance in life is largely to do with the location that one is coming from is a notion which is shared by hooks (1995) and Bourdieu and Darbel (1991). Both are aware of the limitations that can exist as a result of a person's social class, and Bourdieu particularly argues that art is inaccessible for those who do not understand, and who have not been endowed with the privilege to enter this world, this is what separates the middle class from the working class. hooks (1995) notes that her sister spoke about art from her position of being working class and to her art was '…just too far away from our lives', and this position of working class is a position that most African-Americans come from. Art is studied and enjoyed by the upper class who have the time and means to

study it, within this class it is seen as a luxury and a form of enjoyment (Bourdieu and Darbel 1991), and in particular 'Art consumption is a leisure activity' (Eyck 2012:332). The work of Eyck (2012) highlights the place of the media in reiterating art as inaccessible for the majority, the newspaper articles researched in this journal article highlight that '…this is a social sphere with access open to only a handful of people' and therefore 'to speak of art is to speak of a background of privilege and distinction' (Eyck 2012:337). With this perspective in mind; that the narrative presented to larger society is one whereby engaging with art is a luxury, then it becomes possible to understand hooks (1995) argument that 'taking our cues from mainstream white culture black folks have tended to see art as completely unimportant in the struggle for survival' (hooks 1995:3) such that art consumption is viewed as an activity to be enjoyed mainly by those with the money to do so and not those struggling to survive.

Although hooks (1995) asserts that Black communities in general found art unimportant, she also highlighted that those more likely to engage with it were from middle class and upper-middle class backgrounds, and predominantly through art consumption rather than art production, thus echoing findings by Bourdieu and Darbel (1991) in regards to class status and art engagement. DiMaggio (1990) compared Black and White cultural participation and also found that middle class Blacks were more likely to engage in art than their working class counterparts, but further noted a 'bicultural competence' amongst the Black middle class whereby they engaged in both European art forms and African-American art forms as there was a need in order for them to progress to maintain a foothold within both cultures. Whilst research by Banks (2010) did not compare working class and middle class, but focused specifically on the cultural consumption of the Black upper-middle class with a particular emphasis on Black visual art, highlighted that the activities that participants in the study undertook were class dependent, they were able to undertake these activities as a result of their 'disposable income'. hooks however, acknowledges that she found it a mystery '…why I wanted to look while others around me close their eyes – that I cannot explain yet' (hooks 1995:2). By acknowledging that although she also came from working class background she *did* want to engage with art, hooks (1995) shows the complexity of this topic and the need to seek an analysis that includes but is not limited to class inequalities.

The notion that 'black folks have tended to see art as completely unimportant in the struggle for survival' can be seen, as ascertained by hooks, as not only relating to the consumption of art but also the practice of making art. Such that art was only seen as important in the Black community, if it was dealing with political issues. In her discussion of types of artwork being created by Black artists and the place of non-figurative art in dealing with social and political issues, Doy (2000) determines

> 'The caption reads: 'No, it don't make no sense to me neither Bootsie, but white folks jus' won't buy nothin' if it makes sense!' Powell feels that the cartoon was addressed to a largely sympathetic black audience which viewed abstract painting as a 'con' and who felt alienated from the white art world of the avant-garde. This cartoon raises interesting issues concerning the possibilities of a place for the black modernist artist, however. Was there a space for the development of black experiences within abstract modernist painting? Would the black modernist painter enter a largely white art world and be viewed with suspicion by wider sections of black communities? (Doy 2000:39-40).

The reception that would be received by a Black artist creating abstract artwork is questioned here by Doy (2000); identifying the dilemma Black artists face as a result of their race. The limitations within the Black community in regards to the type of art they expected Black artists to make, is discussed by hooks arguing that 'black folks who thought there could be some art for art's sake for Black people, well, they were seen as being out of the loop, apolitical' (hooks 1995:3). Similarly Doy (2000) talks of Black artists who 'decided that high modernism, with its emphasis on purity of materials and aesthetic concerns was not a comfortable space which the consciously black artist could inhabit' (Doy 2000:43). Both hooks and Doy identify the issues facing Black artists around the burden of representation. Similarly Mercer (1990) discussed 'the burden of representation' placed on Black artists, where their limited visibility often meant that they were seen as representatives of their communities and thus adding extra burdens to their creative practice including issues around the authenticity of their 'blackness' based on the content and issues dealt with in their artwork. In connection to this Mooney (2009), highlights that 'post-Black art' artists are now stepping beyond what they feel are limiting barriers and boundaries placed upon them as Black artists and the type of work they can create.

As put forward by hooks (1995)

> 'art (both the product and the process of creation) maybe so devalued…in diverse black contexts…and in our society as a whole – that we may deem art irrelevant even if it's abundantly in our midst…the point is that most black folks do not believe that the presence of art in our lives is essential to our collective well-being' (hooks 1995:3).

Research by Banks (2010) however, identified that a number of the Black upper middle-class participants she interviewed collected Black art that spoke of and represented issues around slavery and other inequalities affecting Black people, with Banks arguing that a focus on this type of art should be 'understood within a contemporary context where black marginalisation continues to take place' with many middle class Blacks still experiencing discrimination (Banks 2010:54). Thus they were using the art work they collected as a means to 'contemplate and articulate the marginalisation that they currently face' (Banks 2010:54). It can be seen from these findings that some of the participants of Banks (2010) study, as a challenge to hooks (1995) argument, were able to see the presence of art in their lives as 'essential to (their) collective well-being'.

hooks argued that in regards to the lack of engagement with the visual arts by Black people, the issues run deeper than simply 'the problem of underrepresentation'. The invisibility of black artists, their lack of presence in esteemed art galleries, there were other factors that reduced the meaning of art in the daily lives of Black people. The ways in which art had been taught historically to Black people in America was such that it had value predominantly when documenting the world as it was. hooks therefore contended that with African-Americans in relation to the visual there was ' a resistance to the idea of art as a space of defamiliarisation', and that in 'coming to art in search only of exact renderings of reality many black folks have left art dissatisfied' unable to see their own reality within it (hooks 1995:4). In order for more people within Black communities to identify with art there needed to be a 'shift in the conventional ways of thinking about the function of art' (hooks 1995:4), such that art did not always need to be a reflection of ones lived reality in order to be appreciated.

Understanding art as a space in which it is possible to 'nurture the spirit and provide ways of re-thinking and healing psychic wounds inflicted by assault from the forces of imperialist, racist, and sexist domination' (hooks 1995:5) and believing fully in the 'transformative power of art' (hooks 1995:6-7) is considered by hooks as key in order for Black communities to see the true value of art. Research by Banks (2010) focused on Black upper-middle classes consuming art created predominantly by Black artists and thus it could be argued that they were reiterating hooks arguments that Black communities only engaged in art if it portrayed examples of their existing reality. However, the participants in Banks' research also demonstrated that their art consumption had deeper connections than this and there was an element of believing in the power of art to transform and heal psychic wounds carried from the past. Banks (2010) demonstrated how 'upper-middle class blacks...engage in black arts participation to self-consciously articulate and sustain their own and their children's racial identity' (Banks 2010:1). Art participation was identified as attending museums and exhibitions based on Black art and culture and displaying 'Black art' in homes, however with engagement of these activities there was also a deeper understanding of the transformative nature of art particularly in re-affirming racial identity given the former historical inequalities and those that are still prominent today.

Literature which has identified the ways in which Black communities understand and engage with art and aesthetics has been explored here. Arguments have been put forward that there is a need within Black communities to acknowledge that art is not given the place of importance and value that it deserves, and in order to challenge this limiting perspective there is a necessity to see that art can help in the freedom struggle, expression through art can allow one to truly be free, as it is one of the few spaces in which it is possible to be freely expressive in an 'unfree world' (hooks 1995). Perceiving art in this way and warranting it the value it deserves, particularly in art consumption, has however been demonstrated as already existing within Black communities (Banks 2010) especially with the Black middle and upper classes. This brings to the forefront issues around the financial stability of these groups which allows them the ability to truly engage in art. However hooks (1995) comments that she came from a working class background but was interested in engaging in

art reiterates that it is important to be aware that class restrictions may not be the only reason that members of Black communities do not engage in art.

The literature considered here has been focused on an African American perspective demonstrating the limited research that exists around this topic from within a British context. However this section has also identified the importance of understanding the experience and relationship with art from the perspective of Black communities. The subsequent discussion looks more specifically at African art and design and African perspectives of art and design.

2.3.3   Filling 'gaps-between worlds'

Enwezor (1995) has contended

> 'At the end of the century Postmodernism and critical writing on questions of identity and artistic production, find themselves thoroughly defamiliarised in the spaces occupied by African artists in the western metropolis' (Enwezor 1995:119)

His aim within the essay was to show how African artists were 'working in the intercises of postcoloniality in the Western, metropolitan arena' and the ways in which they translated and transfigured their experiences from different localities. In the essay Enwezor shared how certain African artists straddled and moved between Africa and the West, whilst refusing to be limited, fixed, and misrecognised by the gaze of the West. This position that Enwezor talks of may also affect Black African art and design students and their experiences and makes it important to understand the place of art and design for Black African communities not only in Britain but also in relation to the African continent.

2.3.4   Art and design; an African Perspective

It could be argued that there are underlying differences in the cultural perception and value attached to art and design, a different experience of the role that art and design plays in the lives of people and cultures. Thus the ways in which art and design is understood by Africans, given the role played by the West in African history due to slavery, colonialism and imperialism and the ways in which the West perceives art and design from the African continent, raises pertinent issues important for this research project. African immigrants, it

could be said, come to the UK with an understanding of art and design which is grounded in the experiences of their various African cultures which may at times conflict, contradict and/or reflect that which they find in their host country. It is this argument that the following discussion seeks to substantiate.

When considering African art and design one could contend that there are two perspectives from which art and design from this continent is viewed. One is what may be considered the African perspective from the continent and its' peoples and diaspora and the other being the Western perspective of African art and design. But within these two perspectives are various factors and notions which problematize them as will be discussed in this section.

African art and design has been discussed as existing all around the African continent but without the 'Western categories of artist, artisan, art and craft' (Spring 2008:8), and thus there are numerous examples of varied artistic practices that proliferate in different countries in Africa (Spring 2008). Artistic practices such as fantasy coffins made in Ghana which are created to represent the deceased's occupations when they were alive, they are created by skilled carpenters and available to all; sign-painters who use their 'art-work' to advertise a wide array of products and businesses; Kangas which are printed cloths found mainly in East Africa; potters creating pottery as well as blacksmiths and metal workers. All creating, mainly to sell and make a living but not necessarily seeing themselves as practicing artists and designers in the perspective of the Western world. Spring (2008) sees these as examples of the 'thousands of artists' at work in various parts of Africa (Spring 2008:8). These examples demonstrate that in a number of African countries art and design is closely integrated to life and as a practice its social value to society is still present. Similarly Kasfir (1999) writes that in Africa the creation of artefacts is seen as work which is comparable to that of a farmer or taxi driver, with the end aim of the creation of artefacts being 'to satisfy the requirements set down by patrons' (Kasfir 1999:96). Like Spring, Kasfir differentiates between a Western perspective and an African perspective stating that '…whereas Western artists often see their work primarily as a vehicle for self-realisation, that attitude is as unfamiliar to African artists as it is in African culture generally, unless we refer to elite artists trained in Western-type art schools' (Kasfir 1999:96).

The difference between the perspectives of Spring (2008) and Kasfir (1999) is that Kasfir identifies that there are African artists and designers who have received a 'Western-type' training either in Africa or the West as well as artists and designers who have not. Therefore depending on the type of art education received, artists and designers from Africa may have varying perspectives of art and design and therefore its purpose. Historically education during colonialism had the purpose of 'converting' the natives to ways of being that were considered more in tune with Western ideologies, with many foregoing their cultural ways of being and understanding to conform to that which was expected of them, thus the Western training in art and design discussed by Kasfir (1999) is an example of this. Hassan (1995) identified the history of Western-trained African artists as initially belonging to a minority group due to the limited education available during colonialism of 'a western-educated elite class that emerged in many African countries after the second decade of colonial rule' (Hassan 1995:33). Taking further this notion of Western-trained African artists Hassan (1995) identified that this group of artists were recognised by current scholarship as the makers of contemporary African art which he identified as '…individualistically-orientated rather than communally centred' and it was seen as separate from more traditional art forms. Hassan (1995) argues that contemporary African art is

> '…reserved for those African artists who are mostly urban based, produce work according to the norms of Western modern art, and who exhibit in galleries, museums, first class hotels or foreign cultural centres. These artists are to some extent internationally known, and their patrons include governments...foreign expatriates, and a largely western-educated indigenous bourgeoisie'.

Thus the art work discussed earlier by Spring (2008) as being all around African, if utilising the argument by Hassan, would be considered as 'traditional' African art. And this traditional art form is considered as 'tourist', 'commercial' or 'popular'; in contrast to contemporary African art which 'classified as "elite", "fine" or "high" (Hassan 1995:31). Contemporary African art is therefore seen as 'more intellectual' and a completely separate form of art to traditional African art (Hassan, 1995:31). Consequently the art forms which could be considered more 'African' are given a lower status than that which is bestowed on the more contemporary forms of art and which are also more Eurocentric. This exposes the

influence of colonialism on Africa art and design and the ways in which it is written about and understood.

African art is seen then as a dichotomy, always either traditional or contemporary despite the fact that, 'traditional' art and design is still being made at present (Hassan 1995). Creative practices from the African continent are subjected to belonging to one or the other and therefore can be seen as static and unmoving art forms (Hassan 1995). Yet despite the high art label afforded to contemporary African art, it is argued that many museums in the West do not procure and exhibit contemporary African art, as it is often not seen as authentic African art – as this label is reserved for the more traditional art forms' and instead artists from Africa are expected to create work that somehow includes a 'traditional style' (Hassan 1995). In relation to this Oguibe (1999) argues that contemporary African artists are '…positioned on those peripheries of creative genius where the aesthetic experience fails to cohere with great material value' (Oguibe 1999:24). This is due to the little monetary value that is afforded to this work, with collectors unwilling to invest financially for contemporary African art in a way that they would for Western contemporary art (Oguibe 1999). Oguibe argues that the West perceives contemporary African art as belonging

> '…not in the great spaces of culture but on the supermarket shelf, on the sidewalk, in the quirky fringes of normative taste. Projected on contemporary African artists and their work, these attributes tether them to the lowest rungs of a strictly multi-tiered contemporary art market from where upward mobility is almost impossible' (Oguibe 1999:24).

There are many parallels to the reception of Black artists in Britain, particularly the ways in which scholars' ascertain that these artists and designers are continuously on the peripheries, rarely receiving accolades, recognition and visibility, whilst there is also an expectation to create work that is seen as authentic to their culture.

However the lack of interest and low status given to African art that Oguibe (1999) identifies is perhaps changing in our current climate. The present-day reception of African art in Britain is shifting it could be said due to a number of factors, and one of the most significant

is perhaps the investment into African art by wealthy Africans, Africans are themselves challenging the lack of Western investment highlighted by Hassan (1995). Africa's economic fortunes are rapidly rising and as a result there is a fast growing sum of wealth amassing amongst Africans, with some choosing to invest in established and emerging African art and artists (Beugge 2014, Mark 2013). An example of such investment can be seen in the partnership between Nigeria's Guaranty Trust Bank and the Tate gallery, aimed at developing the gallery's collection of African art. It has however also been suggested that in order for the Tate to give prominence to this art there had to be an investment from Africans themselves, the underlying question remains whether the Tate would have invested in expanding their African art collection without the finance from Guaranty Trust Bank (1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair Forum 2013). However it is African patronage such as this that has and is giving African art an ever increasing presence on the international art market (Beugge 2014, Mark 2013). Similarly the place of design in Africa by Africans is also said to be growing in visibility, with a number of fashion designers in particular from the African continent, being recognised on the international stage (Brock and Nyambura-Mwaura 2015).

As part of the focus to increase its collection of African artwork, the Tate gallery recently procured and exhibited the work of Beninese artist Meshach Gaba, and simultaneously held the first ever retrospective of an African artist with the exhibition of Sudanese artist Ibrahim El Selahi in the summer of 2013. This year (2013) also saw the first ever contemporary African art fair; 1.54 held at Somerset House. As part of a series of talks at the 2013 fair Chris Dercon - director of Tate Modern, Koyo Kouoh - 1.54 artistic director and Robert Devereux - African Arts Trust founder discussed the necessity of the art world to engage further with contemporary African art. Over the last few years a number of smaller galleries in Britain such as Tiwani Contemporary, Jack Bell Gallery and GAFRA have also emerged with a focus on contemporary African art. The existing excitement about and attention given to contemporary African art at present in Britain however, is not a wholly new phenomenon. Hylton (2007) identifies that as far back the late 1970s the October Gallery was already showing contemporary work by a wide ranging number of African artists as a way of 'de-primitivising' African art. This move away from seeing African art from solely an

anthropological perspective was also a large part of two significant events held in Britain; *africa95* and *Africa 05;* these are a small number of examples of the numerous exhibitions of contemporary African art in Britain in the last 35 years.

Both the perspectives on African art and design and the issues raised around cultural diversity in art and design in the UK highlight that the work of artists and designers from minoritised groups is often plagued by issues around authenticity – the type of art they should make – as well as a focus that often falls back to the artists identity at the expense of a critical engagement with their artworks. There are often boundaries placed by art galleries on what art they should make, how they should make it and for what purpose, and thus an attempt at placing limitations on the careers of artists from minoritised groups. Yet looking at the growing development of African art and design and its place in the world, shows that we are perhaps in a place where the African communities' perspectives of art and design as well as the Western perspectives of African art and design, are in a space of re-evaluation with changing attitudes and perceptions towards its importance and relevance.

The research examined in this section highlights the barriers facing Black African students with regards to discrimination and marginalisation in the art and design sector, but also highlights the positive possibilities in terms of the reception that African art and design is currently receiving. It is important to question what all this means for Black African students in HE art and design.

2.4 Black African Student participation in and experience of Higher Education

As a result of a dominant literature and research focus on a homogenous BAME group much of the information located in trying to understand the Black African student access and participation in HE has been drawn out of literature that has focused on BAME groups' collectively.

Despite a number of reports highlighting the need in HE research, for BAME groups to be treated as individual groups with varying cultural difference (Connor et al 2004, Okon 2005, Mai Sims 2007, NUS 2011), there has been a notable lack of separation of BAME

communities in many studies in this field, and instead a treatment of BAME groups as one homogenous group as they are often seen as facing similar problems in regards to racism. There have been few exceptions (Connor et al 2004,) which have kept separate groups with 'increasingly separate identities' including Black Caribbeans and Black Africans, allowing for issues related to Black students to be drawn out and explained. Research that has focused on individual BAME groups in Higher Education has tended to look at South Asian communities, Chinese communities and Black Caribbean communities (Bagguley & Hussain 2005, Huat See et al 2011, Modood 2004). Literature that has looked specifically at BAME groups individually and their behaviours, experiences, trends and patterns of participation in HE and access to HE has tended to focus predominantly on South Asian groups (Bagguley and Hussain 2007, Huat See et al 2011, Modood 2004, Bhopal 2010) with little focus on the other BAME groups.

The majority of literature looking at 'the BAME group' overall has covered a broad spectrum of areas including; understanding differences in participation and experiences of BAME groups at university (Connor et al 2004, Okon 2005 , Bagguley & Hussain 2005, NUS 2011, Mai Sims 2007)**,** Higher Education choices (Ball et al 2002), 'over representation' of BAME groups in HE (Modood 2004, Torgerson et al 2007, 2011), attainment of BAME groups in Higher education (Huat See et al 2011, Richardson 2008); the effects of HE attainment on employment and general labour market returns (Tackey et al 2011), socio-economic status and its effect on education (Strand 2011), and the 'over education' of BAME groups (Lindley 2009).

Population statistics show that the Black African communities have grown and are growing in size in the UK but despite this, in the field of HE they are very under-researched. Connor et al (2004), Mai Simms (2007) and Bhagat and O'Neil (2011) highlighted the way in which issues of race are viewed within the HE sector 'as a problem that has already been solved' due to the high or 'over-representation' of BAME students in HE (Bhagat and O'Neil 2011:30). It could be said that the second highest participation rates in HE (Huat See et al 2011, Connor et al 2004, Mai Simms 2007, NUS 2011, Togerson 2007, Tackey et al 2011) have thus resulted in invisibility and a lack of focus on the issues impacting the Black African students.

Whereas the main focus of research on HE in regards to Widening Participation has been related to social class, Bhagat and O'Neil (2011) noted that social class cuts across many other categories relating to disadvantage 'deepening the barriers of race, gender, disability, sexuality and age, but highlighting that barriers such as race also worked in isolation' (Bhagat and O'Neil 2011:28-29). Within this research there is an understanding that different BAME groups have a commonality in the racism and discrimination that they face, but also an understanding that research which allows minoritised groups to be looked at individually highlights issues that would otherwise be hidden under the cloak of homogeneity.

2.4.1   Rates and patterns of participation

According to a number of reports Black African students have the second highest participation rates in HE[xv], and this has been the trend for a number of years (Huat See et al 2011, Connor et al 2004, Mai Simms 2007, NUS 2011, Okon 2005, Togerson 2007, Tackey et al 2011) and within the Black sector of the HE student community, Black African students are better represented than Black Caribbean students (Huat See et al 2011, Connor et al 2004, NUS 2011). Possible reasons given for this are that the cultures that BAME students overall are coming from, place great value in higher education (Bhattacharyya et al 2003, Connor et al 2004, Gillborn 2005, Tackey et al 2011) and its potential to aid in upward social mobility (Modood 2004, Tackey et al 2011). And particularly to Black African communities there has been a history of focus on gaining higher education qualifications including travel from Africa to the UK for educational purposes (Daley 1998, Oguibe 1994, Lam and Smith 2009).

However there are patterns and trends that have been identified within this participation namely that; Black African students tend to enter HE from Further Education (FE) colleges rather than Sixth-Form, have lower HE entry qualifications, are clustered predominantly in post-92 HE institutions, are older on average than white peers when entering HE, are well represented in science subjects and under-represented in arts and humanities, are the BAME group with the third highest proportion with degrees[xvi], yet have the lowest HE attainment and particularly high initial unemployment rates after graduation (Connor et al

2004, NUS 2011, Tackey et al 2011). It seems that their high aspirations to HE are not turning into 'proportional gains in terms of attainment' (Strand 2011:216) or labour returns. Perhaps one reason may be related to student experiences of HE. There are few studies that have contributed research focused on the first-hand experiences of Black students in HE, NUS (2011) is one example of this. It highlighted that between 2006 and 2010 the National Student Survey found that UK-domiciled Black students consistently had a 'lower overall satisfaction with their HE experience than white students' (NUS 2011:8).

Literature such as Tackey et al (2011) have framed the BAME student participation in HE as being one that has been encouraged by the community, with families from BAME groups valuing education as 'a way of addressing the problem of disadvantage' faced by BAME communities (Tackey et al 2011:16). Education is valued to such an extent that lower social class does not negatively impact HE participation in the same way that it does white British students. Research shows that Black African students enter the education system 'making better progress that white British children' in early years education (Tackey et al 2011:5) and similar progress at GCSE level, however by the time they leave the education system at degree level they are the group least likely to attain a 'good' degree (Richardson 2008). This highlights the need to explore experiences of education to develop understanding as to why there is a shift in educational progress at HE. Its seems what is not being addressed, but warrants further exploration is how being part of a 'disadvantaged' group in British society is impacting on the way Black African students respond to education and in particular HE, and also the ways in which educational institutions respond to them.

NUS (2011) noted that the above issues needed to be dealt with but without 'locating the problems within Black students, or negatively referring to their ability, aspirations and work ethic' (NUS 2011:3). This contrasted widely with Richardson (2008) whose argument centred on the notion of meritocracy in HE, commenting that 'there (was) little evidence that the experiences of Asian and Black student…are sufficiently inferior to those of white students to explain the marked variation in their degree performance' (Richardson 2008:46). Richardson (2008) could be seen as an example of research which placed the blame on BAME students, concluding that lower HE attainment by BAME groups was perhaps more

affected by the support students received from family, friends and community or in-fact related to variations in study behaviour, all factors that were in the students' control, rather than locating the issue within a wider context that included factors related to teaching, curriculum and challenging HE experiences.

2.4.2   Factors affecting student choice

Some previous research has identified the importance of ethnicity in certain aspects in relation to HE, namely HE institution choice, location of institution and subject choice (Connor et al 2004). Whilst others have concluded that ethnicity does not play a significant part in determining HE participation of BAME groups and instead the major factors affecting HE participation are teacher expectations, school experience, peer influence (Huat See et al 2011). Tackey et al (2011) noted that BAME groups, who are more likely to have a lower socio-economic status, still had particularly high HE participation, although this differed amongst groups. Whilst Ball (2002) talked of class differences being more apparent and significant in choice of HE institutions than ethnic similarities. However, Connor et al (2004), Mai Simms (2007) and the NUS (2011) report highlighted the importance of ethnicity, they noted that there was a clustering of BAME groups at certain universities largely due to BAME students feeling more 'comfortable' in HE settings where their own cultural groups were more visible, as well as a mirror of regional concentrations of BAME groups. Mai Simms (2007) noted that BAME groups being predominantly at post-92 universities was also a result of having lower HE entry qualifications and being less likely to travel out to university. These limitations on Higher Education Institution (HEI) choices, seemingly connected to race and ethnicity, have left BAME groups receiving fewer resources and with less chances of getting good jobs after graduation (Mai Simms 2007, Tackey et al 2011).

Previous research also identified factors and barriers that were impacting BAME groups in terms of behaviours, trends and patterns of participation, they focused not specifically on Black African students but BAME groups overall. These factors were; educational capital (A Level points), institution attended (school or FE college), age, advice and guidance from parents and educational institutions, as well as personal preferences and cultural norms (Connor et al 2004, Tackey et al2011). Parental guidance was identified as being a

particularly key influencing factor for BAME groups, playing a pivotal role in the case of subject choice (Connor et al 2004, NUS 2011) with Connor et al (2004) highlighting parental steering' towards certain (professional and vocational) courses. Choice for BAME groups was identified as not just being a matter of personal preference but one that was shaped by cultural, family and community expectations (Connor et al 2004, Bagguley and Hussain 2007, NUS 2011).When discussing subject choice Tackey et al (2011) noted the importance of BAME groups accessing 'well-informed and appropriate (non-stereotyped) advice' from parents, career advisors and education institutions (Tackey et al 2011:11). This was also echoed in the NUS (2011) report which noted that many students felt that there had been a lack of advice for both themselves and their parents.

Statistics show that BAME students are not highly represented in art and humanities subjects at HE and this has also been commented on by a number of reports and research literature (Connor et al 2004, Okon 2005, Tackey et al 2011, Strand 2011). However research with a focus on students who have chosen subjects outside of the supposed 'cultural norm' for BAME groups has received little attention. In regards to subject choice, one of the key issues being addressed in this research, choosing 'traditional' and more 'professional' subjects for study at HE has been considered by some as 'preference' by BAME communities (Connor et al 2004, Tackey et al 2011). However this implies that the majority of BAME groups have easy access to information and are able to choose the subjects that best suit them and their needs. Conversely, research also shows that BAME groups are not always receiving the best advice in regards to HE options (NUS 2011, Tackey et al 2011), and thus identifying a need to question the ability for BAME groups to truly express a preference in regards to HE subject choice if within these communities they are not being given all the options to make informed choices.

2.4.3   Output and Attainment (outcomes)

The importance of attainment at secondary school in determining future HE choice and options was highlighted by Connor et al (2004) and with this in mind we can begin to comprehend the range of issues that affect BAME groups as they look to access, enter and progress into HE. Strand (2011) discussed BAME students secondary school attainment

noting that member of minoritised groups were less likely to attend grammar schools[xvii], and more likely to attend 'deprived schools' where they were less likely to make progress than those from the least deprived schools (Strand 2011:210). However, Gillborn (2008) argued that the low attainment of Black students in-particular was a result of more than simply attending 'deprived schools', that 'inequalities of achievement' characterised the secondary school system in the UK, creating an educational system favouring white students thus resulting in better progress by them at secondary school than minoritised groups (Gillborn 2008:44).

What is considered as the 'poor' attainment of BAME students at HE was an area that had been discussed and identified within a growing body of literature (Beng Haut See 2011, Mai Simms 2007, NUS 2011, Richardson 2008), with Richardson (2008) in particular, seeming to contend that the 'problem' was no longer BAME participation in HE but BAME attainment in HE. Richardson (2008) looked at BAME students who graduated with a 'good degree'[xviii] and identified that for art courses this percentage was 35.9% for Black students, the lowest of all ethnic groups[xix]. Richardson (2008) and NUS (2011) both highlighted 'the chances of a Black (African or Caribbean) student being awarded a good degree were a third those of a white student' (NUS 2011:7). Tackey et al (2011) linked low returns on degree after graduation with low attainment at HE, as well as a number of other factors including; post-92 HEI attendance, studying in home town, lower degree classification and non-white ethnicity, all descriptions of Black African HE patterns and trends. These factors were also looked at in regards to degree subject, which found that art and humanities subjects had the lowest returns on degree. It was also noted by Tackey et al (2011) that 'Black or Black British people aged 16-24' had the highest rate of unemployment; this was echoed by NUS (2011) which noted that African and Caribbean students were being disproportionately affected by the rise in graduate unemployment. With all aforementioned factors against them, it could be argued that studying art and design subjects, would only further compound the problem for Black African students looking to gain employment after completing their degrees. This raises the notion that, perhaps, given their challenging circumstances, Black African students are making conscious decisions not to study art and design subjects, but it also highlights the barriers that plague participation in and experiences of HE art and design for

this group. Little research and literature has given depth of focus to patterns of participation, access to HE, experiences at HE and choice of HE institution in regards to Black African communities.

Modood (2004) (also Strand 2011 in trying to understand the lower attainment of Black Caribbean students at age 14) explored certain theories by; Bourdieu in regards to cultural capital, Ogbu in regards to voluntary migrants and involuntary migrants carrying different types of capital and Zhou in regards to ethnicity and social capital, in trying to understanding the high participation of South Asian students. Rather than focusing on the negative aspects of minoritised groups and education, Modood (2004) identified positive experiences and what could be gleaned from this. However the analysis and methods embraced by both Modood (2004) and Strand (2011) can be seen to align themselves to a concept described by Gillborn (2008) as looking at and highlighting 'model minorities' who are achieving well 'despite' the disadvantaging circumstances surrounding them. Gillborn (2008) contends that this type of method of researching BAME groups can lend itself to hierarchy and the privileging one group at the expense of another, rather it should not be forgotten that different minoritised groups can face different forms of inequalities at different times.

Conclusion to Black African Student participation in and experience of Higher Education:

Despite much research highlighting the high representation of Black African students in HE, these students are not responding positively, in ways that will benefit them, to the current HE system. The problem stands that Black African students are going to HE, but the majority are attending poorly rated universities, clustered on certain degree courses, not achieving 'good' degrees upon completion of degrees and not gaining employment when they graduate. It could be argued that social class is the main factor working against students, or rather that it is the students who are entering university under-prepared for academic life. However it can be seen from the literature explored in this section that race and ethnicity does affect participation in and experiences of HE for minoritised students.

In addition to the issues affecting Black African students during their time at HE, it is also noticeable that predominantly, Black African students are coming from secondary school

with low GSCE grades and entering university from the non-traditional route of FE colleges and thus these factors are also hindering their end gains from HE. In order to better understand the experiences of this group there is a need to consider the education institutions (secondary and tertiary) and how they are preparing Black African students for HE, as well as the ways in which HEIs are accommodating students upon their arrival and during their time at university. It is necessary to talk to students from Black African communities and look to understand the situation from their perspective. Similar to other research on South Asian communities (Bagguley &Hussain 2007), a focus on Black Africans would allow the opportunity to focus on specific issues affecting this group. The differences within the Black community in the UK are currently under-researched; therefore, by looking specifically at Black African groups, there will be an opportunity to draw out differences among the group as a whole in order to better understand their educational experiences.

2.5 <u>Black African Student participation in and experience of Higher Education art and design</u>

The majority of the literature which has explored participation in and experience of HE art and design that has included BAME students has been literature linked to Widening Participation strategies in art and design in the UK. However these strategies that have tended to focus on the increase of 'non-traditional', 'under-represented', 'disadvantaged', 'disaffected' and predominantly working class applicants, resulting in BAME groups being somewhat lost in amongst all these labels (Bhagat and O'Neil 2011, Okon 2005). These labels tend to encourage an understanding of these young people in deficit terms which encourages a view of the young people as 'lacking' something rather than seeing the issue in terms of 'unequal social relations' where access to resources and positions are not so readily available to all (Burke and McManus 2011), particularly if HEIs are seen as rewarding mainly those who understand the system (Zimdars et al 2009).

Burke & McManus (2011) and McManus (2006) have focused on exploring the applications and admissions process as being the key barrier to access for HE art and design for 'non-

traditional' applicants. With Burke and McManus (2011) in particular highlighting and problematising the admissions and applications process as one that is fraught with exclusions, misrecognitions, inequalities and injustices, as well as offering a critique of meritocracy and neoliberalism which has positioned Widening Participation policies around 'raising educational attainment and aspirations of those groups identified as 'disadvantaged' because 'individual under-achievement and non-participation in HE are understood largely as the result of a lack of ability and /or lack of aspiration' (Burke and McManus 2011: 702).

Within the field of HE art and design some research has focused on engaging with 'non-traditional' students' learning as a way of developing a more diverse and inclusive HE art and design curriculum for all students, namely Finnigan (2009). And although BAME students were a part of Finnigan's research they were not acknowledged as a group who have low participation in HE art and design or who face specific challenges as minority groups[xx]. Whilst other research such as Dean (2004, 2005) which looked at the HE art and design interview process, although not focusing specifically on BAME students but on inclusion and exclusion in HE art and design in Scotland, noted that work needed to be done in HE art and design which explored the 'distinctions across different ethnic groups' (Dean 2005:75) as well a proactive encouragement of a more ethnically diverse group of applicants. The clustering of BAME students at predominantly new universities was highlighted by McManus (2006) as ensuring 'the continued reproduction of racialised and classed inequalities' McManus (2006:73), especially given the power old universities have and the privileges they were able to bestow on their predominantly middle class graduates.

There have been some exceptions which have looked at BAME students as a group separate from the all-encompassing 'non-traditional' identification, namely Okon (2005), Hatton (2009, 2012, 2013), Zimdars et al (2009) and Theuri (2015). Okon (2005) a literature review initiated by the Arts Council, identified areas and factors around lack of participation in HE art and design that would warrant further investigation as well as noting the lack of literature around this field[xxi].

Hatton (2009) looked at Black student experiences in HE art and design, the term Black was used to denote all BAME students in the research. (It should also be noted that this is unpublished doctoral research which has an embargo placed on it and so it was not possible to see the entire thesis for critical analysis. The author allowed me to see the introduction and conclusion only, but I deemed it necessary to include this work in my review of literature as it focused on areas that were directly relevant to the research I have conducted)

Hatton (2012) investigated the development of a more diverse and inclusive HE art curriculum as a solution specifically to BAME participation, retention and in particular poor attainment by BAME students. Hatton (2013) looked at diversity and art and design education focusing on educational achievement, poor attainment by BAME students on art and design degree courses and the curriculum. Zimdars et al (2009) explored social background, in particular South-Asian, and gaining an offer to study at the University of Oxford on arts[xxii] and science courses. The most recent literature in this field has been Theuri (2015) which has looked at art and design education through a Critical Race Theory framework[xxiii] as a method to highlight issues around race and inequality in the field, and within that it addresses the effects of racism on BAME student participation and experience. However none of the identified literature focused specifically on Black African students, but similar to the majority of other literature on higher education identified in the previous section they focused on the BAME group as a whole. As yet there appears to be no work looking at *individual* BAME groups and their participation in and experiences of HE art and design in the UK.

There are some limitations with the literature identified in regards to the scope of the research. The research identified here that has looked at BAME students and HE art and design (Hatton 2009, 2012, 2013 and Zimdars et al 2009) are small scale studies that have focused on individual institutions. Similarly research by McManus (2006), Finnigan (2009) and Dean (2004, 2005) have also been studies looking at individual art and design institutions. Okon (2005) predominantly echoed many research conclusions already noted by Connor et al (2004), particularly the need to not treat BAME groups as one homogenous

group and the need to explore variations of participation rates between BAME groups and between subject choices.

2.5.1 Rates and patterns of participation

In terms of participation and representation rates in art and design courses at HE, Connor et al (2004) identified that Black African students had a percentage of 0.8[xxiv]. More current data shows that figures have risen, Higher Education Statistics Agency 2010-11 figures show that participation rose with 3.7 % of Black African students studying HE art and design, and 2011-12 figures showed the percentage at 3.8% (see appendix 4 and appendix 4a for pie chart). However, Black African students, despite their continued high representation in HE overall, still have less than 10% of their student population studying art and design compared to the higher percentages for other subjects. Less than 10% can be considered low when compared with the larger percentages of Black African students studying subjects such as science.

2.5.2 Factors affecting student choice

In regards to factors affecting student choice McManus (2006) identified role models, good quality advice (from institutions, family and friends), and fitting in as influencing factors in students' decision making for HE art and design. However given the evidence of factors affecting Black African students as discussed in the previous section on higher education in general, having role models, good quality advice and fitting in cannot be taken for granted as being readily available to this group. Burke and McManus (2011) identified the HE art and design space as one that inscribed a worthy art student as a person whose characteristics were 'historically associated with white euro-centric forms of masculinity' (Burke and McManus 2011:706), this idea was shared by Zimdars et al (2009), and thus the ability to fit in on HE art and design courses, which was seen as an important factor in decision making by McManus (2006), can be viewed as potentially problematic for Black African students.

Okon (2005) identified that BAME students had low participation in HE art and design, and highlighted that there were key barriers to participation specifically related to HE art and design which can be seen as affecting student choice. Noting that those of BAME

backgrounds felt that they arts was for the privileged few, that there were a lack of BAME role models in the arts, BAME students lacked encouragement from teachers and career advisors in pursuing careers in the arts, as well as a perception that the creative industries are not a good career option (Okon 2005). In connection to this recommendations from Okon (2005) that highlighted the specific need for my research were; qualitative research looking at factors influencing BAME participation/non-participation (interviews with students, parents, art teachers at schools and FE colleges, career advisors and teaching and careers staff at HEIs).

2.5.3   Interview and admissions process

The interview process of art and design subjects was discussed by a number of authors (Dean 2004, 2005, McManus 2006, Zimdars et al 2009, Burke and McManus 2011), who all highlighted the subjectivity of these interviews, particularly with middle class applicants being better able to persuade their way onto a course. Both McManus (2006) and Zimdars et al (2009) focused on the importance of cultural capital, with Zimdars et al (2009:659) finding that 'cultural knowledge was a significant predictor of admission in the arts subjects' and McManus (2006) noting that 'what became clear, however, was that not only was there a clear list of likely interview questions, there was a list of almost canonical 'right' answers' (McManus 2006:80), requiring a reflection of 'middle class habitus and cultural capital' with applicants having to 'fashion themselves in the tradition of the traditional HE applicant' in order to succeed (McManus 2006:82). These canonical 'right' answers required for admission are however, not generally available to all students, with research by Dean (2005) noting the need to make admissions information available to all students and highlighting the importance of being 'more pro-active in seeking out and encouraging a socially and ethnically diverse body of applicants, by engaging with audiences through new sites, spaces and approaches' (Dean 2005:84).

The impact of race and ethnicity and gender in the admissions process of art and design courses has been identified by Dean (2004) and Burke and McManus (2011), both pieces of research drew attention to the difficulties faced by BAME students in art interviews, highlighting the experiences of BAME female students and how admissions tutors'

perspectives in relation to their ethnicity had an impact on their progress on the interviews.
Further demonstrating the role of race and ethnicity in admissions, Zimdars et al (2009)
found that high scores for cultural capital 'were associated with having graduate parents,
two professional class parents, private school attendance and white ethnicity' (Zimdars et al
2009:659). The importance of cultural capital in order for entry was noted as particular high
in HE Arts and Design (Burke and McManus 2011, Zimdars et al 2009). Black African
students are thus potentially facing a large number of barriers given that few of them hold
the necessary capital expected. Also important to note here the cultures that Black African
students come from, may not place importance on nurturing 'cultural capital' in the way
that white middle class culture does (Yosso 2005).

2.5.4   Student experiences of HE art and design

Looking at student experiences Finnigan (2009) focused on 'non-traditional' HE art and
design students who had been on HE courses and BAME students were included in the
sample[xxv], the research was focused on seeing beyond the deficit model often associated
with these students, with an end purpose to utilise their experiences to make changes in
teaching and learning. Finnigan (2009) noted that success for these students was as a result
of; inspiring and supportive tutors, access to good support systems (including family, friends
and other students), individual determination, encouragement, opportunities to discuss and
listen to other students and challenging and interesting projects. However, even with these
'success' stories Finnigan (2009) noted that challenges faced by students included lack of
spaces to discuss diversity and assumptions made by tutors about students' backgrounds
and heritage.

Research by Okon (2005) identified in relation to the experiences of Black artists in HE, that
they had feelings of not belonging and felt an expectation to produce a certain type of work
related to 'identity'. The issues in relation to not belonging have also been discussed by
Finnigan (2009) and Burke and McManus (2011) who noted that within the HE art and
design academy the 'normal' art student tended to be perceived as 'white and middle class'
resulting in students who did not fit this profile being 'othered' or considered as problematic
students within the academy. This notion was shared by Hatton (2012) who identified the

space of HE art and design as 'white' and 'Euro-centric' with BAME students often at the margins becoming what she referred to as the 'pedagogised others', Hatton (2012) highlighted this as a possible factor in regards to the low attainment of BAME students at HE. Both Finnigan (2009) and Hatton (2012), similar to NUS (2011), noted that there was a need to move away from seeing non-traditional students as the problem, but instead to problematize the HE academy and its privileging of a particular type of student and forms of knowledge.

Research undertaken by Hatton (2009) identified that the arts as an institution had presented itself as Eurocentric to Black students, there was an existing 'whiteness' in the conceptualisation of art which had been transferred to the art curriculum, and Black students in the research had identified instances of racism and cultural stereotyping in their art educational experiences. Hatton (2013) identified that there were numerous occurrences whereby Black students were marginalised within the art and design institution that was the focus of the research, including the teaching of a curriculum with a Eurocentric focus (Hatton 2013). Theuri (2015) highlighted similar issues to Hatton (2009) and (2013), through utilising a Critical Race Theory Framework, Theuri identified the 'whiteness' of art and design education in relation to; the Eurocentric curriculum taught to students, the predominantly white educators in institutions and the white middle class behaviours which were viewed as the 'norm', arguing that these issues helped to maintain and reassert racism and inequality thus disadvantaging BAME students.

2.5.5 Output and attainment (outcomes)

Low attainment for BAME HE students that was identified in the previous section which looked at research on BAME students in HE overall, was also reflected in research undertaken by University of the Arts London (Hatton 2013). However this research also noted that although overall BAME students had lower attainment, there were certain courses namely cultural and historical studies where BAME students 'were outperforming white students' , highlighting the possibility that these courses 'had benefitted (BAME)

students more than white students, or were in fact more appropriate to their needs' (Hatton 2013:25). The issue of low attainment of minoritised groups in HE art and design has also been discussed by Hatton (2012), with a focus on the 'achievement gap' between 'Home white students and Home black students'. Hatton (2012) put forward the idea of curriculum interventions and changes, particularly from within HEIs as a possible way to eliminate the gap thus offering positive suggestions to move forward and diversify what has been identified as a predominantly Eurocentric curriculum. However, Gillborn (2008) when discussing the issue of the 'achievement gap' noted that it was important to consider this issue in relation 'to centuries of racism and exclusion that have shaped the present situation creating an educational debt rather than a simple gap' (Gillborn 2008:44). BAME students in NUS (2011) noted issues relating to inequalities in education were not limited to HE but went as far back primary and secondary school. The historical inequality in education discussed by Gillborn (2008) coupled with BAME students own negative experiences mean that changes and development in the curriculum to be more diverse is necessary but the historical inequities in education at all levels which led to achievement gaps also needed to be addressed.

<u>Conclusions to Black African Student participation in and experience of Higher Education art and design:</u>

The Arts Council report undertaken by Okon (2005) highlighted a lack of participation by the BAME communities in Higher Education art and design. The suggestions from Okon (2005) that highlighted the specific need for my research were; qualitative research looking at factors influencing BAME participation/non-participation (interviews with students, parents, art teachers at schools and FE colleges, career advisors and teaching and careers staff at HEIs).

Through compiling a comprehensive literature review Okon (2005) identified that, as well as an under-representation of BAME groups, actual research and literature within this field which focused on BAME groups and participation in HE art and design was also greatly lacking. As a result of the period in which the review was compiled the most recent

literature considered was from 2004, highlighting that there was a need for this review to be updated to show current literature, which this chapter has sought to do. The research in this field that has been undertaken since the report include Hatton (2009) which looked at Black student experiences in HE art and design, Hatton (2012) which explored the HE curriculum in relation to BAME groups, Hatton (2013) which looked at diversity and art and design education focusing on educational achievement, attainment and the curriculum, and Theuri (2015) which looked at the utilisation of Critical Race Theory as a framework to highlight issues around race and inequality in the field.

HE art and design has been identified as the premise of the middle class (Burke and McManus 2011, Theuri 2015) with some institutions seeing it as having 'little relevance for lower income groups…either in cultural or vocational terms' (McManus 2006:78). This idea of art and design not being part of working class culture has also been shared by artist and art critic Sonia Dyer, who highlighted that a larger percentage of Black families were working class and this in part explained their low participation in art and design overall (Dyer 2007). To further clarify the importance of class status within HE art and design, McManus (2006) highlighted Bourdieu and Darbel's findings in *'The Love of Art'* (1991) which suggested that middle class families were able to transmit a love of art to their children as they were 'more likely to own books on art and talk about art, leading their children to develop an interest in the subject' (McManus 2006: 81). According to Burke and McManus' (2011) analysis the early nurturing of this cultural capital is one that is not only welcomed but expected in order to gain access to the HE art and design space, those who do not understand this system miss out regardless of ability and potential. Similarly Zimdars et al (2009) highlighted the important place that cultural capital and the 'acculturation of training' had in 'helping' students to gain a place on arts courses in Oxford (Zimdars et al 2009:659). Zimdars et al (2009) also noted the importance of having a 'relationship of familiarity with culture', determining that 'it was not enough for parents to simply take their children to the museum, or send them to learn the flute, but children who read and understood high culture and accumulated the cultural knowledge rewarded by the education system fared particularly well in the competition for a place at Oxford' (Zimdars et al 2009:661). The extent to which this transmission of culture cuts across ethnicities has

been explored by Banks (2010), who interviewed African American middle class families and discussed their art appreciation and consumption, noting that similar to the findings of Bourdieu (1991) African American middle class families were doing similar activities in engaging their children with the arts, but has yet to be explored within research in the UK. The research discussed in this section highlights the important role class plays in participation in and experience of HE art and design.

However, the fact that much of the literature discussed noted that the HE art and design space was not just a middle class space but a 'White' middle class space does confirm that for Black African students their race, ethnicity and culture also plays a significant part in the extent to which they are accepted and accommodated into that space. This can be seen in Burke and McManus (2011) in their discussion of a Black female working class candidate who was not offered a place on an HE art and design course because 'she did not cite the discourses that would enable (her) to be recognised as a legitimate student subject' (Burke and McManus 2011:708). Also recognising the place of race, ethnicity and culture Dean (2004) discussed two BAME female applicants and their admissions process into a Scottish art college, although both were from very different backgrounds they were discussed and constructed by the admissions tutor in very similar ways with continuous reference to their ethnicity in relation to the 'quality' of work produced which the tutor had presumed would be sub-standard. One of the students 'given her background' (Dean 2004:179) was given a place, which Dean (2004) noted 'raised a number of important questions about the process and possibility of positive discrimination based on ethnicity' (Dean 2004:221). Burke and McManus (2011) highlighted the intersectionality of being Black, female and working class and the issues this brought about in comparison to being white, male and middle class thus recognising that different groups face different challenges in regards to accessing the HE art and design space. Both Dean (2004) and Burke and McManus (2011) located specific issues faced by Black students as a result of race, ethnicity and culture.

With the exception of Okon (2005), Hatton (2009, 2012, 2013) and Theuri (2015) most of the literature identified on HE art and design, has tended to focus on issues relating to class,

admissions, portfolios, applications, interviews and retention. Despite having identified some issues that were affecting BAME students specifically, McManus (2006) was mainly focused on highlighting the importance of class and its impact on students and where/if they chose to study HE art and design. Although Zimdars et al (2009) noted that the research was focusing on South Asian applicants, issues to do with race and ethnicity were not explored in much depth, and were considered as one variable out of a possible three (the others being academic attainment, cultural capital).

From a reading of previous research (Zimdars et al 2009, Burke and McManus 2011 and McManus 2006), it can be said that cultural capital is a key factor in participation in and experience of HE art and design subjects, but the place of race, ethnicity and culture has yet to be explored in any great depth and detail. It is concluded in this section that moving on from a focus predominantly on class, there is a need for race, ethnicity and culture to be considered together to explore how this intersectionality affects student participation in and experiences of HE art and design.

2.6   Art and design Widening Participation strategies

The Widening Participation (WP) agenda was established on the belief and opinion that there were particular groups, usually defined according to socio-economic or ethnic group, which were 'unfairly under-represented in higher education' (Goard et al 2006:8). WP strategies started when New Labour came into power in 1997 (Callender 2002, Dean 2004, Leathwood et al 2010, Burke and McManus 2009, 2011). The strategies 'asserted access and participation as a central theme of UK educational policy' (Burke and McManus 2011:700). But despite wanting to widen participation, New Labour also took on board the previous Conservative party's plan to remove grants and replace them with loans, plans which were viewed as unacceptable particularly by the Scottish parliament (Callender 2002). The WP strategies nonetheless resulted in the landscape of HE undergoing transformation partly due to diverse new student constituencies emerging (Leathwood 2010, Burke and McManus 2011)[xxvi]. In 2003 Labour set a target that 50% of 18-30 year olds should be participating in learning in HE by 2010 (Runnymede 2010) However, it seems despite the strategies, policies and approaches, 'persistent patterns of under-representation continue to perplex policy-

makers and practitioners' (Burke and McManus 2011:700) with rates of participation still being lower than those in other developed countries (Runnymede 2010). Callender (2002) for example noted that although New Labour had a focus to widen participation, majority of the student body remained middle class. Similarly Burke and McManus (2009, 2011) highlighted that WP was not working with particular groups in certain areas, questioning that perhaps it was attitudes and practices within HEIs that were hindering the process, coupled with the WP agenda seeming to place the problem with the students and emphasis on the students' need to change to fit into the existing HE system. They also noted that existing systems showed an expectation that the normal art and design student was white, male and middle class.

Subject choice and WP strategies in art and design have tended to focus more on the increase of 'non-traditional' and predominantly working class applicants rather than BAME groups (Bhagat and O'Neil 2011, McManus 2006). The research around this area has also tended to be more focused on the applications and admissions process as being the key barrier to access for HE creative arts and design for non-traditional applicants (McManus 2006, Burke & McManus 2011, Bhagat & O'Neil 2011). Literature in this area has included critiques of the WP discourse (Burke and McManus 2011), a historical mapping of WP strategies (Dean 2004, Hudson 2009a, 2009b) and research on the progress and experiences of WP students in HE art and design (Hudson 2009a). Hudson (2009b) identified that there was a range of WP initiatives specifically related to art and design, but there was little evidence of evaluation on the effectiveness of these initiatives. Research by Burke and McManus (2009, 2011) was one of very few which truly critiqued the HEI art and design and their WP agendas which expected students to fit into already existing systems and where they did not the students were seen as problematic. Other research (Candela 2009) focused predominantly on the success of WP schemes particularly where students had fitted into the system, where problems with the HEIs were raised, there was still an underlying narrative that changes should be made but these changes still expected students to fit into existing structures (Hagger et al 2007). However research by Candela (2009), Leathwood (2010) and Runnymede (2010) identified that a number of students had positively benefitted from the work done by educational institutions as a result of the WP agenda.

Okon (2005) highlighted a range of WP strategies in HE art and design and although noting that most did not target the BAME groups specifically, the report did identify a very small number of strategies that focused on BAME groups (five specifically). However Bhagat and O'Neil (2011) highlighted that in the UK the focus has tended to be on social class with the WP agenda often proclaiming an inclusive agenda 'looking at all 'under-represented groups' (Bhagat and O'Neil 2011:29)[xxvii], a contrast to USA where issues of race and ethnicity often dominated (Bhagat and O'Neil 2011). As a policy Bhagat and O'Neil (2011) noted that it had been viewed by New Labour from a 'colour blind' perspective with the overall focus being on students from the 'most disadvantaged socio-economic groups'. Connor et al (2004) also identified that due to the perception that BAME groups as a whole were over-represented in HE, WP strategies were not targeting them as a specific group. This perspective is shared by a report on WP and racial equality by the Runnymede group which observed that

> 'There has been less public concern about the race equality implications of widening participation efforts. Masked by the global figure that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds have a higher participation rate in HE than their white counterparts, issues of race and ethnicity seem to have fallen from the widening participation agenda' (Runnymede 2010:3)

Thus Connor et al (2004), Bhagat and O'Neil (2011) and Runnymede (2010) all identify that BAME students (and within that it can be said; Black African students) are not being considered specifically within the Widening Participation agenda.

2.7   Conclusion to Literature review

Through exploring how academics and researchers have examined and interpreted the field so far, this chapter has reviewed literature and identified gaps in the field. This review has highlighted gaps in scholarship specifically around Black African student participation in and experience of HE art and design. It has been noted that a large amount of the research on student participation and experience in HE art and design is focused on class issues and looks predominantly at BAME groups collectively with Black African students subsumed within that. Primarily literature in the field has leaned towards discourses on limiting barriers in participation and HE experience with less focus on facilitating strategies. The

review has highlighted the necessity for further research in this field, a venture that this research study has thus undertaken.

This chapter has revealed through existing research that, given the place of education in maintaining, preserving and extending wider societal inequalities (Bourdieu 1990), Black African student participation in and experience of HE art and design has been identified as an experience fraught with a range of difficulties and barriers. This section has also illuminated the contexts within which the participants' experiences are situated, and thus revealed the complex, difficult, discriminating and marginalising circumstances that the participants in this study may face in regards to participation in and experiences of HE art and design. The review has looked at the historical, cultural and socio-economic circumstances affecting the Black African communities in Britain, thus it has demonstrated the significance of historical and contemporary events that have both affected and shaped Black African communities, placing this research study within an historical and present-day context. This review has also considered the cultural diversity strategies in the art and design sector in the UK and their impact on Black African communities and discussed art and design from a Black and African viewpoint highlighting the ways in which art and design could be considered from a perspective other than the Eurocentric one that has dominated the field. These varied understandings of art and design based on Black and African cultures is an important consideration as it is argued that they have a formative bearing on the choice and adaptability of Black African art and design students and thus their participation in and experiences of HE art and Design.

Overall this review has demonstrated that the research that this study will undertake will build on previous work in the field, offering a more nuanced understanding of Black African student participation in and experience of HE art and design which form the main focus and primary research of this thesis.

The next section looks at the theoretical frameworks deemed necessary for aiding in the understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

3   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1   Introduction

This section explores and summarises the theoretical frameworks that are deemed relevant for understanding the phenomena under study. The theoretical frameworks discussed in this chapter present what have been identified as central understandings and explanations of the societal, political, cultural and economic elements that underline Black African students' participation in and experiences of HE art and design. They are deemed relevant because utilised collectively they bring to the forefront the intersectionality of issues around race and ethnicity, culture and class that exist within our society, and which ultimately affect Black African students. The theoretical frameworks to be discussed are as follows; theory of reproduction, Critical Race Theory, theory of Multiculturalism, Afrocentrism and Post-Black theory. Collectively these frameworks allow an analysis of the participant narratives which take into consideration Black African students' places in a multicultural society, their acculturation into that society, the influence of their African culture and heritage, the place of racism in society and its effect on their experiences, and the ways that dominant groups dictate knowledge and ways of being in education.

Research in HE art and design has yet to explore the experiences of Black African art and design students, and to explore them through the collective lens that the discussed theoretical frameworks provide. This chapter, therefore, argues as to why the theoretical frameworks discussed, which are brought together to create a conceptual framework for this research project, are relevant to the understanding of the experiences of Black African art and design students. A range of cross-disciplinary frameworks have been utilised as there was not one specific framework that was deemed on its own to be sufficient. Modood (2004) noted the necessity of a 'wider-sociological framework… in order to answer questions about ethnic minority entry into HE in a way that connects it with wider explanations' (Modood 2004:44) which have been missing thus far in this field.

In relation to current British society Gilroy (2012) noted that

> The last few years comprise a specific conjuncture in Britain's politics of race. The spectacle of racialised truths and ethnic conflicts endures, but it is being punctuated by a growing sense that the analyses forged in order to make sense of earlier struggles may have reached the end of their use. The need for a successor approach is acutely felt (Gilroy 2012:380)

It is with this perspective that these range of frameworks were considered. Though some of these theories have previously been looked at in relation to art and design education, in particular, Multiculturalism (e.g. Chalmers 1996, 1999, Boughton and Mason 1999), Afrocentrism (e.g. Adu-Poku 2002, Chanda 1992), the theory of reproduction (e.g. Burke and McManus 2011, McManus 2006), and Critical Race Theory (Theuri 2015), they provide insights that cannot and should not be overlooked. However it is believed that new insights may be offered through a conceptual framework which draws these theoretical frameworks and other lesser used theories (in this field) together. In later chapters the theoretical frameworks referenced here will re-emerge in the discussion of the findings from this study.

As this research is very much centred on the disciplines of art and design I begin with a discussion of African American artist Kara Walker. Walker looks at taboo areas such as the rape of African American women and the often violent way that many African Americans were killed during slavery. Walker's work is based on the premise that the lives and experiences of African Americans are chain links in a continuous narrative, and the memory of slavery is an inherited lived experience that has potentially inhibiting influences on the patterns of enterprise and responsiveness of today's African Americans. This conflicts with the liberalist position that equal opportunities favour new and rigorous narratives that redress and annul the discriminatory actions and events of the past. Between these two positions there lies the need for capacity building, including the healing of wounded self-worth and self-esteem that has resulted from painful histories.

The above forms the elements of a paradigm that is applicable to the condition of being Black not only in America but also in the UK today. The continuous narratives of slavery, colonialism and imperialism resulting in centuries of racism and exclusion, shape not only the Black communities' educational experiences but also their responsiveness to education. As argued by Dash (2010) 'the echo of the slave trade still affects African Caribbean pupil

performance and, as inheritors of Euro-centered traditions of teaching and learning, teacher pedagogic approaches'(Dash 2010:9). Dash identifies 'African Caribbean students as learners, whose cultures have been rendered invisible' and they 'are by this means disadvantaged…' (Dash 2010:9). Within research on the Black communities in the UK, this paradigm has often influenced the discourse relating to the educational experiences of those of African Caribbean heritage; however Black African communities and their educational experiences have not been considered to the same degree within this paradigm where historical inequalities and disadvantages are seen as shaping contemporary experiences. This chapter discusses the utilisation of the highlighted theoretical frameworks as a way of understanding the specificities of Black African student participation in and experiences of HE art and design within the paradigm discussed above, where it is viewed as important that the legacy of historical inequalities and disadvantages affecting minoritised groups are taken into consideration when looking at their responsiveness to education.

Simultaneously whilst considering the past it is also important to consider how this interacts with the present. Our current society is described by Gilroy (2012) as led by a Prime Minister who unlike his Conservative party predecessors

> 'is in no position to repeat the Tory right's traditional xenological instructions to Britain's unwanted incomers. His well-publicised appreciation of Reggae effectively prevents him from telling blacks to flee from the conflict which will inevitably follow their post-colonial intrusions into British peace and quiet. That appetite for the exotic pleasures of multiculture may be useful as a measure of the changes at the top of the Conservative party. It combines with the fruits of focus group research to close down any mention of expulsion or repatriation' (Gilroy 2012:387)

but instead calls for an approach which seeks to assimilate all cultures to follow one set of values and ways of being that are considered to be truly British (Gilroy 2012). Against this backdrop are the 2011 riots which began as a reaction against the death of a Black male at the hands of the police. Politicians 'dismissed' the riots as 'mindless violence', but as discussed in the previous chapter, earlier research showed that participants believed their reactions were a result of anger at the death of Duggan, but also as a result of anger at government cuts and racist stop and search police procedures Gillborn (2013)

Gilroy (2012) identifies what could be deemed the existing political rhetoric around minoritised groups; seemingly immigrants are welcomed but expected to assimilate into the host countries culture, whilst Gillborn (2013) highlights the ongoing governmental policies that negatively impact minoritised groups. Thus the place of immigrants in British society and the socio-political and economic contexts that they live in also needs to be taken into consideration when looking at their responsiveness to education. Therefore a conceptual framework that can offer understandings and explanations for this world and the ways it is experienced by minoritised young people is necessary; one which brings together historical past contexts with the contemporary present contexts. Bringing together the frameworks discussed is deemed as offering that potential.

3.2   Theory of cultural reproduction

This section begins with a consideration of class inequalities which are significantly important in art and design, a space which is often viewed as the domain of the upper and middle class of societies (Bourdieu and Darbel 1991). The theory of cultural reproduction as conceptualised by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) considers the ways in which education reproduces social and cultural inequalities. According to Harker (1990)

> 'Bourdieu…has argued that it is the culture of the dominant group…(that control the economic, social and political resources), which is embodied in the schools, and that it is this 'embodiment' that works as a reproduction strategy for the dominant group' (Harker 1990:87)

In discussing the inclusion and exclusion of groups, Bourdieu highlights the term; cultural capital as referring to the inherited assets which dominant groups hold, such as 'attitudes and aptitudes' (Harker 1990:87) which they utilise to help them maintain their current status in society and also move forward. This cultural capital is one that is expected and reinforced as normal in school and seen as necessary in order to succeed, yet it is a set of attitudes and aptitudes that belong to and are held by the dominant group (Mills 2008). Cultural capital is facilitated in the home and then maintained through reinforcement in the school turning it into educational capital, thus placing all those who have no access to this cultural capital at a disadvantage within the educational systems (Harker1990, Reay 2004, Mills 2008).

This cycle discussed above, is however not static and some individuals from disadvantaged groups are able to succeed by gaining qualifications in a system that favours the dominant groups, subsequently as this happens 'as everyone gets qualified…selection and recruiting agents shift to other criteria, such as presentation, ease, style and so on, all favouring the product of the dominant elite habitus' (Harker 1990:95). To add to the cycle of inequality, disadvantaged groups may gain the qualifications but are not always able to increase the returns on their qualifications. They are largely unable to make the qualifications work as a form of social and economic capital as they are not a part of the dominant group and cannot tap into the knowledge that they hold (Harker 1990, Reay 2001, 2004). Research undertaken by Macmillan and Vignoles (2013) which looked at the occupational destinations of new graduates at six months and three years after graduation within the UK, showed that more socio-economically advantaged graduates were more likely to be in highest status occupations compared to those from lower socio-economic groups. Further to this students who had attended private schools were more likely to be in highest status occupations than those from state schools. This research demonstrates that there is evidence to show that in contemporary contexts the arguments put forward by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) still hold true.

Bourdieu's theory is useful in highlighting the class inequalities that perpetuate in society and the extent to which they are played out in education (Reay 2004). This theory has been used in considering the exclusion of working class students in HE art and design (e.g. McManus 2006). This perspective draws attention to the cultural capital that Black African individuals and families hold and are able to make use of in educating their children on HE options and choices and their ability to then access, enter and progress in HE art and design. Bourdieu argues that the ability to do this is class dependent and there are differences in how middle and working class groups prepare their children for HE and also the extent to which they are aware of HE choices. It has been argued that when looking at inequalities that exist in education social class analysis is useful and relevant but it is not enough, it is also necessary to consider the place of race (Gillborn in Theuri 2015). Class inequalities have been identified as not being equally significant for all ethnic groups (Gillborn 2008), ethnicity has been noted as compounding the effect of class inequalities (Reay 2004), and it has been

argued that the theory of reproduction does not include race in its analysis (Modood 2004, Yosso 2005). Race perpetuates exclusion, research shows that members of Black communities who are middle class and hold the relevant cultural capital are still more likely to be disadvantaged and face discrimination (Gillborn 2008, Rollock et al 2011, Gillborn et al 2012), within the society that would otherwise value their capital if they were white middle class. Ultimately race, is a marker of difference which dominant groups continue to use to exclude, Critical Race Theory (which is discussed next) is a theoretical framework which further highlights and draws attention to this.

3.3   **Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has its origins in American critical legal scholarship (CRL); beginning in the 1970s with the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman (Ladson-Billings 1999, Delgado and Stefancic 2000). Many of the starting points of CRT are taken from critical legal scholarship, but the theory revived and transformed many of the CRL concepts (Roithmayr 1999). It was the focus predominantly on the critique of liberalism by CRL with little focus on racism in American society which impelled CRT scholars such as Derrick Bell and Kimberle Crenshaw to develop a more 'race conscious analysis of race in US legislation' (Warmington 2012:10), and to cultivate a theory which placed race and racism at the centre (Delgado and Stefancic 2000, Gillborn 2008). In the mid-90s Ladson-Billings and Tate began to utilise CRT within the education field (Warmington 2012), its use in the field of education has progressed significantly in the years since then. Although predominantly a framework used in America, the work of Gillborn (2005, 2006, 2008, 2010), Hylton (2009), Rollock (2012a, 2012b) and Warmington (2012) are key names in a growing body of work which deals with CRT from a specifically UK context. Looking specifically at research on education in the UK, CRT has been used as a tool to identify and expose racism and discrimination within British education, specifically secondary education (Gillborn 2008), and the work of Gillborn et al (2012) has explored the experiences of Black middle class parents and their children's education through a CRT framework. There has been a limited amount of work which has considered CRT in regards to art and design education in general and higher education art and design specifically, so far only (Theuri 2015) which explores the ways in

which a CRT framework can be useful in highlighting the exclusion of minoritised groups in HE art and design[xxviii].

The central focus of CRT is on race and racism. Racism is seen as so endemic in society that it has been normalised (Delgado and Stefancic 2001). The theory notes the importance of class and gender inequalities but argues that race should not be side-lined in and amongst these; CRT claims the right to begin with race. As a theory it brings race and racism to the centre of debates, it is a critique of liberalism and the supposed meritocratic society we live in, and focuses on giving voices to minoritised groups. With CRT, 'racism is seen as *normal*, as an ingrained part of our everyday culture, it is ordinary and natural' (Gillborn 2008:27), CRT identifies, exposes and analyses this taken for granted everyday racism that affects minority ethnic groups on a daily basis.

CRT offers a lens to 'deconstruct and challenge racial inequality in society' and also 'to expose the way in which racial inequality is maintained through the operation of structures and assumptions that appear normal and unremarkable' (Rollock and Gillborn 2011). Earlier it was noted that Bourdieu's work on cultural capital was limited in its failure to address race issues, CRT however, has been used to challenge 'traditional interpretations of cultural capital' and identify cultural wealth that exists within minoritised groups that are unrecognised by the dominant culture (Yosso 2005). Yosso (2005) asserts that the cultural wealth that minoritised students bring with them to educational contexts need to be recognised by educational institutions. Similarly this research, which has CRT as part of its basis, is focused on placing race and racism at the centre in order to aid in understanding and providing insight to the experiences of the participants in this study. CRT is a theoretical framework which draws attention to issues around race and racism in education, issues which are deemed necessary for consideration when interpreting and interrogating the experiences of Black African art and design students.

CRT has been criticised as solely focused on race, however CRT also focuses on the intersectionality of race along with gender, class, disability, sexuality, national origin and how they play out in society (Crenshaw 1995, Gonzalez 1999, Delgado and Stefancic 2001, Gillborn 2008). Crenshaw (1995) and Gonzalez (1999) both highlight the necessity of taking

into account multiple identities when considering the way in which the social world is structured. As argued by Parekh (2006), the culture someone comes from plays a part in the structuring of personality and the ways individuals see the world, as such the participants' experiences will be informed by the British culture they inhabit as well as the African cultures that form a part of their heritage. It has been argued by Gillborn (2008) that different ethnic groups can face different forms of inequalities at different times, highlighting for example the one dimensional stereotyping of Asian female students in educational contexts, when in fact these students have rich and varied lives incorporating both their home cultures with that of their local cultures. Therefore in order to gain a holistic perspective of the narratives of the participants in this study it is not enough to look only at race but also necessary to look at the place of culture and the ways in which the two intersect. In this case the focus is on African and British cultures coming together for Africans, and the intersectionality aspect of CRT allows such issues to be considered. A framework which maintains as its focus African culture is Afrocentrism which is discussed in the next section.

3.4 Culture as understood within a theory of Multiculturalism

This section begins first with a discussion of multiculturalism, followed by a discussion of culture as understood within a theory of multiculturalism and then lastly the theoretical framework of Afrocentrism is discussed. An understanding of culture informed by Parekh's (2006) work on multiculturalism, where he tackles questions and issues that ultimately surface with the coming together of multiple cultures in one place, is an important framework for this study. The significance of culture is key in this research; the ways educational choices are shaped by culture both 'African' and 'British', and the extent to which the students' cultural identity and perspective are being considered and accommodated for within art and design education.

3.4.1 Multiculturalism

A multicultural society is a society which includes within it two or more cultural communities (Hall 2000, Parekh 2006). The UK therefore is very much a multicultural

society, that is, it is a society that has a number of different cultures within it. Parekh (2006) however distinguishes between the terms 'multicultural' and 'multiculturalist', stating that a country may be multicultural but this does not then mean that it is multiculturalist, which definition a country fits depends on its response to its cultural communities. A multicultural society

> '…might respond to its cultural diversity in one of two ways, each in turn capable of taking several forms. It might welcome and cherish it, make it central to its self-understanding, and respect the cultural demands of its constituent communities; or it might seek to assimilate these communities into mainstream culture either wholly or substantially. In the first case it is multiculturalist and in the second monoculturalist in its orientation and ethos. Both alike are multicultural societies, but only one of them is multiculturalist. The term 'multicultural refers to the fact of cultural diversity, the term 'multiculturalism' to a normative response to that fact' (Parekh 2006:6).

There exists a large body of work on multiculturalism identifying and discussing wide-ranging perspectives on cultural diversity in contemporary society, from those who identify multiculturalism with assimilation into host societies, to those who see it as perspective which allows different groups to maintain their cultural variances (Nagel and Hopkins 2010). With regards to this Doy (2003) identifies four ways that multiculturalism can be considered

> Indeed 'multiculturalism' is a vague term, and as such masks some pretty big problems. At best, it suggests a move to value various cultures equally, to take the best from a variety of cultures (while rejecting the worst?), and an avoidance of the pressure to force integration of 'other' cultures into 'mainstream' culture…In the middle somewhere multiculturalism can result in a tolerance of difference, among groups of fragmented identities and smaller interest groups who have to struggle to find out what can unite them against the source of their problems. Or multiculturalism can entail a kind of woolly liberal tolerance where there is tacit agreement among all the participants that no one will criticise any reactionary elements of any culture. At worst, multiculturalism is an avoidance of the problem of racism and imperialism, and becomes a soft option to replace a directly anti-racist approach (Doy 2003:199-200)

Similarly Hall (2000) has noted the complex nature of multiculturalism highlighting that if the term is understood as the strategies and policies utilised by societies to manage the complexities of multicultural societies, then there are a number of different existing

'multiculturalisms'. Whilst taking on board Doy's critique of the ways in which multiculturalism can be upheld in a society, the idea of valuing cultures equally which has also been noted by Doy (2003) as possibly the 'best' element of multiculturalism is one of the main tenets of this framework that this research project upholds. This acknowledgement of the acceptance of culture is seen as the core of multiculturalism, and thus it is a framework which allows a focus of culture and an understanding that culture forms part of the ways in which people live and fashion their lives, and therefore is vital in understanding human experience. However Doy (2003) also highlights the criticisms of multiculturalism and thus its limitations particularly in regards to the way in which it can become 'a soft option to replace a directly anti-racist approach', these limitations of the framework particularly what has been perceived as the 'failure' of its practical conceptualisation will also be discussed.

In *Re-thinking Multiculturalism* Parekh(2006) contends that 'multiculturalism is not about difference and identity *per se* but about those that are embedded in and sustained by culture' (Parekh 2006:2) And he defines culture as a body of values and customs by which groups understand and 'organise their individual and collective lives' (Parekh 2006:3), asserting the importance of *culture* in multiculturalism as it differentiates multiculturalism as more than a focus of identity and difference. Parekh then goes ahead to identify that

> Multiculturalism then, is about cultural diversity or culturally embedded differences. Since it is possible to welcome other kinds of differences but not those derived from culture, or vice versa, not all advocates of the politics of recognition need be or, as a matter of historical fact, are sympathetic to multiculturalism. Although part of the politics of recognition, multiculturalism is a distinct movement maintaining an ambivalent relationship to it (Parekh 2006:3)

As both Parekh (2006) and Doy (2003) demonstrate multiculturalism is difficult to define and the level to which it is practiced is largely dependent on societies and individuals within societies and the extent to which they wish to embrace or reject cultural diversity.

Multiculturalism as a concept in modern times was said to have originated in North America in the 1970s and 80s (Turner 2006). Within the UK, given its changing landscape as a result of several waves of migration there have been various phases in which multiculturalism has

been incorporated into the society. These phases have been identified and discussed by some scholars, Turner (2006) and Gillborn (2008), in relation to changes in policy and educational policy respectively, where the changes in policy have been seen as the result of responses to 'public crises' (Turner 2006:612). Turner (2006) commented that Britain has had a 'race relations policy rather than a multicultural policy' which came about as a result of a number of riots and outcries, particularly from Black communities in relation to discrimination they faced. The analysis by Turner (2006) does however limit these 'public crises' as predominantly connected to the 'West Indian' community initially and then in later years the Muslim community, and thus erasing other minoritised groups from the debate and their place in helping to challenge inequalities in the UK.

Gillborn (2008) however, discusses race relation policies in relation to all minoritised groups in the UK and critiques the key trends that have shaped contemporary policy from 1945 through to 2006 in relation to multiculturalism, highlighting the racial inequalities that have dominated multiculturalism in the UK. Within this analysis Gillborn identifies 'phases and themes' within 'social and educational policy in relation to race, the aim being to understand how exclusions and oppressions have been made, remade and legitimized' (Gillborn 2008:70). The phases are defined as follows; 1945 to late 1950s was a time in which policy ignored issues around 'race and ethnic diversity'; the late 1950 to late 1960s saw an introduction of significant controls around immigration, and it was also a time when assimilation was the goal for policy and with this came 'the attempt to eradicate (or at least reduce to an absolute minimum) signs of racial and cultural difference' (Gillborn 2008:73) including a push for the teaching of the English language as well as actions 'to limit minoritised student numbers at the school and classroom level' (Gillborn 2008:73).

In Gillborn's analysis 1966 to the late 1970s saw assimilation remain as the key goal however there was a change of focus to 'cultural pluralism' and 'integration' and within education 'minoritised group (were) portrayed as strange exotic and other' and educational policy continued to 'view minorities as a problem needing to adapt to a largely unchanged system' (Gillborn 2008:73). The late 1970s to mid-1980s are identified as a time of 'cultural pluralism and multiculturalism' with 'multicultural; education' becoming 'accepted as part of public policy, albeit superficially and with a focus on 'celebratory approaches' and the

'lifestyles' of minority ethnic groups. The mid-1980s to 1997 was characterised as the period of 'new racism and colour blind policies', in which Conservative party leaders' approaches to policy emphasised colour blindness and ignored racial diversity instead focusing on tackling disadvantages faced by all British people regardless of their background. 1997-2001 was then a time in which Tony Blair and the Labour party broke away from the colour blind policies of the Conservatives and began a phase labelled by Gillborn (2008) as 'naïve multiculturalism'

> Naïve because although there is evidence of a limited commitment to equity, that commitment was largely superficial: it consisted of rhetorical flourishes that left mainstream policy untouched except for the area of separate faith schools, where the action indicated acceptance of a weak notion of equality of *access* and diversity of *provision* with no deeper analysis of the consequences nor genuine understanding of the scale of race inequality in the system (Gillborn 2008:75)

However following the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and the 7/7 attacks in 2005 the debate and opinions around multiculturalism changed significantly, with many openly talking of the failure of multiculturalism (Gillborn 2008, Watters 2011). Multiculturalism was seen by some as possibly having 'provided a breeding ground for extremism; and the fact that the 2005 London bombers were home grown terrorists, born and raised in the UK, seemed to exemplify this' (Vertovec 2010:86). This demise of multiculturalism has however been identified as being discussed by academics from as early as the 1980s (Nagel and Hopkins 2010, Vertovec 2010), identifying multiculturalism historically as having been a contested issue. The 9/11 attacks signalled a significant change in that there was a 'retaliatory confidence' by politicians and those within host societies in the West to voice their concerns over ethnic diversity taking 'the opportunity to position themselves as plain-speaking honest folk unafraid to voice 'common sense' opinions despite the supposed threat of censure from forces of 'political correctness' (Gillborn 2008:79). Perspectives that would previously have been viewed as racist were now given space for discussion particularly in the media, and in particular certain groups being viewed with suspicion and perceived as dangerous (Vertovec 2010).

This identifies with arguments by Ahmed (2000) that

> …multiculturalism can involve a double and contradictory process of incorporation and expulsion: it may seek to differentiate between those strangers whose appearance of difference can be claimed by the nation, and those stranger strangers who may yet be expelled, whose difference may be dangerous to the well-being of even the most heterogeneous of nations (Ahmed 2000:97)

The narrative of the failure of multiculturalism, and the inclusion, recognition and acceptance of certain cultures over others, is still a very prevalent discourse within the UK at present. The argument behind the failure of multiculturalism is that there has over the years been too much leeway given to the accommodation and recognition of diverse cultures, such that different groups are living separate lives away from the mainstream culture, unable to integrate and thus creating segregated communities (Vertovec 2010, Gilroy 2012, Keddie 2014, Gillborn 2013). This notion was echoed by the British Prime Minister David Cameron in 2011 where he talked of multiculturalism having allowed a tolerance of segregated communities which behaved in ways that conflicted with British values. This was the failure of multiculturalism, a perspective that has received criticism from key writers within the field of race and ethnicity (Gilroy 2012, Gillborn 2013), in the UK. Here it is possible to see the deep-seated contemporary problems around the inclusion, recognition and acceptance of the multiple cultures that currently make up Britain.

3.4.2   Culture

Culture can be defined as lived, as shaping someone and as the way people identify themselves (Parekh 2006). There is recognition of those who share the beliefs and practices of someone's culture as members of their cultural community. Culture shapes someone from an early age and structures their personality, the way they see the world around them, the way they assign meanings and significance to activities and relationships, their 'inhibitions, taboos, prejudices, and musical, culinary, sartorial, artistic and other tastes…sentiments and memories…love of certain kinds of sounds, smells and sights, heroes, role models, bodily gestures, values, ideals, and ways of holding and carrying themselves' (Parekh 2006: 155-156).

People however, are not constituted or determined by their culture, they may be shaped by it but they have the capacity to see it from a critical perspective and also 'rise above its

constitutive beliefs and practices and reach out to other cultures' (Parekh, 2006:157). Hall (1990) argues that there is not one specific cultural identity which we come from or belong to and identifies that there are 'at least two different ways of thinking about cultural identity' (Hall 1990:223). The first being a mutual and collective culture which 'people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common' (Hall 1990: 223) and which is useful for mobilising groups to affect change, but is essentialist by nature. There is also another view of cultural identity and 'this second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute 'what we really are' (Hall 1990:225). Hall (1990) maintains that cultural identities undergo continuous transformation, both becoming and being, this rather than the first perspective of cultural identity is argued as a useful way of understanding the experiences of Black people. Parekh (2006) shares Hall's sentiments about cultures being shaped out of interactions with other cultures, identifying that there is an understanding that cultures are plural, however he also states that 'this does not mean that (cultures) are devoid of internal coherence and identity but that their identity is plural and fluid' (Parekh 2006:337). Cultures are influenced by each other, however this does not mean that each culture 'has no powers of self-determination…but rather that it is porous and subject to external influences which it interprets and assimilates in its own autonomous way' (Parekh 2006:337). Therefore it is important to acknowledge the shared culture which shapes a person's identity, whilst also taking into consideration that ultimately this culture is also influenced by other cultures and thus for individuals the way their identity is affected by the culture or cultures that surround them is in constant flux. However as highlighted by Hall (2000) 'maintaining racialised, ethno-cultural and religious identities is clearly important to self-understanding in (diaspora) communities' (Hall 2000:220)

Parekh (2006) explores culture as part of the process of his re-thinking of multiculturalism, highlighting the positives of cultural diversity and ways in which it should be nurtured within society, and noting that an understanding of and recognition of culture and the important part it plays in human life is necessary in understanding and moving forward the debate on multiculturalism.

Inequalities in multicultural societies exist where new immigrants often lack enough political and economic power to be a significant political presence (Parekh 2006), whilst also being excluded and disadvantaged in these societies (Hall 2000, Vertovec 2010). Although they may be granted citizenship of a country they may still feel like outsiders, they may not feel as though their cultures are understood and accepted into the society of that country (Parekh 2006). And linking back to the theory of reproduction by Bourdieu, economic and 'cultural power' tends to be

> 'in the hands of a small class of people and (thus) enable(s) them to set the moral and cultural tone of society. The dominant group confers prestige on certain forms of life and ways of doing things, encourages certain types of ambition and motivation, privileges certain values, goals and careers, and by means of a complex blend of inducements and sanctions shapes the choices and lives of their fellow citizens. An unequal society…stifles a wide variety of valuable identities, and discourages a diversity of perspectives and ways of life'. (Parekh 2006:366-367).

In regards to the UK, immigrants and their cultures have been predominantly considered and understood as being in contrast and opposition to Britishness (which is often seen as synonymous to whiteness), with 'Britishness being the empty signifier, the norm, against which 'difference'…is measured' (Hall 2000: 221).

In discussing ways of moving to a more equal society, the importance of culture is noted by Parekh who argues that when societies are able to recognize and 'bring into the political discourse' culture as 'a source of claims' what then happens is 'an additional form of reasoning is available to both liberals (or rather host societies) and immigrants' (Parekh 2006:362). Meaning that the 'cultural beliefs and practices' of immigrants should be valued and accepted when good reasons are offered for it by immigrants, and likewise host societies can also ask for their own cultural beliefs and practices to be respected (Parekh 2006). And therefore

> By acknowledging culture as a legitimate source of claims, the liberal society both incurs an obligation to respect minority cultures and acquires a right to demand reciprocal respect from them (Parekh 2006:362)

It is this understanding of the importance of culture and 'appeal to mutual cultural respect, which lies at the heart of multiculturalism' (Parekh 2006: 362), particularly if multiculturalism is understood as a *response* to cultural diversity as discussed earlier.

This section has explored culture within a theory of multiculturalism, as a theoretical basis for understanding the place of Black African students within a multicultural society. Multiculturalism as a framework is particularly useful in identifying the importance of understanding and including the cultural communities which shape and are a part of multicultural societies. Given the narrative of the failure of multiculturalism, it is questionable as to the extent that this framework can solely be utilised to interrogate the current society we live in. It is necessary and relevant but also requires other frameworks to add to its usefulness. Neither does it in and of itself offer a specific way of exploring the world view of any particular community, in this case Black African communities. Therefore there are limitations with utilising this framework on its own; it throws up the need to consider a theoretical framework which specifically explores African culture, African perspectives on history and culture and the acculturation of African communities into Britain in order to further an understanding of the phenomena under study.

3.5   Afrocentrism (Afrocentricity)

A 'multicultural society consists of several cultures or cultural communities with their own distinct systems of meaning and significance and views of man and the world' (Parekh 2006:13), and so Afrocentrism (also referred to as Afrocentricity) is a paradigm which focuses on an African view of the world and thus it is an African centred paradigm. Whilst it has been argued that an African world view is also intermingled with Western ways of seeing and therefore 'the impact of the imposed philosophy of the West over and above the Africans, developed an outlook in Africans, which could not be referred to as neither African nor European anymore' (Dukor 2005:8) and was very much a product of the two, Afrocentrism takes this into account but puts forth an argument of the importance of placing the African perspective at the centre of discourses. 'It is a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person' (Asante 1991:171) and encourages an understanding of African people that is not fundamentally

contextualised within a distinctly European intellectual tradition and framework (Asante 1991). Afrocentrism highlights the unique characteristics of African people and proposes that other theoretical perspectives exclude the historical and cultural perspectives of Africa. 'Afrocentricity refers to the investigation of African-based issues from an African frame of reference' (Chanda 1992:15), and 'is understood as a way to investigate phenomena by starting with Africa as the center of the study' (Stewart 2011:269). The above observation is 'further predicated on the assumptions that there are distinct cultural differences between African and European peoples…and that Western social science has negated the world view or cultural reality of African people'(Schiele 1994:152).

This framework lends itself to the notion that there needs to be a deeper understanding of the African communities in the UK, an understanding of African 'cultural norms' (community, spirituality, dance, food, arts) that have been carried and sustained in a new host country. It also allows for an understanding of the experiences of Black African communities whilst being sympathetic of the historical legacy of enslavement and colonialism that affects Africans (Ince 2009). Afrocentrism calls for a new narrative that sees beyond media and historical representations of Africans as second class citizens, and instead calls for re-presentation of the history and culture of Africans that predominantly receives little focus (Schiele 1996)

This framework allows for an exploration of the experiences of Black African students and their participation in and experiences of HE art and design through a focus on the influence of their African cultures in order to better recognise and appreciate their experiences. It is viewed as having the potential to help in challenging and providing counter narratives of a group that is seen as disadvantaged within British society, and for whom research around their educational experiences are lacking. With this theory one can begin the process of understanding the experiences of Black African students from an African viewpoint, 'for the understanding of the complex web of experiences that inform African culture, Afrocentrism is the more apt approach' (Traore 2004:356) Afrocentrism decentres the Eurocentric experience as the normative way in which BAME experiences are looked at and allows a consideration of the knowledge that comes from being a part of the African culture. It also empowers Black African students to understand their place as Africans in Britain.

Afrocentrism recognises that it is important to explore the positives that come from being of African origin, as well as allowing opportunities to see the inequalities that may result from being part of this group. It is an invaluable resource for exploring culture and education while facilitating a more nuanced comprehension of African culture in educational experiences through the illumination of the place of African culture.

Afrocentrism calls for a refocus on the history of Africans which has been left out of mainstream history, and thus critiques art and design history and art and design education which has been predominantly Eurocentric for having failed to fully incorporate art and design from Africa or by Africans into its narrative (Adu-Poku 2002). It calls for a reconceptualization which places African culture, history and art and design in its rightful place within mainstream discourses.

There are a number of criticisms which have been made against this theoretical framework (Ince 2009). Although arguing that a 'multicultural society consists of several cultures or cultural communities with their own distinct systems of meaning and significance and views of man and the world', Parekh (2006) has been critical of the Afrocentric perspective stating that it reinforces a single identity and isolates the history of a culture from others giving a fixed and limiting perspective and denying the influence of other cultures when talking about achievements. Afrocentrism has been called out as replicating the systems that Eurocentric perspectives have been criticised for (Howe 1998). Asante (1991) has however argued that

> It must be emphasized that Afrocentricity is not a Black version of Eurocentricity (Asante, 1987). Eurocentricity is based on White supremacist notions whose purposes are to protect White privilege and advantage in education, economics, politics, and so forth. Unlike Eurocentricity, Afrocentricity does not condone ethnocentric valorization at the expense of degrading other groups' perspective' (Asante 1991:171-172)

It has also been criticised for creating a mythicized and romanticised Africa far removed from the realities of contemporary Africa (Howe 1998). And Appiah (1992) has argued that it is essentialist to place cultural unity on a diverse group of people as this denies the complexity of the cultures and the influence of other cultures on Africans. However it is

important to consider that the same way that theories such as Critical Race Theory recognises that racism has to be named as visible and in operation in our current society, so this research study sees it as important to note that there are varying cultures living in the UK and their views of the world may at times differ from other cultures. Therefore if we are able to say that there exist Black African communities then we need to acknowledge that these communities may have their own 'worldviews' and an analysis of Black Africans would need to take into consideration the influence and impact of this. Previous research on BAME groups in education has not placed their world views as central to understanding their experiences of art and design education. The utilisation of this theoretical framework allows a placing at the centre the experiences of African students; however it has been placed as *one* element which makes up a specific collective conceptual framework seen as necessary for understanding the narratives of Black African students, particularly given many Africans in the diaspora still have traceable ties to African cultures and heritage as a result of advanced technologies and cheaper travel making it easier to maintain contact (Vertovec 2010).

> 'As Ogbu (1988) has indicated, the historical and structural aspects of a culture have to be considered. Each culture has a different frame of reference; therefore, understanding how different groups give meaning to their realities is crucial to the success of any program development' (Freeman 2005:7).

This perspective can be considered in regards to education and more specifically art and design education. Being sympathetic that there may be differences of understanding due to culturally differing perspectives, it is important to consider this when considering Black African communities' understanding of art and design in general and the students' participation in and experience of HE art and design, considering the extent to which they understand the system, as well as the extent to which the system understands them.

3.6   A Post-Black theory

The idea of a Post-Black theory comes from the perspective that there has been a distinctive shift in politics, culture and society as a whole in regards to what it means to be Black in the twenty first century. Previous ways of understanding the life and experiences of Black

communities are not seen as fitting or relevant anymore, and there is a search for what it means to be Black *now* (Tulloch 2010). Much of the literature surrounding this has come from America, where it has been noted that young African Americans are living different lives to that of previous generations who were part of the civil rights era (Taylor 2007, Ashe 2010, Womack 2010, Toure 2011, Fowler Snyder 2014). According to Taylor (2007) this shift has been 'marked at least in part by the apparent successes of the mid-20th-century black freedom struggle' (Taylor 2007:625) such that African Americans now are facing different life struggles and challenges and looking for new ways to express their identities, and thus are in the process redefining who they are (Womack 2010)

The importance of the visual arts and artists in bringing to the forefront and dealing head on with issues around the politics of race (Tulloch 2010) can be clearly seen in that the term 'Post-Black' and the ideas behind it are said to have originated from painter Glen Ligon and Thelma Golden, a curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem (Taylor 2007, Tulloch 2010, Fowler Snyder 2014). They utilised the term to describe the artwork on show at the 2001 *Freestyle* Exhibition at the Studio Museum Harlem, where Black artists were, in their work seeking, to shed the 'burden of representation' (Fowler Snyder 2014:336). In regards to Golden's use of the term, Taylor (2007) notes

> Post-black artists, (Golden) says in the exhibition catalogue, are "adamant about not being labelled as black artists" but they still work at "redefining complex notions of blackness". Having been born, for the most part, after the 1950-60's civil rights movement, these artists experience race differently from their predecessors. This generational and ideological shift has two crucial consequences. The post-black artist tends to balk at the traditional meanings and burdens of Black Art and The Black Artist; but he or she has also learned to play on and with these meanings' (Taylor 2007:626).

Taylor (2007) further analyses that for the artists in the *Freestyle* Exhibition and many other Black people

> 'the traditional meanings of blackness, the meanings that took their most recent form in the soul-era politics of respectability and black power, are too confining. New meanings have emerged: new forms of black identity that are multiple, fluid and profoundly contingent, along with newly sophisticated understandings of race

and identity, marking what Neal describes as the shift "from essential notions of blackness to metanarratives on blackness…We might say that to be post-black is to experience the contingency and fluidity of black identity, to have to wrestle with the question of how to orient one's self to the various options for black self-consciousness, and to do all of this while relating one's self to the similarly fluid meanings and practices of the wider society' (Taylor 2007:626-627)

Within the Post-Black era there is a yearning to move beyond existing notions of Blackness, and simultaneously a grappling with the complexities of Black identities within contemporary society. A society in which, as well as experiencing race differently to previous generations, technological developments are creating opportunities for Black people, among other things, to open up internet based businesses and mobilise democratic action and voice their opinions in ways that have not been seen before (Womack 2010, Gabriel 2014). Examples such as President Obama are often given when exploring what it is that Post-Black entails for the individual; and this can partly be seen in that his campaign for presidency was identified as pushing forward 'race neutral politics' (Marable 2009, Pitcher 2010), whilst his election as the first Black president in America forced a reconsideration of the connections between existing power structures and race. Obama is identified as epitomising the ability to retain a sense of being Black yet simultaneously not being limited to specific boundaries of Blackness (Ashe 2010, Pitcher 2010, Toure 2011).

Toure (2011) identifies Post-Black as opening up what it means to be Black and moving beyond monolithic Black identities. Post-Black is not viewed as a rejection of Blackness rather a recognition of the plurality of it 'to an extent that has never been seen before' (Fowler Snyder 2014:337). Such that the limitations on Black identities (e.g. how to dress; speak; eat, what ones social activities and hobbies should be) which have been created by both society at large and Black communities, are being challenged (Womack 2010, Toure 2011).

Similar notions to those identified by Taylor (2007) in terms of the changing life struggles and challenges for Black people in America, can be seen in a 2007 BBC news article entitled *'Born black in post-slavery' society'.* The article reported an interview with a fourteen year old Black British male writing that 'Reece's grandparents came to England in the mid-1960s from the West Indies' and Reece is quoted as saying

> It's different growing up in England for me than it was for my grandparents, we don't have it hard like they did, they paved the way for us…We're going through different things now, you hear all this stuff about young Black boys and you feel like you've got to fight harder just to get a chance out there because people are judging you before they even see you (Kirton 2007).

The article by (Kirton 2007) partly ties in with discussions noted earlier by Paul Gilroy that there needs to be new ways to analyse the contemporary issues affecting minoritised groups in the UK. It is possible to see that the experiences of and the articulation of what it means to be Black in the UK like America, are also shifting and changing.

There have been criticisms that the Post-Black which Toure (2011) in particular argues for, speaks mainly to the experiences of middle and upper class Blacks who would prefer to leave behind Black identities forged by lower class Blacks, because

> 'Post-blackness is described as that which enables black people to be able to skydive, scuba dive, play tennis, play golf, enjoy opera—all examples Toure´ himself uses, and all interests-hobbies that are associated with the upper classes— and still claim their blackness' (Fowler Snyder 2014:339).

In relation to this Toure's Post-Black is also critiqued for promoting an identity which allows middle class Black people to 'climb the ladder of power—without fearing they will be sanctioned for ''acting white' (Fowler Snyder 2014:339). From this critical perspective Post-Black can be considered as a theory which speaks *more* to the experiences of middle and upper class Blacks than it does to working class Black people. Within the UK context writer Diran Adebayo (2014) has commented that in contemporary British society there has to be more than issues around racism that bring Black people together, suggesting that in our contemporary world there is a need for a new narrative for Black experiences that extends beyond race inequalities as the only unifying factor, particularly given that in the UK it is difficult for Black communities to have one shared experience as a result of class stratifications and ethnicity and migration differences. Similarly Womack (2010) highlights that class stratifications and ethnicity and migration differences have also transformed what it means to be African American and understanding these nuances is part of the Post-Black theory. Adebayo (2014) also notes that current racism and the inequalities it brings forth, such as gang culture, knife crime, deaths in police custody and unfair police stop and search

policies are predominantly concerns affecting the Black working class, contending that it has not yet been possible to bring the Black upper and middle class into a wider Black struggle. However I argue that Post-Black should not be seen as synonymous with post-racism; research utilising CRT, as discussed earlier, has shown the Black middle class whilst making gains due to their social status are still impacted by existing racial inequalities. Toure (2011) has maintained that whilst Post-Black widens what it means to be Black, it does not proclaim that racism is over, rather that ' racism remains a daily fact of life for Blacks and a key component in shaping who we become as people even in the post-Black era' (Toure 2011:117). It can be said that

> Post-blackness is blackness emancipated from its historical burdens and empowered by self-knowledge - the knowledge that race-thinking has helped create the world with which critical race theory and liberatory notions of blackness have to contend' (Taylor 2007:640).

So therefore whilst CRT, for example (as discussed earlier), is useful for analysing the ways in which discriminatory institutional structures exist and work in current society against minoritised groups at different times and in different ways, Post-Black is beneficial for looking at the ways in which Black African participants in this study view, perceive and understand themselves, their lives and lived experiences within a contemporary Western society. Post-Black as a theory emphases the plurality and interchangeability of Black identity, and seeks to extend the boundaries of Blackness (Taylor 2007) specifically within a Western context. It has been discussed particular within an American context but many of its tenets can be applied to the UK in order to deepen knowledge and comprehension of the experiences of Black communities here.

3.7   Conclusion to Theoretical Frameworks

The purpose of bringing together the discussed theoretical frameworks is to create a conceptual framework for understanding the phenomena under investigation. The theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter, are seen as key understandings and explanations underpinning this study and the analysis of the experiences that the

participants tell. The frameworks have been utilized as it was deemed that there is a need for a conceptual framework which encapsulates the contemporary realities of Black African communities, taking into consideration the intersection of race and ethnicity, culture and class. Each individual framework is considered relevant and necessary but individually insufficient to explore the experiences of Black African students, however, together it is deemed they will add to a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena under investigation. These frameworks, interlinked, are argued as providing a more comprehensive understanding, as well as speaking to the complexity of Black African art and design student experiences, and thus extending the findings that could be derived from only using one of the frameworks discussed.

The next section discusses my chosen research methodology.

4   METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

4.1   Introduction

Within this chapter I present my research methodology and discuss the way in which it addresses the needs and challenges that are specific to this research project.

My choices for utilising a qualitative methodology with a focus on narrative inquiry will be discussed. I expound and clarify my research design considering my choice of sample, choice of methods and choice of analytical approach in reference to relevant literature, whilst also addressing the methods used for identifying my target group, the methods used for collecting and managing data, and the methods used for organising the data for interpretation. I also discuss the methods and criteria that have been utilised for extracting and interpreting useful and relevant data from participant narratives. This chapter also includes a section where I explore and consider my own positioning and its influence on; the way I conducted my research; my relationship with the research participants; data collection, data analysis and findings.

4.2   Research background, aims and research questions

As was identified in the literature review in Chapter 2, research focused around Black African HE art and design students in the UK in terms of participation in and experience of HE Art and Design is currently absent in the field. Looking specifically at the HE art and design experiences of Black African students presents an opportunity to explore and develop understanding of a group with one of the highest overall participation rates in HE but low participation rates in HE Art and Design. This study seeks to increase understanding through the use of a narrative inquiry, of the features that impede and facilitate Black African students' participation in and experience of HE Art and Design which are normally concealed from casual scrutiny. There is a need for the accurate portrayal of the conditions in which the education system operates with and for this group of students, and an accurate portrayal that allows for a questioning of the terms and conditions set for admission into the art and design education system.

One aim is that findings from this study will enrich the current discourse around Black African students in HE art and design, and more generally around BAME students in HE art and design, contributing to new ways of perceiving and understanding groups that are heavily prejudiced against through sensitising mainstream values to the plight of a specific disadvantaged group.

Below are the study's research aims and questions;

4.2.1   Aims

The research aims are as follows:

- To gain understanding of the art and design educational experiences of Black African art and design students

- To provide a forum whereby Black African art and design students could narrate their perceptions and conceptualisations of their experiences of participation in and experience of HE Art and Design, and thus to amplify the voices of Black African art and design students

This study asks the following research questions;

4.2.2   Research Questions

- Have previously identified barriers within the process of recruitment and education impeded Black African students' participation in and experience of HE art and design?

- Are there unidentified barriers within the process of recruitment and education which have impeded Black African students' participation in and experience of HE art and design?

- Are there strategies within the process of recruitment and education which have facilitated participation in and navigation within HE art and design for Black African students?

- Is there advice and are there strategies which have been offered to Black African students which are fit and suited for the purpose of their participation and progression in HE art and design?

It is deemed that the above research questions will be answered and aims and objectives met through researching and understanding Black African students' art and design educational experiences, as a result their experiences are the primary object of research. A qualitative research approach, which emphases researching experiences and increasing understanding is deemed appropriate to fulfil the purpose of this doctoral research. The study's qualitative research approach focused specifically on employing a narrative inquiry.

4.3   Epistemological and ontological positions

The importance of discussing and identifying epistemological and ontological perspectives is as a result of the impact these perspectives have on a researcher's methodological choices, the formulation of questions, methodological concerns, data sought and treatment of data (Cohen 2007). It is therefore important to discuss this first before moving on to consider the research design.

Within this research there is an understanding that the participants construct multiple realities that are complex, multifaceted and differently expressed depending on context, human perception and social experience, resulting in realities and experiences that undergo continuous changes and revision (Merriam 1998, Cohen 2007, Elliot 2005).

This research, with an understanding of the political, social and economic contexts affecting participant and researcher, looks to learn from the research participants and interpret the 'world' from their perspectives. Taking a Critical Race Theory viewpoint, education is viewed within this research as a social institution in which power and privilege are held by dominant groups resulting in inequalities for BAME groups (Gillborn 2008). Thus there are

discriminatory practices based around race, ethnicity and culture at play within educational structures that significantly affect Black African students' experiences of HE art and design, which need to be considered when interpreting their experiences (Gillborn 2008). Critical Race Theory highlights that '…the various theories of positivism, post positivism, and constructivism have faced criticism for being derived from European-based perspectives and rarely addressing other-race viewpoints' (Taylor 1999:181). Thus CRT stresses the importance of including experiential knowledge of BAME groups, as a way to counteract research that predominantly focuses on European-based perspectives. As a result of coming from this standpoint this research study's methodology seeks to interview Black African students individually, face to face rather than utilising questionnaires or a survey format as each participant's story is extremely important to the study, and it is necessary that each are heard in their own right. It is viewed that

> One powerful way to challenge the dominant mind-set of society – the shared stereotypes, beliefs and understandings – is through telling stories. Stories can both challenge the status quo and help build consensus by creating a shared, communal understanding…As a result CRT scholars often engage and contest negative stereotyping through storytelling /narrative/autobiography/personal history' (Taylor 1999:184).

Challenging, counteracting and changing the perceptions of society about BAME groups through experiential knowledge is one tenet of CRT. The theory argues that naming ones' reality allows marginalised groups to stop internalising negative stereotypes and inflicting mental violence on themselves. The act of storytelling is seen as 'a kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression' (Ladson-Billings 1999:16).

Afrocentrism is seen as complementary theoretical framework to CRT, and therefore I also take on board the Afrocentric standpoint of the need to understand the experiences of Africans from within an African perspective and world view (Asante 1991). Historically Africans have had their experiences, history and ways of being depicted and decided for them through literature and visual media (Traore 2004). They have often historically been presented as uncivilised (Schiele 1996) and Africans have rarely been portrayed as having played a significant part in the development of civilisations or as having a culture worthy of study (Schiele 1996, Ince 2009). Afrocentrism argues that African people are people with

agency. Therefore the research approach is one that is sensitive to the cultural beliefs as well as the historical position of this group, and places at the centre the experiences of African communities thus allowing them to speak freely about their cultural values and ways of being.

Thus my epistemological and ontological position necessitates I undertake a qualitative approach -focused on a narrative inquiry - as the methodological choice for this study. The reason for a focus on qualitative research is based on the need for a research approach that focuses on the richness and depth of insight found in the narratives and voices of the participants. As such there is an understanding of the limitations of quantitative research in helping to answer my research questions; this is discussed in more depth below.

4.4   <u>Why a Qualitative Research Design?</u>

Debates over qualitative and quantitative research which consider the differences, similarities and pros and cons of the two research paradigms have been and continue to be at the forefront of empirical research. Elliot (2005) defines quantitative research, as research that generates data which is coded and communicated in a numerical format, whilst qualitative research is understood as research that generates data which is predominantly of a textual nature, full with rich, thick descriptions. Qualitative research questions the use of scientific approaches when researching human beings (Bell 2005). Quantitative research tends to produce quantifiable and generalizable conclusions, whereas qualitative research is somewhat more concerned with the way in which individuals see the world, and rather than seeking statistical perspectives this type of research is more concerned with individual insights of the world.

However there can at times be instances where the boundaries between quantitative and qualitative research approaches blur, despite the historical and more conventional understanding of qualitative and quantitative research as two separate approaches (Bell 2005, Elliot 2005). Bell (2005) highlights that quantitative and qualitative researchers' draw on each other's techniques and Elliot (2005) notes that when research is being analysed

quantitative data can be analysed and presented in narrative forms and qualitative data can be analysed to produce numerical or statistical findings.

Whilst highlighting differences between researchers who have an objectivist approach to the social world compared to researchers who have a subjectivist approach, Cohen (2007) notes that the subjectivist approach can 'take on a qualitative as well as quantitative aspect'. But though he highlights the ability to combine both qualitative and quantitative research, Cohen (2007) identifies that a particular epistemological and ontological position may still be more sympathetic to a particular way of doing research (Cohen 2007). My position determines that I conduct research which focuses on understanding the meanings and actions of day to day life, which does not focus on 'proof and prediction' as the natural sciences do (Erikson 2011) but rather emphasises 'the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings' (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:8).

Qualitative research is based on a need to do research that focuses on understanding meanings and actions of humans. In discussing their reasons for utilising a qualitative approach Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that 'as we quantified experience, it's richness and expression was stripped away' (Clandinin and Connelly 2000:xxvi). It is because of the ability of a qualitative research approach to focus on richness and expression and understanding the meanings and actions of my research participants, and thus its potential to help produce findings that could bring to the forefront the plight of Black African HE art and design students - a disadvantaged group, that this research design has been chosen. It is a design which serves well the purpose of adequately interpreting the experiences of my targeted group.

Through following a qualitative research design, this study concentrates on a small sample of the targeted group in order to better focus on depth of understanding and the production of rich data with thick descriptions. The study therefore, given its small number of participants, does not look to generalise to all Black African art and design students, but to provide theoretical insight into the experiences of a small group of this population. A qualitative research design allows for a focus on understanding and amplifying the voices of a marginalised group, and an opportunity to consider my place as a researcher who had also

been a Black African HE art and design student. These areas are discussed in more detail below.

4.4.1   Focused on understanding experiences and amplifying marginalised voices

In order to answer my research questions, experiences are the primary object of research. Understanding the experiences of the participants and drawing out of their experiences the features that impede and facilitate participation in, experience of and navigation within HE art and design is viewed as an important part in answering the research questions. The utilisation of qualitative research design is viewed as necessary in understanding the experiences of Black African art and design students and amplifying their voices. Previous research by Manyika (2001) and Adu-Poku (2002) both utilised qualitative research methods as a necessary tool in understanding African student experiences. Whilst Bhopal (2010b) has argued that researching marginalised groups may bring out sensitive issues, and for this reason qualitative methods are preferred 'as they are flexible, fluid and better suited to understand the meanings, interpretations and subjective experiences of those groups who may be marginalised, 'hard to reach' or remain silenced' (Bhopal 2010b:189).

The National Union of Students' (NUS) report on the HE experiences of Black students (2011) and Freeman[xxix] (2005) highlight the importance of qualitative research, in particular the way in which it allows marginalised student voices to be heard in research, a necessity if changes and developments are to be made in HE. This idea is shared by Hatton (2012) whose research on the curriculum and BAME attainment in HE art and design argues the need for BAME voices to be heard, 'making real' the stories behind the statistics' (Hatton 2012:35), particularly in the HE context where institutional beliefs and values 'always take centre stage', resulting in the beliefs and values of BAME groups being placed at the margins (Hatton 2012:38).

The importance of statistics in research can neither be ignored nor side-lined. However, the draw backs to using quantitative research when researching minority groups cannot be discounted either. Issues around statistics and their potential to mask inequalities has been discussed by Gillborn (2010) who noted that 'statistics were less able to capture the

subtleties of racism and how it operates' (Gillborn 2010:271). In research by Zimadars et al (2009) on admissions of Asian students to arts and science subjects at Oxford University; Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani students were grouped as 'South-Asian', the reason for the grouping was that it would be 'uninformative for statistical analysis' to separate the groups due to small numbers, despite an awareness of the major differences within these groups in regards to, among other factors, attainment and social class. As a result the differences in groups were not acknowledged and voices of students given little place of importance, going against the principle of fair and adequate representation.

In contrast Bagguley and Hussain's (2005) qualitative study on South Asian women's experiences of HE and barriers they face entering HE and the labour market, focuses on recognising the diversity of South Asian women and looked at Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students as separate groups. This allowed the research to highlight their different social class profiles, ethnicities, religions and HE experiences. Research by Bhopal (2010) has similarly explored the experiences of Asian women in HE drawing out differences amongst the women also in relation to social class profiles, ethnicities, religions and HE experiences. The differences within Black students in the UK in terms of HE experiences are currently under researched and this research aims to look at differences in relation to Black African students.

The NUS report (2011), although focusing on BAME students' experiences collectively and using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, highlights the limitations of quantitative research in showing the 'unique difficulties' among BAME students, and the importance and requirement of qualitative research strategies in allowing this to happen. It notes that

> 'there were few statistical differences between international and home students in terms of quantitative data gathered on their experiences, but it was clearly evident form the qualitative data that this cohort faced many unique difficulties' (NUS 2011:46).

As a result of the report's focus on student voice it highlights findings such as 'Black students were less likely to be satisfied with their educational experience and to attain first-class degrees in comparison to their white peers' (NUS 2011:3).

4.4.2   Emphasis on subjectivity and the researcher's place in the research

Qualitative researchers very much emphasize the subjective nature of research; the ways in which the relationship between researcher and participant(s) and their situations during the time of research, may influence, structure or form the direction their research takes (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Qualitative research also recognises the importance and place of the researcher's voice, and its place in the research being undertaken (Elliot 2005). The collection of data, and my interpretation of the data collected is defined and situated within my position as a Black African (Kenyan) woman who participated in and experienced HE art and design, this positioning and its' influence on my research study is discussed later in the chapter.

4.5   What is Narrative inquiry?

Having identified and decided to follow a qualitative research approach, I specified my approach to a narrative inquiry. This section looks at what a narrative inquiry entails; how it fits with my chosen research tradition and research questions and also justifies my choice to take this approach within my study. It is important to note here that a narrative inquiry is seen in the context of this study as an approach to research, a general guide on how I view the research process itself, the data I gather through that process, and the way I chose to analyse the data collected, as opposed to following specifically all the protocols and criteria of this research paradigm (Bell 2003)[xxx]. Riessman (2008) notes that using the 'definition of social linguistics…narrative refers to a discrete unit of discourse, an extended answer by a research participant to a single question' (Riessman 2008:5). I ultimately see narrative in this way as an extended answer by a research participant, understanding that when the researcher asks a question the extended answer given by the respondent is a narrative.

This research is ultimately about humans and my understanding of how we as humans discuss our lived experiences follows Bruner's (1987) argument that as humans

we seem to have no other way of describing "lived time" save in the form of a narrative. Which is not to say that there are not other temporal forms that can be imposed on the experience of time, but none of them succeeds in capturing the sense of lived time (Bruner 1987).

This perspective of humans telling and retelling their lived experiences through narratives guides the methodological approach, with narrative inquiry deemed the most appropriate methodological approach for understanding the narrated lived experiences of my research participants (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). According to Chase (2011) narrative inquiry is '…a subtype- of qualitative inquiry' and is centred on a focus of 'life experiences as narrated by those who live them' (Chase 2011:421). Elliot (2005) defines the term 'narrative' as a story and therefore containing the inherent parts of a story; a beginning, middle and an end, and the storytelling of past events is discussed by Reissman (1993:3) as 'universal human activity' that we acquire as children. Narration then is seen as coming naturally to humans, so much so that it is impulsively the form we use to discuss events that have happened (Reissman 1993, McCormack 2000). As succinctly put by Clandinin and Connelly '…if we understand the world narratively… then it makes sense to study the world narratively' (Clandinin and Connelly 2000:17).

As a research approach narrative inquiry has been used by social scientists in a varied number of ways; Elliot (2005) highlights and identifies some common themes that run through narrative research, a number of these themes very much underline my aims and objectives and they are as follows;

1. An interest in people's lived experiences and an appreciation of the temporal nature of that experience.
2. A desire to empower research participants and allow them to contribute to determining what are the most salient themes in an area of research.
3. An interest in process and change over time
4. An awareness that the researcher…is also a narrator. (Elliot 2005:6)

As with narrative inquiry, there has been long term recognition by sociologists of the importance of the 'temporal dimension for understanding the interrelation between

individual lives and social contexts' (Elliot 2005:4). And the sociology of the humanist tradition has consistently stressed the significance of 'attempting to understand the meaning of behaviour and experiences from the perspective of the individuals involved' (Elliot 2005:4), this is also a key feature in narrative inquiry. Both Elliot (2005) and Riessman (2008) point out that research is carried out within social contexts and that over the last few years there has been a deeper awareness of the interviewer's role in the interview as one that helps to construct the narratives and not just listen and collect information.

Narrative research has been understood by some as emancipatory in nature, particularly if narratives are understood as the telling of stories and 'for some individuals and groups, the urgency of storytelling arises from the need and desire to have others hear one's story' (Chase 2011:427). Chase (2011) talks of the history of narrative research, which has been shaped amongst other things, by stories of marginalised and oppressed groups, she goes on further to say;

> Indeed "naming silenced lives" and "giving voices" to marginalised people…"amplifying" others' voices – have been primary goals of narrative research for several decades'
> When survivors or marginalised or oppressed groups tell their collective stories, they demand social change…It may be a demand that people who hold legal, cultural, or other forms of power take action to bring about justice . Thus collective stories become integral to social movements' (Chase 2011:428)

Chase (2011) also identifies the importance of collective stories and the ways in which individual stories can be connected to 'a broader story of a marginalised group' (Chase 2011:428) through the weaving of the history, identity and politics of the group. (Chase 2011). This emancipatory aspect of narrative research has however, been problematized by Elliot (2005) who writes

> 'the narratives that individuals tell can be understood as profoundly implicated in constituting and reinforcing the hegemony, which in turn shapes individuals' lives and behaviour. It is for this reason that we should be cautious about assuming that research methods resting on the collection and analysis of individuals' narratives and life stories will necessarily be emancipatory…there are some specific features of

narrative that make it particularly central to the maintenance of the hegemony. First, the sequential or chronological aspect of narrative and the expectation of coherence mean that narratives tend to include implicit assumptions or claims regarding casual links' (Elliot 2005:146)

The above quote shows the importance of the researcher needing to be aware of not only the advantages of their methodological approach but also the disadvantages, particularly the way final research findings could be construed by its readers (Hunter 2010). For this research it has been important to question whether I am re-affirming taken for granted assumptions and possible stereotypes of extremely varied Black African communities and their ways of seeing and valuing education. Ultimately though, the final editing and portrayal of the participants' stories lie in the hands of the researcher, it is possible for them to work with the aim of producing research 'which reveals rather than maintains what is taken for granted in a society' (Elliot 2005:148). The theoretical framework a researcher utilises to analyse the data, plays a large part in this aim as it frames what others read and what they can interpret from what is available. The importance of the way narratives are analysed and findings presented is discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

4.6   Utilising a narrative inquiry methodology

In the previous section I discussed what narrative inquiry was, in this section of the methodology chapter I will discuss why narrative inquiry is utilised within this research. This approach to research is in accordance with the qualitative research tradition that I have chosen to follow. Qualitative research is in itself a broad title and different researchers are interested in different approaches to it; narrative inquiry is considered to be one of these many approaches (Elliot 2005)

The narrative inquiry approach to research is in keeping with my ontological and epistemological positions. Those interested in narratives are predominantly interested in the everyday lives of, and the evidence that can be gained from, research participants and the way they narrate and engage in constructing and making sense of their own life experiences and the meanings they attach to these experiences (Elliot 2005). Those, like myself, who approach research from a constructivist stand point are interested in how

people create a sense of social order through talking and interacting, and therefore value the importance of the interview interaction and the place it plays in the content of the narratives provided by the participants (Elliot 2005). 'For constructivists an interest in narrative would…stem from the fact that it is a social accomplishment, needing the collaboration of an audience' (Elliot 2005:19). Within this research I view that 'audience' as the interviewer, therefore my position as both researcher and interviewer is seen as integral to the content of the narratives produced by the research participants.(Finnegan 1998, Clandinin and Connelly 2000, Riessman 2008)

The emancipatory nature of narrative research which allows for the possibility to amplify voices of those who are seldom heard, is in line with my Critical Race Theory and Afrocentric perspectives where education is viewed as a social institution with many inequalities significantly affecting those who are seen as coming from disadvantaged and minoritised groups. The emancipatory nature of narrative research is viewed as important especially given the under-researched nature of this research and the lack of voice given to Black African students in art and design educational research (Hatton 2012), thus the importance of their narratives is paramount. An important aspect of this research is to stimulate dialogue on change and transformation within the educational space; particularly in relation to the way in which Black African students are understood and therefore acculturated into the art and design educational space. Narrative research is seen as conducive to that emancipatory element, it is seen as a research methodology that is able to do more than amplify voices through collective stories, but also encourage dialogue on the need for social change.

Narrative inquiry is ultimately understood as inquiring into the individual narratives of the research participants, created in collaboration with the researcher, as well as the larger social and institutional discourses the participants are a part of, in order to understand the continuity and wholeness of their educational experiences (Elliot 2005, Reissman 1993, 2008, Clandinin and Connelly 2000). Of interest in particular is the inter-textual nature of the narratives, the way individual personal stories and institutional discourses can also intertwine, be a part of and create a whole larger story, and the possibilities of new understandings of experiences being constructed through their connection and dialogue,

thus building and developing understanding through connecting a multiplicity of voices (Finnegan 1998). Participants in this research have been encouraged to narrate their art and design educational experiences, these narrations form the data which has been analysed and interpreted to help shed light on their participation in and experiences of HE art and design. The participants' narratives are understood as personal and contexualised in time and place, particular to each individual yet able to provide a richness, depth and insight that cannot be provided by quantitative data. Storytelling and loosely structured questions, with a focus on participants setting the agenda within the boundaries of the research area under focus, are also very much within the practices and principles of a qualitative methodology (Merriam 1998).

The three key features discussed above as well as the common themes that run through narrative inquiry; the recognition of the temporal nature of individual lives and social contexts, the focus on understanding experiences of participants from the participants' perspectives and the interest in process and change over time (Hunter 2010), fit with my epistemological and ontological position and also demonstrate how a narrative inquiry has lent itself to my research questions. The importance of the 'temporal dimension for understanding the interrelation between individual lives and social contexts', highlighted by Elliot (2005) draws attention to the fact that the stories told by participants in this research are located in specific times and places and thus stresses the importance of interviewing a range of participants at different points in their educational journey, as these differing points may have shaped the way they tell their stories and the meanings they derive from their experiences.

A narrative inquiry is deemed as appropriate as it allows the researcher to look at a small group and focus on their perspectives of the phenomena in question, as well as consider contexts, time, space and location. It also allows an analysis of the participants perspectives through exploring the underlying social conditions namely; the history of Black African communities in Britain; their relationship with education; the art and design sector and art and design education, as well as issues in relation to race, ethnicity, culture and an underlying focus on class, in order to show a holistic interpretation of the experiences and stories of the participants (Elliot 2005). An understanding of these macro contexts and the

places they play within the stories of the participants is a part of the narrative tradition when analysing participants' experiences (Riessman 2008).

It is through a firm understanding of narrative inquiry that this approach has been chosen to conduct my research study. The interviews and final transcripts are seen as co-constructed narratives between participant and researcher. The participants have told me their story about their journey into and within and out of and away from HE Art and Design. The questions I asked in the interview were a means to understand their story better. I was interested in; how their journey began, what happened within the journey and how it ended, and thus there was a beginning middle and end. Their experiences are seen as stories containing the inherent structure of a story, a beginning, middle and an end (Elliot 2005).

Although the experiences of Black African art and design students is not an inaccessible phenomena, as the literature review has shown it is a phenomena that had not previously been studied, and therefore the findings from this research are seen as being revelatory in nature. Through a focus on the way the selected participants perceive and describe their experiences, the research provides an opportunity for the participants to contribute to an under-researched area; this element of empowerment is one of the key elements of narrative inquiry discussed earlier. The research is focused specifically on understanding this phenomenon through looking at certain key areas, limiting barriers, facilitating strategies, thus helping to give the study a boundary and a focus. Ultimately narrative inquiry is seen as a way to study lived experiences, it is seen as

> '…a method of research (which) constitutes a sociology through narrative in so far as it examines and invokes narratives as a mode of observation, a vantage from which the world can be seen or heard.' (Ewick and Sibley 1995:203)'

and therefore the best methodology for studying the experiences of Black African art and design students.

4.7   Reflexivity

In keeping with narrative inquiry and the importance it places on seeing the interviewer as a narrator also, and therefore implicated in the construction of narratives (Elliot 2005, Riessman 2008), I discuss my positioning, personal history and art and design educational experiences and their influence on this study.

> 'Reflexivity recognises that researchers are inescapably part of the social world they are researching… They bring their own biographies to the research situation and participants behave in a certain way in their presence. Reflexivity suggests that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research, seeking to understand their part in, or influence on, the research. Rather than trying to eliminate researcher effects (which is impossible as researchers are a part of the world they are themselves investigating) researchers should hold themselves up to the light… (Cohen 2007:171)

Bryman (2008) discusses reflexivity and sees it as 'a sensitivity to the researcher's cultural, political and social context' (Bryman 2008:682). And it is with Cohen's and Bryman's comments in mind that in this section I discuss my own positioning and its influence on; the way I conduct my research, my relationship with the research participants, the way I undertake data collection and data analysis. Like the participants in my study I am also Black African and I studied art and design (from GCSE level up to post-graduate level). The narrative inquiry methodology that I have employed for this research talks of the importance of the researcher/interviewer and their part in the creation and construction of narratives. I therefore have experiences of the art and design educational space that I feel importantly needed to be acknowledged and discussed because I am the main research instrument, both collecting and analysing data. I came to the UK as an immigrant; I was born in Kenya and came to England as a child. I grew up in inner-city London and studied art and design in London and Manchester. I attended the local comprehensive secondary school, followed by FE College and I studied my undergraduate degree art and design at a post-92 university. After completing my degree I went on to do a Post Graduate Certificate in Education and spent 2 years as a secondary school art and design teacher. My mother is a medical doctor and I grew up in a single parent family. These personal experiences including my art and design educational journey, place me as coming from a particular social and cultural context, and in keeping with the narrative inquiry methodology it is necessary to

highlight my subjectivities and the place I am coming from as I have asked, listened and interpreted the data I collect.

4.7.1   Personal journey: 'I felt as though I did not belong'

I would say that at home, throughout my childhood and adolescent years, my mother was incredibly supportive of my art and design interests. I was encouraged to draw, paint, make, write, to use whichever creative outlet that caught my fancy. And so at home I was at times a painter, at times an illustrator, other times a writer and on many occasions I was all three at once.

A few years after completing my first degree I decided to pursue post-graduate study. I arrived at the post-graduate open day, I had been to a number of them and this was the last one I was attending, and I approached the desk with information about the art and design course I was interested in. The two white members of staff at the desk were in deep conversation as I approached. I'm not sure if they noticed me standing there as they continued talking for a few minutes before one of them turned and introduced themselves as the course leader. I said that I had come to the open day to find out a little bit more about the course and what it entailed in terms of course structure. The course leader looked at me and the first thing she asked was whether I realised that the minimum requirement for entry on the course was a 2:2 degree classification. I was extremely surprised by this comment, I wasn't quite sure why she had informed me of that, I had not asked about the course requirements as these were readily available on the university website. I asked for a brochure and quickly left the room. Once outside I began to think about the course leader's comment, becoming increasingly upset. I wondered if she had looked at me and from my physical appearance had felt that I would not have or be aware of the entry requirements for the course. The course leader's comments left me very much feeling as though I somehow did not belong in that space.

I contrast the post-graduate open day experience to my experience as a 15 year old. I recall my male, Chinese art and design teacher Mr. W chasing me down the corridor holding my pencil portrait of Liam Neeson, telling me that I had a real talent and that I must do art and

design as a GCSE. I said I would but only if I could have him as my art and design teacher. I did have Mr. W as my teacher, and in his lessons, I was encouraged and I felt that I belonged, that as an introverted 15 year old girl I had found my space of refuge.

 Those feelings of not belonging, which surfaced at the post-graduate open day, had also been felt much earlier in my art and design educational journey. One significant experience that shaped my learning in art and design was studying A-Levels in fine art and graphic design at a FE college in an affluent, middle class area in Southern England. My transition from GCSEs to A-Levels was not a smooth one; it was a huge leap from the familiar and comfortable setting of an inner-city London secondary school into a college where I often found myself feeling alienated and alone. In my fine art and graphic design lessons I was the only Black student, and having come from a multicultural inner-city London school, I found this particularly hard to adjust to. It was at this point in my life that I began to feel that I was "different". Fanon (1972) describes the comfort zone of being around others like yourself, he writes that 'as long as the black man is among his own he will have no occasion, except in minor internal conflicts, to experience his being through others' (Fanon 1972: 77). Fanon goes on to explore the negative and confusing emotions that a Black person goes through as they experience for the first time how others 'truly' view their race. In the case of my A-Level experience my feelings of 'difference' were caused by a realisation that I was part of the minority in my class and by seeing the invisibility of Black people and their cultures within the art and design that I was taught. One part of Fanon's writing describes the Black person as a non-entity; 'the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared', a view that I felt was particularly highlighted in my A-Level educational experience (Fanon 1972: 79).

Fine art lessons in particular were very hard for me, for one the teaching style was very traditional and very different to what I was used to; for two years our weekly lessons consisted of life drawings and learning the art of oil painting. Unlike my GCSE art and design lessons where I was able to create artwork that incorporated my Kenyan heritage, there seemed to be no room for individual creativity and I struggled with these lessons a great deal. Although I learnt about oil painting, mixing colours as well as the painting process itself, I felt that there were huge areas of my personal, cultural and art and design

educational needs that were largely neglected. In the two years that I was at college I gained an in-depth knowledge of the mixing process needed to create paint for white skin but I was never taught or asked if I wanted to learn how to paint the colour of my own skin. I never asked either as I did not feel comfortable enough to broach the subject with my middle-class white male teacher. My personal experience highlighted that having teachers who I could relate to (either through race or the willingness to embrace different cultures) was vital in making me feel comfortable enough to develop my own learning.

Whilst studying on my fine art course I often felt embarrassed to show my paintings to my friends who were mainly Black African, because none of them represented Black people. I remember one particular time when I became so uncomfortable with only painting white skin that I chose to paint the skin of my subject brown even though he was white; I wanted one painting that I could 'allow' my friends to see. My predominant reasons for feeling embarrassed have been highlighted and explained very well in a study of Afro-Caribbean children by Sewell (1999) where he outlined 'the process by which Afro-Caribbean children had been reduced to two extreme choices 'the (acting white) MacDonald man and the rebellious Yard man, any children that did not remain within the collective boundaries of 'blackness' were considered to be 'white' (Sewell 1999:394). According to my own understanding at the time, a Black African girl painting nudes of white people fell completely outside the boundaries of 'blackness'. I was constantly caught between having to deal with how I was seen by the Western world and also how people from within my own ethnic group viewed me.

I preferred my graphic design lessons, because to me it seemed issues in relation to identity and race where less highlighted there. I was able to focus on design briefs that allowed me to incorporate areas that interested me personally. My mother is a huge jazz fan and as a result of her influence, I did a project commemorating the 100th birthday anniversary of Louis Armstrong. My experiences of fine art and graphic design meant that I was more drawn to design and I went on to do a foundation course specialising in spatial design. I intended to study interior design at university but after a few weeks on the course I felt it was overly focused on architecture and I instead chose to study the History of art and design with practice (fine art). I chose to study this subject because, despite previous experiences, I

was still very passionate about all areas of art and design and I wanted to learn the history behind it. My experiences of the history of art and design and that of my peers were mainly based around what we were taught at school, which from my experience, tended to have a rather Eurocentric focus. This was why I felt that many within my own cultural community found it hard to understand why I was studying this subject; perhaps they could not see how I related to it. There were numerous times I was embarrassed to tell people what I was studying and I found myself simply saying I studied 'art and design', because for a Black African person to be studying the history of art and design was a concept that many found hard to grasp. Here again we can see that almost three years later I was still being affected by Sewell's notion of stepping outside 'the collective boundaries of blackness'.

Although within my degree there was a Eurocentric focus in terms of subject matter, I was able to take modules such as 'Race and Representation', which meant I began to understand the history of slavery, colonialism and race issues in relation to the history of art and design. The difference with my experience at university compared to A-Level, was that I felt more confident to take charge of my own learning, I felt compelled to learn about art and design that related to my own identity. bell hooks talks about 'a liberating experience in….the black schools of (her) formative years' that made her 'forever dissatisfied with the education (she) received in predominantly white settings' (hooks 1994: 51). Here hooks considers how one educational experience affected all the rest, similarly I had been so dissatisfied with my A-Level experience that I knew I would not let others' views on what they considered important affect what I wanted to learn for myself. I was interested in Black British art, artists and designers; I knew this was never going to be a huge focus in the subject areas taught on my degree course, so I intentionally focused on this area for my dissertation. This meant I came out of my degree course having learnt about a subject area that I felt related to my personal identity and cultural heritage.

As a result of these previous experiences I have been particularly drawn to and interested in the experiences of other Black African art and design students and the ways in which they have manoeuvred the complex terrain that is the art and design educational space. The aforementioned aspects of my identity are seen as forming an important part of the research evidence, as is the interaction between myself/researcher and the participants in

this study (Elliot 2005, Riessman 2005, Cohen 2007). The place of my identity within the interactions with participants is further discussed below.

As already noted, within this research I also meet the criteria of those I have interviewed, as a result I see myself as occupying two positions, the first as an insider implicated in the production of knowledge. The second position is as an outsider, because I am also aware that among other things (personal life experiences, cultural heritage) as the researcher/ interviewer my research participants and I also occupy differing positions. Bhopal (2001, 2010b) talks about this insider/outside dichotomy within some of her own research, where she interviewed South Asian women. As a South Asian woman, she identified herself as an 'insider' able to understand some of her participants' experiences having had similar experiences herself, she also commented on her participants feeling comfortable enough to openly share their experiences with her *because* she was a South Asian woman (Bhopal 2001). However Bhopal (2010b) also talked about the issues at play with being an outsider in her research on Asian women students, she commented that '…I was not a student…I was part of the academic elite, part of the middle class establishment in which many of the women felt they did not entirely belong'(Bhopal 2010b:191)

To some extent there are positives that *may* come with being considered an 'insider' in research, such as potentially easier access to communities and participants feeling more at ease to talk about their issues, both of which I have experienced in doing this study. There have been a number of instances where my research participants talked of 'we' and 'us', and my initial difficulty in accessing participants through HEIs was counteracted with using personal networks to find participants. However these 'positives' have been problematized by some such as Alexander (2004) and Young (2004), who question the extent to which similarities can be drawn based on a researcher and participants sharing a similar race or cultural heritage. Alexander (2004) discusses the problems of claiming a shared identity based on race, in particular assumptions that access to the community will automatically be easier, that experiences will automatically be shared due to a link which she feels is often considered to be 'natural' as opposed to 'political' or Black researchers being placed 'in the uncomfortable, and impossible position of 'speaking' for their community…' (Alexander 2004:142). The rapport discussed by Bhopal (2001) is problematized by Young (2004) who

talks of his own experiences of being a Black male researcher researching Black males, he identified the 'rupturing of a rapport'(Young 2004:197) on two occasions where his participants were surprised when he did not appear to 'get' where they were coming from and seemed to 'foster a sense of closure at certain moments in (their) conversations because neither of them felt obligated to elaborate upon that which they regarded as perfectly understandable to (him)' (Young 2004:197). Bhopal (2010b) Alexander (2004) and Young (2004) highlight the importance of a critical reflexivity which considers the extent to which a researcher can be both an insider and outsider at the same time. As my subjectivities are inevitably embedded in my research, I see exposing these subjectivities openly in the research as a way to potentially increase validity. My Black African identity may have provided opportunities of access to my participants, and there have been a large number of shared and similar experiences, but there are also many ways as the interviews progressed in which our ideas, notions and experiences differed greatly.

4.8   Research design

The following section looks at my research design and considers the following; the primary purpose of the study, the focus of the study, the unit of analysis, the sampling strategy, types of data that have been collected, the analytical approach I use, the validity and confidence in accessing the field, ethical issues and confidentiality and anonymity (Patton 1990).

Primary research has been undertaken through the use of interviews with Black African art and design students*.* Black African art and design students are defined as; those of sub-Saharan African heritage who were over 18 years old and were either currently studying an art and design course at 6th Form, College or a Higher Education Institution, or have previously studied an art and design course at secondary school (GCSE level), 6th Form, College or a Higher Education Institution (for participant demographics please see appendix 1).

4.8.1   Data collected

As mentioned earlier in-depth interviews have been seen as the appropriate method to gain data that would aid in better understanding the experiences of Black African art and design students and therefore answering my research questions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 participants between April and October 2013.

4.8.2   Accessing the field

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted between November 2012 and January 2013, before the major study began. Participants were recruited for the pilot study from my personal networks. Two of the participants were Black African and both were female, the other two were Black Caribbean; one was male and one was female. I trialled different ways of recording the stories narrated by the participants, two of the interviews were conducted without the use of a recording device, and two were conducted with a recording device present.

 I was able to trial the interview schedule and assess its suitability to provide data that would aid in answering my research questions and meet my research aims. Testing the interview questions before hand allowed me to see if the wording of the questions worked, and whether it gave room for the participants to express themselves fully and narrate their experiences. The study gave me the opportunity to trial the interview process as it was a method of gathering data that I had not used before. It also allowed me to look for and identify any practical issues around conducting the interview, such as location of interviews, and ways of recording the interviews.

Conducting the pilot study was particularly helpful as I had not conducted in-depth interviews before, after the interviews I transcribed the recordings and I was able to go back and look at the way I had asked questions; were they leading, were they clear or overly complicated. I noticed that there were moments in the pilot interviews where the questions were not worded very clearly and it brought forth the need to re-think the way I asked questions of my participants in the major study. Transcribing the interviews myself also gave

me an opportunity to see how the process worked, and also assess if this was something that I would be able to do myself for the main study. I was able to see how long the process would take, and therefore better plan my time for the major study

Through the study I was able to trial two ways of gathering data, making notes as the only form of recording the interview, and recording with a digital device and making notes during the interview. I found that the former method meant I spent a lot of time writing down what the participant was saying rather than truly listening to their stories. Whilst with the latter I found I had more flexibility as it meant I could focus on asking questions and then listening to what the participants had to say.

As a result of the interviews I was able to refine my interview questions based on the experience of the interviews and the feedback I received from the participants. The pilot study was extremely useful, after completing it I felt able to move into the major study with more confidence in the ability of my interview questions to help me gain data that would aid in answering my research questions, as well as my ability to conduct interviews and transcribe the data collected.

4.8.3   Recruiting Interview participants

At the start of the research process, it was anticipated that a broad range of research participants would be recruited predominantly through emailing educational institutions (specifically art and design course leaders and subject tutors, student unions and Afro-Caribbean societies), and then also from snowball sampling, attendance of events and conferences focused around BAME groups and art and design, attendance of HEI open days and the utilisation of personal networks. This variety of ways to recruit participants was due to awareness that BAME groups were considered hard to reach groups and also due to their low participation in HE art and design.

It was deemed practical and sensible to access my research sample from the universities where Black African art and design students were most likely to be studying (Bhopal 2010b). Therefore in the first instance when searching for participants, several HEIs which had been identified through HESA statistics as having large numbers of Black African art and design

students consistently since 2006[xxxi], were selected, contacted and asked to forward my research call for participants to their current students and alumni. This strategy however, yielded an extremely low response rate (5 in total, within that 2 matched the inclusion criteria and only 1 resulted in a face to face interview) some institutions agreed to email their students, some refused to send emails to students stating that they were not allowed, and there was no response by some institutions. These issues in regards to access, particularly refusal of access, reflected experiences by Bhopal (2010b) when conducting research on Asian women in HE. I also contacted Afro-Caribbean societies and student unions at the identified universities but received no response.

Other strategies employed for recruiting research participants however, proved to be much more fruitful in generating participants. I approached potential participants directly at open days conducted by the identified universities, and events and conferences aimed at BAME groups and art and design and asked them to participate in the research study. Being a Black African art and design graduate myself, I recruited several participants who fitted the inclusion criteria, through my personal networks; the majority of the interviews conducted came through these latter methods. Again the opening up of access through contacting personal networks also reflected experiences by (Bhopal 2010b). Snowball sampling initially put me in contact with several participants; however only two actually committed to and attended an interview.

The initial problems with gaining access to participants had an impact on the rest of the research in particular the final sample as will be discussed below.

4.8.4 Sampling

The focus of this research was on sampling for experience, with the emphasis on the quality of the data rather than the quantity. This research utilised purposeful sampling in order to recruit a small number of participants specifically because of their information-rich experiences as Black African art and design students. Participants were not selected in order to be representative of all Black African art and design students, but rather as part of a study that could contribute to much needed research on participation in and experiences of HE

Art and Design of BAME groups, by illuminating the specific research questions understudy (Patton 1990)

Sampling strategy - participants

Based on the initial problems and limitations to gaining access to participants for this study, the following four types of sampling were utilised in this study; opportunistic sampling, snowball sampling, and contrasting and disconfirming cases. The main sampling strategy in this research was opportunistic sampling. Opportunistic sampling allows the researcher to be more flexible with the research design and therefore more flexible with sampling participants. It 'often involves on-the-spot decisions about sampling to take advantage to new opportunities during actual data collection' (Patton 1990:179).This flexibility allowed me to 'follow wherever the data lead' and permitted my 'sample to emerge during fieldwork' (Patton 1990:179). The utilisation of this strategy was in light of the access problems, its flexibility allowed my research design to be more open and recruit participants through taking advantage of various opportunities as they arose.

As the research progressed *snowball sampling*, where participants who knew other suitable participants referred them to be a part of the research, was also used. My sampling strategy also involved searching for and including *contrasting and disconfirming cases* as a way of exploring the phenomena understudy in greater depth (Patton 1990, Merriam 1998), I interviewed both participants who had an interest in art and design but did not study the subject at HE, as well as those who had an interest in art and design and went on to study the subject at HE in order to understand better the limiting barriers and facilitating strategies experienced by the participants.

Given the under-researched nature of my chosen topic, the aim was to collect narratives from a sample that would yield the most useful data for answering my research question. I therefore aimed for a sample of participants that incorporated a wide range of experiences of the phenomena in focus; this type of sample is usually collected through using maximum variation sampling (Patton 1990). However in the end, the range and number of participants was limited to those who showed an interest, were willing to and made themselves

available for an interview. Despite this limitation the sample of participants interviewed did incorporate a wide range of experiences.

The sample in this study included participants who were; male (2) and female (12) and aged between 18 and 36; from a range of African backgrounds and heritage; from institutions covering a range of HE Mission groups; at different stages of their art and design educational journey. They were based in a range of locations across England but predominantly in London, this reflected the geographical location of the majority of Black Africans studying and living in the UK. With this varied end sample I was able to; better describe the variations amongst Black African art and design students, to understand variations in educational experience whilst simultaneously allowing for researching common patterns of experience as they arose in the data collected (Patton 1990). This sample allowed a wide enough range of participants to be interviewed in order to explore the experiences of both past and current art and design students as well as including contrasting and disconfirming cases.

Once theoretical saturation was reached the recruiting and interviewing of participants was stopped, meaning that further interviews were not deemed necessary as they were not adding anything new to the phenomena under study (Bryman 2008). The focus of this research was also to look at the experiences of a small group of participants in order to do data analysis of the narratives full justice.

The sizeable difference in male to female ratio within my sample could be a reflection of my own gender impacting on the sample, but it could also be a reflection of the larger number of Black African females in HE as compared to males (Connor et al 2004), as well as research by Etherington (2013) which notes that more girls than boys study art and design at GCSE and A Level. In order to try and improve the gender balance a further 4 males were approached to participate in the research through personal networks and snowballing, but they did not respond to my invitations.

4.8.5 Ethics

Ethical approval:

Before commencement of any work, ethical approval for this research study was gained from the University of Salford's Research Governance and Ethics committee (for ethical approval letter see appendix 2)

Written consent forms:

The potential uses of the research/dissemination of findings were outlined in the consent form, as were details regarding the retaining and secure storage of interview material. The form explained to the participants that participating in the study was voluntary and participants were asked to indicate that they had understood the information material and had the opportunity to ask questions and also that they agreed to the interview being audio recorded.

Confidentiality and anonymity:

All participants' information and identity has been kept anonymous. Participants were asked to choose a pseudonym of their choice, and where they did not offer a preference a pseudonym was chosen for them. The names of institutions that the participants were a part of are also anonymised. All data is stored according to the Data Protection Act (1998)

The interview transcripts were sent to all participants. Follow up questions were asked via email where I discovered, during the transcription process, areas from the interviews that I felt needed further clarification.

4.8.6 Approach to participants

Participants were approached in a four different ways, they are discussed below.

Email sent to selected HEIs:

Emails were sent out to selected HEIs, (selection of HEIs was discussed earlier in section 4.8.3). When participants responded to my email calling for participants, they were sent an email telling them more about the research and what I was looking for, with the information sheet attached. They were then asked to confirm a date, time and location which would be suitable for the interview to take place.

Attendance of events focused around BAME groups and art and design and attendance of HEI open days:

I approached event and open day attendees directly, told them a little about myself and handed out flyers which had information about the research and what I was looking for. On the flyer I asked for those who were interested in participating to fill in their contact details and hand the flyers back to me. I then followed up those who left their contact details with an email telling them more about the research and the information sheet attached. They were then asked to confirm a date, time and location which would be suitable for the interview to take place.

Snowball sampling:

After completing interviews with participants, I asked if they knew anyone within their networks who fitted my inclusion criteria, those that did were asked to find out if the members of their network were willing to participate and if so to send me their email addresses. I then contacted all those who were willing to participate with an email telling more about the research and the information sheet attached. Those that showed an interest were then asked to confirm a date, time and location which would be suitable for the interview to take place.

Personal networks:

As a Black African woman who has studied and taught art and design at secondary school and higher education I also had access to networks which included people who fit my inclusion criteria. I therefore sent emails to members of my networks who fit the inclusion criteria, asking if they were willing to participate. I also sent emails to members of my

networks asking if they knew anyone within their networks who fit the criteria and were willing to participate in the research. All those who responded showing their interest were emailed with more information about the research with the information sheet attached. They were then asked to confirm a date, time and location which would be suitable for the interview to take place.

4.9   **Interviews**

The main data collection method for this study was in-depth interviews; all interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed by myself. The qualitative interview process, through face to face interaction, allows the researcher to learn about peoples' feelings, thoughts and intentions, to learn about the meanings they attach to life events, to learn about situations that have already taken place (Patton 1990).

Within this study interviews were seen as an opportunity to gain insight into the perspectives of the people being interviewed (Patton 1990). As my focus was on hearing the stories of my participants, and allowing participants to construct knowledge (Simons et al 2008) the conversational structure and nature and open ended style of the qualitative interview process appealed to me, particularly the fact that it was possible to probe further into questions when necessary, something that the use of other data collection methods such as questionnaires and surveys would not allow as easily.

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The semi-structured interview is an interview type that sits between highly structured interviews and unstructured open-ended interviews and gives the researcher the ability to combine elements of both interview types (Merriam 1998).The researcher has a clear idea of the type of questions they want to ask, and these are written out in advance. Generally each person who is interviewed is asked the same questions, but it is also permits the researcher to combine elements of the more open-ended interview by not only asking pre-written questions but also allowing flexibility through asking more open-ended questions and allowing the researcher to pursue emergent topics of interest as the interview progresses (Merriam 1998, Patton, 1990). The choice to use a semi-structured interview was because it

was deemed that the rigid nature of highly structured interviews would be limiting and not allow enough 'access to participants' perspectives and understandings of the world' (Merriam 1998:74). At the other end of the spectrum it was viewed that purely unstructured open-ended interview could yield large amounts of data that were disconnected and divergent (Merriam 1998), thus making analysis potentially problematic given the limited amount of time to conduct the research study. According to Patton (1990) a more semi structured interview is useful if there are time constraints on the research study, and if 'it is only possible to interview each participant once' (Patton 1990:286). Patton (1990), also noted that the positives of semi-structured interviews were that the pre-written interview questions would be available for inspection, and the actually interview itself would be more focused in order to maximise the time given for the interview.

In choosing this interview type I was aware that it would limit the way in which the participants would tell their story as it would focus their narratives to very specific chapters of their life history. However Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out that there are various ways of obtaining narratives ranging from structured questions to 'asking participants to tell their own stories in their own way' (Clandinin and Connelly 2000:111).

Questions were orientated towards certain areas, I asked about the participants' identities, their secondary school, Post-16 and HE art and design educational experience, engagement with and discussion and viewing of art and design work, educational decision making process, as opposed to questions focusing on the larger life history of the participants. The questions asked in the interviews were constructed with prior theoretical knowledge on what others in the field had already considered in mind. I was also aware that the questions I asked and the way they were structured would be providing 'a frame within which participants shape the accounts of their life' (Clandinin and Connelly 2000:110) as well as only providing me with the participants' 'self-understanding as this was presented in the interview', resulting in the focus of my research being limited to this (Ezzy 2007:315), as each participant was interviewed once. The type of narrative research I conducted looked at episodic accounts of the participants' lives, focusing on their educational trajectory; it was not fully a biographical study, life history or oral history. Most interviews lasted on average between one hour to two hours.

My research questions, and thus the interview questions that I asked of my participants, were very much informed by my reading of theoretical perspectives and prior knowledge on what others in the field had already considered (Patton 1990, Riessman 2008). Prior research and theory were not utilised to create a hypothesis to be tested through empirical research, but rather to guide the direction of my study and highlight the pertinent areas in this field that would benefit from additional scrutiny. Generating interview questions in this way was deemed necessary in order for my own research findings to make a contribution to the field. Prior research and theory were also utilised as a source of interpretation of the participants' narratives, they were a guide therefore in the analysis process. However, at the same time it is important to note that the analysis of data was also concerned with searching 'for novel theoretical insights from the data' (Riessman 2008:75), which would add to existing understandings, as and when they arose in the interview data. This influence of previous theory separates narrative inquiry from other qualitative methods such as grounded theory (Riessman 2008).

Asking the interview questions face to face, encouraged the conversational aspect of the interview, allowing participants to elaborate and discuss in more depth, than they would perhaps in questionnaires. This allowed for the story telling element to come through as the interview process was seen as the eliciting of a story. This is discussed by Finnegan (1998) who talks of the interview as interactive and dialogical with the interviewer playing 'a significant part in framing, eliciting and recording the story' (Finnegan 1998:73) through various verbal and facial responses, the interviewer is seen as playing a part in the outcome of the interview (Simons et al 2008). The selectivity and subjectivity of the interview process; the questions the interviewer asks/doesn't ask, the points they probe on and those they don't, the relationships they build/don't build with participants are highlighted by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), who sees this as part of the repeated and continual interpretive nature of narrative research (for the Interview guides see appendix 3A, 3B, 3C).

Other data sources:

Open day attendance

As well as interviewing participants I also attended university open days to help with my understanding of the process of access and entry to HE art and design. As the research participants who studied HE art and design attended universities from within certain mission groups, I limited my open day attendance to these mission group universities. I therefore attended 5 open days for universities from within the following mission groups; Million Plus, University Alliance, 1994 and non-aligned.

At the open days I was a background observer and I focused on answering the following questions:

- Who attends the open day?
- What is the distribution of Black prospective students at the open day?
- Does the university present itself as a diverse institution? If so how?
- What strategies does the university utilise to recruit prospective students?
- What advice do they offer prospective students?
- How do they enable prospective students to gain access and entry to HE through the open day events?

Following on from the 5 university open days I also looked at their prospectuses, asking the following questions;

- Does the university present itself as a diverse institution? If so how?
- What advice do they offer prospective students?
- How do they enable prospective students to gain access and entry to HE through their open day events?

Attendance and observation of art and design events focused around BAME group

I attended the events listed below with the aim of gaining further understanding about inclusion and exclusion issues affecting BAME art and design students.

- Towards a Progressive Arts Education: Inclusion, Change and Intervention Conference, London UK (October 2013). This conference focused on looking specifically at art education and strategies towards making art education more inclusive for both students and teachers.

- 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, London UK (October 2013). This art fair was an international event which focused on shining a light on and discussing the range of work being produced by African artists on the African continent and in the diaspora.

- Shades of Noir; Race in Creative Higher Education (January 2013). This was an open debate with the aim of encouraging a dialogue around race issues within HE art and design. There were a number of BAME art and design students present at this event, and so it also presented an informal opportunity talk to BAME art and design students.

- Re-Framing The Moment, Legacies of the 1982 Blk Art Group Conference, Wolverhampton UK (October 2012). This conference focused on discussing the history and the legacy of the BLK art group in Britain. The BLK art group was a group that was created in the 1980s. BAME artists came together with a common goal of increasing the visibility of BAME artists. Some of the artists that formed this group included; Sonia Boyce, Keith Piper and Eddie Chambers.

4.10   <u>Analytical approach – narrative analysis</u>

Merriam (1998) describes narrative analysis as an analysis strategy that places emphasis on the stories that the participants tell. Within this research I see interview data as stories and so require an analysis strategy where the perspective of seeing the interview data as stories is not lost. Therefore it is important that the choice of method of analysis is one that is sympathetic to the importance of interpreting the data as stories and narrative analysis fits this criterion. Three different types of narrative analysis; structural analysis, thematic analysis and dialogical/performative analysis have been used to analyse the interview data (Elliot 2005, Riessman 2008). Using these three forms of analysis means that there has been a focus on how the participants have organised their stories and thus the form it takes during narration, on the content of the interviews, and how the interview data has been

produced in dialogue between participant and researcher and produced within wider societal discourses (Elliot 2005, Riessman 2008, Hunter 2010). It also allows a focus on the social and cultural world of the narrators, as well as the meanings the narrators make of their experiences so follows a 'holistic approach to analysis' (Elliot 2005:41)

4.10.1   Structural analysis

Structural analysis, analysis focusing on the form or structure of narratives, on the way 'content is organised by a speaker' (Riessman 2008:100-101), has been utilised as the first form of analysis on the participant narratives. Structural analysis allows a way to relate language and meaning, it takes language seriously (Riessman 2008) and by focusing in the language used by participants a researcher can see how a participant speaks about themselves and how they want to be understood before they begin to interpret their narratives (Hunter 2010). The form or structure of narratives can be analysed using 'genre' as a 'holistic analysis' (Elliot 2005:46), this comprises a categorisation of the participant narratives into a typology or genre like comedy or tragedy which is often used in literature (Elliot 2005, Frank 2013). This method of analysis of individual participants' narratives is advantageous as it can allow the researcher to see patterns and similarities across otherwise personal and very individual stories and also to theorise about an activity that can have quite different meanings for different people (Elliot 2005, Frank 2013). It is also useful device when trying to ascertain how the participants want their stories to be interpreted (Elliot 2005). It is the way in which structural analysis has been used in this research.

4.10.2   Thematic analysis

The second form of analysis utilised to interpret the participants' narratives is thematic analysis which focuses on the content of narratives. This analysis searches for themes across the data by focusing on content (Simons et al 2008). This is done by identifying categories through careful reading of the data; data is then assigned to categories looking in particular for similarities, differences and patterns (Simons et al 2008). Whilst looking for difference, thematic analysis can also be used to identify the common elements in the trajectories of research participants in order to develop a collective story that is representative of the

participants' common experiences (Elliot 2005). With thematic analysis the data is interpreted using themes developed by the researcher which have been guided by prior theory as well as looking for emergent theory (Riessman 2008, Simons et al 2008)

4.10.3   Dialogical/Performative Analysis

Narratives can also be analysed by focusing '…on how (they) are 'bound into wider negotiated worlds' (Elliot 2005:50). The notion of narratives as either maintaining hegemony or being emancipatory in transforming lives and wider society is seen as the focus of this type of analysis. According to Riessman (2008) dialogical/performance analysis

> 'requires close reading of contexts, including the influence of investigator, setting, and social circumstances on the production and interpretation of narrative…it asks "who" an utterance may be directed to, "when" and "why", that is for what purpose?' (Riessman 2008:105)

It is an analysis that pays attention to wider contexts that extend beyond the interview environment, where narratives are seen as created and listened to in contexts which are 'interactional, historical, institutional and discursive', and so the data may come from individual stories but these stories can also show us a lot about our societies and cultures (Riessman 2008: 105) (Hunter 2010). It is understood that

> 'A given word…is saturated with ideology and meanings from previous usage; analysts never encounter a word from a pure position – it is not a neutral repository of an idea. An utterance carries the traces of other utterances, past and present, as words carry history on their backs. No longer accepting the narrator as the "final" authority, the social scientist can interrogate particular words, listen to voices of minor characters, identify hidden discourses speakers take for granted…' (Riessman 2008:107)

4.11   Data Analysis

The data has first been analysed using a structural analysis so the focus has been on the form and structure of the narratives. Out of this analysis I have created typologies based around the metaphor of journey; these typologies have been identified through the words

used and the way in which the stories were narrated. The typologies have aided in better understanding the participant narratives, as well as drawing out similarities within the individual stories told. The findings from the structural analysis are presented in Chapter 5 'Participant Narratives'.

The data has then been analysed using thematic and dialogical/performative analysis. Utilising thematic analysis the focus has been on the content of the interview data and the search for key themes. This form of analysis is influenced by prior theory, emergent theory as well as the purpose of the research study. By utilising a dialogical /performative analysis the focus has also been on contexts – historical, institutional and discursive and the place they play in why participants have narrated their experiences the way they have, and also on what hidden and perhaps unidentified discourses are within the narratives. The findings from this are presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

One of the purposes of this research is to amplify the voices of Black African art and design students; there is an understanding that the agency which this group holds is rarely acknowledged within the field of art and design education. Their insight holds a wealth of knowledge that would be valuable in challenging the discriminatory and limiting structures that exist within Art and Design education. Therefore it is important as part of the process of analysis to interpret and present these narratives in such a way that this purpose is met, whilst maintaining the essence of each individual participant narrative.

4.11.1   <u>**Thinking through the presentation of narratives**</u>

To move from the spoken word (of interviews) to the written, and represent within limited space fourteen individual and personal narratives whilst attempting to keep their stories whole is a challenging dilemma. Narrative analysis encourages an analytical focus on the whole content of the narratives spoken by the participants. As highlighted by Riessman (2008) one of the purposes of narrative analysis is to refrain from fragmenting narratives through focusing only on short key segments of a much larger narrative, but to aim instead to keep participants' narratives as complete and intact as possible. I am conscious that I do not want to present an analysis of findings that are focused to such an extent on my interpretations (my researcher voice) intermingled with theory, that the participants voices

and experiences are lost within this (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). The purpose of using the three forms of narrative analysis is to allow the participant voices to be heard through presenting as much of their whole narratives as possible, to provide the reader an opportunity to hear in their entirety the stories of the participants, and yet also to be able to analyse the data and draw out themes which are interpreted by both prior and emergent theory.

Richardson (1991, 1993, 1994) challenges existing methods of research data presentation, such that she has presented interview data as poems, dramas and film scripts, ascertaining that in post-modern times we are able to disrupt pre-existing boundaries around the presentation of research data. Her work sets precedence for challenging existing ways of working with data in qualitative research, in order to find the most appropriate way to analyse and present participants' lived experiences. Given that there are many modes in which a narrative based research project can be written, different ways that data can be analysed and presented, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) assert that it is important for someone employing narrative analysis to ask themselves what forms of literature they like to read and make use of these examples to help guide their writing style and presentation, as this may open up and suggest 'innovative and compelling' forms of presenting narratives (Clandinin and Connelly 2000:137). In this particular case, looking at other writing styles would be helpful in thinking about how I could best represent the 'multiple voices' within my research (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). With this in mind I recalled reading '*A Portrait of the artist as a young girl*' by John Quinn (1986). The book consisted of nine stories of childhood as told by Irish women writers. Each story was originally a radio interview conducted by Quinn, which were edited to create the book. In looking for a way to present my participant's narratives I considered Quinn's re-presentation of radio interviews for possible suggestions of ways of presenting narratives.

The immediacy and the unrehearsed quality of the radio interviews conducted by Quinn was something that I was aware is also part of the narratives that my participants told. I want to preserve this as much as possible and allow readers to be as much a part of the unplanned, unrehearsed 'first thoughts' of the individual narrators as I was. I therefore found it useful to look at the techniques employed by Quinn in re-presenting the interviews he conducted

with the nine writers as it offered the possibility of a 'narrative form that fit with (my) particular narrative inquiry' (Clandinin and Connelly 2000:163). Quinn addressed the issue of re-presenting the radio interviews into written format, questioning how to transfer material catered for the ear to 'one which caters for the eye', understanding that this involves a great deal of editing and re-editing material (Quinn 1986[xxxii]). Some of the challenges present when trying to *retain* the freshness and originality present in the original interview, yet having to *edit* and re-order narratives are captured in by Quinn (1986), and are also identified by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Elliot (2005) and Riessman (2008) as part of the dilemmas of narrative research. Transferring the spoken word to the written word requires a large amount of editing and interpretation such that the new material cannot be a *direct* representation of the original spoken word, there is a compromise (Elliot 2005). The removal of the presence of the interviewer has been problematized by Riessman (2008) and Rosenthal (1993), with Riessman (2008) arguing that 'stories don't fall from the sky…they are composed and received in contexts', with one of these contexts being 'interactional' (Riessman 2008:105). However, by not including the dialogue between participant and researcher it does allow for the reader to focus solely on the subject matter shared by the participants and for their stories to be told as an uninterrupted whole, a quality that is important in narrative analysis.

Research by Finnegan (1998) argues that by allowing substantial extracts of participants narratives to be shown it is possible to '…bring home that these tales are indeed those of individuals, each recounting personal experiences unique to the teller' (Finnegan 1998:56). Due to space Finnegan does not present the narratives in their entirety, but comments that she felt it was '…only fair to let at least *some* speakers present their accounts at some length – even if only in the limited medium of printed script- rather than appear just in short quotations selected by the researcher' (Finnegan 1998:57). Finnegan also discusses the removal of evidence of dialogue in narratives, highlighting that with most published texts this is a part of the unavoidable editing process.

The narrative analysis focus of keeping a story intact (Riessman 2008) does present problems where one is limited due to the amount of space that can be allocated for predominantly lengthy narratives. This is a problem I faced, however this is not a new

problem and has been faced by other researchers. Riessman (2008) in her analysis of a range of narrative research exemplar identifies the work of Cain (1991) as research in which 'representing the long interview narratives also presented problems for Cain' (Riessman 2008:71). Cain (1991) resolves this issue through creating a synopsis of each interview and placing them in her appendix. Cain (1991) uses the synopsis to present a form of the participant's narrative in its entirety; the synopsis was in her own words, however the compromise is that the evidence of dialogue between researcher and participant is lost. The work of Cain (1991) challenges the expected style in which interview data should be presented, by creating a synopsis out of the original transcription of interview she has altered and edited the participant's story, but does this mean that her findings and interpretations are any less 'truthful'? Richardson (1993) argues that in post-modern times we are encouraged 'to doubt that any method of knowing or telling can claim authoritative truth' (Richardson 1993:706). Richardson (1993) challenges limited and fixed boundaries in sociology on how to present research, identifying that more unconventional methods can be utilised in order to open up the 'discipline to other speakers and ways of speaking' (Richardson 1993:697). I see Richardson's methods as encouraging the researcher to seek and then utilise the most appropriate method for presenting unique, individual and personal research data, one which is faithful to the participants whilst also being a method that allows the data to have resonance for the reader.

4.11.2   Analysis and presentation of data – the process undertaken

Wanting to give space for my participants' narratives to be told, space that goes beyond a few interview segments, but also aware that I am limited by the space I can allocate to the narratives, I have chosen to utilise a synopsis similar to Cain (1991) in order to summarise and present the lengthy narratives. Having interviewed fourteen participants I have chosen to create a synopsis of the participants' narratives (three are presented in Chapter 5 'Participant Narratives' and the other 11 are in appendix 5). This has been done by personally transcribing recorded interviews, reviewing the interview transcripts, editing the transcripts to create a coherent narrative, and then from that narrative I identified what I think are the key and salient points and transform these into a synopsis. Although I have not changed my interview data into poetry or drama as Richardson has, I am aware that in

creating a synopsis of a whole interview I have transformed the data from its origin, and thus I also blur the line between the 'real' data and the interpreted data. This I feel is the best method, given space limitations, to still allow my participant's whole narrative to be told, because it is '…only fair to let at least *some* speakers present their accounts at some length – even if only in the limited medium of printed script- rather than appear just in short quotations selected by the researcher' (Finnegan 1998:57).

The synopses of participant narratives are presented as typologies. The typologies presented are a result of analysing and interpreting the data and identifying that the participants in narrating their experiences employ words that are related to the concept of journey, and thus it has been interpreted that there is an underlying understanding of the art and design educational experience as a journey. For example participants talk about '*going* to school/university', or taking a designated 'route' or 'path' in regards to their educational choices. This emic approach to the data analysis is further developed into the three typologies that are presented, whereby the participants' experiences are not seen as simply journeys, rather certain *types* of journeys are seen to have emerge as the analysis process developed. This is in part due to the content of the narratives – what was actually said, and in part due to the form - *how* the participants narrated and thus presented their experiences to me; which lent themselves to particular types of journeys. The types of journeys were identified as *ruptured journey*, *undeviating journey* and *arduous journey*, these are not direct 'verbal categories used by the participants', but are born out of a deeper understanding of the participant narratives where I as analyst have taken on 'the task of constructing and making explicit patterns that appear to exist but remain unperceived by the people studied' (Patton 1990:398). My analysis therefore utilises both 'indigenous typologies' and 'analyst-constructed typologies' (Patton 1990:393 &398). The typologies are a tool to *assist* in demonstrating the *different* ways in which the participants participated in and experienced HE Art and Design, the utilisation of the three journey typologies is 'to aid (in the) listening' of the stories told by research participants (Frank 2013).

In the findings and discussion chapters the data from the participants' narratives are presented as narrative extracts in chapters 6 and 7. The extracts have been edited to include

full stops and commas, not present in the original transcript, as it was felt that this would make the text easier to read. Similar to Finnegan (1998) each of the narratives has gone through a process of editing, and where I have omitted information that was in the original interview I have shown this with three dots. I have also included, in brackets, to assist clarification of some of the questions which I asked during the process of the interview. In re-shaping the narratives I have cut out some sections of each narrative. I mainly omitted sections that appear repetitive, or overly lengthy in content, this includes my own questions during the interview.

Each interview was first transcribed by myself and then it underwent a structural analysis focusing on the form and structure of the narrative, as described earlier. I then created a synopsis for each interview and then placed the narratives into typologies. Personally transcribing the interviews and then undertaking structural analysis as described, allowed me to truly get to know my data and thus be able to draw out relevant themes for discussion from large amounts of data (each transcript was roughly 25-30 pages long)

Following on from this, each individual transcript was analysed using thematic and dialogical/performative analysis looking first for themes around limiting barriers followed by themes around facilitating strategies; I focused on these two aspects as they were connected to my research questions. I looked for limiting barriers and facilitating strategies with each of the transcripts and placed them in individual analysis tables that I had created for each participant. Barriers and facilitating strategies where ascertained by identifying the underlying assumptions in the participants narratives (Riessman 2008). This was then followed a re-reading of the transcripts this time looking for any other emergent themes that were provided by the participants which would add further insight to the research project. As part of the process I had an analysis journal where I made analytical comments as the analysis progressed. As I was analysing each individual transcript I made notes of key themes and categories that were coming up for both limiting barriers and facilitating strategies in the analysis table I had created for each participant. I then used the key themes and categories as headings in the analysis table and underneath each heading I identified specific examples (quotes) where the participants had talked about these themes and categories. Once I had analysed individual participant transcripts I then moved to do an

analysis that looked for patterns across all the transcripts, I created a table with participants' names and listed the common and prevalent themes that could be seen through cross analysis. Individually the participants' narratives may be

> 'dismissed as anecdotal...experiences of the tellers which do not constitute evidence in research terms. However when a large number of these accounts...are connected and analysed it becomes clear that there are common patterns in both content and way of telling. These patterns are evidence of common experience and perception' (Cortazzi 1993:126)

However, whilst looking for commonality I also looked for relationships and differences during cross analysis. The key themes drawn from this analysis form the sections of my findings and discussion chapter.

Merriam's (1998) identifies that findings from data can be organised by different levels of analysis including category construction which incorporates the analysis of the data by placing them into themes or categories, with a further level of analysis involving the explanation of the themes. The first part of my thematic and dialogical/performative analysis took a category construction approach where data was analysed in order to identify themes relevant to the educational trajectory of Black African art and design students. This was then followed by an explanation of the themes found utilising literature and theory. These two levels were assessed as the two levels of analysis necessary to answer the research questions. I came to my findings by building up the data thematically and then adding the analysis based on the data as well as literature and theory in between quotations. As this process progressed more depth was added to the analysis and it was also possible to reduce the amount of quotations from the interview data. Part of the process of analysis included contrasting negative cases to see if there were other explanations other than the ones I had reached (Patton 1990, Merriam 1998) some of which are discussed in the findings and discussion.

4.12   **Establishing trustworthiness:**

This section of the will describe the measures taken to ensure the research conducted was trustworthy and credible.

Some qualitative researchers argue that the criteria used to ascertain whether quantitative research is valid, reliable and objective should not be used when looking at qualitative research (Cohen et al 2007). Instead ascertaining whether a study has produced good qualitative research should be considered using different criteria, as the end purpose and aim of qualitative research is not the same as that of quantitative research. As discussed earlier in this chapter, detailed descriptions and meanings made and interpreted from experiences tend to be more the focus of qualitative research, whereas quantitative research is more concerned with quantification, measurement of data and generalisations (Elliot 2005). The uniqueness and multiple interpretations given to events that are prioritised by qualitative research make it difficult to ask whether the research is valid, reliable or objective. Instead readers of qualitative research should ask of the credibility, confirmability, dependability, trustworthiness and transferability of data garnered through qualitative means (Cohen et al 2007). Elliot (2005) highlights the problem that many qualitative researchers have with the terms reliability and validity but still uses these terms when discussing the evaluation of qualitative narrative research as she argues that the validity and reliability of qualitative research findings must be paid attention too even if other terms such as trustworthiness are used instead.

It is important bearing in mind the above discussion that issues around credibility and trustworthiness are considered in relation to the narrative inquiry approach that this research takes. Like Elliot (2005), Reissman (1993) does also refer to the 'validity' of narratives, however unlike Elliot (2005), Reissman (1993) contends that 'traditional notions of reliability simply do not apply to narrative studies, and validity must be radically reconceptualised' (Reissman 1993:65). Reissman sees validation as a process through which claims are made for the 'trustworthiness of our interpretations' and highlights that there is a difference between truth and trustworthiness, truth takes the stand that there is one 'objective reality' out there, whilst trustworthiness 'moves the process into the social world'. Taking into consideration Reissman's definitions of the two terms, trustworthiness can then be seen as more in line with the constructivist perspective, that there are many realities out in the social world and research findings therefore are but one representation of one of the many realities (Patton 1990). With the awareness of a need for a 'validity'

more suited to narratives Reissman (1993:65) then identifies '…ways of approaching validation in narrative work'. Two of them will be adopted for addressing trustworthiness and credibility in this study, they are; persuasiveness and pragmatic use.

4.12.1   Persuasiveness

The criterion for persuasiveness is defined as the extent to which an interpretation is reasonable and convincing, Reissman (1993:65) contends that persuasiveness is at its most possible when 'theoretical claims are supported with evidence from informants and when alternative interpretations of the data are considered'. This study has considered alternative interpretations and claims by looking at the experiences of participants from a range of HEIs, ages as well as both participants who have studied HE art and design as well as those who were interested in it but did not. Findings from the data are supported with quotes from the interviews which is in effect evidence from participants.

4.12.2   Pragmatic use

This is the extent to which the findings from a study can be a source for other researchers to use. If others find a study's outcomes of a good enough quality to use then this can be seen as a testament to the trustworthiness of the study and its findings (Reissman 1993). In order to establish the trustworthiness of this study so that others are confident in using its findings; a full description of the methodology and how the interpretations are produced has been provided. I have endeavoured to make the research process clear, visible and fully discussed and primary data is available for consideration.

Patton (1990) also addresses credibility in qualitative research and identifies two issues that need to be addressed for a credible study. They will also be adopted for dealing further with trustworthiness and credibility. Two of the issues are as noted below:

4.12.3   Techniques for enhancing the quality of analysis

Similarly to Reissman (1993), Patton (1990) also identifies the fact that, that in order for others to judge the quality of the findings the researcher has to provide sufficient information on the data collection and analysis process and the importance of rival

explanations and searching for negative cases. Both of these have been utilised as discussed earlier. Multiple theories have been used when interpreting the data in order to understand the effect of different postulations on the data; this is referred to as 'theory/perspective triangulation' by Patton (1990). I have considered Critical Race Theory, Afrocentrism, Theory of Reproduction and Post-Black Theory in relation to analysing the interview data

4.12.4   The credibility of the researcher

As the main instrument of data collection, it is important that the study contains information about the researcher (Patton 1990, Cohen et al 2007, Bryman 2008) as a way of enhancing the credibility of the study, through establishing the trustworthiness of the researcher. This has already been discussed earlier in great depth (see Reflexivity section).

4.13   Methodological limitations of the study

There are potential difficulties with recruiting participants from personal networks as this study did. One is that this type of recruitment may favour a particular type of person who is similar to myself, rather than providing a representative cross-section. However I was also able to recruit participants from outside my personal networks. The sample of participants has already been discussed and in particular the fact that the majority of the participants in the study are women, this was not a sample that I went out of my way to look for, rather I was looking for a good gender balance of participants. Research (Connor et al 2004) has shown that BAME women have higher participation in HE than BAME men. Due to the small sample size it is not possible to generalise this to a wider Black African art and design student population,

I have used interviews as my main data source, and so as a researcher it is important that I am mindful that there is no over identification with the experiences of the participants that may affect the creation and analysis of data. I looked for ways to counteract this during the interview process by asking further questions in order to clarify that which I did not understand or when I felt that the participant was responding to a question with limited information because they presumed that I was familiar with the topic.

As discussed earlier I received low response rates from participants connected to any one particular HEI, and thus it was not possible to focus on one particular university and perhaps do a case study. However by focusing on a small number of participants (although from a range of different HEIs) I was able to do a much more in-depth and detailed study which focused on understanding Black African art and design students' educational experiences.

The next chapter presents a synopsis of seven participant narratives understood through the metaphor of journey, it allows space for some of the narratives to be heard in greater depth.

5   <u>PARTICIPANTS' NARRATIVES</u>

<u>Participant profiles</u>

<u>Asa</u>

At the time of the interview Asa was 33 years of age. Asa is of Nigerian heritage; she was born in the UK and grew up here. Asa attended a state comprehensive school in London. Asa completed her GCSEs and A Levels, and then went on to a foundation course; she followed the traditional route into HE Art and Design. She studied a degree in graphic design at a post-1992 university, which specialises in the arts and is not affiliated to any of the university mission groups. She graduated in 2005. Asa's father went to university in Nigeria and was an accountant by profession. Asa's mother was a housewife she begun a degree in Nigeria but did not complete it.

<u>Ben</u>

At the time of the interview Ben was 27 years old. Ben is of Nigerian heritage; he was born in the UK and grew up here. Ben attended a state comprehensive school in London. Ben completed his GCSEs and A Levels, and then went on to a foundation course; he followed the traditional route into HE art and design. He studied a degree in fine art at a post-1992, Million Plus university. Ben graduated in 2009. Ben's father went to university in Nigeria and worked for the Nigerian embassy. Ben's mother was a housewife; she had begun a degree in Nigeria but did not complete it.

<u>Ella</u>

At the time of the interview Ella was 34 years old. She is of Congolese heritage; she was born in Congo and came to the UK as a refugee when she was 16 years old. Ella did not have GCSE or A Level qualifications in art and design. She completed a 2 year BTEC course in art and design at an FE college and then went on to study a degree in fashion. She studied her degree at a post-1992 university which specialises in the arts and is not affiliated to any of the university mission groups. Ella graduated in 2013. Ella entered university as a mature student and mother of a young daughter. Ella's father went to university in Congo, he had worked in banking in Congo but once living in the UK he was unable to find work at the same level, he therefore changed profession and was a Pastor at a Baptist church. Ella's mother went to university in Congo and was a director of an oil company in Congo, but once living in the UK also was unable to find work at the same level. Ella's mother was also a Pastor at a Baptist church.

<u>Iman</u>

At the time of the interview Iman was 26 years old. She is of Somali heritage; she was born in Somalia and came to the UK as a refugee when she was 7 years old. Iman attended an all-girls Muslim secondary school in Manchester. Iman did not have GCSE or A Level qualifications in art and design. She studied for a degree in graphic design, first undertaking a two year foundation degree at a further education college, and then doing a final top up year at a post-1992, University Alliance university. Iman graduated in 2009. Iman's father went to university in Somalia and was a teacher at an FE college. Iman's mother went to university in Somalia and was a housewife.

<u>Laker</u>

At the time of the interview Laker was 27 years old. She is of Ugandan and English heritage. She was born in the UK and grew up here. Her father is Ugandan and her mother is English. Laker attended a private school in London, on a full scholarship. Laker completed her GCSEs and A Levels, and then went on to a foundation course; she followed the traditional route into HE art and design. She studied a degree in graphic design at a post-1992 university, which specialises in the arts and is not affiliated to any of the university mission groups. She graduated in 2009. Laker's father went to university in Russia; he struggled to find work in the UK and was in and out of employment during Laker's childhood. Laker's mother went to university in Russia, she worked as a translator and a teacher when Laker was growing up, and currently she is a director of a soup kitchen.

<u>Lidia</u>

At the time of the interview Lidia was 36 years old. Lidia is of Ethiopian heritage; she was born in the Ethiopia and came to the UK when she was 12 years old with her family as economic migrants. Lidia attended a state comprehensive school in the north of England. Lidia completed her GCSEs, followed by a two year GNVQ course in art and design at an FE college, and then went on to university to study a degree in fashion. Lidia attended a post-1992, University Alliance university. Lidia graduated in 1998. Lidia received a grant from the government to attend university. Lidia's father went to university in Ethiopia, in Ethiopia he worked in banking and when he came to the UK he run his own business distributing drinks around the UK. Lidia's mother was a housewife; she finished secondary school in Ethiopia. Lidia's mother began studying for a degree in the UK but did not complete it.

<u>Ngozi</u>

At the time of the interview Ngozi was 24 years old. Ngozi is of Nigerian and Sierra Leonean heritage; she was born in the UK and grew up here. Ngozi attended a state comprehensive school in Essex. Ngozi completed her GCSEs and A Levels, and then went on to study a degree in history of art at a 1994 Group university. Ngozi graduated in 2010. Neither of Ngozi's parents went to university. Ngozi's father run his own business shipping fish heads to Scandinavian countries, and her mother was an administrator. Ngozi's parents separated when she was young and she was raised by her mother in a single parent household. Ngozi's sister went to university to study engineering and Ngozi was the second in her family to go to university.

Peter

At the time of the interview Peter was 21 years old. Peter is of Mauritian heritage; he was born in Mauritius and came to the UK when he was 7 years old. Peter attended a state comprehensive school in London. Peter completed his GCSEs and A Levels and then went on to a foundation course; he followed the traditional route into HE art and design. He studied a degree in graphic design at a post-1992 university, which specialises in the arts and is not affiliated to any of the university mission groups. Peter graduated in 2013. Neither of Peter's parents went to university. Peter's father held various jobs and was often in and out of employment. Peter's mother was an administrator. Peter was the first in his family to go to university.

Abena

At the time of the interview Abena was 18 years old. Abena is of Ghanaian heritage; she was born in Ghana and came to the UK when she was 10 years old. Abena attended a state comprehensive school in Liverpool. Abena completed her GCSEs and A Levels and at the time of the interview was about to begin studying on a foundation course at an FE college. Abena had aspirations to study fashion once completing the foundation course. Abena's father did not go to university; he was working as a security worker. Abena's mother went to university in Ghana and was a nurse.

Iqra

At the time of the interview Iqra was 18 years old. Iqra is of Somali heritage and was born in Holland. She came to the UK as a refugee when she was 6 years old. Iqra attended a state comprehensive school in London. Iqra completed her GCSEs and then went to study a two year art and design BTEC course at an FE college. At the time of the interview Iqra was about to begin studying on a textiles degree course at a post-92, Million Plus university. Neither of Iqra's parents went to university. Both

of Iqra's parents were not in employment. Iqra's brother went to university to study medicine, and Iqra was the second in her family to go to university.

Liz

At the time of the interview Liz was 31 years old. Liz is of Gabonese heritage; she was born in the UK and grew up here. Liz attended a state comprehensive school in London. Liz completed her GCSEs and A Levels and then went on to study a degree in politics and business at a Russell Group university. Liz's parents separated when she was young and she was brought up by her mother in a single parent household. Her mother went university in Gabon and was a secondary school languages teacher.

Toyin

At the time of the interview Toyin was 30 years old. Toyin is of Nigerian heritage; she was born in Nigeria and came to the UK when she was a baby. Toyin attended a state comprehensive in London. Toyin completed GCSEs and A Levels and then went on to study a degree in business at a post-92, Million Plus university. Toyin's father went to university in Nigeria, he struggled to find work when he first came over to the UK and was in and out of work when Toyin was growing up. Toyin's father was now working in accounting. Toyin's mother went to university in Nigeria and was also in and out of work when Toyin was growing up. Toyin's mother was now working as an administrator.

Sam

At the time of the interview Sam was 32 years old. Sam is of Nigerian heritage; she was born in Nigeria and came to the UK when she was 15 years old. Sam attended a state comprehensive in London. Sam completed GCSEs and A Levels and then went on to study a degree in marketing at a post-1992 university, which is not affiliated to any of the university mission groups. Sam was brought up by her mother in a single parent household. When Sam was growing up her mother did night work for a railway company. Sam's mother went to university in the UK as a mature student; she attended university at the same time as Sam.

Michelle

At the time of the interview Michelle was 18 years old. Michelle is of Zimbabwean heritage; she was born in Zimbabwe and came to the UK when she was 8 years old. Michelle attended a state

comprehensive in Manchester. Michelle completed her GCSEs and A Levels. At the time of the interview Michelle was about to begin studying on a law degree at a Russell Group university. Michelle's father went to university in Zimbabwe and was working in IT. Michelle's mother did not go to university; she completed her education up to GCSE level. Michelle's mother was working as carer.

5.1   Introduction

One of the purposes of this research has been to amplify the voices of Black African art and design students; there is an understanding that the agency which this group holds is rarely acknowledged within the field of art and design education. Their insights into participation in and experiences of HE art and design hold a wealth of knowledge that is valuable in challenging the discriminatory and limiting structures that existing within art and design education. Therefore it is important as part of process of analysis to represent these narratives in such a way that this purpose is met, whilst maintaining the essence of each individual participant narrative. As discussed in the methodology chapter this research follows a narrative inquiry and thus narrative analysis encourages an analytical focus on the whole content of the narratives spoken by the participants. As highlighted by Riessman (2008) one of the purposes of narrative analysis is to refrain from fragmenting narratives through focusing only on short key segments of a much larger narrative, but instead to aim to keep participants' narratives as complete and intact as possible. I am conscious that I do not want to present an analysis of findings that focuses to such an extent on my interpretations (my researcher voice) intermingled with theory, that the participants voices and experiences are lost within this (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). The purpose of this chapter is to allow the participant voices to be heard through presenting as much of their narratives as possible. It also provides the reader an opportunity to hear in their entirety the stories of the participants which are then further analysed and discussed in the next chapter.

At the end of the field work process, once the participant interviews had been completed, I found myself with a challenging dilemma; how to move from the spoken word (of interviews) to the written and re-present within limited space, fourteen individual and

personal narratives whilst attempting to keep each stories whole. Like Richardson (1991, 1993, 1994) who has presented interview data as poems, dramas and film scripts, arguing that in post-modern times we are able to disrupt pre-existing boundaries around the presentation of research data, I was also interested in challenging existing ways of working with data in qualitative research, in order to find the most appropriate way to represent participants' lived experiences

The 14 narratives which are presented in their entirety are examples of pertinent experiences of the process of art and design education (three narratives are presented here and the other 11 can be found in appendix 5). Each of the narratives illustrates the variations in the art and design educational experiences of the participants. But although the experiences vary they each identify some key limiting barriers and key facilitating strategies that run across many of the narratives, these are discussed further in the next two chapters.

5.2 <u>Journey as a metaphor</u>

The narrative accounts in this section are presented using journey as a metaphor. Patton (1990) states that 'metaphors can be powerful and clever ways of communicating findings' (Patton 1990:402), it is one method in which a significant amount of meaning can be well expressed. However it is important to note that at times the use of metaphors can also limit the data if a metaphor is used which does not quite 'fit' the data (Patton 1990, Clandinin and Connelly 2000). But 'as long as one is aware of the possible dangers, metaphors may be helpful in the creation of narrative form' (Clandinin and Connelly 2000:163). The journey metaphor is used as a tool to communicate the experiences of the research participants, thus the participants' narratives have been created into typologies of journeys. Lakoff and Turner (1989) have theorised that we understand life experiences metaphorically; it is a part of our everyday life such that we use it automatically and reflexively. They argue that 'metaphor allows us to understand our selves and our world in ways that no other modes of thought can' (Lakoff and Turner 1989:xi). As a result we are able to understand and utilise in everyday discussions the conceptual metaphor of *life as a journey,* whereby we 'can speak of children "getting off to a good start" in life' and 'people worry about whether they are

"getting anywhere" with their lives' (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 2). We are able to make connections and relationships between life and journey, such that we understand that someone leading a life can be a traveller with destinations, routes, landmarks and crossroads (Lakoff and Turner 1989).

Taking on board Lakoff and Turner's (1989) theories, Turner (1997) has argued that it is also possible to consider the process of learning and educational practices through the metaphor of journey. Turner (1997) gives examples of book titles focusing on learning English as a Foreign language, whereby words closely linked to journey such as 'destinations, directions, crossroads' and 'horizons' are used (Turner 1997:26), and states that the practice of learning is understood as having an underlying journey metaphor.

The data collected from the participants all demonstrate some aspects of what is envisaged within the culturally understood structure of a journey. Journeys are usually understood as structured with a starting point and an end point, although some journeys do not have a particular end destination, and it is usually anticipated that there will be different stages in the journey; ups, downs, encounters, obstacles and barriers along the way, as well as triumphs and overcoming limitations. The typologies presented here have come as a result of analysing and interpreting the data and identifying that the participants, in narrating their experiences have employed words and expressions that are related to the concept of journey. Thus it is deemed that there was an underlying understanding of the art and design educational experience as a journey. This is in part due to the content of the narratives – what was actually said, and in part due to the form and structure - *how* the participants narrated and thus presented their experiences to me; which lent themselves to particular types of journeys. The typologies of journeys are *ruptured journey*, *undeviating journey* and *arduous journey*, however it should be noted that these are not direct 'verbal categories used by the participants', but those interpreted by myself as analyst (Patton 1990).

Seven narratives are looked at in-depth in this chapter (three of the seven narratives are shown here and the other four can be found in appendix 5), whilst the other narratives will be drawn upon in the next chapter to further draw out and analyse the ideas and themes brought up in these seven narratives. Three different typologies of journeys as described

and experienced by the participants are presented. Arthur Frank (2013) who employed typologies in '*The Wounded Storyteller*' talks about the purpose of utilising typologies and also the problems that come with it;

> 'Why propose "types" of illness narratives and suggest that individual stories somehow "fit" one type or another? The risk is creating yet another "general unifying view" that subsumes the particularity of individual experience. The advantage is to encourage closer attention to the stories ill persons tell; ultimately, to aid listening to the ill...' (Frank 2013:76-77)

Though he chooses to focus on three illness typologies, Frank (2013) ascertains that utilising typologies should not in any way take away from the originality of a narrative, as each narrative told does not necessarily conform to only one typology but can at different times and phases of the narrative combine a range of typologies. Thus although the experiences are presented in typologies there is also an understanding that typologies have fuzzy boundaries and each participant's stories could fit into more than one typology, or no typology at all. Like Frank (2013) the utilisation of the three journey typologies is 'to aid (in the) listening' of the stories told by research participants. The typologies are a tool to assist in demonstrating the ways in which participants went about the process of participation in HE art and design and the ways they experienced HE art and design, and they form the first part of the analysis of the research participants' narratives. The second part of the analysis comes in the next two chapters that follow.

The three typologies are presented as;

1. Ruptured journey – this typology consists of narratives that tell of experiences in which there are many obstacles and barriers which have hindered the journey to studying art and design. The teller of the story talks of having had a passion for art and design but they do not reach the destination of studying art and design at HE. The word rupture has been used as the narrator does begin the journey to studying art and design but does not complete it. Somewhere along the journey there is a rupture that leaves traces of wanting to be in art and design that are still in the process of resolution.

2. <u>Undeviating journey</u> – this typology consists of narratives that tell of experiences where nothing will stop the traveller from reaching their goal. The traveller is able to overcome any obstacles that may come up as the journey progresses. Art and design HE is always seen as the end goal from the very beginning of the journey. The word un-deviating has been used because the traveller does not via off course but instead they follow their chosen trajectory. The narrators all experience some barriers but are still able study and progress in HE art and design, thus they also demonstrate facilitating strategies.

3. <u>Arduous journey</u> - this typology consists of narratives that tell of experiences in which the narrator presents their experience of art and design education as a long problematic journey with many potentially major setbacks and thus the term arduous has been employed. They do not always have support as they progress within their journey, but the traveller is able to overcome obstacles and barriers and reach their end destination. Their end destination is studying HE art and design. The narrators all experience some barriers but are still able study and progress in HE art and design, thus they demonstrate facilitating strategies.

I present the research in this way as I believe it important to allow the participants' narratives as much as possible to speak for themselves first, and then follow this with a findings and discussions chapter. The typologies are used as a way to understand the varying experiences of the participants, but yet also to show to the reader both the facilitating strategies and limiting barriers that are part of their unique and individual educational journeys.

5.3   **A Ruptured Journey**
5.3.1   **Toyin's story**

The narrative that Toyin presented was one whereby she had a great passion for art and design, and in particular fashion. Toyin recalled spending a large amount of her time during her GCSEs doing art and design work; it was something that she particularly enjoyed and was successful in, gaining an A grade in both textiles and art and design GCSE. From a young age she had aspirations to run her own 'boutique', and she also did a lot of drawing when

she was younger which was encouraged by her parents. Toyin's story presents an experience in which previously identified barriers, in particular parental steering[xxxiii], had to a great extent impeded her ability to access, enter and progress in HE art and design. But her story was also rather a complicated one as she also talked about her parents encouraging her to engage in a great deal of extra-curricular art and design activities, as well as exposing her to art and design through regular museum and gallery visits. She felt that she received plenty of encouragement from her art and design teacher, but Toyin did not feel that the institutional support she received counted for much when her parents were not supportive of her continuing with her educational interest in art and design. Toyin also talked about her Textiles teacher who she felt was very unsupportive, such that for her final exam she did not receive help from her teacher but worked on her project with her mother. Toyin's mother also had an interest in fashion and textiles, she was able to sew and also took classes at art and design institutions in order to develop her textiles ability. Toyin recalled seeing some of her mother's textile work, but could not remember ever sitting down with her mother and discussing it.

In contrast to another participant Liz who felt that it would have helped her to have Black role models as inspiration to pursue art and design, Toyin's story shows that she had what could be considered Black role models. Her Textiles teacher was Black, and the head teacher encouraged successful members from BAME communities to come and talk to the students. Toyin recalled a fashion consultant coming to the school, and from that experience she believed that she could also enter the fashion world, yet she still did not enter HE art and design. The narrative that Toyin presented showed her as someone who was proactive in seeking out information as well as knowledgeable about the field of art and design, she was aware of which university was the best for studying fashion, she had completed work experience in a range of art and design institutions and organisations, and had even taken part in short courses at art and design institutions when she was younger. During her teenage years Toyin recalled running an art club for children in her local area, she did this on Saturdays and school holidays for a number of years. She recalled taking them to art galleries and teaching them skills based on what she had learnt in her GCSE classes, it was something that she enjoyed and took particularly seriously, and her involvement in this art

club was encouraged by her father. Toyin talked about her parents collecting art work, taking her to exhibitions.

Toyin's narrative presented a number of examples around the theme of risk aversion, there was an underlying sense that art and design was a risky subject to pursue. Toyin gave examples of people who were still working in retail jobs despite having 'followed their dream' and pursued art courses, she had not wanted that to happen to her, and this tied in with what she felt her parents were telling her. Toyin talked of her parents' not seeing art and design as something that needed to be studied at university, it was something that she could learn at home, her mother could teach her therefore she did not need to 'waste' a subject choice on art and design. There were a number of times when Toyin's story demonstrated that she had a lack of confidence in her own artistic abilities. Toyin also commented that perhaps she had allowed her parents to guide her too much in her choices, something which she felt that her other siblings had not done. When talking about her experience of art and design at secondary school, Toyin highlighted that she felt that art and design was seen as an easy subject by other students, and it was not taken very seriously in the school as a whole. She felt that as a majority Black all-girls' school, art wasn't 'the main thing'. Toyin talked about her parents, who both had degrees from Nigeria, having struggled in the UK to achieve their potential. Toyin talked of her cousin who went to America to pursue a successful career in fashion, being considered 'eccentric' by her family and that she had not wanted to be considered eccentric.

Toyin had undertaken a degree in Business, and had hoped that she would still be able to enter and work in the fashion industry. This did happen and since graduating Toyin had worked for various fashion companies, but due to her degree she was generally placed in job roles that were more business based and analytical rather than creative and this was something that frustrated her. At the time of the interview Toyin was considering the possibility of going back to study fashion, and also starting her own fashion label/company, but also seemed nervous and unsure about it, particularly as it was a dream she had held since she was in primary school. She questioned whether she had the ability to actually do it.

Toyin was able to participate in and experience art and design education as far as GCSE level.

5.4   An undeviating journey

5.4.1   Lidia's story

Lidia talked of always being interested in art and design. She recalled a significant moment, when her mother gave a her a great deal of praise over a pencil drawing that she did when she was quite young, which she felt gave her enough 'fuel to go on'. Lidia felt that encouragement inspired her to continue to pursue art and design. Lidia highlighted that the encouragement and engagement with art and design came mainly from her mother. Lidia also felt that her interest in the art and design may have come from seeing her mother being creative around the house. She recalled her mother drawing a lot, making garments to wear, as well as creating things to use around the house. Lidia felt that she was surrounded by creativity at home.

Lidia was born in Ethiopia and lived there until she was twelve years old when her and her family moved to the UK. She commented that any art work she did, or any encouragement to engage in art and design had come from her mother as she was not taught any art and design at school in Ethiopia. Lidia did not recall going to any museums or galleries when she was younger in Ethiopia or in the UK. In Ethiopia Lidia commented that there were no galleries and museums to go to, and in the UK as they were new to the country and the culture, most of their time was invested in adjusting to their new environment.

Lidia talked of studying art and design being a natural progression; it was the only thing she wanted to study and could not imagine studying anything else. She chose to study it at GCSE, as a GNVQ and as a degree course. Although art and design was all she wanted to do, Lidia recalled that she was not sure which direction to follow with it after completing her GCSEs. She felt that the school did not offer effective advice; the careers adviser provided by the school was not very helpful. Also as her and her family were new to the country, she had not done very well in her GCSEs, and was unsure how to progress further in her education.

Lidia talked about her mother's friend who was from the Caribbean, who recognised that her and her sister needed help in deciding the next steps to take after GCSE and so organised for them to see a careers adviser at a local college. The careers adviser talked through Lidia's options, taking into consideration the things she liked doing, and Lidia recalled that was when she realised that she could progress onto college and continue full time with GNVQ Art and Design. Her decision to continue full time with art and design was wholeheartedly encouraged by her parents, especially her mother who also had a design background.

Talking about her experiences of GCSE art and design, Lidia felt that she and her sister were discriminated against. She was one of three Black girls in the whole school, and she felt that the discrimination was subtle in that the teachers simply did not invest time into helping her and her sister. Lidia felt that her art and design teacher did not have any expectations of her or her sister, she felt that their work was graded more harshly than the other students, and there was never any positive recognition of the work they did. Lidia felt that art and design were the only subject she wanted to study, so even if there was no institutional support it was all she wanted to do. Lidia noted that it was her mother who helped her prepare her portfolio when she had an interview for a college place after completing her GCSEs.

Lidia's experience of art and design at college when she was studying for her GNVQ was a contrast from secondary school. She felt that she was fully supported, she had encouraging teachers, and she felt that she came alive during that period. She would often stay late at college and she felt that her parents could see her commitment and excitement, such that when it was time to decide what to do for university there was no objection to her continuing with art and design. When it was time to apply for university, she recalled that her mother helped her with her portfolio and her father drove her to the interview. Her college teacher gave her advice on her portfolio and also about the best place to study Fashion Design, and was very encouraging; Lidia felt that she also played a key role in her deciding to study Fashion Design at university.

When Lidia talked of her time at university, she was not as positive about the experience as she had been of her college experience. She acknowledged that it was a fast pace and

demanding course. She commented that there were many more students all competing for the attention of a few lecturers, such that if you did not make yourself visible you were not noticed. Lidia felt that she was not a student to go out of her way to make herself visible, she was not confident in seeking the lecturers' attention and time, so she did not receive much support from them. She recalled that the lecturers had their favourites, and the amount of support students received was based around that. Throughout her whole art and design education from GCSE to degree, Lidia did not recall being taught by any BAME teachers. At university Lidia commented that there were many BAME students studying at the university but few studying art and design. In regards to the curriculum Lidia did not recall learning about any art and design outside the Western canon at secondary school or at college. At university she felt that they were given the freedom to look at the fashion designers they were interested in. As a result she felt it was easier to engage with a more diverse artists and designers in design than in art.

Lidia felt that few from BAME groups pursued studying art and design because it was not considered to lead to a 'safe job'. But she felt that a person should follow careers within their passion and their talent rather than focus on jobs that paid well. She also highlighted that she saw careers in art and design as lucrative. Lidia commented that when she went to Ethiopia and spoke to people about what she was studying at university they were surprised to learn she was studying Fashion Design. She felt that they could not understand that what they saw people doing in the market she had studied for a degree. She felt that they were not supportive, and was relieved that her parents did not have the same perspective. Lidia felt that her parents' differing perspective was due to her mother coming from a home where her mother chose to bring up her children differently to the expected cultural norms.

Lidia was able study and progress in HE art and design. The narrative she presented was one in which access, entry and progression in art and design education was a natural and as such relatively smooth, although she did experience some barriers which impeded her journey but did not take her off course.

5.5   An arduous journey

5.5.1   Asa's story

Asa presented a narrative which showed a complicated journey full of many barriers, but despite it all, she wanted to study art and design so much that she found means and ways to overcome the barriers. She also recalled drawing at home when she was younger, she could not remember if that was something that was encouraged at home, but she recalled her mother putting up on her noticeboard a picture that Asa drew in primary school of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane praying. When it came to choosing her GCSE options Asa chose to study art and design, but her father disagreed with her choice and she was not allowed to study art and design. Asa commented that when it came to A Levels a similar thing happened and her father enrolled her into a private school to study physics and maths.

However Asa was determined to study art and design, and behind her father's back she enrolled herself into an FE college to study a BTEC Diploma in art and design. She stopped attending the private school and attended the FE college instead; she was able to maintain this for a few months. Asa recalled that the college was 2 hours away from her home, and she had chosen to go there as they were one of the few colleges still accepting late applications. Due to the distance she started missing lessons, the college wrote to her father about this and he found out that she had changed courses without his knowledge. Asa commented that her father was extremely unhappy at her actions and it was a difficult time at home. Asa had to change back to studying physics and maths at the FE college for the rest of the year. Asa did not enjoy studying the subjects chosen by her father, and decided that despite the difficulties it would cause she was determined to study the subjects that made her happy. The following year she enrolled in a different FE college studying GCSE art and design and A Level photography and graphic design. Asa recalled that her father stopped her allowance, but she got a job to earn money. Asa commented that during this period when she chose to continue studying art and design her and her father did not speak to each

other for a long time. Asa went on to study a foundation course in art and design, and then a degree and Masters in graphic design.

Looking back on the decision making process, Asa did not recall speaking to anyone, or having anyone guide her as she made her choices. She recalled researching and finding out about art courses and colleges on her own. Asa did not recall any teachers or careers advisers sitting with her and discussing what she was good at and what options she could consider in terms of further study and future careers. She did not discuss with her parents what she was doing, or tell them when she decided to go back and study A Levels in art and design subjects. Asa recalled that when it came to choosing where to go for university, she was very focused about attending a particular well renowned institution and applied to go there for her foundation course, in order to increase her chances of attending there for her degree.

Asa commented that she enjoyed her time at college doing A Levels in art and design, and she also enjoyed her time on the foundation course. When she moved on to study for her BA in graphic design Asa still enjoyed the course, but felt that she struggled trying to find her place in regards to the work she was making. She did not feel that her work 'fit within the remit of what graphic design was' and she felt that the tutors on the course were not able to help her resolve this.

Asa discussed in great depth what she felt were issues with the curriculum and its lack of inclusion of artists and designers of colour. She recalled that during her time as an undergraduate, she learnt very little about a broad range of Black artists and designers. Asa also commented that on one project she chose to critique through her graphic design work, the misogyny that she felt was apparent in hip hop music, but she felt that the tutors on her course were uncomfortable discussing the topic with her and thus unable to offer her constructive feedback. Asa instead commented that at each tutorial she had to educate the tutors on the subject matter and this limited the development of her work. Asa was not taught art and design by any BAME teachers at A Level, on the foundation or on the degree.

Asa recalled that she did not go to museums or galleries with her family. But she did recall that her mother was a dressmaker part-time when Asa was growing up. Making dresses for other people was seen more as a means to make money that was convenient as her mother was also a housewife. Whenever the dressmaking was discussed Asa felt that it was always very matter of fact, the emphasis was on getting paid to complete the job, it was not discussed as a creative practice. Asa commented that although she was surrounded by it, it was not something that Asa took a particular interest engaging with or pursuing in her own time. Asa recalled that her father, who did not encourage her to pursue art and design, had himself engaged in art practices where he dressed up to be part of a traditional masquerade and perform to the public back in his local village in Nigeria.

Asa discussed a great deal about African perspectives to art and design, how the African communities understood art and design. Asa was now spending a large amount of time travelling to Nigeria and other parts of Africa engaging in the art and design world there. She commented that the West was not willing to make space for artists and designers from BAME backgrounds, and she therefore felt that it was more beneficial for her to go an establish herself in Africa where issues around diversity and inclusion in relation to race were not a focus, instead it was somewhere where she could be accepted more on her own terms. She also talked about the way in which art and design was growing as a field in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Asa was able to study and progress in HE art and design. The narrative she presented was one in which the process to participation in and experiences of HE art and design were a challenge with a number of barriers impeding her journey. However, Asa was determined that she would study art and design.

5.6   Conclusion to participants' narratives

The purpose of this chapter has been to allow the participants' narratives to be re-presented and heard in greater depth than would be possible through quotes alone. The way each participant has narrated their experience during the interviews has been interpreted as lending itself to a particular type of journey, such that those who did not

enter into HE art and design narrated their story as one which portrayed a ruptured journey, and those who participated in and experienced HE art and design narrated a story that portrayed either an un-deviated journey or an arduous journey. Similarly the individual content of each of the narratives has been interpreted as lending themselves to the three journey typologies presented. These typologies should not be viewed as conclusions but rather as acknowledging that there are a range of ways in which participants have participated in and experienced (or not) HE art and design. The typologies should be seen rather as a 'device' which the researcher has used in attempting 'to discern how the narrator wishe(d) the events and experiences that (were) being recounted to be interpreted' (Elliot 2005:47-48). The participants' stories that have been told here are the same ones that are analysed and discussed in the next chapter. By introducing their narratives in more detail here the intention is to allow the reader to have a deeper understanding of the different educational journeys that some of the research participants have taken, and thus set the scene for the upcoming chapters where key themes from the narratives are drawn out.

6   IMPEDING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN AND EXPERIENCES OF HE ART AND DESIGN

6.1   Introduction

Following on from the previous section which allowed an opportunity for the participants' full narratives to be summarised and made available for the reader, this section discusses my findings and thus my interpretations of the participants' narratives. The theoretical and historical considerations discussed earlier in the thesis will 're-emerge' now in discussion of this study's findings. The data has been analysed by drawing on the understandings of theories based on Multiculturalism, Afrocentrism, Post-Blackness and Critical Race Theory mainly and reproduction theory where necessary, as these theories allow for a deep consideration of the key socio-economic issues that affect the daily lives of Black African communities. The focus of this research has been on issues around race, ethnicity, culture, with an underlying focus on class, and thus there is an emphasis and attention on themes within the data that highlight issues around race, ethnicity and culture.

Narrative analysis encourages an analytical focus on the whole content of the narratives spoken by the participants, and thus is an analytical approach that allows the possibility to amplify voices. As mentioned in the previous chapter I have been conscious that I do not want to present an analysis of findings that are focused to such an extent on my interpretations (my researcher voice) intermingled with theory, that the participants voices and experiences are lost within this (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). However with qualitative research there is always a compromise (Elliot 200), for this section I have had to fragment the narratives and focus on key segments of a much larger narrative, but I try to give as much space as possible for the participants' voices to be heard through the extracts presented, as I am aware of the narrative analysis aim to keep participants' narratives as complete and intact as possible (Riessman 2008).

In this section I discuss the barriers which have impeded the participants' participation in and experience of HE art and design, taking into consideration the way they influenced their decision not to study HE art and design for some participants and negatively impacted the journeys into and within HE art and design for other participants (see Table 1 for barriers

experienced by each participant). The themes discussed here are those linked to my first two research questions. The findings suggest that the experiences of the participants were very much a combination of individual, familial and institutional influences. I have examined the data looking for common and prevalent themes, as well as difference and relationships related to barriers, from within the narratives of those who did not enter HE art and design (narratives belonging to Liz, Toyin, Sam and Michelle), from those who did study HE art and design (narratives belonging to Ngozi, Lidia, Ben, Iman, Asa, Laker, Peter and Ella) and those who were on their way to studying HE art and design (Abena and Iqra). The themes identified have been drawn from the data, but they have also been influenced by the previous literature discussed in Chapter 2, the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 3 (Patton 1990, Riessman 2008), the institutional contexts within which the game of empowerment and disempowerment is played out, as well as the experiences and values I bring to the data as the researcher (Simons et al 2008).

1.1 MASTER NARRATIVE			1.2 PARENTAL INFLUENCE		1.3 INSTITUTIONAL THEME	
Low status afforded to art and design and art and design education	The Art and Design space as a 'White' space	Limited engagement, discussion and viewing of art and design work	Art and design not seen as a viable option given societal inequalities	Differing outlooks on life between parent and child	Eurocentric nature of the Art and Design curriculum	Lack of support, advice and encouragement from art and design teachers and tutors
ABENA	ASA	ABENA	ASA	ABENA	ASA	ASA
ASA	BEN	ASA	BEN	ASA	BEN	BEN
BEN	ELLA	BEN	ELLA	BEN	ELLA	ELLA
ELLA	IMAN	ELLA	IMAN	ELLA	IMAN	IMAN
IMAN	LAKER	IMAN	LAKER	LAKER	LAKER	IQRA
IQRA	LIDIA	IQRA	LIZ	LIZ	LIDIA	LIDIA
LAKER	LIZ	LAKER	NGOZI	TOYIN	LIZ	LIZ
LIDIA	NGOZI	LIDIA	TOYIN		NGOZI	NGOZI
LIZ	TOYIN	LIZ	SAM		MICHELLE	TOYIN
TOYIN		NGOZI	MICHELLE			MICHELLE
SAM		PETER				
MICHELLE		*TOYIN				
		SAM				
		MICHELLE				

Table 1 BARRIERS FACED BY PARTICIPANTS

* Toyin was a significant outlier, although there was lack of discussion of the creative practice her mother engaged in, her parents encouraged and went with her to museums and galleries and also spent time discussing the artwork they saw.

6.2 Master Narrative: art and design is not seen as part of the African culture (individual and familial)

'Contemporary cultural criticism by African-Americans has nicely highlighted the need to uncover subjugated knowledge in black communities that relates to art and aesthetics – all too often it is simply assumed that the visual arts are not important' (hooks 1995:XIII).

'Master narratives' are narratives or scripts which are constructed and legitimised within society as a means of holding power and control whilst simultaneously validating the suppression of marginalised groups (Stanley 2007, Espino 2008). Espino (2008) argues that marginalised communities, who must routinely manoeuvre within structures in society that are oppressive, are subjected to master narratives such that they 'internalise them to the extent that members of marginalised communities begin to reproduce the master narratives' (Espino 2008:69). It is then possible for groups who hold positions of power to retain hegemony through the creation of master narratives that support their dominance. Stanley (2007) argues that to some level we are socialised to adhere to master narratives and thus need to be aware that we are often a part of the survival and maintenance of master narratives. Whilst Espino (2008) states that some master narratives 'remain uncovered because they are so deeply embedded within the consciousness of individuals, communities, and societies until they are brought to light and challenged through critical analysis' (Espino 2008:69)

Such critical analysis can be seen in the work of bell hooks (1995) in regards to Black communities and the visual arts. hooks (1995:xiv) identifies subjugated knowledge within the context of art and aesthetics in Black communities as 'the attitudes and ways of thinking about art that black folks from different class positionalities hold and that are rarely talked about'. hooks observes that the visual arts are not esteemed in Black communities. Although not making a direct connection she does remark on the history of Western imperialism whereby art from non-western cultures were taken or destroyed. hooks highlights the wealth of artwork from Africa that she saw in Parisian museums and links this to the notion that part of the purpose of colonisation was to make a group of people 'lose touch with their capacity to create, lose sight of their will and their power to make art'

(hooks 1995:xv). Thus she implies an association between the history of imperialism and colonialism and the attitudes held by Black communities around their self-worth and value which seep into their views towards and around the visual arts. By seeing the visual arts as unimportant hooks ascertains that there has been a colonisation in the minds and imaginations of Black communities.

This form of subjugated knowledge is visible to see in a number of the research participant's narratives through the prevalent topics which came up during the course of the interviews. The topics identified are; low status afforded to art and design education; art and design not being seen as part of, nor valued within African culture and communities; the art and design space seen as a 'white' space, and limited engagement, discussion and viewing of art and design work, these are understood to be different examples of subjugated knowledge. These examples, leading to the perception of art and design being unimportant to Black African communities can be seen as having developed into an internalised 'master narrative' given the propensity with which it is talked about within the narratives of the research participants. It can be seen that this narrative exists predominantly within familial contexts and is replicated by the participants either through choices made for FE and HE subjects, and/or through their underlying perspectives of the way art and design is perceived in general within their communities. Internalising this 'master narrative' is suggested as a barrier impeding participation in and experience of HE art and design for Black African students.

6.2.1   Low status afforded to art and design practices and art and design education

Some participants identified that their parents and family members afforded a low status to art and design education and the careers it leads to. This section looks at this notion, exploring reasons as to why this perception may exist.

Iqra commented that her parents placed greater importance on certain subjects over art and design. She felt that her parents were more encouraging of her to work harder in subjects like history, maths, english and science 'but when it comes to stuff like art, they think you just get a grade'. Iqra felt that art and design was seen by her parents, as a subject

that was solely talent based and so did not require as much work, and therefore required less time spent on it.

Abena recalled that her mother placed higher prestige on the science based subjects compared to art and design. Such that when Abena's workload at A Level increased and she was beginning to find it hard to cope, her mother encouraged Abena to drop her textiles A Level and focus on science.

> '…well my mum mainly wanted me to do science…yeah I can choose whatever I want to do, but I should mainly focus on the science…I think coz I was doing biology and chemistry, my mum was, she was the one who mainly wanted me to do that so, she was alright as long as I was doing them. But yeah when it got to A2 year…I had all that workload, she was like; it will be better for me to focus on the thing, coz like I had a lot of work in the textiles and it was gonna distract me from like the science bit, so she mainly, at the A2, she mainly stepped up and she was like; no more art kind of thing' (Abena)

Abena and Iqra identified that with their parents, there was a hierarchy of subjects and art and design was predominantly at the bottom. Similar sentiments were shared by other participants. Toyin who studied art and design up to GCSE and then went on to study Business at HE, recalled that when she was choosing subjects to study at A Level she had wanted to study an art and design subject but this was discouraged.

> '…I did say I wanted to do like something creative…but then like I said it was the whole; you can do this at home, why are you wasting an A Level on this, you can always do this later…my parents were like if you do a Business degree you can always go into fashion business and if you want to do the creative, as in sewing and designing you don't really need to learn that, your mum's here she can teach you' (Toyin)

Toyin's parents showed an apprehension towards allowing her to study art and design at A Level, it was viewed as a misuse of time and talents, as something that could easily be taught at home as Toyin's mother was able to sew. Toyin spent and invested a great deal of time when she was younger engaging in extra-curricular activities in art and design, but recalled that '…my parents were ok with it coz it's not, at the end of the day it's what you do

at uni and college that counts, as long as you get the qualification', and art and design did not count as a worthy qualification. The idea of studying fashion or textiles at university was also something that Lidia, a fashion design graduate; found that her extended family in Ethiopia did not look highly upon. Similar to Toyin's parents, Lidia's extended family also could not see the worth of attaining a degree in what they saw as sewing.

> 'Whenever I used to go back home (Ethiopia) and I'd tell them, they'd ask me; what did you study, fashion design, they'd be like; you went all that way to learn to sew! They really do see it as…that's what they do in the markets….you know like people who stich things up, or make clothes for people, that's a normal thing, *not a degree!* Why are you going to take three years to study *that* for, and why did you go abroad to do *that*, you could have stayed here. So it's just the mentality behind it, still forever till today is not supportive in the community, *but thank God my parents were not like that*' (Lidia)

The low status that Lidia felt her degree was given in Ethiopia, is also discussed by Laker when trying to understand why her father of Ugandan origin did not support her choice to study Graphic Design at university.

> '…that's the whole thing with the African art thing, is that you've got loads of people who do craft…like oh my granny knits and sells her scarves, and my auntie makes baskets and sells them in the market to survive, and I think that is part of the issue…over there (Africa) poor people still make a living out of craft, which I think is amazing…because craft is art, it's slightly different in terms of the concept around it…and I think that's why they (African parents) can't seem to remove the low status' (Laker)

Liz studied for a politics and sociology degree instead of an art and design related degree, in the comment below she noted the higher prestige bestowed upon her non-art related degree course within the communities that she was a part of.

> 'I think that was like the only cache I got off my degree, was when I went to church…or something or when I was with like a gathering of family or other Black people and you could say, oh what did you study? Politics and sociology and it was like ooooh, and I'm like no it's terrible…and I would have been much happier studying…something with art and design or like film studies, but it was like oh wow and that was when I felt good about it, coz I was like…*that's the one value of it*!' (Liz)

This reception received by Liz in relation to studying politics and sociology at a Russell Group university is in direct contrast to the reception Lidia received from her family for studying fashion design and Laker received from her father for studying graphic design, suggesting a hierarchy of subjects and their positioning within the participants' African communities. Chalmers (1999) has argued that there is a 'dominant artistic canon where it has been posited that; the best art in the world has been produced by Europeans' (Chalmers 1999:173), and further argues that as a result of colonialism European art educators have tended to view 'the art and also the lives of "others" with contempt and as such they dismissed the cultural production of "others" as less than art. This 'ignoring and denigrating the art of indigenous people' was very much a part of colonisation, and for the people who were colonised their indigenous art had a periphery role in society and education (Chalmers 1999:179). This periphery role of art in colonised societies discussed by Chalmers (1999) ties in with Kasfir (1999) who has noted that within the African continent the creation of artefacts is often seen as 'work' which is comparable to that of a taxi driver or a farmer, the purpose of this work is to satisfy a patron and a means to make a living. Lidia's family in Ethiopia and their perception of fashion and textiles could be transposed onto this notion; if it was seen rather as comparable to the low status work of a taxi driver then perhaps it can be understood why they did not view a university degree in fashion as having a real purpose, similarly the same could be said for Laker's father. And for Toyin's parents it could be argued that they carried over to the UK this similar perspective from Nigeria. This brings forth hooks' (1995) argument of a colonisation of the mind, as a result of imperialism, whereby art and design is not seen as important or having any value – in this case educational value – and this can be seen within the Black African communities that some participants were a part of.

Like Toyin, Liz also noted that her mother viewed art and design subjects as something for Liz to engage with in her spare time but in regards to her education Liz needed to study something that her mother considered to be more substantiated.

> 'Sixth form I studied english, history, economics not my choice…I really wanted to study art but I had a massive conversation with my mum when I was choosing my subjects and she was adamant that I wouldn't go down that route, she was just like

you can do all those things in your spare time if you want to but this is your education you have to do something that is kind of like more grounded' (Liz)

However in discussing why she felt her mother did not encourage her to pursue art and design at further and higher education, Liz identified her mother's perceptions of its lack of standing and a critical view particularly towards artists who produced what is considered contemporary art, in which it is perceived that little effort, thought and talent has gone into creating it. This was compounded by what Liz saw as her mother's understanding that there were scarce future prospects in the art and design.

'…you just assume that a career in art…you must know when you've been to art school and you see the art school stereotype…I don't think I could have identified with them anyway but I guess she (Liz's mother) must just assume that you become this sort of art school stereotype…People are always like reductive about Damien Hirst, and kind of the idea that you become a modern artist…or like Tracey Emin, you just like mess your bed up and put it in a gallery and I don't want my daughter becoming that…that's a dead end to nowhere…' (Liz)

It is possible to argue that the explanation given by Liz highlights a British understanding of the negative ways in which British contemporary artists are viewed. Writers such Stallabrass (1999) for example have been especially critical of the hype and prominence given to the likes of Damien Hirst and the 'Young British Artists' (YBAs) for transforming the British art world. Ray (2004) acknowledges Hirst as the 'enfant terrible' of the YBAs, and Perry (2004) has identified the supposed 'bad girl' image of female artists such as Tracey Emin, these identities of Hirst and Emin were also particularly prominent in the newsprint media, with an underlying notion that contemporary art and artists had a lack of standing in British society. This negative identity of the British contemporary artist as described by Liz is aligned with notions of art and design as a 'dead end to nowhere' which is seen as her mother's perspective of the subject area. Thus it could be said that the low status afforded towards art and design in Black African communities discussed earlier by some participants, also existed albeit in a different form in British society as noted by Liz, and it could be argued that in Liz's case when these two cultural perspectives were brought together they further intensified and heightened the already existing low status that her mother had afforded towards art and design education and the careers it led to.

From Toyin's perspective studying art and design was not seen as the normal trajectory to follow in regards to education and career within her family; therefore those who chose to follow that path were seen as atypical and stepping outside of boundaries. She talked about her cousin who chose to pursue a career in design

> '…my cousin, who we used to spend a lot of time with, he now designs for Kurt Geiger…Everyone thought it was crazy. He…runaway to the US and, he started studying out there and he did well and he was given a scholarship…I think he was given some money, now he works for Kurt Geiger. Well everyone thought he was crazy anyway when he left, coz he left Nigeria to go to America, with no money, his parents have had to support him, naira to pound ain't funny…you should be supporting your parents not them supporting you. But now he's made a success of it, everyone, even I thought he was eccentric…maybe I didn't wanna be the eccentric one…I just thought he was talented…but didn't actually think he'd get a job out of it…(Toyin)

The idea of someone choosing to pursue a career in art and design was thought of as bizarre and outlandish by Toyin and her family. It takes further Liz's comments about the negative identities of artists and adds a further layer, seeing artists and designers as unconventional, crazy and eccentric. Toyin then seems to 'justify' her cousin choosing to pursue a career that is seen as having few prospects as due to his eccentricity, whilst simultaneously highlighting her fear of being perceived in a similar way by her family. Toyin's cousin was seen as atypical for choosing to study and work in art and design, because for Toyin and her family there appeared to be a disconnection between seeing art and design as something that someone could study and then go on and build a successful career out of. This can also be seen in Liz's experience.

> '…I remember telling my mum when I was 7 years old, oh I wanna be like an artist…and her just being like no, that's not something you do, it doesn't make sense I may as well have said I wanna be a tree…it's not something that I think to a lot of maybe my wider family, it's like not an acceptable thing to be. You can be an accountant, you can be a teacher…they're concrete, they're acceptable. But saying you want to do something in the arts it doesn't make any sense, I may as well say I wanna be a bottle of water, there's no resonance and I don't really know why that is, because it should be just as possible as everything, and I don't think all West African kids have that, but I would say *a lot* maybe did' (Liz)

For both Liz and Toyin studying and then having a career in art and design was not seen as acceptable or realistic within their families and communities, it's lack of acceptability was underlined by the negative perception it was given and the low status it was afforded. And overall the comments made by the research participants that have been discussed in this section, demonstrate the low status afforded to art and design by their families and communities and within that a discouragement to pursue it for further and higher education.

6.2.2   The art and design space as a 'white' space

> '…by the time I got to my BA, I'd kind of realised well this is what I wanna do,
> there're all white people on the course but that's just life' (Laker)

Laker's extract demonstrates a realisation by the time she was studying for her degree that the art and design educational space was a predominantly 'white' space and something that she would have to get used to it, and it is this notion of the art and design space as 'white' that is the focus of this section. In the last quote in section 6.2.1 Liz comments that she didn't know why entering art and design was not deemed as possible within the culture that she was a part of. One explanation is that there does seem to be an underlying but prevalent narrative that 'art and design is not for Black African people, which it is suggested here can also be read as the 'art and design is a space for white people', within the accounts given by a number of research participants.

hooks (1995) has discussed 'black folk not seeing art as related to their struggle for survival' and explanations by Liz as to why her mother did not engage in art and design very much seem to echo this. Liz discussed the idea that perhaps her mother, as a Black person and an immigrant who had come to the UK from Gabon, had been positioned outside of art and design institutions as the existing art and design work did not speak of or to her daily reality, and in a way her struggle for survival.

> '…my mum doesn't tend to read fiction, she doesn't go to the theatre, she watches
> films but everything is sort of like, you get your knowledge and your power from
> things that are real, you don't get them from art and design because those are sort

of fripperies. And also because I do think that sometimes when you are…from an immigrant community or you're Black or you're somehow othered and you see what art and design is, you don't really see anything that you understand as life represented there. So there's no sort of point of my mum walking down to the Tate gallery to look at some paintings, there may be one or two things in there… but a lot of art, I think Pop Art prints or David Bailey…it just doesn't register as being anything real to her and so I don't think she really got into it. (Liz)

Doy (2000:39-40) has talked about Black audiences feeling alienated from the 'white world of the avant-garde', and tying in with this notion it can be seen in the above extract that Liz has highlighted how Pop Art prints were not the type of artwork that her mother could connect with, thus drawing attention to existing limitations within art institutions in terms of artwork on show which may not represent a wide enough range to include work that would appeal to an immigrant single mother from Gabon. Liz however, also recalled taking her mother to look at photographs taken by Guy Tillim which were connected to Africa's colonial history and these were artworks that she felt her mother related to and connected with, thus showing that artwork which extended beyond the 'white world of the avant-garde' was something that her mother was interested in engaging with.

Toyin on the other hand, who attended an all-girls secondary school with a large percentage of Black African students, identified the *students* in her school positioning themselves outside of art and design education.

> '…I mean it's a Black girl's school near (names geographical area with a large number of BAME groups), you're not really gonna get, art's not the main thing' (Toyin)

The way in which Toyin highlights that art was not the 'main thing' to study because she attended a predominantly Black secondary school, it could be argued alludes to problematic and complex issues around Black identities which meant that in her school engaging in art meant that students were seen as stepping outside of their 'Blackness'. With this in mind it is important to consider as suggested by Dash (1999) that many Black students do not want to be seen to collude with a discriminating white establishment and therefore are rejecting an art and design curriculum which they perceived to be 'white dominated' (Dash 1999:124), and this it could be argued is what the students in Toyin's school were doing.

This perception by Black students of seeing art and design education as part of a discriminating white establishment, it is suggested may partly be as a result of consistently having to engage in a predominantly Eurocentric curriculum, and is discussed further in section 6.4.1.

In a similar vein to Toyin, Ella pointed out that her attendance at galleries and museums was considered by her friends to be a 'white activity'.

> '…when I was at college that's when I really got into them, you need inspiration, you need sources of inspiration, so they gave us a list of galleries to go to, you have to go to museums, sometimes they would give you specific exhibitions to go look at in a museum…I just thoroughly enjoy it…it's funny, coz you have some friends who say; *you're so white,* what's white about it, coz not all art I go see is white…*(So you were saying that your friends, saying that it's white, as in?)* Yeah like; *that's not what Black people do!!* And I was like; that's what you think *coz I bump into Black people when I go!...*it's usually my African friends, they'll come up with stuff like that' (Ella)

It can be seen in Ella's extract that like Toyin, she was also highlighting the limitations existing within her community which does not 'allow' Black people to engage in certain activities without the potential of losing their 'Blackness' (Fowler-Snyder 2014, Toure 2011). This perspective which it could be said had been internalised and accepted by her friends, problematised and sought to regulate and constrain Ella's interest and engagement in certain cultural activities. Perhaps because of her engagement in museum and gallery attendance Ella was being negatively labelled by her friends, through what could be seen as disapproving observations of 'you're so white' and 'that's not what Black people do', as colluding with a discriminating white establishment. Post-Black theory has openly critiqued the limitations and boundaries placed around Black identities by Black communities themselves as well as wider societal expectations, about what is and isn't acceptable for Black people to do. Ella it can be seen refused to be restricted by these boundaries and engaged with art and design because she enjoyed it, Post-Black writers such as Toure (2011) have argued of the importance of stepping outside of these limitations as it frees Black people to be who they really are in all their capacity.

Ngozi, Lidia, Ben, and Iman all studied art and design courses at HE, however they also expressed similar sentiments to Toyin around other Black students positioning themselves outside of art and design education. Ngozi talked about certain subjects being studied instead of art and design at the university she attended

> '…(names city) is a diverse city, it's got a big South Asian population and the university at the time as well was quite diverse as well, there were other Black people there, they just didn't study an art subject' (Ngozi)

Lidia noted a similar pattern with Asian and Black students at her university.

> '…Honestly there was a lot of Asians and a lot of Black people, and then lots of mixed race, there were a few white people….on the course there was a lot more white people…than you would see generally around, because as you know Asians and Black people usually go for academic subjects' (Lidia)

Lidia's statement in particular where she stated 'as you know Asians and Black people usually go for academic subjects' highlighted that she believed this to be commonly held knowledge about these minoritised groups. Talking about his experience at school and the ethnicities of the students in his art and design class, Ben commented

> 'It was more towards European, white…it wasn't like mixed with Afro-Caribbean…again I was the only Black student. I think it's because…in terms of culture I don't know whether it appealed much to the ethnic minorities in my school in those days' (Ben)

Whilst Iman noted that because her secondary school had mainly minority ethnic students, art and design would not be something they studied, again echoing Toyin's sentiments.

> '…very few people did art…Can you imagine, it's a school of ethnics… *(You were all Muslims?)* Yeah, so we had Pakistani, Arabs, Somalis, I think there was a handful of Black kids when I was there' (Iman)

The comments by Ngozi, Lidia, Ben and Iman all reflect previous research around patterns of subject choice for BAME students (Connor et al 2004, Okon 2005). However, Post-Black theoretical observations of existing limitations on what activities and interests Black people should be engaging in can also be seen in the above participants' comments, and by

highlighting the *lack* of BAME students in art and design it is possible to see that the art and design educational space was being understood by some participants as a space predominantly *for* white students. Whilst Ben's comments, particularly about art and design not appealing to minority ethnic groups in terms of culture, also suggests a sense of alienation from art and design due to its lack of connection and association with the cultures that minority groups come from, and thus there has been a distancing from the subject. This connects with the comments discussed earlier by Liz about her Gabonese immigrant mother not seeing anything that reflected her life in art and design and Toyin and Ella talking about the art and design space as not being perceived as a 'Black' space.

6.2.3   Limited engagement, discussion and viewing of art and design work (individual and familial)

HE art and design has been identified as the premise of the middle class, and as such the cultural capital the middle class confer on their children including engaging and discussing art and artworks is the expected norm within the HE art and design space (McManus 2006, Zimdars et al 2009, Burke and McManus 2011). With this in mind it can then be argued that students who arrive into HE art and design without this experience are not arriving from a position of strength to manoeuvre within the existing educational system. In correlation with the low opinions and value placed on art and design already considered, it was also notable in the data that few parents engaged in discussion, and/or viewing of art and design works in museums and galleries. This echoes previous research which shows that BAME audiences are less likely to attend museums and galleries compared to white audiences (Taking Part Survey 2014-15, Araeen 2004, Dyer 2007, Hooper-Greenhill 1997, Whitehead 2005). It has already been briefly discussed through an analysis of the narrative concerning Liz and her mother that perhaps the lack of diversity existing in regards to artworks on display in these institutions may be impacting BAME groups wanting and choosing to attend. Although care needs to be taken so as not to make assumptions that BAME groups are only interested in seeing artwork that represents their own cultural heritage.

Taking further this topic of museum and gallery attendance, it can be seen that some participants commented in particular that *art galleries* where not somewhere they attended with their family. Within Ngozi's experiences it can be noted that her father saw the importance of cultural visits and thus took her specifically to visit museums but he did not take her to art galleries.

> '(…*you said that you went to museums with your Dad and your family, did you ever go to any galleries, like any art galleries?)* No…it was always quite historical or cultural in that sense, not any *art* galleries, not with my family' (Ngozi)

Similarly Ben commented

> 'When we were younger I don't really recall going to many art galleries and exhibitions much, but we used to go to the Science Museum and Natural History Museum…but in terms of art we didn't really go to many' (Ben)

And Michelle also commented

> 'I think I never really visited that many *galleries,* but I always visited loads of museums… so yeah my parents did take me to museums, but I can't remember going to a gallery' (Michelle)

Thus a separation can be seen, there was interest cultivated towards museum attendance, but *not* art gallery attendance. In regards to understanding better why the difference between museum and gallery attendance of Black African communities, this is an interesting finding that would warrant further investigation but is outside the scope of this research study. However it can be seen that Ben and Ngozi, who both went on to study art and design based degree courses, by not attending galleries and engaging in and discussing art and artworks with their family, were not in a position to attain a required cultural capital and expected norm within the HE art and design space, and thus this could also be seen as a limiting barrier inhibiting participation in and experience of HE art and design.

Liz however, described visiting both museums and galleries with her mother and noted that her mother was aware that these visits were a necessary part of Liz's education, but Liz felt that the visits lacked a deeper engagement and appreciation of the artworks that they saw.

'(*Can you recall any experiences of visiting galleries and museums with family and friends when you were younger?*)…We did but also it was always like esoteric. I remember my mum taking us to the British Museum or taking us to an art gallery…It was something you do coz like you tick a box on your kids' education. They need to see a bit of art, just in the same way they need to do a bit of Maths, they need to do a bit of Science. We would go to the Science museum, none of us wanted to be scientists or were that interested in Science, but it was like you're a kid, you should go have a look at the astronauts…and it wasn't ever like how do you feel about the art or here's art. It was just like have a look at some paintings…my mum wasn't particularly someone who like appreciates art or is that into it, it's just not her thing' (Liz)

In regards to why her mother didn't engage with artworks and art galleries, Liz identified that this was something that her mother was not particularly interested in. Despite not seeming to have an interest in art and design, Liz's mother's actions in terms of taking her children on cultural visits in order to 'tick a box' on her 'kids' education' can be seen as displaying an understanding of the necessary cultural capital that is expected and needed for success in education (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). However it seems that Liz was seeking a deeper connection and engagement to the artwork she viewed, than that which she believed was available from her mother. In relation to this Zimdars et al (2009) has argued that it is not enough to simply take your child to museums and galleries; they also need to have a 'relationship of familiarity with culture' which comes from a deep and regular engagement with it, as this form of cultural capital is better rewarded by the education system. And in HE art and design the importance of cultural capital was identified as particularly high (Zimdars et al 2009, Burke and McManus 2011). Thus Liz's mother's actions were proceeding in the right direction but they lacked the familiarity which Zimdars et al (2009) identified and which would ultimately have been expected in HE art and design.

Lidia and Iman also gave their view points as to why their parents did not take them to museums and galleries. They both believed that as new immigrants to the country their parents were predominantly focused on adjusting to the new country and new culture.

'(*And what can you recall about visiting museums and galleries with your family when you were younger?*)…I don't think we did, coz we don't have that back home, and while we were here, we didn't do that either coz I think my family was quite new

to the place, so just day to day stuff got us busy enough, so I don't think we actually really did any kind of visits on a cultural basis or looking even at art' (Lidia)

Although taking a comparable perspective to Lidia, Iman in particular highlighted that engaging in the arts was a *luxury*, that as new immigrants at the time her family could not afford.

> *(Do you remember going to museums and galleries with family when you were younger?)*...I think the first museum I went to was when I was old enough to go by myself with friends...it may sound a bit extreme...but we were too busy kind of adjusting in a sense. I think that was probably a luxury that others may have had, and I think that's what my dad saw art as, a bit of a luxury that you can *afford* to do once you're you know established...my parents were too busy trying to understand the culture, and the...system. And just trying to live...day to day, so for them to kind of think outside of just the whole; right we're taking our kids to school now and bringing them home, and trying to do their homework, and just trying to understand that, and trying to live within that, they didn't really have the time to take us out, to go like to the museums and, we rarely even did things like, went to the cinema for example...So theatres and galleries were probably well off...That might be the kind of thing that I will do with my kids, coz I've been here longer, and I understand the system and the schools...hopefully I won't be living on benefits...and trying to like survive. They were more surviving, and I would be more like living, do you know what I mean? Being able to enjoy the finer things in life' (Iman)

Iman's comments reflect findings by Okon (2005:49) who notes that one of the barriers to participation in HE art and design for BAME students was a 'perception of the arts as the preserve of the privileged', and also reflected work by Eyck (2012) who notes that through the media art is understood and reinstated as a 'luxury' to the general public and this is how she felt her family viewed art and design. Iman's understanding of her parents' thoughts towards attending museum and galleries given their circumstances also ties in with Liz's comments about her mother not seeing how art and design related to her daily life, and this reinstates hooks' argument that Black people do not see art as related to their struggle for survival. However Iman does also differentiate between her parents' views and her own as a second generation immigrant. Fernandez-Kelly (2010) observes that 'the children of immigrants face circumstances dissimilar from those confronted by their forebears and, as a result; their artistic tastes diverge from those cultivated by the first generation' (Fernandez-

Kelly 2010:53). Although in Iman's case she does not speak about any artistic tastes being demonstrated by her parents, she does discuss the differing life circumstances for her and her parents, such that artistic avenues which did not appear to be available to her parents would be available to her and her children.

Toyin's narrative was a particularly interesting one because although her parents encouraged her to pursue art and design in her spare time and took her out to museums and galleries to view artwork, she never discussed with them what was in fact a creative practice that her mother engaged in.

> '…she already knew how to sew perfectly, but she wanted to know…how like Western society did it, or how you do it properly, she did one (a course) at (names university). Actually she did two, she did one that was more arty, I remember her doing a lot of art work and then one that was more fashion like, pattern cutting or something. I remember her using the Janome….sewing machine where you could do like proper art pieces on fabric, like embroidery art (*Did your mum the have a passion for it do you think?*) I guess so, not that she's ever done anything with it. For a little while she was sewing for other people…I know she doesn't draw now or anything like that. Outside of the courses I don't actually remember her drawing…It wasn't something we sat down and chatted about…(*You've never talked to her about her interest?*) No. I don't know whether it's coz I was young or maybe she didn't talk about it, no never sat down with her' (Toyin)

Asa also recalled a similar experience with her mother and also provided an explanation as to why her mother, and perhaps this can be applied to Toyin's mother too, did not engage in a discussion of dressmaking as a creative practice (this discussed further in section 7.3.2).

> (*Talking about art and design at home, was that something that came up in conversation?*) No but it was funny, my mum's a dressmaker so we were surrounded by her, we had her clients coming home, she fitting them, and that is an element of creativity…it wasn't talked about in term of like recreational, it was just talked about in terms of matter of fact; *oh what are you making today, oh for Mrs so and so, ah this is nice…*it was a job, if that makes sense, it was something that brought money in and my mum got paid to do…the end result what the emphasis is on, is getting paid… and I think that comes from, again you'll find that a lot of…Nigerians, they can sew, it was like all the women can sew…it was a matter of fact…it's black and white, *we are making these clothes, to make money…*coz I think when she was staying at home,

when she was looking after us, that was the easiest thing to do, and I think again that's where that came from, it wasn't so much a career, as what can I do while I'm looking after the kids, what can I do between the school run …It was more functional…' (Asa)

Asa's explanations connect back to earlier discussions around the argument that art and design in Africa is seen as a way to make a living (Kasfir 1999), as opposed to what can be perceived as a more self-indulgent 'Western' perspective of a creative practice (Hassan 1995, Kasfir 1999). And thus if seen through this lens – a way to make a living, then dressmaking was regarded as more an activity that Asa's mother could realistically pursue as an occupation which still allowed her to look after her children.

'…I'm interested in this idea about the role of arts, and what is *art* in terms of like an African perspective…and that's when I started to think that, maybe we are looking at art completely wrong, in terms of an African perspective. Coz maybe it's *intrinsic* to our way of life, it's not extracting a bit over here as a subject matter, do you see what I mean, it's actually part of everything. There's a certain spoon that you use when you are making the pounded yam, there's a certain pot that you use…when someone's just gotten married the traditional wedding that they go to…Maybe the thing that we are doing wrong is we are trying to project a *Western* interpretation of art on to Africa, as opposed to finding out what art means to Africans, or what is art in an African community' (Asa)

From the above comment it can be seen that in Asa's family art and design was maybe then seen as part of, and integral to, their 'everyday' life as Africans to the point that its familiarity meant that it was not seen as an activity to be discussed or analysed as anything more than what it was, or even as subject worthy of study at higher education.

Ngozi, Iman and Michelle all expressed similar sentiments around discussions about art and design with their parents and family; it was not something that happened. The underlying notion from the participants was that it was not an area of interest for their respective families.

'…we talk a lot about politics and I guess society…if I can see a link or I think; *oh my gosh, this is represented in that,* I will tuck it in there, but no, my family's not whatsoever engaged in art, visual arts in that way' (Ngozi)

'(*And what about talking about art with family now?*) Are they into it do you mean? (*Yeah, is it something that gets discussed at any point?*)…I like to keep up with it…but no nobody in my family is really into it, like it's mainly my sister and I who discuss things, she might tell me about something, she still writes her own poetry…but generally no, it's not really something that comes up at the dinner table' (Iman)

Michelle commented that she did not explicitly talk about art and design with her parents

'…never explicitly sat down and asked (puts on a posh accent); *what do you think about Picasso, or the Mona Lisa,* or anything like that, no' (Michelle)

In the same way that participants noted that their families did not go to art galleries, this was also reflected in discussions about art and design. Ben however, talked about the issue in more depth

'When I was younger I didn't really talk about it much…not that it wasn't appreciated but it just wasn't the thing to talk about at home…I used to enjoy just reading to myself and to my brother, but just really with me, I didn't really express it with my family. *(Why was that?)* Because *I* felt that they didn't really think it was anything to be, anything intriguing you know (Ben)

Ben acknowledged that he did not initiate or encourage conversation either about art and design because *he* felt that it would not be a subject that his family would want to engage with, and he also highlighted that he felt that this was not a proper subject to discuss with his family. Ben talked about there being a certain level of respect for elders in his household such that he did not feel he could discuss certain topics and this had an impact on the way in which he interacted with his parents about his passion for art and design.

…one thing growing up in my family…it was a lot to do with respect, sometimes asking your elders; what do you do, how old are you, it's like, who are you asking this question to…I used to be really inquisitive when I was younger like; *mum how old are you, what did you do,* and because they always told me; *it's none of your business*, I never used to ask you know…so that way unfortunately I wasn't able to really engage, that's why I wasn't able to express myself about art with my parents you know…because it would have been none of their business, it was hard…it's like that respect level, it was hard to be able to speak to them on a one on one type level because like, I just didn't feel comfortable…' (Ben)

In regards to respect of elders Nzira (2011) has noted that 'African children are expected to show respect for their elders by the way they communicate, verbally or non-verbally', highlighting research from the 70s about West African families in Britain which identified

> …however alien it may seem to our society with its emphasis on youth and on individual freedom…understanding the significance of respect for one's elders is one of the keys to the understanding of African societies (Nzira 2011:100)

Acknowledging that the forms of showing respect, such as kneeling and prostrating – lying flat on the ground in front of elders - may have changed over the years, (Nzira 2011) emphasises that the importance of showing respect to elders has not. But rather respect is perhaps more visible in verbal communication such as that discussed by Ben. Lam and Smith (2009) identified that African young people were able to trace their origins more directly to Africa due to their parents, and this strengthened their adherence to cultural traditions and cultural traditions perhaps dictated that certain topics were not to be discussed.

Within Liz's experience she noted that there were existing criteria of what was acceptable for her as a Black African to be pursuing in terms of education and career, and art and design was outside this.

> '(*You talked about a boundary of subjects, so who would you say set that boundary?*) Definitely sort of my mother and like generally sort of like wider ideals of what was kind of acceptable for like us to be trying to achieve...my mother and sort of the culture she came from really set those boundaries' (Liz)

Conclusion to Master Narratives: Art and Design not seen as part of the African culture

Research findings have identified that choice for BAME groups is not just a matter of personal preference but one that is shaped by cultural, family and community expectations (Connor et al 2004, Bagguley and Hussain 2007, NUS 2011), whilst Reay (2001a) talks about working class students often asking themselves 'what is normal for people like us' to be studying when making university choices. This is connected to what Reay (2001a) terms 'intergenerational transmission', where ideas are passed on by family in regards to spaces that are deemed possible to enter and those that are not. It would then appear from the

experiences of several of the research participants that there has been, through cultural, family and community expectations, a similar form of transmission in that art and design is not deemed as important, nor is it a subject to be studied at HE, rather it is viewed as a 'white' space and thus for Black African students the art and design space is not a space to enter. This is a perception that seemed to not only be internalised, but also actioned by Liz and Toyin who were the two participants who did not study art and design. The findings discussed in this section suggest that barriers have been formed within Black African communities, whereby it is perceived that the art and design space is not for them. This can be understood partially as a colonisation of the mind based on past historical actions which have been internalised by Black African communities, this was identified as connected to the removal of African artworks from Africa by Europeans (hooks 1995), as well as the lack of value placed on indigenous artwork created during colonial times such that art began to have a peripheral role in the societies of colonised people (Chalmers 1999). With this history, a Western perspective of art and design could thus be seen as being in opposition to African ways of understanding art and design, and perhaps leading to the perception that an engagement with art and design was colluding with a discriminatory establishment.

In relation to the findings discussed in this section, the notion of the art and design space as a space not to be entered can be seen through a number of ways. For example in the lack of diverse artworks in art galleries such that some immigrant parents could not see their lives reflected in art; and given the difficulties of adjusting to life in the UK art and design was not seen as important by immigrant parents and rather it was seen by some as a luxury. Thus it could be argued that the art and design which is presented by institutions in the UK does not relate to the world views or the existing life circumstances of the participants' parents and as such it adds to the perception where it is not seen as a part of the African culture. The findings demonstrate that parental viewpoints notably impeded participation in HE art and design for Liz and Toyin.

An acceptance of the narrative that art and design is not for members of Black African communities allows dominant groups to keep 'others' out, and allows for spaces to exist in which certain groups cannot and should not enter. Espino (2008) identified similar findings with Mexican American doctorate students around the internalisation and reproduction of

master narratives around deficit models of education. Espino (2012) argues that '…master narratives are constructed by dominant groups but must be reproduced by marginalised communities, either as a means of self-preservation or as a result of coercion, in order to maintain the dominant culture's social positions and power in…society' (Espino 2012:46-47). It is to the benefit of those who do not want art and design education to be more diverse and inclusive that Black African communities continue to believe that art and design is not a space for them. However, as Espino (2012) pinpoints it also important to consider that the maintenance of this narrative within Black African communities may partly come from the need for self-preservation given the unequal and exclusionary society that we live in. It is perhaps this self-preservation which leads to parental steering away from art and design education and careers; this is discussed in more depth in the following section.

6.3   Parental Influence

This section focuses on the barriers that have been found to be associated with parental influence within the data gleaned from the research participants. Parental involvement has been identified as a key element in student success (Desforges 2003), and student patterns of participation in HE by BAME groups have been identified as influenced strongly by advice and guidance from parents (Connor et al 2004, Tackey et al 2011) particularly playing a pivotal role in subject choice (Connor et al 2004, NUS 2011), thus parental influence is a key factor to consider when looking at barriers impeding participation in and experiences of HE art and design.

6.3.1   Art and design not seen as a viable option given societal inequalities (familial)

'I think you know as an African child, you always have this thing thrown at you that this is what's respectable and this is what you *should* do, and I think this is what usually plays amongst the African community, art is not acceptable… I think that's wrong you never know where someone could end up with that, but at the same time I do understand the logic, its fear; *my child won't be able to provide for themselves'* (Michelle)

Michelle's comments demonstrate that she saw within her community that there was a perception that a career in art and design was not a financially viable option.

The 1950s saw a large number of Africans migrating to the UK for educational purposes (Daley 1998) and thus there was an emphasis and importance placed on education such that it was seen as the main route to higher social status, meaning that during the 90s Black Africans were the most qualified ethnic group in Britain (Daley 1998). The main subjects studied were law, engineering and the Sciences. This history of migration for education has meant that there are high educational expectations within African communities in the UK (Lam and Smith 2009). Previous studies have identified that there is parental steering towards certain professional and vocational subjects (medicine, law, IT) at HE for minority ethnic groups (Connor et al 2004), with a perception that careers in the creative industries are not a good option (Okon 2005). The findings of this study also show that many of the participants identified that their parents did not encourage them to study art and design at HE as they did not see it as leading to a long term 'stable' career, and instead encouraged them to pursue certain professional and vocational subjects. However this research seeks to delve further into this notion of parental steering, considering whether art and design is seen as a *realistic* choice, given existing limitations from inequalities faced by immigrants in the UK (Hall 2000, Parekh 2006, Modood 2004, Vertovec 2010).

Laker identified that her father had worked hard to get out of poverty in Uganda, education provided him the means to do that, and it was the academic subjects that were seen as affording those opportunities in Uganda. hooks (1995) suggests that within the Black community in America there was disbelief that 'black folks could be artists...why, you could not eat art' (hooks 1995:1).

Laker made similar observations when talking about her father's perspectives about a career in art and design. She felt that he did not equate art and design education with upward social mobility in the way in which he equated it to other academic subjects.

> I think it's just that African thing of wanting your kids to be a doctor or a scientist...I think he (Laker's father) couldn't see how it was a viable career...I understand where he was coming from more now, but I think realistically in this culture it's easier to survive as an artist than it probably would be in Uganda...I think for him and where he was coming from, you know he had worked really hard to get out...poverty really, I don't know if I'd call it poverty, but he grew up without any shoes, they struggled,

they lived in a village…and for him he was getting out of that, and his way out of that for him was education, and art doesn't fit in with that academic route, but over here it's easier to survive without being a scientist' (Laker)

Abena identified that her mother was steering her away from a career in art and design as she did not see how Abena, as an immigrant to the UK, could be successful in it.

'…well my mum I think she might be a bit disappointed, well the main part for her, why she doesn't want me to do art as a career, she, she erm, she's supportive more of me doing it like in my free time and stuff but not as a career, coz she thinks that the career prospects of it, in art is not really great for newcomers particularly, so she's not, she might be disappointed if I do decide to take it further as a career' (Abena)

Liz also talked about her mother steering her away from studying or following a career in art and design, she identified that her mother saw this field as dangerous field to enter as she had not seen examples of Black success in art and design that she could relate to her daughter.

'… I just think there's no frame of reference for how like my 17 year old Black daughter could be successful going off doing art, therefore I will just steer her away. It was always very much like, I'm protecting you from like *the danger* of an art career as opposed to kind of, I mean it wasn't like malice full, it was like I think this is for your own good that you sort of do something that is like politics or sociology or you do something steady, because that's going to kind of like protect you (Liz).

Liz, like her mother, also could not see herself reflected in successful outcomes in art and design; and it could be said that for Liz, there was perhaps a fear to go against the more stable career path laid out by her mother into a 'risky' area with no successful Black artists and designers visible to her.

'as much as it was like my mum telling me what to do, but it was sort of easier to doing what she said rather than trying to kind of take that risk of doing what I wanted for myself. And again I think part of that comes down to just not seeing very many people who were like me in art, like just in fields of art…I don't like the idea of having role models as a general rule, but just as an idea that if I decided to like at 17 go study art that I would be ok. The idea that I would study art or…anything that I was interested in at 17 years old, it's just like you're not gonna make any money,

you're gonna be broke and unhappy and lonely and all this other business…I didn't see any alternative to that, that's what I'd always been told and that's how my family felt about it and there was no one there to sort of say to me…I *certainly* didn't know any Black artists…let alone any Black British artists. So this idea that I could actually like be successful in my own right by doing something I was interested in, rather than doing what I had to do was just like so bizarre to me' (Liz)

bell hooks (1995) has commented that her life experience as a Black person in America had taught her that to be an artist was a dangerous calling, and she gives the example of her father's cousin who as an artist was seen by her family as a solitary, sad and impoverished figure, this can be seen as reflected in Liz's experience where she talks about artists being portrayed to her by her family as 'broke, unhappy and lonely'. Liz's comments about not seeing any successful Black British artists to look up to and guide her aspirations, demonstrates the way in which the art and design sector outside of formal education is part of the wider contexts in which student aspirations to HE art and design are situated. The invisibility, dearth of recognition and marginalisation of BAME groups which exists in the art and design sector (Owusu 1988, Mercer 1990, Araeen 2008, Hylton 2007, Chambers 2012) evidently affected Liz's aspirations, as she explained that she was not aware of Black artists and designers when she was younger and thus believed that she could not then be successful in art and design.

Similar to Liz's mother who Liz felt had no 'frame of reference' as to how Liz could be successful in art and design and therefore chose to steer her away from the danger of a career in the field, Asa also noted that her father envisioned a future career in art and design as drawing on pavements, and it was not the future that he had in mind for his daughter.

'I just knew that I didn't want to do anything else…I sat down with him (her father) and said that this is what I wanted to do, and he goes; *no you're not doing that…I don't want you drawing on the pavement for the rest of your life*, that's what he said and so that was the end of that discussion' (Asa)

It could be said that similar to Liz's mother's perception of unsuccessful careers in art and design, Asa's father could also not envision a successful outcome for his daughter if she

followed an education and career in art and design, and so by refusing to encourage her aspirations he was protecting her. Liz's earlier comments that her mother was protecting her from '*the danger* of an art career' identified that she felt that her mother ultimately was looking out for her best interests, and steering her away from art and design came from an understanding of and therefore a safeguarding against the socio-economic challenges that she anticipated her 'Black daughter' would experience as a result of being part of a minority ethnic group. Downward social mobility is one such challenge that has affected immigrants arriving in the UK. Modood (2004) identified that due to racial discrimination in the labour market 'migrants often suffered a downward social mobility on entry into Britain' (Modood 2004:93). Toyin talked of her parents and other members of her family coming to the UK from Nigeria, 'losing their way' and not being as successful as they were in Nigeria. Toyin talked about her father struggling when he came over to the UK; he had a degree and had been working in banking in Nigeria

> '…when he came over here he did a finance course and for a while he really struggled even now…where he is, is not where he should be…especially in the old days, people come and they just do any job, so for a little while he was working in Sainsbury's…in Esso, for a little while… he stayed at home and my mum went out to work. But neither of them, they haven't really achieved what they should have achieved when they came over here. I don't know if that's why they're so like, if you need to move to Nigeria move… even he'll say he never really reached his potential here, it was more I've got family I need to make some money.' (Toyin)

It has been noted by research from the 1990s (Oguibe 1994, Daley 1998) that a large number of African immigrants entered the UK and were unemployed or underemployed despite their educational qualifications. Whilst Nzira (2011) identified that for some African immigrants coming to the UK, there was a lack of recognition of qualifications attained in Africa which lead to poorer employment prospects, an example of this can be seen with Toyin's father and is also shared by Ella who recalled that her parents whilst in Congo worked in well-respected jobs, her father in banking and her mother a director in an oil company, but this was not replicated when they came to England

> '…it's a shame that they don't really acknowledge whatever you do back home to bring here, coz you can't use any of the stuff you do over there…(*The degrees they*

did, the experience they had when they came over here?) They count for nothing here…I know the reality, I've learnt from what I've see with my parents, it's not worth it, if you have a decent job back home, you're all nicely set up after you're degree, *stay there!*' (Ella)

Similarly Iman noted that it had taken a long time for her family to settle financially in the UK, after having arrived as refugees from Somalia in 1993. And research has shown that Somali immigrants have been identified as particularly disadvantaged immigrants in the UK, unskilled with a poor command of English, as well very few job prospects, and lowest levels of education and employment rates (Daley 1998, Aspinall 2011, Mitton 2011).

'…we only bought our house recently, first we lived in a council house, then we were renting for a while, and then just recently about 2006 we bought a house. But that's how long it took them to get on their feet' (Iman)

Given the context within which her family came from, Iman felt that these were the reasons that her father discouraged her from studying art and design.

'…I *wanted* to do art for GCSE, but my dad….being a refugee and an ethnic…he felt the need to kind of push me in a direction that was like a secure career, he felt like art wasn't very like secure' (Iman)

Previous research has shown that Black African students have particularly high unemployment rates after graduation (Connor et al 2004, NUS 2011,Tackey et al 2011), and the arts and humanities have been identified to have the lowest return on degrees (Tackey et al 2011). Black African students are thus graduating and entering a climate where they face greater challenges in finding employment, and consequently the parental worries around job opportunities in general, and art and design specifically, mentioned by research participants in this study are not unfounded. The importance of stability and security could be seen when participants discussed their parents' discouragement from studying art and design, the participants understood that there was a parental need to ensure a secure future for their children and thus there was the encouragement to study subjects that would lead to what the parents perceived were stable jobs.

Although Sam was interested in pursuing photography beyond A Level she felt that her mother

> 'wasn't really keen on that, she didn't understand the concept of doing photography at university level; she just wanted me to go to uni and get a decent job' (Sam)

And Iman commented that

> 'It really does go back to the idea that my parents saw stability…in kind of careers, you know like medicine…my sister and I are quite creative, my sister is more like a poet, and I try to push her to kind of like do English literature and to go down the kind of creative writing route…I mean I can't really say I blame my parents…she's now doing her third year of medicine, but those things (creative subjects) were not really valued in a sense, it just seemed like; is that gonna get you a job, are you gonna have money to support yourself, make something of yourself and your life…so no. Bottom line, no' (Iman)

Similar sentiments to Sam and Iman were shared by Ben

> '…after secondary school, just before I went to university and art school it wasn't encouraged much simply because they didn't feel like it would be lucrative, they didn't feel like I could make a living out of drawing you know, so they encouraged the more academic side like doctors, lawyers' (Ben)

As well as talking about the lack of security that her father saw in art and design, Asa also highlighted that her father was interested in her pursuing a career where he could 'see the return on it'. Freeman (2005:43) put forward the notion that African American higher education participation was connected to student 'perceptions of potential economic gain after higher education', whereby going to college was seen as worthwhile when students could see that it would be 'economically viable'. Asa's father was projecting a similar attitude towards an art and design education and career.

> '…my dad is an accountant…my older brother he's an engineer, my sister is a lawyer, so again it follows that kind of…academia where they know what the outcome is gonna be, they're good like jobs, where you can see the return on it, I guess his thing…it was coming from a place where he wanted me to be *secure*. But at the time I saw it as; no he just doesn't want me to do what I want to do, and I guess as I've got older you realise…coming from an African family tradition upon tradition…there's a hierarchy the way that things are played out…he wasn't happy

because in his eyes, being like the young teenager I didn't have a global perspective or wider perspective of what that meant, he probably thought that I was jeopardising my future' (Asa)

Ngozi and Lidia both studied art and design courses at HE and had the full support of their parents in the choices they made, however they both identified in their narratives the financial pressures and constraints that came with pursuing a career in art and design after graduating from university. Ngozi identifying that her friend was working in other sectors in order to sustain herself as an artist 'my…friend went to Goldsmiths and she is a practising artist, but she works in other industries and sectors if she wants to get money, coz living on art is just not realistic'. Whilst Lidia described the financial difficulties she faced upon entering the fashion design industry when she first graduated,

'(*What jobs have you held since graduating from university?*) So I started off with doing, a design room assistant in Ladbroke Grove for a fashion designer. (*Was that paid?) No!* There's no such thing as a paid design room assistant position, they're all free (Lidia laughs)…not only was it unpaid, I had to also fund my transportation to come from, coz I was living in Crowthorne which is in Berkshire with my Aunt, so I was travelling every day from there and back, and I had to pay for my travel, lunch everything. So that was not sustainable for me so I had to stop. I think after a month or so' (Lidia)

Through Lidia's extract it can be seen that gaining much needed work experience in the fashion field after graduation was in the long term unsustainable for her as the financial cost she had to meet herself stopped her from continuing further with her design room assistant position. Thus having to gain experience in this way could be a real limiting barrier for those thinking about the long term prospects after completing a degree in this subject area. Both these extracts bring to light and give evidence to the fears that some of the participants' parents had around the lack of financial stability in the art and design field.

By examining the extracts in this section, it can be seen that many participants' parents were aware that degree courses which led to careers which held high financial returns were better for children if they were looking for upward social mobility, particularly given the historical difficulties in gaining employment for African immigrants coming to the UK (Daley 1998, Aspinall 2011, Mitton 2011, Nzira 2011) and which are also reflected in the more

contemporary low employment rates of Black African students (Connor et al 2004, NUS 2011,Tackey et al 2011). There were other subjects and careers that were seen by the participants' parents as being better able to aid in upward social mobility, and thus it is possible to begin to contend that parental steering identified in this section was in a sense a form of self-preservation necessary to aid the participants in surviving our existing world. These extracts highlighted that for some parents' art and design was not perceived as a realistically viable career for a community that is disadvantaged due to the limiting and unequal structures affecting immigrants and minoritised groups. Rather the extracts in this section reflect findings that families of BAME groups value education as 'a way of addressing the problems of disadvantage faced by BME communities' (Tackey et al 2011:16), seeing it as necessary in upward social mobility. Thus the perspective that barriers to access, entry and progression were connected to parental steering, have been further explored to show that for a number of the participants' parents the steering of their children's education aspiration was because art and design was not seen as a *realistic* choice, given existing limitations from inequalities faced by immigrants in the UK (Hall 2000, Parekh 2006, Modood 2004, Vertovec 2010).

6.3.2   Differing outlooks on life between parent and child (individual and familial)

Research by McManus (2006:78) found that the advice that working class students received in regards to studying art and design at HE, betrayed a possible stereotyping of working class students where they were seen as mainly interested in HE for of its 'instrumental benefits'. From the extracts discussed above it can be seen that there was a focus by parents particularly on the instrumental benefits of HE but the reasons behind this emphasis have been analysed by placing and understanding this focus within the context of societal inequalities. However it can also be seen that the instrumental benefits of HE appear more relevant to the participants' parents than the individual participants themselves. Menjivar (2010:188) has argued that scholars analysing immigration 'have noted the importance of different outlooks between immigrant parents and their children', and thus immigrant generational cohorts share certain life experiences that shape their world view and frame of reference. These world views may differ across generations, such that

'…historical events, social circumstances to which they are exposed…by virtue of their age and time of birth, give form to their experiences in particular ways and with dissimilar outcomes' (Menjivar 2010:188-189)

This is reflected in the data collected, it was possible to identify in a number of narratives that some participants and their parents had quite different understandings of what constituted a successful career and life path, and this generational disconnection it is suggested, was a barrier in their experiences.

Liz talked about her mother having a different understanding to her in regards to pursuing a career that she enjoyed. Enjoyment was not a factor to consider when looking to future career prospects, the monetary rewards and thus stability were the main concern.

'So there still wasn't this idea that, oh you could be an artist…I think it's the predominant thing coz when I talk to my brothers about it they agree, it's always like something that gives you a steady pay cheque. That's like the first place you go and then you build from that, sort of not the other way around. It's not like well what do you want to do? The idea of what do you want to do, well its work, it's not what you want to do…it doesn't have to be enjoyable it has to be done (Liz)

Possible explanations for Liz's mother's perception have already been discussed in the previous section; this section focuses on comprehending why there were different understandings between certain parents and their children. As mentioned earlier one reason could be that due to being of different generations, their battles and their perceptions of success and happiness were therefore different. This topic has been raised by DiMaggio and Fernandez-Kelly (2010), who have argued that

'Immigrant parents toil and sacrifice, opening up paths for economic and social mobility; their children take a measure of prosperity for granted while *yearning for something more than survival – prominence, pleasure and even fame*. The result is expressive entrepreneurship – that is, a type of self-employment that relies on artistic inventiveness to produce or disseminate goods and services. Through poetry, graffiti, art, dancing, music, immigrant children seek independence from strictures and conventions of nine-to-five jobs.' (DiMaggio and Fernandez-Kelly 2010:5).

Thus DiMaggio and Fernandez-Kelly (2010) identify that difference in understandings is a result of different focuses. As a consequence of the hard work invested by parents, their children are in a position to focus on more than just degree courses and careers that are economically viable, there is a possibility to also explore degree courses and therefore careers that are enjoyable, that they *want* to do as opposed to *have* to do. These sentiments are very much echoed by Liz who very clearly articulates the differences between her's and her mother's experiences. As noted earlier (see page 153) Liz talked about her mother not having any connection to art and design as she did not see any examples of her life reflected in it. But Liz believed that she had a connection to art and design, an emotional one as she saw the potential to explore her identity through it. She also saw that she and her mother, as a result of coming from different immigrant generational cohorts were searching for different forms of success and happiness in life.

> '…I think it's different for me, but I think that's just coz being first generation you just occupy a different space. I feel like my mum's struggle was maybe much more economic, she left Gabon because she thought she could have a better sort of economic life outside Gabon and I think because of getting the opportunities from her to get a good education and taking that stuff for granted, your struggle then becomes something, I think, a bit more internal. So my struggle has been much more about my identity…I mean economics is in there, but it's much more about where do I stand and I'm sort of not really British, I don't see myself as British, but I find it hard to sort of say I'm Gabonese coz London is my home, and I haven't been back there since I was 6 years old. So when your grappling with that then I guess you kind of gravitate towards more esoteric subjects, maybe art can mean more to me coz I'm not worrying so much about any food on my table…I don't think it's sort of like uniform like that, but I do kind of find having a lot of friends in that same space as I am it's kind of like we've used art and creative things to kind of like inform you much more, because you feel like there's a space that needs to be informed a lot more' (Liz)

Liz's comments, that unlike her mother whose struggle was economic, her struggle was based on understanding the complexities and the challenges of her identity as both British and Gabonese and she saw art and design as a way to explore this, tie in very much with the idea 'that aesthetics nurture the spirit and provide ways of re-thinking and healing psychic wounds inflicted by assault from the forces of imperialist, and sexist domination' (hooks 1995:5). They also connect to Banks (2010) research which identified that the Black middle

and upper class community in America collected art work because they saw in art the possibility to contemplate and articulate the marginalisation they faced in society. Thus the place of art and design as an important emotional outlet of the challenges of second generation immigrants can very much be seen in Liz's extract, as can the way Liz believed that her mother was not able to relate to her emotional need to engage in art and design.

Ben talked of his parents not understanding why he did not take a 9 to 5 job upon the completion of his fine art degree. After graduation Ben spent all his time at home working on developing his art practice and therefore did not have a job that was bringing in income to the family home. Ben articulated this as a difficult time for him as he believed his parents did not understand that his happiness rested in being able to create artwork.

> *'…*And like I wasn't working, there was no income coming in, which was hard because I felt selfish, I felt like I should just get an ordinary job, get a 9 to 5 job to help myself and most importantly my family, but I just always believed that what it was that I was doing at the end of the day it would have its rewards. *(And how did your family see that, you being at home not working after having done a degree?)* It was hard…they wasn't very happy…coz they didn't really understand what I was trying to do, they felt…like I wasn't trying to make money, but they didn't understand that I was trying to be happy and in the long run *make* money, for me it was happiness before money you know. And being in university there's a lot of pressure about jobs…and it's not easy to get jobs, but I think in life it's more important to be happy, to know *yourself* before you find yourself working all your life and you're not happy and you haven't even got the chance to know who you really are, and what it is you really love to do. I do genuinely feel like life is about taking risks sometimes…as in doing what it is that you wanna do…back home there wasn't really much emotional support from my mum and my dad. My sisters and my brother were very much supportive of what I was doing but the emotional support really wasn't much from my mum and my dad…they were supportive in my happiness, but my happiness they thought was in making money' (Ben)

In a sense Ben was perhaps trying to avoid the difficulties that Toyin described a cousin of hers experiencing as a result of staying within the 'strictures and conventions of nine-to-five jobs' rather than going ahead to pursue something which he enjoyed.

> '(*Do you think that maybe there are differences in the way people view success? Maybe success isn't always about money?)* I think that's how our parents viewed it,

but then us as a younger generation, for a little while we were viewing it like that, and that's why my cousin's…come over here and…he's in finance…he's working in hedge funds…maybe a year or two ago he's like; he wishes he had been as carefree as his brother who just upped left Nigeria and went studied what he wanted to study and now designs shoes for Kurt Geiger. Whereas he didn't do that, he came over here, he did his masters…he's got two masters, all financie and he feels entrapped…he's not very happy' (Toyin)

Toyin's cousin it can be seen was struggling with the educational choices he had made, where he chose not to study art and design and pursued finance instead. This choice however, had not made Toyin's cousin particularly happy, whereas in contrast it can be seen in Ben's extract that he was content with his choice to study fine art and follow this by becoming an artist.

Asa noted that her father despite steering her away from art and design also engaged in an art practice, her father was part of a 'masquerade', a traditional Nigerian performance in which participants wear costumes and perform and dance to the public. She saw her father as engaging in a form of creative practice with the masquerade, but felt that he did not see it as such (this engagement in a creative practice by some participants parents has been discussed earlier in section 6.2.3 and is further discussed in the next chapter section 7.3.2). She therefore concluded that his discouragement of her studying art and design was as a result of him seeing success quite differently to her.

> '…it's always back to my Dad at the centre because he was the one that was like; *no you're not doing it,* but he was the masquerade, he's the one that dresses up…I look at him and think;*…why did you not support what I wanted to do, when I look at you and all the things you engage in…why weren't you more encouraging when I wanted to study it as a subject…*I haven't got that answer yet…I guess the thing I keep coming back to maybe he just wanted (pauses)…me to have some sort of security, you know to do well…But then again this whole idea, what does doing well look like, someone's idea of doing well could be you've got your own house, you're earning a certain amount a year…as long as I can watch my EastEnders every Tuesday…that's me doing well…' (Asa)

The participants' extracts analysed in this section identify that more than financial stability their interest and focus in art and design was for its use as an emotional and creative outlet. They engaged with it because it brought them happiness however this was not something

that they felt their parents shared or understood as they had different ideas of what happiness meant. The extracts highlight the differences in perspective and at times the disconnection between immigrant generational cohorts, a disconnection which inadvertently worked as a barrier that a number of participants faced.

Conclusion to Parental Influence

The findings in this section indicate that there are existing barriers which are related to parental influence in regards to the participants' subject choices for university degrees. The two main areas discussed were; art and design is not seen as a viable option by parents given societal inequalities, and parents have different understandings of what constitutes a successful career and life path compared to their children. The circumstances that the participants' parents found themselves in upon arrival in the UK; the difficulties of finding employment whilst providing for families and maintaining economic stability had an impact on their views in regards to the degree subjects to be studied and thus the careers to be followed. However, it could be argued further still that this maybe a generational perspective, with the participants as a result of being second generation immigrants growing up and studying in the UK, saw art and design differently such that they valued it as a creative practice. Thus a number of the research participants it could be said were taking a measure of prosperity for granted, and thus searching for more than economic stability, more than what their parents deemed important. However the fears resulting from the difficulties experienced by immigrant parents were passed on by some parents to their children, where those fears were kept alive and nurtured by some children such that participants like Toyin and Liz chose not to study HE art and design and pursued instead what their parents believed to be more sensible degree courses.

6.4   Institutional themes

This section focuses on institutional themes, and whilst it would have been useful to separate education experiences of secondary, FE and HE, the majority of participants spoke about these experiences as intertwined. However, where possible I make clear the distinctions between the different education levels. In this section the discussion is concentrated on the manner in which art and design has been taught to the participants in

this study and their receptivity to it. Having first looked at the individual and familial barriers impacting on participation in and experience of HE art and design, this section now discusses the institutional discourses of facilitation and development of students alongside the participants lived experiences within institutions and their narrations of those experiences. This section locates the barriers impeding Black African students within an educational context which includes staff diversity, pedagogy and the curriculum. It considers how education institutions prepare Black African students for HE art and design, as well as the way in which HEIs are accommodating Black African art and design students upon their arrival and during their time at university.

6.4.1   Eurocentric nature of the art and design curriculum

Doy (2003) has argued that in regards to the largely Eurocentric content of the art and design curriculum it is important to acknowledge that a great deal of progress has been made since the mid-1980s in regards to the material available on BAME art and design work and artists and designers, but that there is still more which could be done. The findings discussed in this section demonstrate that a number of the participants felt that they received and were taught a limited curriculum, with some highlighting that more could be and needed to be done around widening and diversifying the curriculum. The dissatisfaction they raised in regards to the curriculum thus has brought attention and identified a Eurocentric curriculum as a limiting barrier in participation in and experience of HE art and design.

Recalling her experiences of the curriculum on the BTEC art and design course she studied, Michelle commented

> '…it was always more about Western culture than let's say Eastern or African something like that, so I think if I was to learn more about art I really would be interested in kind of Eastern art because the patterns they use in for example the Asian art, the patterns that they use I find them pretty cool, and then African art is not really that prevalent in lessons…it was always more about classical artists and yeah I don't remember any other type of art' (Michelle)

It can be seen in Michelle's comments that she had wanted to learn about art and design from a more diverse range of cultures than that which was offered on her BTEC course. Similarly in regards to his secondary school experience, Ben noted that the curriculum was limited in that it did not deal with much outside of the Western canon

> *'…*I think that was the information I acquired going to libraries and going to museums and galleries. *(Was that something that you went out seeking?)* Out of my way to, I was seeking that yeah, coz I was so interested in different forms of art, and I found that in school it was very limited in terms of how far in stretched and how broad it was in terms of the history of art that we were learning about' (Ben)

It can be seen from Ben's comments that he was voicing a complaint about the limited curriculum he was taught. As a result this was something that he personally went out of his way to redress by going to libraries and museums and galleries, as he was seeking to know more than that which was on offer to him during secondary school. Whilst Ngozi, talking about her A Level experience at an FE college commented that

> 'That's my biggest problem with the curriculum…you touch upon maybe African art but you don't touch upon the, it's more cultural and materialistic objects than art itself, so we never did that, and even when I did Graphics and I chose to study artists never once in my mind; *oh I'm gonna do a Black artist*, or I'm gonna do an African artist, coz I don't think the association was there. I saw art from African artists at home but I didn't see that at school so I didn't see the link' (Ngozi)

Ngozi's experience demonstrated that there was some focus on African art, but it was a relatively superficial focus. She also noted that as a result of the curriculum she was taught, she did not associate Black or African artists with her art and design education and therefore did not incorporate them into her projects, even though it was something that she saw at home. As such it can be seen that her heritage and culture were not being truly reflected in the curriculum she was taught. Mason (1999), Chalmers (1996) and Dash (2010) identified that teachers' art and design knowledge is grounded in Eurocentric history and constructs, and thus the curriculum they offer up to students often replicates this existing knowledge. A truly inclusive art and design curriculum needs to be one that values and esteems the identities of Black students (Dash 1999) and does not value particular heritages and identities over others. Both Ben and Ngozi's experiences concurred with Dash's (2007)

findings where the Black students he spoke to voiced a disenchantment and dejection with the art and design curriculum and its lack of reference and interaction with their culture and heritage. Disenchantment and dejection can be seen in the way Ben noted that it was 'unfortunate' that there was little reference to art and design outside the Western canon; whilst Ngozi noted that the superficiality and lack of depth when looking at African art was her biggest problem with the curriculum. And particularly in Ngozi's extract it can be seen that she did not see her cultural heritage as welcome in the classroom.

> '(*What about experiences of secondary school, of studying art and design?*)…because we were all Muslims, we didn't really have a focus on Islam, or anything like that, we just did art, we did fruit bowls and painting buildings, and crafts and that kind of thing. (*Did you enjoy it, did you gain from it?*) Yeah I did, we weren't really exposed to different art forms, or different artists or anything like that, I don't remember that, I mean it's a long time ago now, but I don't really remember that…our only kind of point of information, was our teacher' (Iman)

In the extract above Iman identified that despite being in an Islamic secondary school the art and design she was taught did not look at topics related to Islam. Similar to Ngozi it can be seen that Iman's cultural heritage was not incorporated in the curriculum, rather there was a focus on observational drawing during her school art and design lessons. In regards to this Addison and Burgess (2000) note that teaching which focuses on observational drawing in the classroom pushes the resources and reference used to be drawn 'exclusively upon the nineteenth and early twentieth century Western still-life tradition' (Addison and Burgess 2000:83). Thus by Iman's teacher focusing on observational drawing in the classroom, it could be said that the tendency would be for a Eurocentric dominance in the curriculum. But Chalmers (1996) considers the skills/discipline based approach to art as 'an open concept, not a static, monolithic phenomenon' and that there have been many teachers who work within this context of teaching and who have 'responded, sometimes very successfully, to the challenge of multi-cultural art education' (Chalmers 1996:9). Thus Chalmers (1996) argues that the inclusion of art and design from other cultures is possible if educators are willing to engage with it regardless of the approach to art and design teaching that they take.

Iman's comments about her art and design teacher being her only point of information also corresponds with the notion put forward by Atkinson (2002) that identities are formed in schools by teachers and students, who 'position themselves…respectively as the subject supposed to know and the subject seeking to know' (Atkinson 2002:98), and with this type of identity formation teachers are in a position of power such that *what* they choose to teach and *how* they choose to teach holds great weight in the future outcomes of students. Atkinson and Dash (2005) further argue that this type of 'didactic' teaching practice as experienced by Iman

> 'offers no space for trying to understand the different ways in which pupils act and learn, their practices of learning, and developing appropriate responses to meet this diversity' (Atkinson and Dash 2005:xii-xiii).

Thus it could be argued that Iman was aware that what she was taught in art and design at secondary school was very much dictated by the teacher as the only point of information, and the lack of diversity she noted in her curriculum was a result of her teacher's selective choice which ultimately did not meet the diversity of the students in the classroom.

The above comments on the curriculum have mainly focused on secondary school and FE experiences, the comments below focus on HE and show very similar issues to those discussed above.

> '(*What about your experiences of Higher education, doing your History and History of Art degree?)* It was not diverse, it was very Eurocentric…we studied European art, some elements of Australian art and twentieth century American art and film, but none of those were really me…I guess what you learn is based on your faculties knowledge, so if your faculty hasn't got a diverse research background you're limited to what they know, and a lot of my faculty was based on German Expressionism, Classicalism...the head of it is like on the board for acquisitions for the Arts Council, so he's very Classical' (Ngozi)

> '…if you're faculty is not diverse or willing to engage in more diverse topics…you're kind of screwed, unless you have an alternative means to engage or have a background or foundation of something else, you're kind of just following the trend. That's why sometimes I look at some of the fellow historians I graduated with and the pathway they've chosen, it's still the same as what the faculty was teaching

them, and I feel like; are you adding to the debate or are you just contributing to the fact of it and just strengthening that…' (Ngozi)

Ngozi identified that the subject matter she was taught at HE was not diverse, and this lack of diversity was a result of her faculties' knowledge which was largely Eurocentric. She observed that because her faculty was not willing to engage fully in diverse topics, her art history education was limited. Ngozi's comments very much demonstrate that within her experience she saw and was critical of the continuous reproduction of 'Western hegemonic constructs of history and cultural excellence' (Dash 2010:192) which existed in the HE art and design curriculum that she was taught. Her extract noted that she did not see the curriculum changing given the direction her degree colleagues had taken, and which ultimately left groups of students wanting to engage in more diverse art and design disadvantaged within a limited curriculum. She also discussed her problems with the *way* that art and design outside the Western canon was taught

'(*You mentioned that coming to do the Masters you were interested in pursuing, looking more into African art, was it something that you considered doing on the undergrad course, was it something you were interested in?*) No because I didn't like their representation of African art, it was always African art as cultural objects…just that artworks, the term they coined as art was applied to works, these objects when they're not actually art works, what is considered art in those countries are not seen as art or weren't imported into Europe to be considered as art, it's Europe's formulation of what they thought as art and was applied to these foreign objects, and they were objects they had purposes for daily life, daily uses, they weren't art in a pure sense, so because of that there was just nothing there and I didn't pursue it…in my personal time I was always…talking about African culture, African traditions, art forms' (Ngozi)

Whilst Ngozi did not see the curriculum as a whole as diverse, she identified learning about African art. But she felt that African art was taught within a Western framework and not considered from an African perspective, this she felt was another limitation in the curriculum. Ngozi's comments around a European interpretation affixed onto non-European artefacts has been observed by Dash (1999) who identified that many teachers when teaching a multicultural curriculum, simply borrowed from other cultural traditions but then continued to embed the interpretations within 'a Western conceptual framework' (Dash

1999:125). If non-Western art and design was included in the curriculum it often was an add-on which needed to fit within existing Eurocentric structures. The idea of art and design as well as artists and designers from cultures outside the West needing to be more than just supplementary to an already existing curriculum and the problems this may cause is evident in Asa's descriptions of her HE experience

> '…as far as when I was studying I wasn't shown, I didn't know of any Black artists, any Black film makers, any Black designers apart from the obvious ones which was Chris Ofilli, Yinka Shonibare, and for me to some degree I just found that they were just the same…I wanted more, they're not the only ones and I refuse to believe that they are the only ones…One of the projects that I did, it was looking at a Black face, like jesters, coons, and I remember every time I sat down to speak to my tutors it was really awkward…This was on the BA, it was awkward in the sense that they didn't know much about it, and every time I went to them, it was me trying to bring them up to speed as opposed to talking about the work…bring them up to speed on the subject matter, on what this meant and why this was important…and I used to always come out with not knowing how to develop the work, which I think is bad because, in my own practice as a tutor if a student comes up to me with a subject matter that I don't understand, it's my responsibility behind closed doors to go and do that research *myself*…I'm not saying that as teachers we should know everything *we can't*….but definitely when it's something you are approached with and you don't know, you need to at least go and look at it or find out by yourself, and so when that student comes back to you, you can engage in it *more* than them giving you a lesson, and I don't think they did that…it was just really awkward…and I just felt like I didn't get any help whatsoever you know…I think it's important now regardless of whether they are Afro-Caribbean artists or not there just needs to be a diversity in terms of the material that is presented, because there isn't, it's always the same…' (Asa)

> '…they couldn't understand *why* I was doing that even though I explained everything, and they couldn't engage with me in terms of asking me *questions* for me to critically engage with the work myself…they couldn't *question* me about it, because one I felt they didn't feel comfortable…two their knowledge about it was minimal, I felt like they didn't feel they had authority to engage in it…because it had colour, and I am a person of colour and it's a subject that they are not familiar with, maybe I took it away from them, or they felt intimidated, or they were cautious not to say the wrong thing' (Asa)

The above comments by Asa identified that she felt that it is not enough to have BAME artists and designers as an add on to the curriculum, there needed to be a critical

engagement such that the artists and designers taught to students were relevant and did not become tokenistic to the extent of creating a Black canon where a small number of BAME artists and designers were constantly reused. Asa also further noted that she saw the lack of knowledge and engagement with diverse artists and designers as detrimental to the development of her education within that institution. The extent, to which a lack of engagement with BAME artists and designers may also be a reflection of a lack of knowledge and/or a lack of confidence and understanding in the subject matter by teachers, was touched upon by Asa as a possible explanation for the lack of diversity in the HE curriculum. This can be seen in the way she talked about feeling that her tutors either were not comfortable with artwork that foregrounded Black issues or that they did not appear to know enough about the subject to feel confident to talk about it.

Iman's HE experience in some ways parallels Asa's, in regards to tutor engagement with the subject matter she was dealing with in her work. Iman felt that her tutor on the surface seemed interested in her work on women and Islam, but she perceived that he did not understand it nor give her the time she felt she deserved as a student

> '…you know a lot of my final piece at the degree, at (names university she attended) was about women in Islam and perceptions…and I remember…being in a room as like, the only Black, Muslim girl and like, everyone around me was like white…and non-Muslim, and I felt like, can I talk about this in front of everyone, what are they gonna think…they're gonna think I've got a one track mind. (*Did you talk about it?) I did, but I really struggled you know'*…There was the one tutor, the male tutor, who was my work tutor, like my art…I think he had just never had any exposure to Black people…or Muslims, so for him it was just really new…he seemed interested but…I don't think he really understood it, that's probably what I want to say. (*Was he able to advise you on how to move forward with it, and other ideas you could consider?*) No, I remember in fact…I gave up on him…he was *always in a rush* you know, he always like had an hour and there were four students and…I don't think he really got it, he didn't get *me* for sure. So it was hard, in a way there was like a different element to me, because…I was so interested in Islam and Muslim *women* in particular, and that's quite foreign to a lot of people I think…I can't really blame him' (Iman)

Like Asa, Iman felt that her tutor lacked knowledge on issues around women and Islam, and this may have caused him to distance himself from engaging with her. The treatment that Iman received towards her and her work, meant that in the end she was not able obtain the necessary feedback from her tutor, in order to develop her work.

Similarly Ella, with her HE experience, felt that there was no deep engagement with her area of interest – African Fashion, but instead there was stigma and marginalisation around it from both staff and students.

> 'Nothing to do with culture, it's like they shy away from that kind of thing…even when you do cultural studies they shy away from anything really cultural, you just learn general things…that's why I got some eyebrows raised when I said *I'm gonna do African fashion! Oh yeah, African student doing African fashion!* And I was like; *no one else is doing it!…*you just say African fashion and it's like; *oh (long pause)* and they move on to talk about something else! And I was like; *eh hello!* (Ella laughs) *I'm not being an activist!* I just wanna do it coz I've not found any information, I've not found any work done on it!... it carried this stigma, I found it strange, but I said there's no way I'm gonna give up, that's what I want to do, coz that's not the reaction I had when I did it in college…(*So you're saying that there were negative reactions to do African fashion?)* Yeah…(*And who was that from?)* Students, they were just like; *oh okay* and a couple of lecturers who just didn't get it… They just don't know what it's about…they just see this African person who they think's gonna bring them masks and things, and so even if I bring you masks, so what, it is part of our heritage' (Ella)

Ella's extract shows that she received negative responses from staff and students when she decided to look at African fashion. Ella highlights that she had to defend her choice to look at her own cultural heritage in her artwork. That she needed to defend her choice highlights how African fashion was seen to be outside the norm of subjects to be studied in her educational institution. Having to clarify that she was not an 'activist' brought to light that her African heritage – a normality to Ella, as a result of her lack of positon of privilege as a Black African student, was being viewed as 'aberrant or alternative' problematic even, in relation to the Eurocentric norms of the HE institution (Wildman 1999:659)

Atkinson (2002) has stated that his own experiences as a teacher and his preconceived notions about what 'art' should be hugely influenced not only what he taught but also how

he taught, as well as his attitude and views towards students' artwork. He discusses the idea of there being a boundary in our patterns of thought, and thus anything that falls outside of this boundary can be marginalised, arguing that 'that which lies beyond the boundary is difficult to conceive, to comprehend and the tendency is therefore to marginalise' (Atkinson 2002:11). This it could be argued is very much reflected in Asa, Iman and Ella's extracts where their culture and heritage was marginalised within the institutions they studied in, by both teachers and students. Whilst registering and formulating their complaints about the limited curriculum they were exposed to and the difficulty of getting tutors to engage with them on topics related to their culture and heritage, Asa and Iman also highlighted the challenges their presence brought to educators who had not worked with diverse students. Asa and Iman were aware of the challenges that engaging with a diverse student body who brought with them ideas that called for a diverse curriculum, may have produced for teachers who had 'traditionally occupied positions of authority and privilege' (Atkinson and Dash 2005:xiv), but this challenge necessitated new ways of teaching rather than a distancing and refusal to engage that they had experienced.

Looking at the practicalities of creating a diverse curriculum Doy (2003) has argued that the wealth and breadth of knowledge available on art and design from places such as Africa, Asia and South America is so vast that 'there is too much material for one person to assimilate and teach without becoming a kind of cultural tourist' (Doy 2003:204) and instead calls for educators to focus more broadly on 'anti-imperialist, antiracist, anti-exploitative approach(es)' in their fields of expertise. As the negative participant experiences have shown, however challenging the practicalities may be, it is necessary for educators to engage and actively participate in widening and diversifying the curriculum in order to provide students with the holistic education they need and deserve. It is suggested from the extracts presented here that the participants were unhappy with the curriculum that was taught and presented to them and this was demonstrated in the way they brought attention to a Eurocentric curriculum, and in this way identifying it as a limiting barrier in recruitment and education.

6.4.2   Lack of support, advice and encouragement from art and design teachers and tutors

Reay (2001b) has identified the importance of 'examining the influence of educational institutions on the shaping of higher education choices' (Reay 2001b: 1.1), arguing that the level of influence and the final university choices made by students varied greatly depending on the type of institution attended, in relation to this as the extracts in this section will illustrate, the advice and support students receive from the institution - teachers and tutors, is an important issue to consider for Black African students.

Research by Okon (2005) highlighted that in regards to BAME students there was a lack of guidance and advice from teachers in regards to studying or pursuing art and design beyond school, and this is also reflected in the extracts presented in this section. It is also noted that out of the 14 participants interviewed, 5 recalled being taught at one point during either secondary, FE or HE by a BAME art and design teacher or tutor, whilst the rest did not recall being taught by a BAME art and design teacher or tutor at any point in their art and design education. When broken down into educational levels it can be seen that; at secondary school only Toyin and Peter were taught by BAME art and design teachers; at FE it was only Iqra and Ella, and at HE it was Ella and Ben. No participant was taught by a BAME art and design teacher or tutor throughout all three levels of education. Research by Maylor (2009) noted that teachers in English schools were predominantly white, whilst Hatton (2013) noted that there was a tendency for staff in art and design HEIs, particularly those in high positions, to be white and middle class, whilst many Black staff were on temporary contracts and first to lose jobs when cuts were made. The low representation of BAME staff in HE has also been identified by Bhopal and Jackson (2013) and ECU (2011), with Bhopal and Jackson (2013) recommending that HEIs be aware of 'unconscious biases' that existed in the recruitment and promotion of BAME staff in the academy. The importance of discussing staff diversity is because of the way in which it is connected to the support and advice BAME students receive from educators, and a lack of support and advice from educators is a topic that a number of the participants discussed at length. Gillborn (2013) argues that the expectations of teachers towards their Black students affects the way they interact with these students and as a result affects Black student performance overall, with negative

expectations resulting in Black students receiving a poorer educational experience than their white counterparts.

The negative impact that a lack of diversity in staff members can have on student educational experiences can be seen in Liz's narrative. Liz talked about her secondary school experience noting that

> '…I wish I had, I don't think I had *any* Black teachers at school…I think that really influenced me and just made me feel like I can't do any, you know there's no, it's like amazing to have like a Black art teacher, I mean it would have made such a difference, I think to me' (Liz)

It can be seen from her above comment that Liz was expressing a real need to have connection with a Black teacher, this can be seen in the way she highlighted that she 'wished' she had a Black teacher and that she believed that a more diverse teaching force - in particular a Black art teacher - would have made a 'difference' to her specifically. Liz felt that at school, where she was one of very few Black students with no Black teachers, she was 'navigating a really white world', although Liz also acknowledged in the interview that she did not believe in 'role models as a rule', she did believe that it would have benefited her to have engaged with Black teachers during her school experience. Research by Maylor (1999) identified that some Black teachers entered the teaching profession for reasons that went beyond wanting to be role models, but also so that they could challenge Black educational inequality (Maylor 1999). Thus a teaching force which is diverse can aid in creating a more inclusive and equal art and design educational space for BAME students in regards to the educational experience they receive (Theuri 2015). This may be what Liz was alluding to when she said she felt that a Black art teacher 'would have made such a difference to me'. The emotional and educational effect that Liz believed her experience had on her and her subsequent educational choices can be seen in her comments below

> '…I know people have had different experiences and it might have been because of the school I went to but I think I was sort of treated a little differently, if not maybe a lot differently, because you were sort of like the token in the class. It was like you're gonna get on with your work…I never felt like I was a personality in any of the classrooms I was in, so people weren't interested in like what are you interested in,

it was like here's your worksheet get your work done, here's your grade, bye! I never would have gone to any of my teachers to ask their advice coz I don't feel like they knew who I was…I wish I had formed a relationship with at least one teacher because…I might have been able to sit down with someone and say this is actually what I am interested in, what should I do?' (Liz)

'And I really enjoyed studying art…I mean I enjoyed sort of learning what art was…again I just didn't really have like any particular affection for the teacher…I don't know I think maybe I would have fought more to carry on art if, I had felt like I was really close to the teacher or I was really getting something from the teachers. But there was an element of me thinking well I can get this on my own, I can sort of just study art in my spare time or I can just be interested in art in my spare time. So, if I had felt really motivated by my teachers' maybe I would have pushed to study it at A Level' (Liz)

Liz refers to herself as the 'token' in the class and so the only Black student in classes of predominantly white students, and highlights that as a result she felt there was a sense of being treated differently to the other students, a sense of being discriminated against as one of the only Black students in the class. As a result of being treated differently she did not feel that she could go to the teachers and seek advice around her future aspirations. Liz further explained her experience as that of one feeling invisible, as she never felt like a personality in the classroom, with no one taking a particular interest in her and her aspirations. When talking specifically about art and design Liz felt she did not gain much from the way the subject was taught, this coupled with a general lack of support and advice from her teachers subsequently constrained her decision to take the subject further in her education. There were underlying notions in Liz's comments that a Black teacher would have had a positive and significant impact on her school experience, changing the type of support and advice she received.

And similar to Liz, Lidia also felt she was racially discriminated against during her schooling as one of very few Black students in the school, again like Liz it was not in an overt way but much more subtle where she was left to her own devices and to manage herself in the classroom. It has been argued that racism in the Post-Black experience is much more subtle and less overtly visible than it has been historically such that 'it has ways of making itself seem not to exist' whilst still having a consistent presence (Toure 2011:16), with CRT

identifying that 'racial inequality is maintained through the operation of structures and assumptions that appear normal and unremarkable' (Rollock and Gillborn 2011) and this it can be said is what Liz and Lidia experienced.

Lidia talked about her GCSE art and design teacher, noting that she did not feel she was encouraged in the class, and highlighting that she felt she was discriminated against

> '…I felt like I was discriminated against…I think that is what put my sister off as well actually, there was not much encouragement at all, because in our school…me and my sister and another girl were the only Black girls there…It wasn't even a…discrimination that was actioned, it was more like not giving you…the support that you need…so it wasn't like; oh I'm being racist to you or whatever, but it's more like leaving you to your own devises…Rather than, if you had a student who you know needs guidance…you'd invest a lot more time and advise into your student, but you also have the choice not to, so I think our teacher chose not to bother to put much investment in us, which was you know, *noticeable…*' (Lidia)

> '…this was a teacher who didn't have any expectations of you, so it didn't make a difference whether you were there or not. (*How do you know that she didn't have any expectations?*) Because you can see the difference with others, how much investment she placed on other students, also even in the grading, it was more harsh with us than other students, that's what we felt…In a way it was good coz my sister was in the same class, I know her work was amazing..but the recognition was not there from the teacher at all, and again when there's lack of recognition, I think there's doubt and therefore there's no point pushing that way…I saw it with 'W'(Lidia's twin sister)…the little guidance there was…it was more negative than positive, which leads you to believe that, okay well there's no point pursuing this, so when we got to the point of choosing, college…I can see…why 'W' did not go for the art subject…She had other passions, she wanted to be a scientist…so she had I think more options, when this option was shut, she had more options. When mine was shut I was like; *listen there's no other option, I'm going for this*, and I think I knew it in me anyway so it didn't matter, I think that's the difference, because I knew it from a very young age, it didn't matter that this one was not such a wide open door, I was gonna push through. So it's not even lack of options for me, I just *knew it*…and it was backed up by my mum, so it didn't matter' (Lidia)

Lidia noted that the support from her mother encouraged her where there was no support at school (how this worked as a facilitating strategy is discussed further in the next chapter), but due to a lack of encouragement and racial discrimination at secondary school Lidia

believed that her sister pursued the other interests she had and discounted art and design. Although not highlighting any specific racial discrimination, Asa also noted that she did not receiving encouragement to pursue her art and design education further

> '…I don't remember my tutors at secondary school saying or suggesting; *this is a pathway for you* or *maybe you should consider this coz you're really good,* no I don't think anyone *really* sat me down and said; *go this way, or maybe you should think about this,* and indicate what you are good at' (Asa)

Asa did not recall any teachers at secondary school taking the time with her to consider her options based on her talents and skills, and offer her advice and support on her art and design educational options. A similar experience was shared by Iqra, when it came to making decisions about going to and applying for university Iqra didn't feel as though there was support at her college ' …if you wanna do work then it's up to you, no one really cares, it's up to yourself. And I don't think there was a lot of support to be honest'. Whilst Michelle, talked about the way a lack of support and encouragement from her A Level photography teacher took away her enjoyment of the subject and impacted on her decision to study the subject further

> I *loved* Photography but I ended up not *liking* the subject, and that was mainly due probably to the teacher… she was kind of like the whole favouritism, it was all about what *she* liked in people's art basically, and again that kind of disillusioned me a bit, yes I might be good but she's kind of made me not like the subject anymore rather than the photography itself, and so that's why I wasn't keen on pursuing it at college…it was all about favouritism and there was a group of people *she liked*, and she liked their work…she'd encourage them *more,* than everyone else in the class' (Michelle)

The experiences of Liz, Lidia, Asa, Iqra and Michelle demonstrate the findings of Okon (2005) which noted that there was limited advice and support being given by art and design teachers to BAME students. Education has been identified as an institution in which the racial inequalities of society are replicated (Ladson Billings 1999, Parker et al 1999). This can be seen in the experiences of the participants discussed in this section, with Liz and Lidia in particular noting the limitations they felt were placed on them because of their race and as a result their place within art and design education was lower in the classroom hierarchy compared to their white peers. Subsequently Liz believed she did not take art and design

beyond GCSE as she was unhappy with her school experience, and Lidia talked about her sister choosing to move away from art and design due to the discrimination and lack of support she received at secondary school. It can be ascertained particularly from the experiences discussed by Liz and Lidia that they believe that they received a poorer educational experience than their white counterparts (Gillborn 2013).

Ben recalled that the university he attended for his Fine Art degree was recommended by tutors at the art college he was attending, and it was the only institution he really considered

> *'(And did you have a backup institution if you didn't get in?)* I didn't, no…and that was very silly of me but I don't know, my instinct, I felt like this is, this is the one. You know there were other places like Royal College of Art, Central St Martins, but I found out *during* my time at university, I didn't really research much about it. *(And were they suggested to you?)* No actually' (Ben)

Research by Reay (2001b) identified that certain FE colleges with a large number of working class and minority ethnic students, only encouraged their students to apply to certain institutions which they believed would welcome and accommodate their students, and as such a large number of 'prestigious' universities were ruled out. These findings by Reay can be seen as playing out in the experience shared by Ben, Ben was a minority ethnic student and the more prestigious institutions were not offered as an option to him by educators and he was not aware of their existence or their availability as a choice. However this does not operate in uniform for all participants, Asa for example was aware of the prestigious art and design institutions and was focused on applying to them despite being told of the competition by her teachers, this is discussed further in the next chapter. However, the limitations of encouragement, support and advice on choice given to the participants in this study by educational institutions extend beyond which art and design institution to attend, into whether or not art and design is a possibility as a subject to be studied. Reay (2001b) noted that for middle class students there was predominantly a seamless connection between school and home aspirations for higher education, something that did not exist with working class and minority ethnic students.

'It is also important to emphasize that individuals are differentially positioned in relation to the institutional habitus of their school or college according to the extent to which influences of family and peer group are congruent or discordant with those of the institution. It is only the more privileged of the middle class students, primarily in the private sector, who experience the different contexts impinging on choice as almost seamless. While this advantaged minority are operating within spheres where the diverse influences are predominantly reinforcing rather than in competition with each other, for the majority of students there is less of a fit between educational institution and family and friends. Most are managing a degree of dissonance, and a significant minority are having to cope with tensions that make choice both conflictual and problematic' (Reay 2001b: 1.7)

And thus teachers working with working class and minority ethnic students on many occasions felt that they had to fight to retain their students past the GCSE stage, often having to convince their parents of the value of further and higher education (Reay 2001b). It can be seen that choice was both 'conflictual and problematic' for many of the participants in this study and this created a barrier to access, entry and progression in HE art and design. However, comments by Iman about *her* experience of dissonance between institutional advice and aspiration and parental advice and aspirations brings a different perspective to Reay's (2001b) findings, as she felt that her art and design teacher did not try to offer to her father the value and worth of art and design as a subject to study further

'…we had an open evening where the parents come and they discuss the different options with the teachers, and I remember my dad, my art teacher and me were talking about it, and I was saying to my dad; *ah dad I really wanna do art you know, it seems interesting…*but my dad in front of my teacher was like; no just think about the kind of future career prospects, and what would that mean, and I remember my teacher being very blasé about it; *okay then*, you know, there wasn't any kind of like push back from her like; *oh Iman is really good at art, if she wants to do it, she should do it…*she was very much like okay, if your dad doesn't want you to do it…(Iman)

It is suggested that Iman was waiting for her teacher to help curb her father's fears through advice of the possibilities that existed within art and design as a career, but this did not happen. Research by Etherington (2013) identified a teacher perception that parents of minority ethnic students both discouraged their children from studying GCSE art and design and showed a lack of support once students had chosen the subject; this teacher perception is also reflected in the experience shared by Iman. Taking this further it can be argued that,

the prevalent narrative of BAME parents steering their children towards certain professional and vocational subjects, can negatively affect the aspirations that some teachers hold and the advice that they choose to give BAME students in that they also do not believe that certain subjects are a realistic option for them given parental steering.

> '…when I was choosing my AS, there was a teacher there…and I think I wanted to do French, Maths, History…and I didn't want to do Biology, I think I wanted to do Chemistry or something, and I was like; I'm not sure Sir so I'll have to go home and discuss it with my dad…and he was like; so I'll see you on Monday and you'll be doing Biology then, he knew that French, that was something different and it was not gonna be an option, I came back and I was like; yeah I think I'll do Biology, on Monday, and he was like; okay, yeah that's fine I've put you down already…and I think it was his way of saying that…a lot of the Asian kids as well they all did that, you found very few of like the Asian or Muslim, especially Muslim…doing you know Art or English Lit, or anything that wasn't kind of like Science or Maths based' (Iman)

The above extract also shows Iman's teacher's perception towards her and what they believed Iman could study as a result of her race and ethnicity. It can be seen that Iman's teacher had already 'decided' that there were certain subjects that were outside the scope of study for Iman. From both of Iman's comments it can be seen that she experienced teachers holding certain beliefs about the motivations and aspirations of minoritised groups that presented themselves as stereotyped, one-dimensional, fixed (Gillborn 2008) and often unintentional but which ultimately worked against her and limited the type of advice and guidance that she received during her education. This corroborates with findings by Hatton (2009) who noted that Black students had identified instances of cultural stereotyping in their art educational experiences. When discussing subject choice Tackey et al (2011) noted the importance of BAME groups accessing 'well-informed and appropriate (non-stereotypical) advice' from parents, career advisors and education institutions (Tackey et al 2011:11) something that the participants discussed in this section did not receive at school. It can be seen from Iman's experience and so argued that choosing 'traditional' and more 'professional' subjects for study at HE was considered by her teachers to be a 'preference' for her as a Somali and Muslim, and thus from a minority group (Connor et al 2004, Tackey et al 2011), however the extracts also demonstrates that she did not have full access to the necessary information and support that would enable her to choose the subjects that best

suited her and her needs. Rather Iman's experience (and that of Ben, Lidia, Liz and Asa) echoed the NUS (2011) report findings that many Black students felt there had been a lack of useful advice for both themselves and their parents.

Conclusion to Institutional themes

This section has discussed the barriers to participation in and experience of HE art and design which are connected to educational institutions. The main areas of discussion were the Eurocentric nature of art and design education specifically exploring, staff diversity and curriculum diversity and the lack of support, advice and encouragement that participants received from art and design teachers. The Eurocentric nature of the curriculum and the art and design educational space was consistently echoed in the participants' narratives. The findings suggest that the historically Eurocentric nature of art and design education had an impact on the participants' art and design educational experiences with a number of them voicing their dissatisfaction at the limited curriculum they had to engage with, within their education. Participants commented on having to find out information on non-Western art and design on their own, they recalled memories and critiqued what they felt was not a fully rounded education, where their cultural heritage was not included in the curriculum and teaching but rather it was marginalised and ignored. It can also be seen that the support, advice and encouragement at secondary school to pursue art and design further was lacking for a number of participants, with some directly connecting this to racial discrimination that they received in the art and design classroom. These findings highlight the barriers that exist in art and design education that could impede participation in and experiences of HE art and design for Black African students, and which could be a deterrent to Black African students wanting to study the subject, whilst creating challenging and at times negative environments for those already studying the subject. The findings in the section very much demonstrate a critique by a number of participants of the art and design subject and its problematic delivery to Black African students across the different tiers of education (secondary, FE and HE).

One of the research participants, Asa was born in the UK; grew up in London; completed her art and design education in British institutions and was subsequently working in British art

and design institutions as an educator and also as a practising artist. Thus she is an example of a Black African person who has gone through the British art and design educational system from beginning to end. However, it would seem out of frustration at the lack of space for diversity in art and design that she had experienced in the UK she was now choosing to engage more in the art and design industry in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Despite having been born and having grown up in the UK, her extract highlights in particular that she had started thinking about where she was *originally* from and planning her return to a space where she believed there was room for her culture and heritage to be included.

> '…in my mind the solution to this problem…I started thinking about where am I from originally, and let me go back there and *build that up*, so much to the point where I'm not looking towards this place, this foreign place (UK)…I've got this place here (Africa)…Coz this place (Africa) even though it's riddled with problems at the moment, if those problems were to be eliminated that place would be one of the power houses of the world…So *my* thing was like okay… instead of trying to focus on the art industry of the Western world, look at the African arts industry and help get that to a place where it's secure in itself, then we won't need to worry about diversifying you know…it will be loud and clear' (Asa)

Asa's choice to distance herself from the Western art and design space highlights the possibility of significant negative effects that the art and design educational space, which it can be argued as a result of the findings discussed here is a space that marginalises minority groups, could have on Black African art and design students and the potential loss of talent that could happen as a result. This reflects research undertaken by ECU (2015) on 'academic flight from UK education' which shows that a number of BAME academics were moving to work abroad due to limited prospects for BAME academics in the UK as a result of discrimination.

6.5   Chapter Conclusion

The narrative extracts presented here and the analysis of those extracts show that the barriers faced by the participants were constructed out of; their parents often negative, difficult and challenging experiences as immigrants to the UK and the effect of this in regards to their aspirations for their children, the ambitions of the participants as second generation immigrants caught between African and British cultures, the limitations existing

from a historically Eurocentric education system, the gatekeeping inherent within educational institutions, as well as the general climate of disempowerment and discouragement that ensue for Black African students from the socio-political climate in which all these issues operate.

The findings discussed in this section suggest that there are a number of key fundamental barriers, expressed in different ways, which come through the participants' narratives. As the data presented in this chapter show these barriers lie at the core of the experiences of the Black African art and design students interviewed, at the essence of their experience. The fundamental barriers include; an existing prevalent 'master narrative' that art and design are outside the African culture; the majority of participants talked of or mentioned this narrative within their interviews. For many parents art and design is not seen as a realistic option given the inequalities around race, ethnicity and class that exist for immigrants in the UK (Hall 2000, Parekh 2006, Vertovec 2010). It is believed by some parents that art and design does not aid in upward social mobility, and it can be argued that this way of thinking is a means of self-preservation. A 'ceiling of aspiration' exists whereby those from immigrant communities are aspiring only to what they perceive is reasonable to achieve within the social positions that exist (Espino 2008). Racial and class inequalities are thus in a sense crippling aspirations to art and design courses, lending to what is then perceived by Connor et al (2004) as 'parental steering' towards certain professional and vocational subjects.   The narratives also highlighted the overtly Eurocentric foundations of the education system which also existed within art and design education and which negatively impacted the educational experiences of the participants in terms of encouraging their participation in HE art and design and their experiences of HE art and design overall.

Previous research identified existing barriers as; those of BAME backgrounds felt the arts were for the privileged few; there was a lack of BAME role models in the arts, BAME students lacked encouragement from parents, teachers and career advisors in pursuing careers in the arts, there was a perception that the creative industries were not a good career option (Okon 2005), and for some BAME groups there appeared to be a 'parental steering' towards certain (professional and vocational) courses (Connor et al 2004). Research undertaken by Hatton (2009) also identified that the arts as institution had

presented itself as Eurocentric, there was an existing 'whiteness' in the conceptualisation of art which had been transferred to the art curriculum, and Black students in the research had identified instances of racism and cultural stereotyping in their art educational experiences. Between 2006 and 2010, NUS (2011) found that UK Black domiciled students consistently had 'lower overall satisfaction with their HE experience than white students' (NUS 2011:8), although this research does not compare the experiences of Black African students with that of their white counterparts, the participants experiences replicated and reflected a low satisfaction with their educational experiences. Finnegan (2009), NUS (2011) and Hatton (2012) noted the need to problematize the HE academy and it's privileging of a particular type of student and forms of knowledge. The critique of the educational system from secondary school, FE to HE by the participants shows that they problematised not just the HE academy but the lower levels of education too; however secondary school and HE in particular received a majority of the criticism. As such, the participants' experiences add weight and evidence to the need to continue to campaign for change and equality within educational institutions. The findings analysed here reflect and deepen understanding of these previous research findings, and they also highlight how these previous findings have manifested themselves in the experiences of Black African students.

As the narratives discussed in this section have shown, both the participants who studied art and design courses at HE and those who did not faced a number of key barriers within their art and design educational journey. For some participants barriers impeded their journeys to the extent that they did not participate in HE art and design. However, my analysis of findings suggest that for those who studied art and design courses at HE, the barriers affected their journeys because there also existed facilitating strategies that were put in place by the individual participants themselves, their family, as well as teachers and tutors at secondary education, FE and HE. Having identified a number of key limiting barriers, the next chapter looks at the strategies identified in the data which facilitated participation in and navigation within HE art and design.

7 STRATEGIES WHICH HAVE FACILITATED PARTICIPATION IN AND NAVIGATION WITHIN HE ART AND DESIGN

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter identified a number of key limiting barriers which highlighted the range of difficulties faced by the research participants in regards to their participation in and experience of HE art and design. This study however is also interested in considering the facilitating strategies, which presented themselves in the participants' narratives. Given that there were identified existing barriers this section as part of the data analysis considers how the participants' participated in and navigated within HE art and design. This section therefore discusses the key facilitating strategies that have been identified from the narratives of the participants who were able to participate in and navigate within HE art and design[xxxiv], I discuss individual, familial and institutional strategies as revealed by the participants (see Table 2 for facilitating strategies experienced by each participant). As in the previous chapter the analysis focus has been on issues around race, ethnicity, culture, with an underlying focus on class, and thus there is an emphasis and attention on themes within the data that highlight issues around race, ethnicity and culture.

As part of the process of positively utilising the range of experiences of the participants in this study this section identifies and discusses the wealth and strength that the participants have had to draw upon in order to manoeuvre into and within an often excluding art and design educational space. Research with a similar purpose of identifying success within the experiences of 'non-traditional' art and design students who are often seen within the deficit model has been undertaken by Finnigan (2009); however this study differs from Finnigan's in that it has focused specifically on Black African students. The experience of overcoming barriers within complex institutional systems is worthy of recognition, acknowledgment and utilisation in order to create a more inclusive art and design educational space. Highlighting facilitating strategies challenges the deficit model often associated with minoritised groups, where they are described as lacking the necessary tools to progress, and encourages a focus on the talents, abilities and knowledge held within minoritised communities that stand outside white middle class norms (Yosso, 2005).

Research by Osler (1999) has also advocated research which focuses on successful BAME students and the ways in which they 'negotiate and overcome...structural barriers which they encounter during...education' and the strategies they employed to do this (Osler 1999:42). Osler also highlights the 'potential pitfalls' of such an approach where it could be utilised as an excuse for inaction if evidence shows that members of BAME groups have been able to overcome disadvantages without the intervention of racial equality strategies. Gillborn (2008) has also problematised highlighting 'model minorities' who are achieving well 'despite' the disadvantaging circumstances surrounding them. However Osler further argues that

> 'to ignore such success may be equally damaging to black communities since a focus on failure...may simply reinforce negative stereotypes and prevent teachers and policy makers from looking beyond these' (Osler 1999:42).

This research therefore sees it as important to move the focus away from failure and also identify successes within Black African communities.

The findings and discussion in this chapter are merged together and the themes discussed here are those linked to my third and fourth research questions. This chapter draws from and utilises quotes from the narratives of the participants to support the themes identified.

The discussion and analysis draws upon and extends Yosso's (2005) cultural wealth model which utilises the CRT framework to understand the ways in which American 'students of colour' experience college from a perspective which focuses on the strengths and capital they use to manoeuvre the space. Yosso (2005) takes and extends Bourdieu's work on cultural capital, giving it a more nuanced connection to the experiences of minority ethnic groups, which previous research (Modood 2004) had noted was lacking in the work of Bourdieu. Within this research the identified individual and familial facilitating strategies are viewed as cultural wealth existing in Black African communities. However the research has also acknowledged the institutional facilitating strategies that were revealed by the research participants.

	2.1 OVERCOMING BARRIERS THROUGH INDIVIDUAL ASPIRATION, RESISTANCE & SELF EFFICACY		2.2 PARENTAL SUPPORT		2.3 KNOWLEDGE/ UNDERSTANDING OF ROUTES TO HE ART AND DESIGN	2.4 INSTITUTIONAL THEMES			2.5 AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE
	Overcoming familial based barriers	Overcoming Institutional based barriers	Pedagogies of the home - instilling aspirations and providing positive support	Pedagogies of the home - art and design practices in the home	Individual and familial knowledge and understanding of routes into HE art and design	Support and encouragement from art and design teachers and tutors	Participating in 'Widening Participation'	Diverse Art and Design education	Art and design from an African perspective
	ABENA	LIDIA	IMAN	ABENA	ASA	ASA	ELLA	BEN	ASA
	ASA	ASA	ASA	ASA	IMAN	BEN	PETER	IMAN	ELLA
	BEN	BEN	BEN	IQRA	IQRA	ELLA		LIDIA	IQRA
	ELLA	ELLA	LAKER	LIDIA	LIDIA	IMAN		NGOZI	LAKER
	IMAN	IMAN	LIDIA	PETER	NGOZI	IQRA			*TOYIN
	IQRA	IQRA	NGOZI	*TOYIN	*TOYIN	LAKER			
		NGOZI	PETER			LIDIA			
						*TOYIN			
						SAM			
						MICHELLE			

Table 2 FACILITATING STRATEGIES FACED BY PARTICIPANTS

* Toyin was a significant outlier, because although there was an art and design practice happening in the home, she had knowledge and understanding of routes into HE Art and Design, and support from her art and design teacher at secondary school they did not work as facilitating strategies for her.

7.2 **Overcoming barriers through Individual Aspiration, Resistance and Self-efficacy**

Aspiration, resistance and self-efficacy as a combination were identified as one of the main strategies which helped facilitate participation in and navigation within HE art and design in the narratives of the participants. They demonstrate one of the ways in which some participants overcame barriers in within their educational journeys. It could be seen that the participants who studied HE art and design were particularly passionate about the subject, they had high aspirations to pursue an art and design education, could not imagine themselves doing anything else, and were able to advocate for themselves such that they did not let familial and institutional barriers hold them back.

High aspirations towards art and design education and careers could be seen in the narratives of a number of participants. They talked about *knowing* that art and design was what they wanted to study, and so from a young age they were aspiring to study the subject.

> '…I think I knew I wanted to do art, because I had always liked it and was good at it, so I just, I chose that' (Laker)

> '(*When would you say you realised that you had an interest in art and design?*) Always…But to me the reason I chose it, I enjoyed it, I couldn't see anything else I wanted to do…(*How was your decision to study art and design informed?*) Oh at secondary, *oh I knew*, that was normal…when you get the subjects list that art was just definitely a must, (Lidia)

> '…from GCSEs that was a time when I was really finding myself… and so from GCSE to A Levels, A Level art and design from there I knew I loved art and that's what I wanted to do, so I was researching what would I study in university…so if I was going to study anything in university it was gonna be art. And so that's where the decision came to study art. *(And was it informed by others, by your parents? Where they part of your decision making?)* No it was pretty much just me' (Ben)

> '…I just knew that I didn't want to do anything else (Asa laughs)…I didn't wanna be a doctor I didn't want to be a lawyer, and I kind of just chose it in terms of what I enjoyed' (Asa)

Freeman (2005) in her research on African Americans and the factors that influence their college choice, talked of three distinct types of students; those who always knew that they would be going to college, those who came to believe that they would be going to college, and those who did not truly see college as an option but still dreamt about the possibilities. Looking at the narratives presented above it is possible to see that these participants always knew that they wanted to study art and design; there was a self-understanding such that they knew where skills and passion lay. The above participant extracts demonstrate that this knowing that art and design was what they wanted to study was very much viewed as a personal and individual choice. Okon (2005:16) has noted that

BAME students 'are in general less likely than white students to choose subjects for personal interest reasons and are more likely to be influenced by employment considerations or economic outcomes'. This observation however, is challenged by the narrative extracts discussed here, as these participants chose to study art and design based on their personal interests; they enjoyed the subject and knew it was what they wanted to study.

Some of the participants' high aspirations have been identified and discussed above, and given limiting barriers that existed in their educational experiences which were discussed in the previous chapter; their aspirations are thus viewed as a form of capital – aspirational capital which helped facilitate their participation in and navigation within HE art and design. Aspirational capital has been defined as 'the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers' and is 'evidenced in those who allow themselves to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances' (Yosso 2005:77-78).

In overcoming barriers it is suggested that the participants showed a combination of aspirational capital, resistant capital, as well as high self-efficacy levels. Resistant capital has been defined as 'knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behaviour that challenges inequality' (Yosso 2005:80). The fostering of resistant capital can be split into a familial fostering which Yosso's framework focuses on (and which is further discussed in

section 7.3 of this chapter) and also an individual fostering of this capital which is identified within the narrative extracts analysed and discussed in this section. Whilst Schunk (1991) has defined self-efficacy as 'an individual's judgement of his or her capabilities to perform given actions', ascertaining that 'self-efficacy predicts such diverse outcomes as academic achievement…career choices…coping with feared events' (Schunk 1991:207-208). This understanding of self-efficacy defined by Schunk comes from self-efficacy theories put forward by Albert Bandura. Bandura (1995) noted that

> 'self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act' (Bandura 1995:2)

Having identified in the extracts above that the participants had aspirations towards studying art and design, it is argued that they were able to maintain these aspirations for their future when faced with limiting barriers because they had high levels of belief in their own capabilities to participated in and navigate within HE art and design, and they utilised resistant capital to challenge existing limitations in order to achieve their aspirations. Examples of this are shown through analysis of participants' extracts in the following sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2

7.2.1   <u>Overcoming familial based barriers</u>

The participants talked about the ways in which they had overcome barriers placed before them, in order to continue to pursue education in art and design. Some talked about having to overcome familial barriers, in particular parental expectations to follow certain subjects and pathways. The narrative extracts discussed here show examples of aspirational capital, resistant capital and self-efficacy being utilised to overcome what some participants saw as limitations placed on them by their parents.

Iqra talked about being focused on doing what she felt was best for her and not what was best for her parents, especially as her mother had not wanted her to study a BTEC course in Fashion.

'…didn't really care what she thought, I thought it's my decision. If I do what she wants it won't be for my benefit, it'll be for her benefit. I do respect her but still it's my life what I do is gonna have a big impact on me' (Iqra)

Like Iqra, Abena was adamant that she would study Textiles despite what her parents wanted

'…no matter what, if me parents fight me on this I'm still gonna do the Textiles, that's what *I* want to do' (Abena)

Iman also discussed her determined focus on moving away from the educational path laid out by her parents, and to follow instead her self-chosen path of interest in a subject area that she felt was more in tune with her personality and her personal aspirations.

'(*And how would you say that your decision to study art and design, you know how did you come to that decision?)…*I was really insistent on moving away from this…path that my parents had set out for everybody, you know you go to college, you do your A Levels, we all did the same A Levels…it was always Biology, Chemistry, Maths…so I really wanted to move away from that, so after I did my A Levels I went away and pursued Arabic…for a year. I came back and…I had a place for Pharmacy in Liverpool, and I was like; I'm *really* not gonna do Pharmacy, it's not for me…so at that point I was like I really wanna do…something creative, and I really wanna get into either art or design…and I started researching and I found…the foundation degree course…and I was like; *this is so me*…(*So what do you think happened in that year in France that made you change?)* I think it was a moment, being away from like the pressure and the kind of expectations of it, I don't know when you travel you just feel like a different person, you're more in tune with what you want…And I started thinking about it, do I really want wanna do *Pharmacy*…I thought no I really don't' (Iman)

Similarly the comment below demonstrates that Asa also showed aspirational capital, resistance capital and self-efficacy through her refusal to follow the trajectory that her father had laid out for her, in order to follow her aspirations

'…when I did my GCSEs I chose…well my Dad chose them for me, and then basically I told him I wanted to do art and he said *no*…When we came to choosing my subjects for college it was the same kind of thing…he wanted me to be a doctor, so right; Physics, Maths…he enrolled me into…a private school and I went there for literally

like two days and then I went and signed myself up in another college without his knowledge doing all the subjects that I wanted to do. But then when he found out he stopped my allowance…the following year I went back to the subjects he wanted me to do…that year was horrible, and then from then I just made up my mind; like it's either I do it for them, or I do what I'm interested in, okay what am I gonna loose here, and the main thing was literally my allowance…so I ended up getting a job…So in the third year I just ended up enrolling at S***(names another college)…I ended up doing GCSE art, alongside my A Level photography and graphic design, and then from there I went on to my Foundation…' (Asa)

Asa when describing why she undertook the drastic actions mentioned above, felt that she had to take control of what was happening and make her own decisions and choose her own educational path and not the one laid out by her father. There was a real sense of belief in her own capabilities and an urgency to hold on to her personal dreams for the future. Similar observations can be made about Iqra, Abena and Iman's narrative extracts; they too knew what their parents wanted for them but undertook oppositional behaviour to challenge what they felt was unfairness, in some ways a curbing of their aspirations.

It can be seen from the above extracts that participants believed they had to choose an educational path *they* aspired to, not their parents, and thus make decisions and choices that they would ultimately be happy with. It has already been identified and discussed in the previous chapter the ways in which parental objections to art and design education could be seen as a form of self-preservation given existing societal inequalities. With this in mind it is suggested that through their resistance to follow the path laid out by their parents, the participants were consciously and/or subconsciously choosing to resist and thus find ways to overcome the disadvantaging and limiting structures that would not allow them the possibility to pursue their goals and aspirations. And as such their actions can be seen as representing 'the creation of a history that would break links between their parents' current existing immigrant status and experiences, with that of 'their children's future' educational and career aspirations' (Yosso 2005:78) and by doing this the participants were able to open up new avenues and opportunities for themselves.

The above positive examples of challenging familial educational expectations are however contrasted with Toyin and Liz, two participants who did not study HE Art and Design. They both also had aspirations towards studying art and design beyond GCSE level; however they identified that perhaps they allowed their parents to guide them too much when making decisions.

Looking back on her choices from A Level onwards Toyin felt that she had allowed her parents to guide her a great deal in her decision making.

> '…I'm looking at the way my brothers and sister did it, they didn't let my parents, not that my parents are controlling, but they didn't let them guide them so much. But, I guess we all sat down and thought it made sense…rather than going to (names art college) and having that on your CV and narrowing it' (Toyin)

Liz also identified a similar experience in regards to her own decision making

> 'I think that I was such an obedient 17 year old, I think if I had just gone behind her back and just signed up for art and then she wouldn't have known and I would have done it and that would have been fine. But I think I was…raised in church and sort of raised in this house where it's like education is very important…and my mother was very engaged in our education and I didn't feel like I had any sort of leeway…I was much too kind of like concerned with what my mother thought. She says Economics so I'll do Economics and even though I'll suffer through it I will do it. And I think I had that attitude until I left (names university), coz I suffered through (names university)…coz every time I talked to my mum about it she was like you need this degree, and I was like I don't think I'm going to use it, I'm not enjoying it…But I just didn't have the thing in me where I was like oh well I'll just do what I want' (Liz)

It can be seen that both Toyin and Liz, unlike the participants previously discussed, appeared not to hold a large amount of aspirational capital, because when faced with familial barriers they were not able to hold on to their hopes and dreams to study art and design. Having listened to her parents Toyin came to believe that studying art and design would 'narrow' her options, whilst for Liz her mother was able to influence her to study subjects other than art and design even though they were subjects that she lacked enjoyment and enthusiasm for. Both Liz and Toyin did not feel that they had the capacity to enact oppositional behaviour and challenge their parents' expectations, therefore it is suggested here that unlike the participants discussed earlier they had limited aspirational and resistant capital

and low self-efficacy levels. Thus it can be seen that whilst a number of participants were able to resist the paths laid out by their parents and go their own way through individual actions that demonstrated high self-efficacy level as well as aspirational and resistant capital, there were some (Toyin and Liz) for whom this was much more of a challenge and familial limiting barriers constrained and restricted them.

7.2.2   Overcoming Institutional based barriers

The previous chapter analysed a number of narrative extracts where it is suggested that the art and design institutional space was predominantly Eurocentric in nature. Participants identified that there were few BAME students, few BAME teachers and that there was a predominantly Eurocentric curriculum in place. Therefore there were a number of institutional barriers which participants had to overcome in order to access, enter and progress in HE art and design. And in order to do this it is argued that some participants demonstrated navigational capital as well as aspirational and resistant capital. Navigational capital is understood as

> '...skills of manoeuvring through social institutions...the ability to manoeuvre through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind...strategies to navigate through racially-hostile university campuses draw on the concept of academic invulnerability, or students' ability to 'sustain high levels of achievement, despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly at school'. (Yosso 2005:80)'

The previous chapter, which focused on limiting barriers, analysed extracts from Lidia's narrative where she had identified racial discrimination during her secondary school education such that her art and design teacher offered her and her sister – the only two Black students in the class – no positive encouragement, support or advice during the course of the time she taught them.

> '...the little guidance there was...it was more negative than positive, which leads you to believe that, okay well there's no point pursuing this, so when we got to the point of choosing, college...I can see...why 'W' did not go for the art subject...She had other passions, she wanted to be a scientist...so she had I think more options, when this option was shut, she had more options. When mine was shut I was like; *listen there's no other option, I'm going for this*...because I knew it from a very young age, it didn't

matter that this one was not such a wide open door, I was gonna push through. So it's not even lack of options for me, I just *knew it*…and it was backed up by my mum, so it didn't matter' (Lidia)

Lidia believed that it was the lack of support and discrimination from her art and design teacher which led her sister not to pursue art and design further and instead follow other pathways. Lidia contrasted herself to her sister showing that unlike her sister, studying art and design was the only thing she wanted to do and there was no other option for her. Therefore when speaking about why she continued despite her difficult secondary school experience she talked about pushing through doors that were not wide open to her and seeing beyond the lack of support, advice and encouragement. Her explanation demonstrated that she had aspiration and resistant capital as well as navigational capital and was unwilling to give up art and design due to racial discrimination and lack of support and advice from her teacher. Lidia persevered and was thus able to manoeuvre and achieve within a racially hostile environment. She also connected her own facilitating strategies as having been drawn from her mother (this familial facilitating strategy is discussed in section 7.3).

The previous chapter (6.4) discussed the ways in which teachers' and tutors' preconceived ideas about art influenced the type of artwork they encouraged some participants to make, as well as *how* and *what* they taught students. These preconceived ideas ultimately limited and marginalised the participants. With this in mind it can be seen in Iqra's extract that she felt limited by her secondary school art and design curriculum, and at times decided to do her own thing, which ultimately got her in trouble

> '…it was more contained, coz you have to do something with a brief…I just wanted to…interpret it in my own way…But that usually doesn't get the mark…coz you need to follow what the teacher says but sometimes I just do my own thing and then get in trouble' (Iqra)

Peter highlighted that these limitations, restrictions and expectation to fit into a certain norm of making artwork were a negative in art and design education

'...I think that's where education lets people down, coz you're doing work that the criteria tells you to do, and I don't know if that's necessarily making you a better artist or designer' (Peter)

Ben identified that whilst he received encouragement from teachers, this encouragement necessitated that he fit into a certain norm of making artwork.

They (teachers) encouraged it, because they saw that I had a skill for art...But the only thing is the style of art I was producing wasn't conceptual and wasn't contemporary, and it was too traditional and old...I'm a big lover of tradition and culture and that was all I wanted to do in my craft. So that was discouraging but I just kept on with it because I knew that was what I wanted to do' (Ben)

'(And what about higher education, how was that experience?)... my style of art again it wasn't really encouraged... it was too old-fashioned, too precise, they wanted me to let loose and do something different...But I knew how it made me feel, doing my own type of art and that was all I wanted to do...and it was a battle for me to continue doing what I was doing. And just abiding by what they wanted me to do at the end of the day that's how I can get good grades at school....but at the same time I am where I am today because I stuck with what I wanted to really do...The styles I was learning wasn't really what I found appealing, art is so open to interpretation...and I found it a little bit unfair to limit this person's view of art just so that they could pass through school because they are doing what everyone else is doing...that didn't really settle well with me. (Did that hinder your progress at university?) My grades suffered a little bit in the first two years at university...I just stuck to my guns and I had to prove to them that this is what I'm about...and towards the end of it they were encouraging my style' (Ben)

Both Ben's comments demonstrate that he had a particular style of artwork that was considered 'traditional', 'old fashioned' and 'precise' by his teachers and tutors. It should be noted that Ben was a portrait artist who loved to work in pencil and who considered that 'my drawings are in the genre of photorealism, you know really realistic art', a style he had been practicing since he was 15 years old. Therefore it was his photorealist artwork that was considered old fashioned and traditional, and he was encouraged instead to create more contemporary and conceptual artwork. hooks (1995:4) has identified that the type of artwork created in Black communities tended to be the type which had a 'heavy handed emphasis on portraiture' and artwork which tended to render life exactly as it was,

descriptions that very much fit the type of work Ben was creating. In contrast, the type of artwork - the conceptual and the contemporary - that his teachers wanted him to make could be read as more 'avant-garde', a type of work which Doy (2000) discussed as being perceived by some Black audiences as part of 'white art world'. It could then be said that Ben's teachers and tutors were encouraging him to make what would seem to be more Eurocentric artwork. Therefore Ben's extracts show him navigating to survive an environment that privileged what would appear to be a more Eurocentric approach to art and design.

Hatton (2013) has argued that at times in art and design education 'different approaches are not understood by tutors who have their own particular visual language and understanding which they have built their courses on (Hatton 2013:29), and so students' 'creative identities are inevitably conditioned by settings in which they (have) been formed and the expectations of tutors and examiners' this can make it a challenge for students when working to develop their own creative identities (Hatton 2013:30). This could be seen in both Iqra and Ben's extracts. By holding onto his ideals and challenging what he found to be an unfair system in which students are expected to follow teacher expectations or risk failure, Ben talked about his grades suffering particularly at university, and similarly Iqra also felt that when she challenged the criteria her grades suffered. However Ben's experience is resolved in that Ben believed that by remaining true to his principles he managed to bring his HE tutors around to his way of thinking. Ben's narrative extract in particular, demonstrates holding on to his ideals and the utilisation of resistant and navigational capital necessary to survive the challenging educational environment he found himself in when trying to develop his own creative identity.

Some participants also talked about challenges they faced in relation to the perception of their school peers towards studying art and design. Although Toyin did not go on to study HE art and design and therefore cannot be seen to have participated in or navigated within HE art and design, her narrative identifies the negative perception studying art and design had amongst her peers, an experience that some participants' who did study HE art and design also experience. Toyin highlighted that in her predominantly Black girls' secondary school, studying art was not looked highly upon by her peers 'art's not the main thing'.

Whilst Ngozi noted that

> '…although art GCSE is a subject you select, some people are in it because they think it's an easy subject to do and they can get a decent grade in it, so you have people in the classroom who are happy to muck around and not really get serious. (*Would you say that you took it seriously?*) Yeah I did…I enjoy learning so I've always taken my academics seriously…I kind of believed that if you don't put your all into something you don't really know whether you like it or not, so that's what I always used to do when I was younger, coz I was quite independent in thinking, that's why I said no, no I'll give it a go' (Ngozi)

And Ben commented

> 'it was like my social group, my peers outside school and in school, no one was into art so it was just me, so it was kind of lonesome, and they didn't really think it was hip, or it was cool...it wasn't very encouraging coz I felt like I was an outsider who didn't fit in, but then it's like I had to just show them the passion and the love for it, and unfortunately the ones who couldn't see it, I lost some friends along the way coz we were just on two different paths, two different understandings' (Ben)

Ngozi talked about taking all her subjects at school seriously including art and design, a subject that her peers did not take seriously, she felt she had to be independent in taking a different perspective towards her art and design education compared to her peers in order to be academically successful. Similarly in Ben's extract there was a distancing from peers, and he talked about 'loosing friends' as a result of choosing to pursue art and design at secondary school. For Ngozi, Toyin and Ben choosing to study art and design meant that there was a loss of allegiance with peer groups, their experiences demonstrated aspirational capital as they chose to study GCSE art and Design in what could be seen as a student environment which was hostile to art and design education.

In the above comment Ben talked about losing friends due to choosing art and design, and in section 6.2.2 it was discussed that at school he was the only Black student in the art and design classroom. Thus it could be said that his narrative extracts present similarities with findings by Sewell (1997) whose research on Black boys in secondary school showed that high achievement in school for Black boys often came at a social cost including loosing allegiance with peer groups. Dash (1999) has argued that some Black students were keen to

distance themselves from what they identified to be a 'white' curriculum, and as can be seen from the previous chapter the art and design curriculum was identified as Eurocentric by a number of participants. Whilst Ladson-Billings (1999:9) has identified that 'school achievement' and 'intelligence' is often seen as synonymous with 'whiteness'. This ties in with arguments by Sewell (1997) that Black students who wanted to do well within the existing curriculum often became 'raceless' – that is distancing themselves from their own race, in order to achieve in school. It can be argued that this notion is reflected in the below comments by Ben.

Ben commented about his experience of attending an open day for his foundation art course

> 'When I went there for viewing I just felt completely at home, you know likeminded people, although my physical form was completely different from the rest it didn't matter because we all had one main like, you know and mind frame, that connected all of us and it was a love for art. So I felt at home, I blended in' (Ben)

Ben talked about feeling at home and having similar perspectives to the majority white students he encountered, but simultaneously he also highlighted that although he looked different to them he was able to 'blend in' with the students. And although Ben did not specifically talk about distancing himself from his race he did present himself as able to see beyond racial barriers, and this was part of why he had been successful, putting forth the notion that those who saw racial barriers and allowed it to limit their aspirations were using it as an excuse.

> '…it was nice being able to engage with you and those types of questions, coz I think being a young Black artist (pauses)…and being in a predominantly white culture, white country, and coming from where I came from…I hope I was able to give enough for you to understand my journey and what it was like…with hopes that other young Black children, from all sorts of ethnicities, Black or white, that they just through those bonds and barriers of the cultural, and the whole race barrier, and just see life and see us as equals you know. Because I find that a lot of people use it as excuses to not do something that they really love…I think it's possible for *anybody*, for like any Black person, any Asian, any ethnic, *anyone*, but like first thing they need to do is get the racial barrier thing out of their minds, because if they think like that, they're always gonna attract it…but I feel like once you have that barrier whether it's

racial…out of your mind…and when you feel good inside I think it's expressed on the outside…and when you apply yourself for a job, or for an interview and you feel good about yourself, that person will see it and they will hire you regardless of what you look like, there's a Black president so it's possible…'

The above comments by Ben could also be viewed as a self-preservation mechanism given the existing barriers, which in Ben's case was being Black in a predominantly white environment. It was a mentality that worked in helping him to access, enter and progress through HE art and design through a belief that his race and ethnicity would not hold him back from any successes. Ben's focus on 'blending in' to an environment where he was the only Black student and also his comments around BAME groups needing to look beyond the 'race barrier' in order to be successful, it could be argued belies a survival strategy as a reaction to an art and design space which had inscribed a worthy art student as one whose characteristics were 'historically associated with Eurocentric forms of masculinity' (Burke and McManus 2011:706), similarly Leathwood (2010) has argued that this is the concept of the 'ideal' student within educational discourses in general. And thus the ability to 'fit in' could be viewed as potentially problematic for Black African students given what has been identified as the 'overwhelming whiteness of the university system' (Reay et al 2001d:865). Difficulty fitting in due to being a Black African student could be seen in the experience of Iman who highlighted that she felt that she stood out as the only Black and Muslim person on her course; 'I remember…being in a room as like, the only Black, Muslim girl and like everyone around me was white…and non-Muslim, and I felt like, can I talk about this in front of everyone', this experience of not belonging she felt impacted on her ability to engage with students and staff particularly in relation to discussing topics around her culture and religion. Dialogue with teachers and peers is an important part of education, and thus difficulties doing this would have impacted on Iman's educational growth and development. Thus students who found themselves in this position would need to find a mechanism to cope with the situation.

It is suggested that the theme within Ben's extract- drawing out positive examples of Black people who are seen to have transcended the race barrier like Barack Obama- is that of 'being positive' which he used to differentiate himself from others, this has been identified as a survival strategy utilised by some members of BAME groups as a form of protection

against existing racism (Gunaratnam 2003). However, identifying BAME group members who have succeeded as a sign that racism does not exist has been problematised by CRT theorists, arguing that this type of race neutral perspective places lack of success at the hands of the disadvantaged individual rather than as part of the larger societal inequalities at play (Ladson-Billings 1999). But as a necessary survival strategy it worked in helping Ben manoeuvre and exist within a Eurocentric art and design educational space.

Conclusion to Overcoming barriers through individual aspiration, resistance and self-efficacy

This section has discussed individual facilitating strategies to participation in and navigation within HE art and design, which are linked to individual self-efficacy levels, aspirational, resistant and navigational capital. And which participants used to overcome familial and institutional barriers.

The limiting familial barriers that the participants, discussed in this section, had to overcome were; art and design not being seen as a viable career given societal inequalities and differing outlooks on life between parent and child. For those who were able to, these barriers were overcome by individual facilitating strategies that consisted of aspirational capital, resistant capital and high self-efficacy levels. The institutional limiting barriers that some participants had to overcome and which were evident in the narrative extracts discussed here included; lack of support and advice from teachers and tutors and generally manoeuvring within a Eurocentric art and design educational space. In order to overcome these barriers the participants similarly demonstrated high self-efficacy levels, aspirational and resistant capital and also navigational capital as the Eurocentric educational space they were in necessitated that they utilise strategies to navigate it as Black African students in space not created with them in mind.

The findings discussed here indicate that the participants demonstrated a range of different ways in which they individually overcame limiting barriers, all of which hinged on a continued, determined and undeviating focus to study art and design. Through individual and personal actions it can be seen that they demonstrated a great deal of persistence and perseverance, whilst maintaining a focus on their goals despite the familial and institutional

barriers that they faced. They adopted these strategies in order to manage the challenging circumstances they found themselves within the process of participation in and navigation within HE art and design.

7.3 Parental Support and Encouragement to pursue an art and design education (familial)

Arguments put forward by Yosso (2005) around the harvesting and utilising of the strengths demonstrated by minority groups in manoeuvring within the education system draws on, among others, the work of Delgado Bernal (2001) and her notion of 'pedagogies of the home'. This has been defined by Delgado Bernal (2001) as

> 'communication, practices, and learning that occur in the home and community - pedagogies of the home - often serve as a cultural knowledge base that helps students survive and succeed within an educational system that often excludes and silences them' (Delgado Bernal 2001:623)

Taking on board Delgado Bernal's notions it has been identified that within the narratives of the participants there were two forms of 'pedagogies of the home' being enacted which can be identified as facilitating strategies. One could be seen in the ways in which parents in particular were teaching their children how to survive within unequal socio-economic structures through both overtly and subtly instilling aspirations and positive support in pursuing an education and career in art and design. The other form could be seen in the art and design practices that were happening in the home of a number of participants, in which some participants actively participated in through encouragement and education from their parents whilst for others it was a more subtle practice and tended to be in the background.

It has been argued that existing forms of parental involvement, through cultural transmission within minoritised and immigrant families, of moral support which happen in the home often are invisible and go unrecognised within discourses on parental involvement in education (Auerbach 2006). Auerbach identified that Latino immigrant

parents for example utilised moral support as the main form of involvement in their children's educational lives, and that moral support included; highlighting the importance of education, as well as 'encouraging students to study, do well and go to college' (Auerbach 2006:276). However she argued that

> 'What counts as parental involvement to most educators is practices traditionally associated with White, middle class parents like homework help and attendance at school events' (Auerbach 2006:277)

As a result of the above expectation other forms of parental involvement are not always recognised in educational institutions (Parker, Deyhle and Villenas 1999). Hidlago (1999) argues of the importance of looking for existing strengths within 'culturally diverse families' (Hidlago 1999:10), by doing this it becomes possible to draw out existing forms of positive cultural wealth (Yosso 2005). One of these forms of cultural wealth has been identified as 'pedagogies of the home' and which is discussed below.

7.3.1   Pedagogies of the home - instilling aspirations and providing positive support

Familial support can be seen as important and effective in students doing well educationally, Finnigan (2009) identified that 'non-traditional' art and design students who were academically successful on HE art and design courses had access to good support systems which included their families. The narrative extracts discussed here identify various examples of familial support that existed for a number of participants. The participants' parents who supported their children's aspirations towards art and design and did not steer them towards more 'stable' careers it could be argued saw beyond limitations from societal inequalities, and to a certain extent also showed a form of implicit activism in that they worked against allowing existing limitations to restrain and restrict their children and their children's aspirations. The previous chapter identified the barriers that were impeding the participants' access, entry and progression – with racism and its resulting underlying barriers being named as part of these limiting barriers. Critical Race Theory identifies that it is important to link the 'practice of racism to the ongoing struggles for social justice through the resilience and resistance of families and communities' (Villenas et al 1999:36).This

section aims to show examples of acts of 'resilience and resistance' demonstrated by participants' parents and the ways in which they operated as facilitating strategies.

A number of participants talked about the full support they received from their parents and as such are examples of the ways in which pedagogies of the home, where parents both overtly and subtly instilled aspirations and positive support in pursuing an education and career in art and design, can be seen. Identifying the ways in which parents provide overt and subtle support through instilling and encouraging aspirations towards art and design education provides a counter discourse to that which has focused on discussing BAME parents steering children towards certain professional and vocational subjects (Connor et al 2004) with little attention paid to the ways in which BAME parents encourage, support and inspire their children to enter art and design education.

Ngozi in her interview commented that because of her mother's encouragement choosing art and design was a 'no brainer'. She credited her mother with leaving doors open for her and her siblings and allowing them to explore their full potential.

> '…the thing I credit my mum is that she never closed any doors towards us…our mum was quite liberal; do what you want as long as your happy, so I'm in the arts, my brother's in finance and banking and my sister is an engineer…I guess because of the nature of my mum, because we never had the pressure of you have to be a Doctor, you have to be a Dentist, you have to be Teacher…I think she was like a barrier to all of that, so we could just do at will, what we wanted to…coz everyone thinks 'Ngozi' is artistic you kind of just do it.' (Ngozi)

Ngozi identified her mother as liberal, and as never placing pressure on her or steering her towards certain careers and as such Ngozi saw herself as artistic and thus focused on this without a second thought. Peter also highlighted that he had the full support of his parents when he decided to study art and design, by stating that this aspiration 'wasn't a surprise' to his parents, Peter identified that his parents knew him well and where his aspirations lay.

> 'my parents are really open to me doing whatever I want to do as long as it's not stupid, so when I told them I wanted to do the foundation course and then go on into the art and design world…it wasn't a surprise, not once did they say, oh I don't think you should do that, they were just completely supportive of it' (Peter)

Whilst Lidia commented

> '…I remember the first time I got even any kind of recognition for doing something that was good was my mum, who still went on and on about this drawing that I drew, I did of my teddy bear, and she was like; *Oh my gosh this is so realistic, you can almost touch the fur! Oh my gosh!* And she went round showing everyone…(*How old were you?)* I don't remember…I was very young' (Lidia)

In Lidia's extract it can be seen that from a young age her mother was encouraging her artistic abilities. Lidia credited this support from her mother, which she felt came quite early on in her art and design educational journey, as the little bit of 'fuel' she needed to continue to pursue art and design education even when she was receiving no support from her teacher at secondary school. Lidia felt that it did not matter that her teacher did not have belief in her abilities, as her mother had already instilled self-belief in Lidia when she was younger. However beyond that encouragement in her early childhood, Lidia's parents remained supportive throughout her art and design education.

> 'from the moment I chose to do my BTEC, there was support from both my parents all the way, because they could see I became myself…I *loved* it…I was in my element…so when I started applying to the universities, I was fully supported. *My dad took me to the interview;* my mum helped me do my portfolio' (Lidia)

Lidia's parents were fully involved in her educational journey, including taking her to interviews and helping with the creation of a portfolio. Part of the support Lidia's mother showed her, which can be seen in the way she helped Lidia create a portfolio, could be considered a result of her mother having similar understandings of what constituted a successful career and life path to Lidia. Her mother not only practiced art and design at home (discussed in the next section) but also studied for a degree in Fashion design.

> 'So when she came here…she studied Fashion Design at university…she doesn't have any qualifications that would be recognised here, so she did her college first, then she started her degree, but I don't think she finished it…(*Do you know why that was?)…*I think time, and also family commitments. She thoroughly enjoyed it' (Lidia)

It can be seen that Lidia and her mother had similar educational aspirations and this coupled with encouragement of her artistic abilities from a young age, as well as helping her with her portfolio demonstrates that Lidia's mother in particular was very much able to instil aspirations and provide positive support.

Although they did not state this directly in their narratives, it could be argued that a deeper reading of Ngozi and Lidia's extracts suggests an underlying form of implicit activism where their parents perhaps were encouraging of their aspirations because they were challenging the master narrative, discussed in the previous chapter - that art and design is not seen as part of the African culture, which sought to limit the options and opportunities available to their children. Thus Ngozi and Lidia's parents were engaging in what could be viewed as transformational resistance (Solorzano and Delgardo Bernal 2001). Solorzano and Delgardo Bernal (2001) have argued that resistance theories emphasise 'that individuals are not simply acted on by structures' but rather they 'negotiate and struggle with structures and create meanings of their own from these interactions' and they have further ascertained that transformational resistance then is a resistance in which there is both 'a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice' (Solorzano and Delgardo Bernal 2001:315).

> '(*Why do you think that they (parents) didn't have the same attitude as others towards fashion and art?)...*my mother's mother, she went to an Italian convent school and she learnt a lot of things about crocheting, about how they did their homes... so, when my mum was college age she went to a sewing college or school, so that's where she learnt pattern making...that's where she learnt to do crocheting and knitting...So most people would send their kids to learn to cook...my mum and my aunt didn't, so all their extra time was spent...learning these skills rather than cooking, which is absurd in that generation...Coz whenever I would tell people that my mum didn't know how to cook until after she got married, they would be like; *what kind of mother did she have*, so when I tell them...I didn't know how to cook, they'd be like; *what*, because...as an African *mother* that's like a must have, one thing you need to teach your daughter is to be able to cook, so that when she does get married she knows how to look after her family...That I think is the difference between most parents that I know, in my generation and also in my culture...And it goes all the way back down to my grandmother'(Lidia)

Transformational resistance can be seen in Lidia's extract above. Lidia identified herself as coming from a family of women who were constantly challenging dominant, master narratives about women's' places in African society. She looked back on her own family history which can be seen to hold moments of transformational resistance, to explain why her parents, unlike her wider family in Ethiopia (see previous chapter section 6.2.1), fully supported and encouraged her aspirations to art and design education. Ngozi also clearly identified that her mother was 'quite liberal', 'did not close any doors' and did not place any pressure on her and her siblings to follow certain prescribed educational pathways. Therefore it can be argued that Ngozi's and Lidia's parents were not simply acted on by structures but they negotiated and struggled with them, critiquing and challenging the societal inequalities that created barriers for their second generation immigrant children.

Whilst the participants discussed so far talked about what could be deemed as quite overt support from their parents, others experienced much more subtle support. For example Ben's parents although they did not agree with his educational choices, did not actively go out of their way to stop him as Asa's father did. During the course of his fine art degree Ben lived at home with his parents, and after graduation he continued to live with them whilst working on his artwork and therefore not 'out there making a living'. This can be viewed as subtle support, because although they did not want Ben to study art and design and pursue a career in it, he was able to live at home when he was studying and afterwards as he established a career in the field.

Asa who received a lot of challenges from her father in regards to studying art and design, recalled her mother giving her what can be seen as subtle support, such as putting Asa's artwork on display in their family home

> 'my mum's a dressmaker, in her studio in the house she's got her noticeboard, and there was one like painting I did of like Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane praying, and I remember doing that in like primary school and it's still on the wall in like our house now…is that an act of encouragement, well yeah, coz my mum must like it to put it up there' (Asa)

This understated act of support and encouragement from Asa's mother by displaying her child's painting can be seen as an example of instilling aspiration in Asa from a young age, particularly as Asa noted that the act happened whilst she was in primary school. Asa's mother also seemed to facilitate Asa's journey to HE art and design by playing the role of mediator between Asa and her father, such that Asa recalled receiving financial support from both her parents, as a result of being able to talk to her mother when she needed money to pay fees for her foundation course

> '…after the A Level now, because before you can do a BA on most design courses they want you to do a foundation, so then I applied for the foundation and because I was older, because I missed that year I was 19 as opposed to being 18 so I had to pay for it…and I didn't have that money so I had to ask my parents…So I spoke to my mum, I didn't tell my dad, and my mum went and told my dad, and the next thing I know my mum gave me a cheque for the money (Asa)

Asa's extracts showed that her mother played what may have seemed like a peripheral role but was in fact pivotal, by supporting Asa's participation in HE Art and Design through subtle but key forms of support and encouragement. Ben and Asa's extracts showed that their parents were involved in facilitating their journeys to HE art and design, although there were no overt discussions about their aspirations, the encouragement was there in the background, in their home environments, through small actions.

'Parents of colour' from African American and Latino communities have been identified as 'instructing their children to engage in behaviours and maintain attitudes that challenge the status quo' (Yosso 2005:81). It is argued that this section has demonstrated examples of this same process in the experiences of some of the participants in this study. Through both subtle and more overt strategies parents instilled aspiration and provided positive support to their children and this worked as strategies which facilitated participation in and navigation within HE art and design for those participants when this was often not the expected educational trajectory. Thus these findings also present a counter discourse to previous findings about BAME parents steering their children towards certain professional and vocational subjects (Conor et al 2004) in which art and design was not included, with

little attention paid to the ways in which BAME parents encourage, support and inspire their children to enter art and design education.

7.3.2   Pedagogies of the home - art and design practices in the home

Burke and McManus (2009, 2011) and Dean (2004) in research which looked at the process of art and design degree course interviews discussed and identified the type of cultural capital that was expected at these interviews. The interview process very much expected candidates to know certain types of art work and attend exhibitions at well-known galleries to name but a few. And this expected knowledge was knowledge which tended to replicate white middle class norms, as a result BAME and working class candidates who could not satisfy these answers were often rejected at interviews (Burke and McManus 2009). This form of knowledge, it could be argued is also what is then expected once the student enters and looks to progress within an art and design degree course. When discussing engagement, discussion and viewing art and design in the previous chapter, it was noted that there was little museum attendance, even less gallery attendance and limited overt discussion and engagement with art works by the majority of participants and their families. However, Stern, Seifert and Vitiello (2010) noted that their research on cultural participation of immigrants in Philadelphia, USA showed that immigrants were much more likely to engage in cultural activities at home and 'the types of participation in which they engage are less orientated to programs and venues that are the focus of official non-profits' (Stern, Seifert and Vitiello 2010:39). Corresponding to this in the narrative extracts discussed here, it can be seen that there were number of participants who engaged, discussed and viewed art and design work and practices but predominantly within their home environment - through a creative practice actioned by their parents and within their communities. And thus it would seem that the types of engagement the participants mentioned were not ones that are predominantly recognised and/or expected within the art and design educational space. Thus it could be maintained that the cultures that Black African students are coming from may not place importance on nurturing 'cultural capital' in the way that white middle class culture does (Yosso 2005).

My analysis in this section seeks to extend Delgado Bernal's concept of pedagogies of the home, which focused on how Latino students drew from the intangible concepts of 'bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, and spiritualties' (Delgado Bernal 2001:628) in their Latino culture in order to be successful in education, by focusing on the tangible skills of an art and design practice which happened in the homes of some participants in this study.

Art and design practices were happening at home for a number of participants; and some participants actively participated in it through encouragement and education from their parents. Lidia in particular seemed to believe that more than just watching her mother engage in her practice she was also learning and receiving an art and design education in the home

> '…in Ethiopia you don't get any kind of art lessons…in primary school and secondary school there were no art subjects. So it was just purely what we were doing at home. My mum…is a designer, so she draws a lot I see her drawing a lot, she makes garments…(*Did you do a lot of drawing when you were younger*?)…I'm sure my mum encouraged us, I think partly also seeing her being so creative in the house…she would make the curtains, she'd make our clothes…there was nothing she didn't do…Even in the kitchen as well she would, after cooking, present her food with some sort of design, so design and art and colours and all that are all part of everyday life for us at home. So it's hard not to notice them…we did saturate whatever was happening at home, coz it was not anywhere else. We weren't taught anything else anywhere else, it had to come from home…The source of encouragement…of inspiration…the resources…were from my mum' (Lidia)

> '(*You said then that any artwork you did do when you were younger was at home? So what kind of things did you do at home?*) So apart from drawing…maybe dressed out dolls…I know we did some knitting…you see her do things, you wanna help…so even if we didn't do anything that made something…we could see it from beginning to end…she'd have…fake pearls all over her dress, but she would first measure them and make a grid onto the fabric, then she'd stitch it exactly…and then she's gonna cut it and make it into her dress…(*Would you say that impacted on you wanting to do fashion?) Yes,* I always saw her' (Lidia)

Whereas Lidia's engagement with her mother's practice was much active and involved and she credits watching her mother as significantly influencing her decision to study fashion,

other participants commented that their mothers' were involved in textiles but it can be seen that their engagement with it was much more subconscious, more subtle, where they were surrounded by a creative practice but it was not openly discussed as such.

Iqra, who at the time of the interview was about to start a degree course in fashion, had parents who were apprehensive about her studying art and design but she determined and went ahead to study it anyway, she recalled her mother making clothing articles and taking courses in fashion

> 'My mum used to do, like pattern cutting and stuff like that, but it's more fashion based…Some lady, she's a technician and she sometimes teaches us and she used to teach my mum…my mum was really good at like making clothes…(she) used to go to some classes… she got some qualifications for it I think… So she's really good at that… She used to practice on me when I was a kid but she doesn't do it anymore. *(So did she make you clothes?)* Yeah I have like this blazer…it's nicely made, you'd think its shop bought. And I've got a few stuff she used to make me when I was a kid, like she'd make me a skirt, a little cardigan and stuff like that' (Iqra)

In this extract Iqra recalled her mother attending classes, gaining qualifications and making clothes at home, but in her interview she also talked about her mother discouraging her from studying art and design. Iqra did not make a direct connection with watching and learning from her mother in the same way that Lidia did, however like Lidia it can be seen that Iqra chose to study and pursue a creative practice that she had seen her mother engage in at home.

Asa's comments about her mother's and her father's art and design practice were already discussed in the previous chapter, but they have been reconsidered here as they add to the evidence of an existing pedagogy in the home of some of the research participants.

> '…it was funny, my mum's a dressmaker so we were surrounded by her, we had her clients coming home, she fitting them, and that is an element of creativity…it wasn't talked about in term of like recreational, it was just talked about in terms of matter of fact; *oh what are you making today, oh for Mrs so and so, ah this is nice…*and that was it…I didn't really get into it, a lot of people are surprised I can't even sew a button…*(So it wasn't something that you got involved in doing with your mum?)* No, I was sat at the table when she was there…sometimes I would play around with the

pins…I'd come home sometimes and she's got the patterns out on the living room floor, she's cutting…so yeah subconsciously…there was a practice that I was surrounded around…but it wasn't discussed as something creative…it was a job…it was something that brought money in and my mum got paid to do' (Asa)

For Asa, like Iqra, there was a much more subtle creative practice which tended to be in the background of day to day living with no direct encouragement from her mother to pursue it herself. Asa in hindsight specifically described what her mother was doing as a creative practice, yet at the same time talked of how it was not discussed as something creative, rather it was a job to pay the bills, and so it was happening and influencing Asa subconsciously. Similar to her mother, Asa also talked about her father engaging in and discussing a creative practice that he was a part of, but again this was also not overtly discussed or perceived as a creative practice by Asa's father

'…my Dad used to be a masquerade, I don't know if you know what masquerades are? *(Yeah)* He used to dress up in the outfits…and they perform and they have these dances and these rituals…One of the things of being an African is, performance…even when they are doing their libations that's a performance as far as I'm concerned. *(What are libations?)* Like for instance when they toast, when they clink the glasses…my Dad still does it…whenever they open brandy they pray over it in his language and then they toast it, they pass the cup around and the elders drink from it first, then they pass it to all the males then all the women, it's like a blessing that they do with it, for me that's a performance'

…he was the masquerade, he's the one that dresses up, now when I think about him when we have family around or when we are at like social events, he becomes very animated…I look at him and think;…*why did you not support what I wanted to do, when I look at you and all the things you engage in.* For instance when I went the first time (to Nigeria) he was the one who told me to go to Kalabar and this carnival…and he's the one that's always talking about the outfits' (Asa)

In the second quote in particular Asa identified the practices that her father was also engaging in were creative practices akin to the art and design she wanted to study, but again it was not perceived as such by her father. By drawing out a connection between creative activities that happened in her Nigerian family home but which were seen as integral to daily life, with the art and design practices that she was interested in engaging in

that were more Western, Asa was displaying what could be seen as an Afrocentric perspective. She was looking to understand better the African culture – in this case Nigerian culture and its norms – and how that inadvertently may have influenced her interest in art and design, but which when viewed mainly through a Eurocentric lens the connection between the two may have been missed. This idea that art and design is integral to daily life in African communities, rather than separated as an art and design practice comes through again here (it is discussed in section 6.2.1), particularly for Iqra and Asa as their parents did not connect the creativity happening in their home with the art and design education that their children were looking to pursue.

Similarly by looking to understand better the African cultures that the participants were coming from through an Afrocentric theoretical perspective, this research study has been able to draw out African cultural norms in particular art and design practices which happened in the home environment of the Black African participants in this study. Taking this a step further, it has been identified that some participants engaged with art and design within the African culture back on the continent itself – again like the creative practices in the home this engagement with art and design existed outside of the educational institution, outside the typical idea of attendance at a museum or gallery.

Peter talked about being influenced by the art and design work he saw in Mauritius through his Uncle's fashion business. He saw the influence as subconscious, he gained a lot of knowledge through watching his Uncle and he noted that his Uncle's influence was reflected in his own artwork.

> '…my family in Mauritius on my mum's side, they're all involved in the art and design world in Mauritius, and so my influences were really from them, watching what they would do, and paintings and stuff, and they were into fashion as well…without me knowing that's what was influencing me, and you can see it in my work as well…Usually I would go back for about a month and just spend time with them, and my Uncle he's like the main person that does all the arts…I would just hang out with him and learn stuff really, not with him sort of sitting me down and saying; you should learn this, just being around him in that environment, you just pick up things without even realising… his main thing was fashion, really abstract and conceptual like garments which will go on to runway, and he'd do photo-shoots and stuff like

that…Mauritius is a small place, so when I was going round the streets I'd see my Uncle's work' (Peter)

Abena remembered sitting and watching her local tailor in Ghana as the catalyst for her interest in art and design

> *(When would you say you realised that you had an interest in art and design?)* Well I would say like way back when, like in Ghana I used to like, go to the tailor shop and like sit around, and like chat to her and watch when she was making clothes and stuff, and then like, I would take scraps home and sew clothes for me dolls and stuff, and I've always had that kind of interest, and so when I came over here, like we had more of an opportunity to do art, coz I'd never really had the opportunity to do art when I was in Ghana in school, so like I had more of that here, so like I got to like, be more interested in art and then it just grew from there, and like I've always loved like fashion and stuff, and like making stuff, so that's how it kind of started' (Abena)

Abena like Lidia recalled that there was not much opportunity for an art and design education in Ghana, but she learnt a great deal from watching her local tailor, and the skills she picked up she would practice at home. Both Peter and Abena saw this form of engagement as a catalyst to their interest and aspirations to art and design and valued its input in their lives. Peter did not recall attending any museums or galleries with his family, and Abena recalled a few trips to help her settle in when she first arrived from in the UK from Ghana, but other than this she did not attend galleries and museums with her family. Neither one recalled any type of discussion about art and design work with their families, but both went on to study art and design; with Peter having completed a Graphic Design degree at the time of the interview, and Abena about to embark on a foundation course in art and design with an end sight of studying fashion at university.

Conclusion to Parental support and encouragement to pursue art and design education

The pedagogies of the home discussed here are rich in cultural capital. Some participants were tangibly engaging in a creative practice, whilst others watched and observed from the background. But there was knowledge and wealth in what the saw their families and members of their communities doing and which they drew from in order to access, enter and progress in HE art and design. The overt and subtle art and design practices happening within the home environment and on the African continent was for a number of participants

the main form of engagement with, and discussion and viewing of art and design artwork, this differed from the attendance of museums and galleries which was often expected by art and design educational institutions. The findings suggest that the pedagogies of the home discussed here, were knowledge and wealth that fell outside of that which was accepted in art and design educational institutions, but which for a number of participants worked as facilitating strategies.

Research by Moll et al (1992:132) focused on understanding and utilising 'the knowledge and skills found in local households' in Mexican communities in America. They were able to identify a broad range of knowledge demonstrated and produced in the homes of Mexican communities, ranging from agriculture, and economics to medicine, which were related to households' rural conditions or familial occupations. This range of knowledge was seen in a positive light as 'funds of knowledge' which had previously been unseen but which could be utilised by educational institutions.

Similarly by highlighting the forms of creative practice carried out in the homes and the cultures of the research participants it can be seen that there were modes of engagement, discussion and viewing of art and design work and practices that consciously and subconsciously worked as facilitating strategies for some participants who accessed, entered and progressed in HE art and design, but which often go unrecognised within educational institutions as they are not the dominant cultural capital. It can also be seen that the aspirations instilled and support given by parents was also pedagogy in the home which worked as a facilitating strategy. As a facilitating strategy it helped some participants pursue an educational trajectory that was often not expected of them as members of a minority ethnic group, and which often presented a range of barriers for them to overcome. It is suggested that what can be learnt from the support given by parents is that parents were engaging in challenging the status quo and working against limitations that sought to restrict and restrain their children's aspirations.

7.4   Individual and familial knowledge and understanding of routes into HE art and design

Research by Okon (2005) identified lack of support and advice from teachers as a barrier to participation in HE art and design. Similarly Burke and McManus (2009) noted that there was often little clear advice and guidance available to students given the complicated nature of applying to HE art and design. The participant narrative extracts discussed in the previous chapter also showed examples where participants received limited support and advice. The narrative extracts discussed in this section show that some participants felt that on a number of occasions knowledge and understanding of routes into HE art and design came from their own personal research and/or was instigated and supported by their family and it can be seen that this worked as a facilitating strategy for them in regards to participating in and navigating with HE art and design.

When looking for universities to apply to Ngozi received a lot of support and advice from her mother. She talked of a combination of her doing her own personal research and her mother doing research which helped them to understand the routes into HE art and design and helped Ngozi with the decision making process. This was juxtaposed against Ngozi's comments of the poor career advice she received at school and sixth-form college.

> '(*Did you talk it through when coming to the decision?*) …my mum was always open to what we wanted to do, and so when we discussed it with her there was no form of pressure…(…*you know you can have careers advisers)…*That was none existent really, in secondary school that was rubbish and poor, in Sixth form you only were pushed to do it when your UCAS application was coming to a close…you'd go there, they didn't really have much of a knowledge and understanding, so you would just look through the literature available….And personal research and my mum would do some as well…where she worked she would talk about us and our directions and education, so they themselves would give pointers, where to source information about the league tables and how to understand what it means and what areas, what institutions are better suited to certain subjects. So she did her own research and helped us with our research and that came together. And then from that we decided which ones (universities) I would look to visit and apply' (Ngozi)

'(*And you mentioned that when you were thinking about university, your mum spoke to a lot of her colleagues, would you say that they were quite helpful to her?*)…considering she's an immigrant to this country, she didn't know the…education system…so she credits them, just being open with their experiences, their knowledge to it all…I do anyway. She…always used to buy us tons of books and stuff like that, but the system in itself, if your parents don't know it, you can't tap into it, you can't really utilise it. I don't think if she didn't discuss her reservations of the area we were growing up in, in East London, that she would have been pushed, like; I'm going to actually leave East London and go to Essex, to give my children a better chance. (*Are you saying that she discussed that with people at work?*) In some senses yeah, about the financial ways of getting a mortgage, and I guess understanding the education system of secondary schools, opportunities, how you transition from each one and the other, how your postcodes plays a part when you're doing an application for university, when you have a job application people look at where you're residing stuff like that, so I think they helped her with that, because she wouldn't have known otherwise' (Ngozi)

Research by Hudson (2009) highlighted that students from disadvantaged backgrounds who were studying art and design pointed out that their family members did not have the cultural capital necessary to support them in their studies. Mills (2008) noted that for marginalised students, their education provision was 'impacted by the cultural capital of their parents', and Mills highlighted that in research conducted by Reay (1998) recent immigrant parents felt unable to compensate for what they saw to be 'gaps in their children's provision' which existed due to not having the expected white middle class capital (Mills 2008:84). In Ngozi's narrative extract it can be seen that Ngozi's mother was aware that as an immigrant to the UK she had limited understanding of the education system and the best way to engage and utilise it in order for her children to get the most from the system. There was an understanding that she needed to have a certain cultural capital necessary for her children to succeed in education and she sought this out and was able to find it from her work colleagues. This knowledge and understanding of white middle class capital helped facilitate a relatively smooth access, entry and progression into HE art and design for Ngozi.

Like Ngozi, Lidia also had help outside of her educational institution in regards to knowledge and routes into art and design education. And similarly Lidia also pointed out the poor advice she received at school, advice that she believed to be unhelpful to her when making decisions about her next step after GCSE.

> '(*Did you talk it through with your parents, what your plan was after doing GCSEs?*) I think so because…the careers adviser we got in school…he put information into a questionnaire and the machine tells you what possible careers you can have, so ridiculous…then a friend of my mum's took us to this college to get careers advice. She was from the Caribbean and I think she recognised that we needed help, coz no one seems to be helping us. Either my mum confided in her…or she noticed…but thanks to her we went to this careers adviser either in college, or outside agency like Connections or something. And then we talked through, about what I liked and what I can do, what I'm good at, and then she said this is the route you can take…and I remember I was so grateful that I had that option to go through college, doing what I loved doing…Now I don't remember if my mum was at that meeting, I don't think she was, but her friend is the one who took us.' (Lidia)

As can be seen from the above extract, a family friend was made aware (possibly by Lidia's mother) that Lidia needed help and guidance and took her to the relevant advisers who were able to assist Lidia in making her decisions. Lidia's extract demonstrated that, whilst her and Ngozi both felt the school careers advisers were not helpful, it was possible to receive good advice from careers advisers. In later email correspondence Lidia identified that the reason that she highlighted that the family friend was of Caribbean heritage was because she had been in the country longer than Lidia and her family and so better understood the British educational system. Having received poor advice at school it can be seen that Lidia was particularly grateful to receive advice that was geared to her and her interests and which helped her to move forward.

The experiences of Ngozi and Lidia suggest that within their family circles they had individuals who went out of their way to seek knowledge that was necessary for Lidia and Ngozi to take the right steps in order to access, enter and progress into HE art and design, knowledge which Ngozi and Lidia did not feel they received from their respective educational institutions. It is suggested here that both Ngozi and Lidia's mothers had an awareness of the disadvantaged position they and their children were in as immigrants, and

sought out the necessary capital they came to understand that their children needed to be successful in the British education system (Mills 2008). It could be said that Lidia and Ngozi's mothers were supplementing the lack of institutional advice that their daughters had received by going out of their way to seek further knowledge and understanding of the routes that lead to HE art and design.

Lidia also identified that her mother's existing knowledge due to her creative background was useful as she helped Lidia with her portfolio for college

> '(*So in terms of preparing to enter the college that you entered, did you have to prepare any work?)* I had to have a body of work, like a portfolio, so I took the work that I did at school, I made a wooden clock, I had made a silk batik, scarves, and my drawings and paintings, so yeah I made it into a portfolio, my mum helped me, so I had a portfolio to go to the interview' (Lidia)

The portfolio is an important part, 'a standard requirement' for entry into HE art and design, and through which judgements about students' abilities are made (Burke and McManus 2009). In the above extract Lidia was talking about entry to college for a two year GNVQ course but she also identified the need for a portfolio in order to gain entry to her course, she noted that she 'had to have a body of work' suggesting also that it was a standard requirement for entry onto her GNVQ course. Therefore not having institutional advice on how to create a portfolio could have been detrimental to Lidia's art and design educational journey. However with her mother's knowledge and understanding Lidia was able to produce a portfolio that assisted her in gaining entry onto the GNVQ course.

Participants like Asa however, who did not have the overt support of her parents, talked much more about the ways they as individuals sought the knowledge and understanding on their own that was necessary for progression. Asa especially had quite a disrupted education between completing her GCSEs and starting her foundation course. She initially attended a private school studying Science based A Levels which were chose for her by her father, but behind his back she enrolled at K*** college to study an art and design based BTEC course and when her father found out she had to change back to the Science based subjects. However, once deciding that she only wanted to study art and design she enrolled

in a different college (S*** college) where she focused only on art and design subjects. But before enrolling in both colleges she talked about doing a lot of personal research.

> '…so basically it was just finding a college that still had spaces on…the BTEC…or that did Graphics, coz again not all colleges did it…I remember…researching and ringing up all these colleges and finding out if they had spaces or if they did this course, or if they did that course' (Asa)

Asa felt that at S*** college where she studied A Level Graphics there was little structured support in terms of advice from the staff members, and students were left to contact staff of their own accord. Because the advice available was unstructured Asa believed that the knowledge she gained about the process of moving towards HE art and design was predominantly self-initiated with Asa taking a lot of ownership.

> '…that support was there, it wasn't like structured… I made allowances; *oh they're artists, that's how it goes…*lessons there was no structure, it wasn't like we are gonna do portfolio now, or talk about portfolios, it was like whenever *you needed it* you went and saw her…and plus there would be notices around the college about UCAS and things like that, so you would know it was in the atmosphere so you would *know* when those times were…so it was like I was already on it, I didn't *need* them to tell me…I was very focused in terms of like *I knew* where I wanted to get, and that came from like my own, and me observing' (Asa)

Asa talked about just 'knowing' when to do things, just 'knowing' the routes into HE art and design, her extracts present her knowledge and understanding as being very individual and personal. Asa highlighted that she did not 'need' anyone to tell her when to take the action necessary for the next educational step forward. And unlike Ben, who in the previous chapter it was discussed that he did not have a lot of knowledge about a range of art and design institutions including the prestigious ones, Asa commented that she had known about one particular prestigious institution and was determined to go there

> '(And then doing the foundation you went to University *****? How did you decide to go there? Why did you pick there?) …when I was in college or…in secondary school, for some reason I knew that was the best place in London to go to…I knew I wanted to go to ****(names university she attended for foundation course and degree)…that's where all the Graphic Designers go…and I was really clear about that,

and like even like on the foundation, when I applied to BA I only put **** (names university she attended for degree) I didn't put anywhere else…The reason why I chose to do the foundation at ****(names university) was for some reason I felt, if I did the foundation there they would be more favourable on me going into the BA, and that was true in the sense that, when we got there…they gave us kind of first refusal, so from the foundation they were willing to take on maybe, say a degree in the first year was maybe like 70 students, they would take at least half from the foundation' (Asa)

Burke and McManus (2009) noted that there existed 'internal progression schemes' at art and design educational institutions which gave places on art and design degree courses to internal students who were already undertaking a foundation diploma course at that institution. This process they argued tended to advantage 'candidates from higher socio-economic and certain background' (white middle class) (Burke and McManus 2009:7). Asa's extract shows that she had managed to tap into this knowledge of the internal progression scheme and thus was able to position herself to gain from this. By utilising the knowledge she had, Asa recalled that she was given a 'kind of first refusal' at the prestigious university, ultimately she was able to study at this prestigious university she had been aspiring to. However it can be seen that she highlighted this information as being self-gained, there was no mention of a third party advising her. There was an understanding by Asa that she needed to enter into the prestigious institutions in order to be successful in the field, and there was a particular route that was more likely to guarantee entry into the degree courses of the prestigious institutions. This information was however, predominantly hidden (Burke and McManus 2009) and thus other students like Ben did not know of its existence.

Iqra also felt that there was a lack of advice from her college and relied on her own knowledge when applying for degree courses

'…I just wanted something which offered the course I wanted and I looked at unis and thought to myself okay, I just relied on online reviews…And then I had some friends…and I just asked…them which uni do you think is good…they said some unis are good but it depends on what you're doing…So I just relied on my instinct' (Iqra)

Iqra talked of relying on her 'instinct', again like Asa she did not identify any significant third party input (her friends' advice seemed minimally helpful), and in particular no institutional

input. The effect of not having institutional advice and support and the haphazard nature of her decision making process could be seen in Iqra's narrative. Within the course of the interview she disclosed that she had applied for the wrong course at one university, but she did not realise this until she was in the interview when the interviewer pointed it out to her, and subsequently she was unsuccessful in gaining a place at that particular university (Iqra did however gain a place at a different university). Individual knowledge and understanding of routes into HE Art and Design did not appear to have worked as efficiently as a facilitating strategy for Iqra when compared to Asa who succeeded relatively smoothly in gaining a place at the prestigious university she had set her focus on. And for other participants it did not work at all as a facilitating strategy as can be seen in Toyin's narrative extract below.

Toyin who did not study HE art and design demonstrated in her narrative that she had a good individual knowledge and understanding of the routes into HE art and design. There were similarities to Asa in that she knew where the best place to study Fashion was. And during her teenage years Toyin also engaged in short courses in art and design, taught art and design to children in her local community, as well as participating in different forms of work experience in the art and design field.

> '(*So do you think your own kind of passion for fashion, did that come in to it when you were making your decision(for university)?*) It did in the sense that should I pick like go to, I've always wanted to go to London College of Fashion, my mum went for a time and I know like it's the best place to be...fashion wise' (Toyin)

> 'I've been to their open day, I've been to like...you know they do short courses in the summer?...I think I really just wanted to be in that building...I did one in costume design...I was like 16, and at the same time I was doing work experience at (names theatre), coz I was thinking maybe costume design might be the way forward for me' (Toyin)

By doing short courses and relevant work experience Toyin was building up knowledge and understanding about the art and design industry and making herself familiar with the institution she aspired to attend. Whilst her knowledge and understanding as well as her self-initiated work experience would seem on the surface to have the potential to be facilitating strategies, at the same time Toyin also saw examples of people who had studied

HE art and design and who after graduating were working in retail and not in the art and design industry.

> '…I've seen people…especially at (retail store A), who've done like followed their dream did arty courses and they're at (retail store A) and they're older than me and I didn't really want that to be me…but then at the same time my parents were like if you do a Business degree you can always go into fashion business…they felt like if I did something fashionie and creative I'd kind of like be narrowing my choice…I could see what they were saying although I didn't totally agree, but then at the same time I could see other people around me and I felt that maybe they'd narrowed their choices and that's why they were… *just* sales assistants' (Toyin)

Therefore despite her knowledge and understanding of routes into HE art and design, Toyin was in part deterred from studying fashion as many of the people she worked with in her part-time retail job when she was studying for her A Levels, had studied art and design based courses and Toyin did not see them as having been successful, and this reflected the advice that her parents were giving her. Clifford (1991: 265) has argued that 'individuals take greater risks when outcome probabilities are unambiguous as opposed to ambiguous or unknown' and for Toyin there was a sense of studying art and design as taking a risk with the possibility of no job at the end of it. The extract suggests that Toyin despite her knowledge and understanding of routes into art and design saw entering the field as a risk she was not prepared to take. Toyin's experience is also very much a reflection of arguments put forward by Bandura (1995:3), who states 'observing others fail despite high effort lowers observers' judgments of their own efficacy and undermines their level of motivation'. Toyin had seen people similar to her who *had* studied HE art and design, and from her perspective she had deemed them not to have been successful, this observation seemed to counteract the facilitating strategy that the knowledge and understanding she had of the routes into HE art and design may have afforded her. Toyin's experience demonstrates that some facilitating strategies worked better for some participants than others.

Conclusion to Individual and Familial knowledge and understanding of routes into HE art and design

The admission processes into HE art and design are often exclusionary, subjective and privilege those from white middle-class backgrounds (Burke and McManus 2009, 2011, Dean 2004) and which makes it harder for BAME groups to gain entry. Thus the importance of having access to the right forms of knowledge is even more important for minoritised groups, but as the extracts in this section show the institutional advice was not always available, and in these cases the knowledge and understanding which helped facilitate entry for some participants was individual and familial.

The findings suggest that the knowledge held by family, which facilitated participation in HE art and design for some participants, was based around the need as immigrants to learn how to adjust and fit into the existing British educational system in order to access, enter and progress in HE art and design. Some participants' narrative extracts showed that it was necessary for their families to gain help from those who had a better understanding of the British educational system, but this help was gained outside of the education institutions that the participants were a part of. Ngozi's mother in particular it could be seen, went out of her way as an immigrant mother to gain the necessary white middle class capital that she saw was needed for her daughter to participate in HE art and design. Thus familial knowledge was particularly helpful in supplementing the poor advice that some participants felt they received at school and sixth-form college.

The findings also suggest that some participants relied more on their own individual knowledge and understanding which they picked up in various ways, and which for some took a haphazard nature. Whilst for some participants their own knowledge and understanding helped them to access, enter and progress, for others like Toyin this knowledge was counteracted by seeing other peoples' efforts to study HE art and design appear not to pay off in the form of a secure job at the end. Thus whilst for some individual knowledge and understanding of routes into HE art and design helped them to continue in their art and design educational path, Toyin's experience demonstrates that for others it was not enough. Toyin's example identifies the importance of considering a range of facilitating strategies and the extent to which they worked for different participants in order to gain a good understanding of the various strategies that facilitated participation in and navigation within HE art and design for the Black African participants in this study.

7.5   **Institutional themes**

This section discusses institutional themes in relation to the facilitating strategies that presented themselves in the research participants' narratives. Although having identified individual and familial facilitating strategies so far in this chapter, a number of participants also acknowledged that they did receive some good and positive support and encouragement from institutions, with a number identifying their FE colleges in particular as the main place where they received this support.

7.5.1   **Support and encouragement from art and design teachers and tutors**

hooks (1994) has argued that a certain aspect of the teaching vocation is 'sacred', that the work of a teacher 'is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of students' (hooks 1994:13). In order for students to engage in deep and intimate learning it is essential that teachers 'teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students' (hooks 1994:13), thus there is a need for a deep almost emotional connection between students and teacher in order for a student to learn and develop to their full potential. Research by Hudson (2009a) which looked at the art and design educational experiences of students from Widening Participation backgrounds, noted that those who had positive experiences with teachers recalled four ways in which it happened 'staff inspiring students, challenging students, supporting students, and influencing student's choices within HE' (Hudson 2009a:15). Finnigan (2009) also noted that success for non-traditional students on HE art and design courses was partly a result of inspiring and supportive tutors. A number of participants were able to identify examples where they received the type of advice and support identified by hooks (1995), Hudson (2009a) and Finnigan (2009) from their teachers and tutors.

Having experienced discrimination and barriers in regards to support and encouragement from her art and design teacher at secondary school, Lidia found that she was very well supported at the FE college where she studied for her GNVQ in art and design.

'...my teacher was amazing at college, she was really helpful...my teacher was really key in me applying for (names university)'(Lidia)

'...second year is when I did my fashion and design, so at that point you only have one teacher, who you have throughout the whole year...guess what, there's about...6 students to that one teacher. That's why it was amazing...So it was a very personal, almost one on one thing...I think she was a knitwear fashion designer, so her input in my life was again, key...She was very positive, she recognised that yes I do have abilities and skills, and that it is very possible for me to pursue a career in it, I'm sure she's even the one person who spoke to me about (names university she attended), coz I think she's the one who told me that, because of where it's situated, which is in the lace industry, textile industry, everything was around (names area that her university was in), so it was a good one for that subject...I'm very...sure she's the one who recommended that to me' (Lidia)

In contrast to her previous educational experience, Lidia's college tutor it would seem was engaging in the aspect of the teaching vocation put forward by hooks (1994), Lidia felt that they had a 'personal' connection and as such her tutor was able to identify Lidia's skills and abilities such that it could be seen that she was a key facilitating strategy in Lidia's participation in HE art and design. Lidia was inspired and supported by her tutor who was able to influence her choices in HE art and design, giving her advice that was informed by her tutor's fashion knowledge but which was tailored to Lidia's individual needs.

Ella was also very positive in regards to the support she received from her college tutors when as a mature single parent she decided to enter into art and design education. It can be seen from the extract that Ella felt that her college tutors listened to her and her aspirations and guided her towards fulfilling them.

'...so I had an idea and I explained to them where I wanted to end up, why I was studying it...that I understand now with the research I've done that I need to have a portfolio to get into fashion, but I have a science background and so my A Levels won't be any good to me to apply for fashion school, they said fine and they were really great, they guided me through it' (Ella)

'...the academic staff from my college I'd say they played a huge role, coz they kept encouraging me; you are good so you should aim high, you should expect the best... That's why I always call them and I always say; you guys don't *understand* as

teaching staff you have so much power over people's lives…that influence, coz that's what encouraged me' (Ella)

Ella highlights what she believed to be the power that teaching staff had in supporting and guiding students. She felt they instilled confidence in her, that they had a belief in her abilities even when she did not and she trusted their judgement. As a result she was able to progress and continue with her art and design education. Like Lidia, Ella also felt that the college staff played a significant role in her participation in HE art and design.

Laker identified supportive teachers at A Level, like Ella, highlighting the positive impact of this type of teacher

> '…tutors always make a difference don't they, so like my teacher on my A Level she did make a difference, coz she was really nice, she was really supportive…she was just really enthusiastic and left a good impression on me' (Laker)

Iman identified within her educational experience support and encouragement from an FE college tutor. When she had decided that she wanted to pursue a more creative educational pathway rather than study a degree in Pharmacy, Iman contacted an FE college and spoke to one of the tutors. Although she had no art and design experience, the tutor talked with her and was open to seeing if she could join the course, and thus made the access and entry process easy for her.

> '…he was like; okay…take a sketchbook home and think of a theme, and just thrash out an idea about it…I think at the time it was the Hijab ban in France…I think I created like this piece about it and I went back and I showed it to him and he was like; okay if you wanna do it you can start, and I was like; *okay!!*..it was like the easiest interview' (Iman)

With Iman's first project, which allowed her access and entry on to the foundation degree, she was able to look at themes that interested her, and which were based around her culture and religion and this was accepted by the college, and given that she had come to apply for the course with minimal art and design educational experience she also found that the FE college easily offered her a place on the course. It can be seen from the participants who identified positive examples of support that this left a lasting impression on them and inspired them to want to continue their art and design education[xxxv].

Ben recalled his secondary school art and design teachers identifying that he was talented in art and design and he found that to be very encouraging

> '…it was encouraged by teachers but it was a bit of both like; *yeah you can do it you've got the skill,* but at the same time it was; *if you wanna do it, you need to change your style of art,* and that's where…the discouragement came from, whereas I was already very happy with the style I was doing' (Ben)

However with that same encouragement there was also discouragement which was based on the artistic style that he particularly enjoyed doing. The dislike for his artistic style was followed through from school into university. Ben was one of two participants in the research study to mention that he was taught by a Black lecturer at university, and he identified that the Black lecturer on his fine art degree course supported his style of working.

> ' **** (names Black artist/lecturer) was one of my lecturers, a true inspiration for me, and he very much encouraged Black art. And very encouraging, he was one tutor who definitely encouraged me to keep going with my style of art, and continue being me and being myself, because at the end of it that's what people see and they will appreciate that, if you are *genuinely* being yourself within your craft. (Ben)

It can be seen from Ben's extract that the Black lecturer on his degree course was one of the few who encouraged him to continue with is artistic style in an environment where he was being asked to change it in order to progress within the expected educational standards and norms. Research by ECU (2015) talked about some BAME academic staff taking on extra pastoral duties which included supporting BAME students who sought them out specifically because they were academics of a BAME background. Although Ben did not identify seeking out the help or support of the Black lecturer on his course, he acknowledged that the lecturer was supportive of his style of artwork when other tutors were not. In section 7.2.2 I discussed the ways in which Ben was pushed to create what could be perceived as a more Eurocentric type of artwork, and it can be seen in the above extract that the Black lecturer was one of few staff members who was not pushing Ben in this direction. Thus it could be said that Ben's Black lecturer was engaging in pastoral care which included supporting BAME students such as Ben manoeuvre within a challenging HE academy. As can be seen

from the extract Ben also noted that the Black lecturer also encouraged Black art within the curriculum (this is discussed further in section 7.5.1).

Like Ben, Ella also identified a Black lecturer who inspired her and gave her support

> '…but my course director or the one at the time, she stopped last year, she's a Black lady, and she influenced me in a *very* positive way, she was very supportive in her guidance, she's not the type to tell you something to just sound nice' (Ella)

And again like Ben, Ella found support in the Black lecturer in regards to her work, when she wanted to look at African fashion for her dissertation but the majority of staff and students were not supportive (discussed in the previous chapter).

> '…I mean my course leader had no objection to it, her thing was just do something different, don't do what everyone's doing, so if you are gonna do it I wanna hear something else, that made me do better research or even more research to make it better' (Ella)

This support from their Black lecturers was acknowledged by Ben and Ella as helpful and inspirational such that they were encouraged during challenging times. Liz in section 6.4.2 talked about the positive impact she believed a Black teacher would have had on her educational experience, and such a positive impact is demonstrated in the extracts of Ben and Ella. Research which explored reasons why some BAME academics may consider leaving the UK to find academic work abroad, noted that extra pastoral care which is given by BAME academics to BAME students was identified as not being prioritised and acknowledged when it came to career progression by the HEIs BAME academics were part of, and thus some felt that while they were happy to provide this extra pastoral care to BAME students it could be an extra and unacknowledged demand on their time (ECU 2015). It could then be argued that the support and advice Ben and Ella received from the Black lecturers demonstrated the staff going above and beyond their job expectation doing work that they may not have received institutional recognition for; the result of this however, was that they helped facilitate easier navigation for Ben and Ella within their respective degree courses[xxxvi] (see appendix 6 for an example of where having a Black teacher did not work as a facilitating strategy).

As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, there were a number of educational institutional barriers which participants had to overcome and which included lack of support and encouragement from art and design teachers and tutors, however the narrative extracts in this section show that there were also instances of support within educational institutions that helped participants to move forward in their art and design educational journey. The findings discussed here also suggest that a predominant amount of the support and encouragement that a number of the participants received came from FE colleges, with fewer participants identifying secondary school and HE teachers and tutors as particularly supportive and encouraging.

7.5.2   Participating in 'Widening Participation'

Widening Participation (WP) - a commitment to addressing the under-representation of certain 'non-traditional' student groups in university, gained a great deal of prominence in educational policy during the late 90s when New Labour came into power (Callender 2002, Dean 2004, Burke and McManus 2009, 2011, Leathwood et al 2010) with many educational institutions becoming involved. Two participants; Ella and Peter who both graduated in 2013 (and who fitted the 'non-traditional' student criteria as Ella was a mature student and Peter was the first in his family to go to university), talked about being part of a WP scheme. They can both be seen as a reflection of the group of students who have benefitted from the priority given to the WP agenda by government policy and educational institutions (Candela 2009, Leathwood et al 2010, Runnymede 2010). Ella noted that the FE college where she studied her foundation course participated in a WP scheme that was in connection to the university she was interested in and eventually attended. Ella's thoughts on the scheme were '…they (the university Ella attended) were forced to do this scheme coz I think there was an issue with them only taking international students…the school really didn't reflect the demographics in the city…even now it still doesn't…But that's their way of getting more home students'. Whereas most research has identified the WP scheme being utilised to help students from working class and minority backgrounds to enter HE art and design (Bhagat and O'Neil, Okon 2005, McManus 2006, Burke and McManus 2009, 2011) Ella's extract showed that her particular institution had an issue of having a large number of international students compared to home students, and she believed the scheme was a way to bring in

more 'home' students. Ella also seemed to see the WP scheme and the diversification of the student body as something that her institution was forced to do rather than wanting to do, and thus there was a sense from her that certain groups of students in universities were unwelcome and unwanted and included only when it was mandatory (Leathwood 2010).

Peter and Ella's narrative extracts show that they benefitted from two 'specific developmental pre HE activities to widen participation' and these were; 'guidance on portfolio and interview preparation' and 'compact arrangements between FE colleges and HEIs' (Hudson 2009b:24, Okon 2005, Hagger et al 2007). Through highlighting how she was prepared for the interview for her degree course – a facilitating strategy for her, Ella also inadvertently highlighted some barriers to HE art and design– if students did not have access to insider knowledge about how the WP scheme worked then they could potentially still miss out within an opportunity that was meant to help them enter HE art and design

> 'Yeah the scheme…we just wanna make sure you are ready, you bring it so we just have a run through to see, people will see your work, you get used to presenting your work for the interview, it's like for them it's like they're preparing you for the interview. C (Ella's tutor) was like; *I'm telling you, that's the actual interview,* that's when they would know who they're gonna bother with on the official interview day' (Ella)

One of the tutors at Ella's college was an associate lecturer at the university she was applying for and as a result Ella felt 'we were lucky in that sense…he guided us through, what to expect and how to present our work'. Ella identified that her tutor due to his insider knowledge was able to inform her that what she thought was a practice interview being organised by the WP scheme at the university Ella had applied for, was actually the *real* interview and any 'weak' students were being separated from the stronger students at the practice interview. And within this practice interview which was a part of the WP scheme Ella also noted differences with students work particularly for those who had not been 'prepared' and for whom it was visible that they may not have had access to the resources needed for entry to HE art and design (Dean 2004, Burke and McManus 2011).

> '…you take your portfolio out and you talk through your work, and I came prepared…we were coached quite well. Coz some people came and you looked at

> their work thinking, *ah your teacher didn't prepare you!* …It was really like they picked up their stuff and just came with it, and she'd (the interviewer) be like; I don't like this, I don't like that…' (Ella)

Thus Ella could see that as a result of the preparation she had received she had an advantage over other art and design students (Hagger et al 2007). For Ella then it was a combination of having a college tutor who was also an associate lecturer at the university she had applied for, as well as being included in the WP scheme that was a part of facilitating her participation in HE art and design

> We were lucky in that sense, he (Ella's tutor) kind of, he guided us through, what to expect and how to present our work, but even the…scheme, they took us in (to the university) one time to see previous students work, look through people's sketchbooks and such things, which was good…that…scheme is a great scheme, they really guide you through, they invite you to look at people's work and C (Ella's tutor) knew how present, pull out your best work…and yeah he knew how quick the interviewer would you know, look through stuff' (Ella)

Peter also participated in a WP scheme through his FE college

> '…I don't know how it works really, but the people that got chosen, were similar…I could just spot similarities between the people that were chosen… A lot of us were coloured to start with, there were two or three people that were sort of white, the rest were coloured' (Peter)

Peter identified that a large number of the students on the WP scheme were non-white. It has been argued that the majority of WP schemes have over the years not targeted BAME people as a specific group (Conor et al 2004, Okon 2005, Bhagat and O'Neil 2011) although Okon (2005) identified a small number focused specifically on BAME groups. Peter's comments highlight that at least from his experience the scheme did draw out a number of BAME students and thus the WP scheme could be seen as working towards helping to increase BAME participation (Runnymede 2010).

Ella was able to identify the relatively seamless way that she felt the WP scheme helped her to get onto her degree course and thus felt that she was well prepared for HE, echoing research findings by Hudson (2009a) and Hagger et al (2007) which showed that the WP art

and design students they spoke to also felt prepared for HE as a result of the scheme. Peter's experience however, was slightly more fraught with difficulties

> '…you do a series of workshops with a uni and they help you with a portfolio for when you apply for any other uni…there were three sessions I only went to two…they give you a project that you have to do to bring in I think it's two weeks after or a month after, but I didn't go in the next month, I only went in the months right at the end, so I missed the month in between where they crit your work, and they say *maybe you need to do this, and maybe you need to do that*. I went in straight at the end with the portfolio and the final piece, and instantly they already know that you didn't turn up…so I came in and they pretty much destroyed my work…I showed them my portfolio and they were like; *to be honest this is not the standard that we are looking for*…it was really disheartening…they said to me; *we would recommend that you don't apply here… the standard of work you've shown us you probably won't get past the interview stage*' (Peter)

Peter recalled that he had not put in as much work as he could have and later in the interview stated that he felt that he also had a lot of college work to do as well as the work from the WP scheme. But it can also be seen that the university which initiated the WP scheme in their critique of his work were also reinforcing the prestige of the university and highlighting to Peter that he was not the calibre of student they were looking for. This issue around certain institutions having a certain prestige which is projected to students was acknowledged by McManus (2006) and Hagger et al (2007) who noted it as a barrier which non-traditional students, who were part of a WP scheme in connection with University of the Arts, London had also identified.

> '…and I was thinking I don't know what to do now, coz they've sort of said this and it was disheartening…so I had to take it upon myself to either drastically improve or do something completely different, so I sat there for a while and I thought; you just improve, stop sitting there feeling sorry for yourself and just go and do it. So I had a few months to really step up my game…and it ended up that that exact uni that said I couldn't get into it, I went back to do an interview and I did get in' (Peter)

Whereas WP schemes in art and design education have been positively identified as increasing confidence in students from non-traditional backgrounds (Hagger et al 2007, Candela 2009), Peter's experience shows that his confidence was greatly knocked as a result of participating in the scheme. However despite his largely negative experience, as can be

seen in the above extract Peter was still determined to attend that university and focused on gaining a place there. It showed that he had navigational, aspirational and resistant capital through his perseverance despite his initial rejection. As well as his own individual effort to improve, Peter recalled that he received a lot of support from one of his college tutors and this helped him gain a place at the university

> 'I told one of my tutors that I was gonna do the course at (names university) they said; *yes it will really suit the way you work…coz it's fast pace and everything gets done really quick, you'll enjoy just the intensity of it…*that is another reason why I put that as my fourth (choice) even though they told me not to…' (Peter)

> '…I had a really good Graphic Design tutor on my foundation course, who was really helpful, he met up with me for an hour, day before my interview and just spoke me through the kinds of things that they wanna hear…he went through my portfolio; *get rid of that…put this in… take a look at this artist…talk about this museum…*and yeah from that I did my research, and so I knew exactly what to say and do in interviews…The course leader of the degree course I went on to, he's really into Swiss design and my tutor told me that…*so go to the Design Museum they've got an exhibition on right now, go look at that, this is what this guy likes, talk to him about it…*(*Did you find that useful when it came to the actual interview?*) …it was definitely useful, coz…he (the course leader) questioned me about it; *if you look at some of the work that we do and the work that you do, it's not very similar,* and I was like; yeah I understand that, but the work that you do I find it interesting, I went to the museum to see that sort of style which you've been inspired by, and I'd like to work and learn how to create work like that' (Peter)

So although Peter had a less positive experience with his WP scheme than Ella, he like Ella was able to tap into the insider knowledge and expertise of one of his college tutors who helped him to prepare for the interview at the university that had initially rejected him. Again the insider knowledge proved vital in securing a university place and thus highlights the consistent reinforcement of set standards and expected norms within certain HEIs (Reay et al 2001d, Burke and McManus 2009, 2011, Leathwood et al 2010, Runnymede 2010). In section 7.3.2 it was identified that Peter was greatly influenced by the art and design practice of his Uncle in Mauritius, however as can be seen in the extract above, the advice he was given in regards to interview preparation, and which helped secure him a place on a Graphic design degree course, required him to talk about and focus on Swiss design which

the degree course leader had an interest in and also to discuss how he could change his work to fit the style of work created on the degree course. It has been argued that

> 'WP policy places far less attention on the transformation of structures, systems and practices that unwittingly reproduce deeply embedded inequalities within HE fields' (Burke and McManus 2009:10)

and far more on getting students to fit into 'structures, systems and practices' as they currently exist. In order to prepare Peter for the course he was applying for, his tutor encouraged him to research and talk about 'Swiss design' because that was what the degree course leader 'expected' to see. Thus it is suggested here that Peter's culture and heritage was not seen as the right 'capital' to bring to a degree course interview, but rather a more European culture was expected. However it could also be argued that the insider knowledge that both Peter and Ella received – whilst reproducing existing norms of the institution – also simultaneously was seeking to prepare students to deal with society as it currently was (Mills 2008), by teaching them what they needed to do to exist and manoeuvre in the existing system. This shows the challenging position that educators are in as they need to

> 'teach the academic skills and competencies required to enable their students to succeed in the mainstream society, while ensuring that they acknowledge and respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community they serve' (Mills 2008:85)

Looking at the WP experiences of the participants in this study is useful as part of evaluating the effectiveness of WP initiatives in art and design, this type of has been identified as lacking in the field (Okon 2005, Hudson 2009b).Whilst this section shows that the WP schemes were facilitating strategies that came from educational institutions, the schemes inadvertently reinforced expected norms already existing in the art and design environment. Rather than taking on board and looking to understand the Black African students - their culture and their heritage, it was the participants who were expected to conform and fit into the educational institutions and their structures as they were, with the WP schemes showing the participants what they needed to do to fit into the educational system. Like research undertaken by Reay et al (2001d) this section also 'challenges…discourses which position widening access and the advent of a mass system of higher education as

unproblematically positive advances' (Reay et al 2001d:855). They were positive advances for the participants in that they secured them university entry, but problematic in that they supported and encouraged only one type of capital. And in Ella's case in particular there also seemed to be extra insider knowledge needed to progress on a Widening Participation scheme, a scheme aimed at opening up opportunities to a wider group of people.

7.5.3 Diverse art and design education

Within the experiences of the participants in the study, for the most part the curriculum they were taught at secondary school, FE and HE was predominantly focused on European art and design, as was identified in the previous chapter. However some participants identified times where they felt that space was created for other cultural influences to come through.

Talking about her experiences of art and design at GCSE level, Ngozi commented

> '…we did about Impressionism, Expressionism…so you had the classical, traditional elements of it all, but…there was always room, for a twentieth century perspective. I chose Aaliyah (deceased African American RnB singer) as one of my topics…I can't remember what it was based on, but it was kind of a heaven hell element to it all. I think it's coz she recently just died when I was studying…and I kind of made a mural for her…although there was traditional elements within it there were elements of freedom to put your own kind of touch upon it. (*Was that something that was encouraged?*) Yeah it was' (Ngozi)

Ngozi talked about her secondary school experience highlighting that the predominant focus was European art and design, but that there was 'room' for her to explore elements of her culture and heritage. On the one side it could be said that Ngozi's teachers were encouraging a diverse curriculum but on the other side it can be seen that this diversity involved giving 'room' within a predominantly European focus.

Lidia felt that within her university experience there was freedom for her, within the curriculum, to go out and look for her own inspirations which could extend beyond the existing curriculum.

> '…fashion design is more current than art…So Da Vinci and all that would have been my examples before, in design coz you're looking at current artists…designers like

Yoshi Yamamoto, so…there was more of a mix. But then you were still free for you to choose those designers that you were looking at, so it's *you* that's looking at them, it's not them telling you…It's *you* whose looking to be inspired, and because like I say, fashion design is very current…you do have more of a selection of mixed culture, designers…(*So would you say that you were exposed to it, at university then?)…*I guess so, not to any great extent but more than I've ever been' (Lidia)

Lidia observed that due to the contemporary nature of fashion design it was easier to incorporate a wider range of designers than it was to incorporate a wider range of artists in art. However it can be argued that the diversity Lidia spoke of as existing on her degree course, was largely dependent on the outside fashion industry as a whole being open to diverse designers, and therefore there was little onus on her educational institution to make a sustained and definite effort to incorporate diverse designers into their curriculum. With Lidia's extract it can be seen that there was space for diversity within her HE curriculum, but seems that it was expected to be mainly self-initiated, if the student was interested in engaging with it rather than as a permanent part of the curriculum. She also noted that whilst she spoke of there being diversity in her curriculum it was not to a great extent.

Iman talked about diversity in the curriculum on her foundation degree at FE college

'…on the foundation degree… we studied lots of different artists, there was always opportunity…for different people to bring in their own inspiration, there were lots of students who were bringing in; oh I really love this artist…and bringing in their work…they would have different people coming in to talk about different artists or art pieces…so in the foundation degree we really were exposed to so many different artists, styles of art' (Iman)

She saw that there was room for her to bring in her own inspiration, and she also identified that the college brought in outside influences which varied the range of artists and designers she was exposed to. This showed that her FE college was pro-active in finding ways to widen the curriculum, and it went beyond only placing the onus on the student.

Ben felt that at university the course curriculum was quite broad and open in terms of diversity of references, and in section 7.5.1 his extract identified a Black lecturer who encouraged Black art as part of his degree curriculum. That it was Ben's Black lecturer who was identified as 'encouraging' Black art gives evidence to arguments put forward that 'a

more diverse teaching force' would 'change the curriculum' because 'people will raise questions' ascertaining that the diversity of the staff and the diversity of the curriculum were in a sense connected to each other as a diverse teaching force would be more likely to raise questions about a predominantly Eurocentric curriculum (Gillborn interview in Theuri 2015:71). Ben's experience emphasises the importance of having a diverse teaching force in educational institutions as part of moving towards a more inclusive art and design education for all students.

Ben also identified that he was asked by his tutors on his fine art degree to explore his Nigerian culture or what the tutors perceived to be *his* culture.

> '…I think it was because they thought I could relate to it, being that I am African, but to me it didn't really prove anything, although I am African I was born here, so I'm going to be *more* in tune with things that's from this sort of culture, although my family are very cultured and lots of the teachings, and the disciplines and the practices from Nigeria are instilled in us…but in terms of art although that sort of teaching, the Black art and learning more about the Black history I enjoyed it, but it really wasn't what I wanted to do' (Ben)

From the extract it can be seen that Ben struggled with using the particular type of culture that the tutors understood to be 'his' culture within his art practice. Although it can be seen that Ben's tutors were in a way widening and differentiating the curriculum, Ben felt that they did not seem to understand the complexity of his identity as a second generation immigrant of African heritage who was born and had grown up in the UK and who was living within the interstices of both African and British cultures yet feeling very much able to claim British culture just as much as his own culture (Smith 2000, Adebayo 1996). Ben's comments above also reflect comments made by Doy (2003), that putting on Black courses as a way to widen the art and design curriculum 'is not a negative thing, but the idea that it will automatically attract Black students is a bit cynical' assuming that Black students would want to take 'Black' courses' (Doy 2003:204), as Ben noted that he was not keen on engaging with that type of work. Chalmers (1996) has argued rather that a more diverse curriculum should be understood as something that was not just necessary for minority ethnic students but beneficial for all students living in and engaging within a multicultural

society and thus should be included for the benefit of *all* students and not just targeted towards BAME groups.

Iman however in contrast to Ben, saw the ability to engage in discussions around her culture and religion as a positive thing within her art and design educational experience and it was something that she was very much interested in engaging in. It was something that she felt was encouraged and accepted during her time at FE college. And thus for Iman it was viewed positively and can be seen as a facilitating strategy.

> 'On the foundation degree we'd have weekly gatherings and everyone would present their work, I was shy at first but I became more confident you know, and I had all these guys and girls like chipping in you know; *oh if you're gonna do it about this you should maybe, what about thinking about it from this angle,* you know people were genuinely interested; *oh how did you do it,* you know I felt like, it became normal, I normalised the topic on Muslims and hijab in that class' (Iman)

And thus their two opposing experiences show the importance of not pigeon holing, assuming or stereotyping identities and interests for minority ethnic students. Post-Black in the visual arts is seen as referring to artists seeking to shed 'the burden of representation, and rather these artists are 'adamant about not being labelled as 'black artists' but they still work at 'redefining complex notions of blackness' (Taylor 2007:626). This idea of not wanting to be labelled as a Black artist can be seen in Ben's extracts in the way that he did not want to create artwork about being Black or his Nigerian culture, nor did he have a great amount of interest in Black art. Whilst complex notions of Blackness can be seen in the differences in perspectives of Ben and Iman, in contrast to Ben, Iman very much wanted to engage in work that incorporated her culture and religion, both were Black African students but chose to engage with their culture and heritage in very different ways and also saw what they *identified* to be *their* culture and heritage very differently. Thus their experiences highlight that students from diverse backgrounds are *diverse* and have individual ways of looking at themselves and their identity, and this needs to be dealt with, with sensitivity from institutions who have Black African students in their midst.

Whilst the participants discussed in this section were able to identify elements of a diverse education in their educational experiences, for some it seemed to be an 'add on' to a largely

European curriculum and pedagogy, or at times it was expected to be self-initiated rather than embedded in the curriculum at large. However the participants tended to see these elements of diversity and opportunities to include their culture within the curriculum for the most part as a positive, and so it can be seen as having contributed in facilitating their participation in and navigation within HE art and design. Their narrative extracts of Iman and Ben in particular, highlight the importance of widening the curriculum with sensitivity to the cultural heritage of students.

7.6   Art and design from an African perspective (individual and familial)

Afrocentrism calls for a reconceptualization within society whereby African culture, and therefore its art and design are located in their rightful place within mainstream discourses (Asante 1991, Chanda 1992, Adu Poku 2002), and as such positively acknowledging the creative and exciting art and design work happening in Africa and by Africans is an integral part of working towards this goal. Focusing on and emphasising the wealth and growth in Africa, and as a result the positive developments in art and design and art and design education happening on the continent and its diaspora could potentially be a strategy for facilitating participation in and navigation within HE art and Design for Black African students. This is because looking at art and design from an African perspective could provide a counter narrative to that discussed in section 6.2 where it was put forward that one of the limiting barriers for participants was that there existed, within their communities, a master narrative whereby art and design was not seen as part of the African culture.

Although none of the participants identified seeing African art and design through a positive lens as a facilitating strategy which happened *during* their art and design educational experience, some did talk about art and design from within an Afrocentric perspective, identifying examples of, as well as potential opportunities for growth and positive development of art and design in Africa and within African communities. Iqra for example, felt that one day she may return to Somalia and although her parents were critical of how

art and design could help Somalia given its current situation, Iqra was positive that there was a way in which it could help.

> '…my country (Somalia), the people are just, it's terrible there. I'd like to help my people somehow…I think that's what my parents didn't like about the course…they always say we are going to go back to where we came from in the end, and how is your course…gonna benefit where you come from?...How is like art gonna help them? I think art can help them in some way…' (Iqra)

hooks (1995) has argued that '…we must set our imaginations free. Acknowledging that we have been and are colonized both in our minds and in our imaginations, we begin to understand the need for promoting and celebrating creative expression' (hooks 1995:4). And it can be seen that Ella had similar perspectives to that of hooks (1995) in regards to how Africans view and perceive art and design. She saw that at present there was still a negative perspective towards art and design, a perspective that she wanted to change, as she felt it limited Africans such that they were not able to see the potential that art and design had for Africa. Ella, like Iman, was also looking at ways of utilising art and design and her education in it to make positive changes in Africa.

> '…so they (parents) were pleased that I'm going to university, just not pleased that I chose to do fashion, coz I think they still probably saw it as a fluffy degree. Which is the mentality Africa wide…with the work I do now, Africa Fashion Week, we're trying to change that perception, really that's our target, coz the creative industry is a lucrative industry' (Ella)

However the perception that Ella felt needed to be changed in Africa and which she was working towards in her work with Africa Fashion Week, was identified by Asa as already happening. By spending time in Nigeria and a number of other African countries Asa was seeing possibilities and opportunities that had arisen recently on the African continent in regards to art and design. Asa's examples highlighted what she saw as a growing understanding in Africa about the importance and the 'need for promoting and celebrating creative expression' (hooks 1995:4). And also corroborates observations by Beugge (2014), Mark (2013) Brock and Nyambura-Mwaura (2015) of the recent recognition and investment in African art and design by Africans.

'…now if you do a degree you're not even guaranteed a job, and now there's opportunities there (Africa), people are going back home. I know there are two friends of mine who have gone…There's lots of things happening in Nigeria, lots of things happening in Dakar…the Dakar Biennale…again South Africa…they have a *vibrant* art scene…and again Zimbabwe now they had their pavilion at the Venice Biennale' (Asa)

'when I go back to Nigeria, there's a lot of creative activities happening, like fashion is a massive thing now…They do Africa Fashion Week…it's like everyone…now is a designer of some sort…everyone is a creative…especially you're seeing it more and more in the younger generation…the guys in their 20s, late 20s. When I was in Nigeria last year, I went to this fundraising gala, this lady she wanted to open…*The Modern school of art*…where the teaching on those subjects were completely different, the subject matter would be fashion, styling, music technology, fine art, graphic design, multimedia design….just her wanting to do that for me says a lot about how that environment is changing and how people are being open to it…I'm finding…more and more like African students are coming out of Africa going to New York…Italy…China to study design… and they are paying international rates….you know that money is coming from their parents and for parents to make that investment where they have to support them financially…they must be okay with it…They're not gonna part with all that money for something that…you're not encouraging of, to me that indicates that there is a massive shift' (Asa)

Asa's example showed that she had noticed what she believed to be a big change in the way art and design, and art and design education was being viewed by African communities. In particular she highlighted educated young people who were either leaving the UK to go to Africa or those already in Africa were establishing themselves within the art and design field, as well as choosing to travel abroad to study art and design, all looking for ways to develop their creativity. She also noted a change in parental perspectives where they seemed more willing to invest in their children's art and design education. Connected to what Asa saw happening on the continent, Toyin highlighted similar successful and financially lucrative creative initiatives being initiated by those who were part of the African diaspora in the UK.

'…there's a shop…it's a Ghanaian shop; Omera, Omari…it means crown and crown, girls crown, guys crown, they've got a branch in Brixton and a branch in Greenwich and like I'm their friend on Facebook…there's someone whose made a shop full of Ankaras (African fabrics), like clothes, shoes and their doing well. Sika by Sika, Sika Designs in Greenwich they're like doing fashion and their making money. Or Jewel by

Lisa, these are all Ankara ones, and these are things I follow on Facebook, follow on Instagram' (Toyin)

Whilst Lidia felt that now art and design was able to compete with academic degrees in terms of the financial gains it could bring to an individual, and like Ella she felt that this needed to be understood by members of Black African communities.

'(*Earlier on you mentioned how Black people, African people always tend to do academic subjects, why do you think that is?*) Because it's seen as a safe option, it's seen as skills are more for those who can't be academic, rather than those who are good at it, and also it's a common knowledge to know that a respected subject, is an academic subject, lawyer, accountant, doctor, those are more established and also seen as they're always needed… but people forget that it's no longer those days, these days actually design and things like that, are where the money is' (Lidia)

DiMaggio (2010) has argued that 'art…provides second-generation immigrants with the tools to circumvent the limitations of labor markets…artistic expression provides a means to succeed through self-employment, innovation and creativity' (DiMaggio 2010:5). Similar notions to that argued by DiMaggio can be seen in the narrative extracts of Asa, Toyin and Lidia, as second generation immigrants they identified the positive potential of art and design, considering self-employment, innovation, creativity and success and it's connection to the African continent and indeed to the way Black African communities were viewing art and design and art and design education. The developing and growing art and design industry was identified by Asa as happening in conjunction with more African students travelling out of the continent to study art and design with parents happy to make the financial investment, the opening up of spaces for art and design in African countries by young Africans, as well as British educated Black Africans talking of or having already returned to the continent (this return to the continent was also discussed by Iqra). Similarly Toyin noted a number of successful Black African designers creating work and building businesses in the UK. Whereas Lidia identified that in our contemporary society art and design was a lucrative industry. Rather than only being an outlet for creativity and emotion, Lidia was looking at art and design as now being financially lucrative and able to compete with other jobs that she believed were perceived to be more respected and stable within Black African communities. A positive focus on the growth and development of African art

and design could be seen in Ella, Toyin and Asa's narrative extracts, whilst the *possibility* of using art and design to develop Somalia could be seen in Iqra's extract. Asa in particular identified the benefits of such an optimistic focus on African art and design and the ways in which it was already facilitating access and entry to art and design education for African students.

Conclusion to Art and design from an African perspective

Thus it can be seen that the participants had noted changes in perspectives around art and design in African communities, showing that art and design was indeed very much a part of African culture. This demonstrates a counter narrative to the narrative that art and design is not seen as part of the African culture. And thus it is suggested that the participants positive focus on art and design from African communities can be seen as having great potential to be a facilitating strategy for Black African art and design students in the UK, as it would afford a higher status to art and design education, identify the art and design space as 'African' as opposed to 'white' and allow opportunities for engagement, discussion and viewing of art and design work within African communities. And so counteracting some of the limiting barriers identified in section 6.2.

7.7   **Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter identified and explored the individual, familial and institutional strategies that facilitated participation in and navigation with HE art and design for the participants interviewed. Researching student experiences, Finnigan (2009) focused on 'non-traditional' HE Art and Design students and noted that success for these students was a result of among other things; inspiring and supportive tutors, access to good support systems (including family), individual determination and encouragement. The findings discussed in this section corroborate Finnigan's findings, whilst adding insight on how these factors affected Black African students' art and design educational journeys.

The analysis of the participants' extracts demonstrates that there were a range of strategies which facilitated participation in and navigation within HE art and design for the research participants. The findings suggest that the participants who chose to study art and design

could not imagine themselves doing anything else, many had high aspirations to study art and design, with a number identifying that they had always known that they wanted to study and pursue a career in art and design. It could be argued that they were able to see beyond limiting barriers and existing inequalities in order to be able to engage in art and design. Simultaneously parents who encouraged and supported their children to study art and design also had to look beyond the limitations and structural inequalities existing for them and their children. It can be seen from the narratives presented in this research that the participants who entered and progressed in HE art and design not only had passion and aspirations for the subject but also a great deal of self-efficacy, aspirational, resistant and navigational capital. And so they were able to overcome familial barriers which included in particular, parental steering for many towards subjects other than art and design. They were also able to overcome institutional barriers including; expectations to fit into certain existing norms in the curriculum and teaching, discrimination and marginalisation, a Eurocentric curriculum, as well as lack of support and advice from teachers and tutors. They succeeded in overcoming these barriers through advocating for themselves; persevering in difficult circumstances and holding on to aspirations despite challenging circumstances, and thus were able to participate in and navigate within HE art and design despite existing limiting barriers.

It was identified that for some participants there existed pedagogies of the home, which were not those that were predominantly acknowledged by educational institutions. They included parents providing overt and subtle support through instilling and encouraging aspirations towards art and design education, this provides a counter discourse to that which has focused on discussing BAME parents steering children towards certain professional and vocational subjects (Connor et al 2004) with little attention paid to the ways in which BAME parents encouraged, supported and inspired their children to enter art and design education. Pedagogies of the home also included overt and subtle art and design practices happening within the home environment and on the African continent; for a number of participants this was the main form of engagement with, and discussion and viewing of art and design artwork as opposed to attendance of museums and galleries which was often expected and accepted by art and design educational institutions. These

pedagogies of the home positively influenced a number of participants and thus acted as facilitating strategies.

Some participants identified that their parents once understanding that they did not have the expected white middle class cultural capital necessary to help their children progress through the education system, went out of their way to gain it and then utilise it as a facilitating strategy to help their children access, enter and progress in HE art and design. Whilst a number of participants talked about their own individual actions to develop understanding of the routes into HE art and design, they felt that they did not gain this knowledge from educational institutions, highlighting that structured advice was not made available to them, and so their individual actions although at times haphazard also worked as facilitating strategies.

Although having identified in the previous chapter a number of narratives where it could be seen that little support and engagement was available from art and design teachers and tutors, some participants, as has been shown in this section, identified and talked about good and positive support from educators with a number identifying in particular FE college as the main place that they received this support. It can also be seen that the majority of the institutional facilitating strategies required participants to integrate into already existing structures and contexts, as well as to follow and attain the expected white middle class cultural capital in order to access, enter and progress. However there were also examples of experiences where participants felt able to stand apart and demonstrate their individuality and cultural heritage within educational institutions, with some participants in particular able to identify Black educators who supported and encouraged them in their journey with sensitivity to their experiences as Black African students. Thus there were examples where participants felt supported and encouraged by educational institutions, and where these worked well they proved to be facilitating strategies. Although it should be noted that particularly in relation to the curriculum and pedagogy, the majority of diversity that happened was often supplementary to a largely Eurocentric focus, and was not always done with the much needed sensitivity to the cultures and heritage of the participants.

Some participants identified the wealth and growth in Africa as well as the changing perceptions towards art and design on the continent. A developing art and design industry in general and in art and design education in particular was seen as happening in conjunction with students from the continent going abroad to study art and design. Similarly there was an identification of successful practising designers working within the African diaspora in the UK, whilst some participants educated in art and design in the UK were looking for ways to use their experience to develop the field in Africa. Looking at African art and design through this positive lens could thus be a facilitating strategy where members of the Black African communities could begin to see the value and potential of art and design and art and design education for their communities, rather than seeing it as apart from and outside of African culture.

The varied narrative extracts presented and analysed in this chapter offer insights into the complex nature of the art and design educational journeys undertaken by the research participants. It can be seen that there were a range of strategies that facilitated participation in and navigation with HE art and design for Black African students, however not all participants utilised all the strategies identified and not all the strategies worked with all the participants. The facilitating strategies identified in the participants' narratives reflect, agree and correspond with each other whilst also competing, challenging and contradicting each other as well as the findings from the previous chapter. However bringing to the forefront these facilitating strategies draws attention to and acknowledges the complexity of the experiences of participation in and navigation within HE art and design for Black African students.

8   CONCLUSIONS

This research study is a qualitative investigation, employing a narrative inquiry, into the educational experiences of a selected group of Black African art and design students. A total of 14 participants were interviewed, all participants had experienced studying art and design in the UK in at least one of three levels of education; secondary, tertiary or HE (at HE the focus was on undergraduate level study not postgraduate level) and therefore it was possible to analyse experiences across these three levels of education in order to gain a better understanding of participation in and experience of HE art and design for Black African students with a specific focus on exploring limiting barriers and facilitating strategies. The experiences of Black African art and design students and their participation in and experience of HE art and design is a phenomenon that has not previously been studied, this research study has addressed this gap and as such has been able to provide findings that add useful insight to the field of art and design education.

This concluding chapter is divided into five parts which; summarise and synthesise answers to the three research questions posed, identify the thesis contributions to literature and knowledge, identify implications of the research and recommendations, highlight limitations of the study and propose future research endeavours and recommendations.

8.1   Barriers impeding participation in and experiences of HE art and design

What is clear from the findings is that there were a number of key limiting barriers identified within the narratives of the research participants. Through an analysis of the participants' narratives the findings suggest that there was an existing 'master narrative' that art and design was outside of the African culture which had been internalised in Black African communities. This was identified as having historical roots connected to colonisation which worked at making Africans lose touch with their ability to create and make artwork (hooks 1995) and the value they placed on art and design (Chalmers 1999). Thus there were barriers resulting from the ways in which Black African communities have been conditioned to think about art and design - with a number of participants identifying a perception within

Black African communities of art and design as a 'white' space, and others discussing the lack of dialogue about and engagement with art and design work (particularly in the form of gallery attendance), and consequentially there appeared to be an overall low value and status afforded to an art and design education within Black African communities. A majority of the participants also noted that their parents did not see art and design as a realistic option for study at HE, this research study interpreted this as due to the inequalities around race, ethnicity, culture and class that existed for them as immigrants in the UK, as some participants highlighted in particular the downward social mobility experienced by their parents upon arrival in the UK from the African continent. The participant's narratives demonstrated that many parents could not see an art and design education and furthermore an art and design career as able to aid in upward social mobility, this perspective was interpreted as a means of self-preservation through prudence, where parents were aspiring for their children that which they perceived to be reasonable to achieve given their existing social positions. It can then be argued that these inequalities crippled a number of parental aspirations for their children thus adding a further layer to the barriers existing and necessary to be overcome by participants who wanted to participate in HE art and design. However, these parental perceptions were not shared by a large number of the participants thus showing a break and disconnect in educational aspirations and understandings between Black African parents and their second generation immigrant children growing up and educated in Britain.

In regards to the art and design educational institutions, a majority of participants identified them as overtly Eurocentric; only three participants recalled being taught by Black art and design teachers at any point in their art and design education, whilst many communicated disenchantment with what they saw to be a Eurocentric art and design curriculum which created limited space for engagement with 'other' cultures and perspectives including African. Some participants noted the lack of effective advice and positive and useful support from teachers and tutors, some noted that support was lacking as a result of racial discrimination, and advice which was given was for some participants stereotyped and limiting, thus highlighting ways in which some educational institutions' strategies for

facilitation were to some extent ineffective for a number of participants. The participants' narratives analysed demonstrated these limiting barriers through the way the participants registered and formulated complaints about their experiences and engagement with the education system, the way they expressed inadequacies and unfairness in the educational system and generally the way they expressed their individual experience of dissatisfied participation in art and design education. Whilst many of the barriers discussed in this research reflected findings from previous research which had looked at BAME students in general, they also added further depth of insight from a specific group of students showing in particular how previously identified barriers affected students from Black African communities.

The barriers identified (which have been discussed above) impeded the participation in HE art and design of a few participants to a notable extent such that they did not go on to study HE art and design, and their narratives demonstrated self-censuring as well as aspirational frustration as they recalled the range of barriers they faced. This can be seen in Toyin and Liz's narratives whereby, among other barriers, their parents' views that art and design was not a realistic option for study at HE had an impact on their decision making significantly such that they chose not to study HE art and design. And Liz in particular also felt that the way in which educational institutions presented art and design to her was such that it was not a space that she felt she could enter, and therefore she did not enter. The findings also suggested that whilst barriers existed and were discussed they were less of an impediment to participation of a majority of the participants (8) interviewed for this research as most were able to study HE art and design, whilst some (2) were at the time of the interview very much on their journey to studying HE art and design. However the barriers identified still had an impact on the educational journeys of these participants. This can be seen in the way in which the participants discussed arguing with and against the educational system, the ways in which they noted insufficiencies and inequity with the system, and thus the limitations that they identified which were placed on them as a result of a system that appeared not to be created with them in mind and consequently did not fully accommodate them as Black African students. Ultimately these barriers contributed in making their

educational journeys much more complicated, problematic, challenging, and arduous for some participants, whilst for others it ruptured their educational journeys

8.2   Strategies facilitating participation in and navigation within HE art and design

The answer to the first research question demonstrated that the art and design educational space had a number of barriers which made it a difficult space for the interviewed Black African students to participate in and navigate within. Those who chose to study art and design had to work with and study within the parameters of a Western perspective of art and design which often contradicted and conflicted with their race, ethnicity and culture. Many had to draw on their own resources in order to access and manoeuvre within the art and design educational space and as a result there is a lot that can be learnt from this group and their experiences. The analysis of the facilitating strategies as revealed by the participants highlighted the strength and resilience of Black African students in participating in and navigating within an educational space not designed with them in mind and thus this research argues that the knowledge, skills and abilities they demonstrated requires recognition and acknowledgement. A focus on facilitating strategies allowed a move away from seeing BAME groups as groups 'full of cultural poverty disadvantages' and instead emphasised what can be learnt from BAME groups (Yosso 2005:69). The narrative extracts analysed showed that there existed an 'array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilised by' Black African students 'to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression' (Yosso 2005:77) within the art and design educational space.

For those who participated in and navigated within HE art and design there were a number of strategies which facilitated their journey. A number of participants saw art and design as important to their well-being and a necessary part of life, such that studying HE art and design and pursuing a career in art and design was more than a means to put food on the table. Whilst being very much aware of their existence, for the majority of the participants being able to see beyond limiting barriers and existing structural inequalities allowed them to be able to engage in art and design education. The same can be said of the participants' parents who encouraged their children's aspirations to study art and design, it is argued that

they showed a form of implicit activism in that they worked against allowing existing limitations to restrain and restrict their children and their children's aspirations.

The individual facilitating strategies that participants utilised to participate in and navigate within HE art and design included having a great deal of self-efficacy, as well as holding aspirational, resistant and navigational capital, this assisted them in overcoming the familial and institutional barriers that existed within their journeys. It is also clear from the findings that there existed pedagogies of the home which differed from those predominantly acknowledged by educational institutions. This included the subtle and overt support given by parents through the instilling and encouraging of art and design educational aspirations. Whilst some participants discussed overt and subtle art and design practices that happened within their home environment as well as on the African continent, some openly acknowledged this as playing a part in their aspirations to art and design education as well working as part of a facilitating strategy, whilst others did not openly highlight it but the analysis of their extracts read it as such. The individual and familial facilitating strategies identified in the participants' narratives ultimately gave the participants a confidence, belief and self-understanding of their abilities and this helped in facilitating their participation in and navigation within in HE art and design.

Other facilitating strategies included some proactive parents going out of their way to seek knowledge and understanding of routes into art and design which they did not have as immigrant parents who were generally unaccustomed to the British education system. Some participants talked about the individual actions they had to take in order to gain the knowledge and understanding necessary to participate in HE art and design, demonstrating that much of this knowledge was not gained through institutional advice. The findings however, did also identify examples of good and positive support from teachers and tutors at secondary school, FE and HE, with a number of participants particularly highlighting positive experiences at FE colleges where they felt especially supported and encouraged to pursue their educational goals. It was also identified within the narrative extracts that institutional facilitating strategies predominantly required participants to integrate into already existing structures and contexts which generally favoured white middle class students, and so those participants who were able to integrate into these structures and

contexts were able to participate in and navigate within HE with much more ease. Whereas in chapter 6 it was identified that there existed a master narrative that art and design was not part of the African culture, it was identified when examining facilitating strategies that looking at African art and design through a positive lens, which focused on the growing and developing art and design industry in general and art and design education in particular, could better allow Black African communities to see the value and potential of art and design and thus art and design education for their communities.

These research findings around facilitating strategies have inclined me to believe that the experience of overcoming barriers within complex institutional systems constitutes a cultural wealth in its own right, and presently this cultural wealth from minoritised groups is not acknowledged or utilised. The recognition of the experience of overcoming barriers and the cultural wealth utilised to do this also allows BAME groups to be seen outside of the deficit model.

8.3   Suitability of advice and strategies for participation and progression in HE art and design

Advice and strategies which were fit and suited for purpose are identified as those which allowed smooth and seamless participation and progression in HE art and design for the research participants. The findings suggested that the strategies which were deliberate and thought through, such as the actions taken by Ngozi and Lidia's mothers, who went out of their way to find the relevant information in order for their children to participate and progress, were particularly effective as they assisted the participants in following their journey with much more confidence and ease. The narratives of Ngozi in particular and Lidia to some extent, suggest that the advice and strategies employed by their mothers were fit and suited for purpose as they followed structures and systems already in existence within educational institutions. This arrangement necessitated that participants 'fit in' with institutional structures as they were, and as a result of certain 'norms' within the institution necessary for participation and progression and I argue that the pedagogies of the home (which this research viewed as a cultural wealth in Black African communities), that existed

in the lives of the participants were not considered by the institutions as advice and strategies which were fit and suited for purpose.

Previous research noted that there needed to be more consistency in advice given to potential art and design students (Dean 2005, Burke and McManus 2011) and this is reflected in the research findings gathered from participants' experiences. When looking at the participants comments around their engagement and interaction with educational institutions it can be seen that the advice and strategies offered towards participation and progression in HE art and design were for the most part unstructured, inconsistent and difficult to access, and as a result some participants received more advice and support whilst others received far less. Much time was lost by some participants trying to find their own way around the art and design educational space as few knew where they could attain the relevant information from and thus a large amount of the advice and strategies offered by teachers, tutors and career advisers were not fit and suited for purpose. Looking at the experiences of the participants who were a part of a Widening Participation scheme, it can be seen that for those who followed the scheme as structured and also had access to insider knowledge and the hidden institutional processes around access and entry to HE art and design there was an ease to their access and entry to degree courses. However, this again necessitated that participants 'fit in' with institutional structures as they were.

From the findings it is suggested that art and design educational institutions often operated in uninviting and unhospitable ways towards the participants, and as a result they made it necessary for the participants to have to find various coping mechanisms to access, enter and survive in such a space. The institutions that the participants' journeys were within took for granted that the behaviour and actions of students in general should to be integrated to the workings and philosophy of the institutions, and as such the advice and capacity building strategies offered by teachers and tutors that worked, were those which *were* integrated to the institutions. This expectation can remain unchallenged as long as the students belong to a white middle class group; however variations from this student body, challenge and critique the nature of the institution and how its structures and systems are managed as can be seen from the narratives of the Black African art and design students who participated in this research. The findings gathered from the experiences of the

participants in this study suggested, for the most part, that the institutions failed to include the variety and diversity which the participants brought with them.

The findings further suggest that the advice and strategies that are fit and suited to allowing smoother participation and progression in HE art and design for Black African students in particular, would be those which are; more sensitive to the cultures that the students come from, have a better understanding of the specific barriers that they face in relation to education as a result of their race, ethnicity, culture as well as immigration and generational status, and are accepting and accommodating of the cultural wealth that these students hold and bring to the process of access, entry and progression in HE art and design.

8.4   **Contribution to previous literature**

This research contributes to literature within the field of education that looks at BAME groups as individual groups with different and varying cultural roles, identities and histories which need to be considered when looking at patterns of participation in HE. It adds to the limited existing literature around experiences of BAME groups in HE art and design namely Okon (2005), Hatton (2009, 2012, 2013) and Theuri (2015), in particular addressing the need identified by Okon (2005) for qualitative research looking at factors influencing BAME participation/non-participation in HE art and design. This research is different to other work in the field exploring participation/non-participation in HE art and design as well as art and design student HE experiences, as it has explored the *specific* experiences of Black African students, privileging in particular issues around race, ethnicity and culture with an underlying focus on class. Thus it has analysed the experiences of Black African art and design students through a theoretical framework that incorporates CRT, Afrocentrism, Multiculturalism, reproduction theory and Post-Black theory. As a result of using these theoretical frameworks the participants' race, ethnicity and culture in particular are centred in the analysis as are their individual and collective voices. Through using these theoretical frameworks it adds to the field as it has produced findings that have been interpreted through a lens which is sensitised to the cultural factors, including historical and contemporary inequalities and disadvantages, which specifically affect Black African art and design students and their responsiveness to education.

Whilst this research reflects and supports previous literature findings in regards to barriers impeding participation in and experiences of HE art and design for minority ethnic students, it also offers new understandings within a Black African context showing how these barriers affect this group. As has been discussed in the literature review there have been a number of barriers identified in relation to participation and experience in HE art and design for BAME students, Connor et al (2004) noted that there was a parental steering towards some professional and vocational subjects (medicine, law, business, IT), whilst Okon (2005) identified that members of BAME groups did not see the creative industries as a good career option. This thesis has further illuminated these previous findings in relation to the experiences of Black African art and design students. The findings suggest that as Black Africans who have migrated to the UK, some participants' parents found themselves experiencing discrimination on the job market and unable to utilise qualifications and experience gained on the African continent. The repercussions of this were such that there was a parental prudence and protection which lead to parents projecting to their children that studying a degree in art and design was not a viable option, implying an understanding that there was a risk associated with studying art and design based degrees for Black African communities given societal inequalities. The findings suggest that participation in HE art and design is a choice which is significantly affected by the specific socio-economic situation affecting Black Africans in the UK. However a number of participants as second generation immigrants demonstrated that their outlooks on degree choices and subsequent career options differed to their parents as they were seeking to study art and design degrees as a result of personal preference and enjoyment rather than financial stability.

A key finding in this research has been the identification of a master narrative as a barrier to participation in and experiences of HE art and design. Research by hooks (1995) identified that within the Black community in America there existed a perspective whereby the visual arts was not seen as important in the lives of this community. The findings from this research suggest that a similar perception existed within the Black African communities that the participants were part of, and this acted as a barrier impeding participation in and experience of HE art and design. Collectively, the notion of low status afforded to art and design education, the art and design space being perceived as a 'white' space and the

limited engagement with and discussion and viewing of art and design work, were identified within the research as being part of a master narrative whereby art and design was not seen as part of the African culture. This master narrative was identified as having historical roots to colonisation and imperialism and the ways in which the West attempted to make Africans lose touch with their ability to create artwork and the negatively impact the value they placed on art and design, this narrative has contemporary repercussions as it has manifested itself as a key barrier within the educational journey of some participants in the research.

Previous research identified HE art and design as largely Eurocentric in nature; with normal art students viewed as white and middle class (Burke and McManus 2011, Hatton 2012, Finnigan 2009), and the curriculum taught identified as Eurocentric (Hatton 2012, 2013, 2009, Theuri 2015). The findings from this thesis support what is known about the Eurocentric nature of the art and design educational space, with a number of participants in particular highlighting the critique they had towards the curriculum which did not often accommodate their culture within it, and some participants noting the challenges they had at times 'fitting in' as Black African students.

This study was also interested in exploring the strategies that facilitated participation in and navigation within HE art and design. Through looking at facilitating strategies the findings from this research have offered a new perspective and counter discourse to research that has identified parental steering towards certain professional and vocational subjects (Connor et al 2005) and identified that members of BAME groups did not see the creative industries as a good career option (Okon 2005). The findings troubles this previous research as they demonstrated that there were some participants who identified that their parents supported their aspirations to participate in HE art and design and thus it is argued that they were resisting the existing societal inequalities that sought to limit their children's educational aspirations and choices.

Research has identified that there is a lack of BAME audiences attending museums and galleries compared to white audiences (Taking Part Survey 2014-15, Araeen 2004, Dyer 2007, Hooper-Greenhill 1997, Whitehead 2005). Whilst Burke and McManus (2011)

identified that this type of cultural participation as well as reading about art and talking about art was one that was not only welcomed but expected in HE art and design. The findings from this research demonstrated that the participants and their families had limited engagement, discussion and viewing of art and design work and thus corroborated the research of (Taking Part Survey 2014-15, Araeen 2004, Dyer 2007, Hooper-Greenhill 1997, Whitehead 2005). This limited engagement, discussion and viewing of art and design work presented itself a barrier to participation in and experience of HE art and design for the research participants as this cultural engagement was expected in art and design education. However, it was also identified in the narratives of the participants that there was a different form of engagement, discussion and viewing of art and design work through creative practices that happened in their homes and communities. This finding suggests something new to the previous research as it demonstrates a different cultural capital in existence for Black African communities, and one which worked as a facilitating strategy for a number of participants in regards to participation in and navigation within HE art and design.

Whereas previous research highlighted the barriers to participation in HE art and design for BAME students (Okon 2005), and barriers to navigation and progress within HE art and design for BAME students (Burke and McManus 2011, Hatton 2013, 2012, 2009, Theuri 2015), this research added new insight to the field by identifying the range of strategies that facilitated participation in and navigation with HE art and design.

8.5   Research Contributions

The experiences of Black African art and design students in regards to participation in and experience of HE art and design have so far not been sufficiently recognised and utilised in the field, however this recognition is necessary as part of the process of initiating change and transformation in art and design education so that participation in and experience of HE art and design becomes more accessible and inclusive. This research provides an insight into the strategies employed and utilised by the selected participants in their journeys into the art and design higher educational space, the ways in which they negotiated and manoeuvred into and within HE art and design amongst and through socio-economic,

institutional, familial and individual limiting barriers. Through an analysis of the narratives presented by the participants which are specifically focused around art and design education, this thesis adds to existing research which argues against the notion that education is meritocratic and that equal access, entry and progression is available to all (Reay et al 2001d, Pilkington 2011, Burke and McManus 2006). It is believed that my research and conclusions provide insight of the perception and lived experiences of an important group of second generation immigrant Black African students, and thus is an addition and worthwhile contribution to existing theoretical texts in the field of art and design education.

The increase in the population of Black Africans in Britain means that they are changing and creating new ways of understanding what it means to be British as well as providing new creative forms of Britishness. These impact on their responsiveness education, and thus the findings from this research provide an insight into the ways this group negotiates and recasts ways of participating in and experiences of HE art and design. The findings from the participant's narratives show that all participants, including those who entered and progressed in HE art and design faced barriers in regards to their participation in and experiences of HE art and design. Through their journeys it is possible to see their ability to overcome barriers to participation in and within their experiences of HE art and design. They not only faced the barriers in regards to art and design education having a low ranking status in the Black African communities at large, where it is not seen as a subject worthy of study at HE, but they also faced the barriers that came as a result of racism and the often negativity and marginalisation that their race, ethnicity and culture could and has received in the educational space, as well as issues around acculturation and navigating the intricacies of a British culture which at times had different ways of being to their own individual African cultural heritage. Discrimination could be overt but also much more subtle and nuanced and this research revealed the various coping mechanisms the participants found for dealing with such issues.

Previous research has identified a need for the art and design educational space to incorporate into its structures and systems other types of cultural capital other than white middle class (Finnigan 2009, Hatton, 2003 2012, Burke and McManus 2011), and thus there

is a need in education to recognise the cultural capital (experiences, skills, histories, ideas) that BAME groups hold (Yosso 2005). This research has taken this on board and focused away from the experiences, skills, histories and ideas that white middle class communities hold, and therefore added to previous research by showing the cultural wealth existing in Black African communities and how this was used by the research participants to enter and navigate within the art and design educational space. This research listened to the experiences of members of Black African communities, a group who are often silenced and marginalised, and their experiences showed exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation underlying participation in and experience of HE art and design for this group. Whilst there has been research in HE art and design which has looked at the positive experiences of 'high achieving' non-traditional art and design students with the aim of 'turning the idea of deficient communities on its head' by capturing 'the voice of high achieving art and design students from diverse backgrounds', in order to make changes in teaching and learning (Finnigan 2009:13) it did not focus specifically on BAME students in general, and thus this research adds to that research by providing an in-depth focus specifically on Black African students. Whilst work by Osler (1999) identified that its research focus was on looking at the educational experiences of members of BAME groups who were successful within the school system it mainly highlighted the challenges they faced and the exclusionary processes they found in HE, it did not discuss the strategies they used to manoeuvre these challenges nor overcome the exclusionary processes in order to succeed at school. This research adds to existing research through its ability to identify what facilitated participation in and navigation within HE art and design for Black African students, particularly given the limiting barriers that existed for the students and which were also identified in the research findings.

This thesis contributes to the research field of art and design education by increasing understanding of educational experiences, aspiration and participation of Black African art and design students. Understanding this group is of vital importance given that they have been historically disadvantaged and currently remain disadvantaged when it comes to education in the UK, and continuous racism and exclusion has impacted and still impacts on their educational experiences and their responsiveness to education. It contributes to an enrichment of the current discourse around BAME students in HE art and design and their

experiences of art and design education. Given the current climate; of increased tuition fees and changing patterns of student participation, coupled with Black African communities having had significant population growth in the UK over the last 10 years and having the second highest HE participation rates of BAME groups, but low participation rates in HE art and design, this research and its' findings are considered not only timely and relevant, but also valuable to institutions who are interested in hearing and utilising this student community's experiences and perspectives on participation in and experiences of HE art and design.

This research also contributes to the debate on participation/non-participation and inclusion/exclusion of 'non-traditional' students in HE art and design, which has often been dominated by social class, by focusing on race, ethnicity and culture as important and determining factors.

The most significant contribution of this thesis has been to specifically examine the experience of Black African art and design students with a particular focus on the intersectionality of issues around race, ethnicity and culture, with an underlying focus on class, whilst looking at their secondary, tertiary and HE educational journeys. The thesis has focused on what the participants' perceived to be the limiting barriers and facilitating strategies within their participation in and experience of and navigation within HE art and design. An assessment of the barriers that impeded their participation in and experiences of HE art and design, and the subsequent strategies they utilised to overcome barriers and thus participate in and navigate within HE art and design, add particularly useful insight to existing research on BAME art and design student participation in and experiences of HE art and design.

8.6   __Future research__

The limitations of the study were perhaps that I was only able to interview and thus hear the experiences of two male participants; it would have been helpful to hear more male experiences and be able to analyse and understand their experiences in relation to the female experiences thus allowing an opportunity to explore issues around gender. Also the

majority of participants I interviewed had either; already studied HE Art and Design or were on the journey to studying HE Art and Design. It would have been helpful to hear more from those who wanted to but did not study HE Art and Design, however it is to be noted that participants in this group were difficult to find. As a result of my study, further research might well be conducted on a larger sample of participants, including in particular those who had aspirations to study HE Art and Design but chose not to in order to explore further the barrier to participation in HE Art and Design, and also a larger sample of male participants in order to allow more male voices to be heard.

Further research might also be conducted in order to explore deeper the institutional perspectives on participation and HE experiences of BAME students, through interviewing teachers and tutors in art and design education at secondary, tertiary and HE. Perhaps it would also be useful to conduct longitudinal research looking at a small group of Black African students and following them over a period of time (post-16 to first year of HE) in order to gain further understanding of their participation in and experiences of HE Art and Design, including any changes in perspectives and to better measure 'distance travelled' (Hagger et al 2007) during crucial decision making stages. It is clear from this study that parents played a particularly pivotal role in participation in HE for Black African art and design students and therefore it may be of interest to conduct further intergenerational research interviewing both students and their parents in order to ascertain better the perspectives of Black African parents. This research looked specifically at Black African Art and Design students and so it may also be worthwhile to do a comparison of experiences with other BAME groups. Further research could also involve looking deeper at what art and design means to Africans, what art and design is in African communities, and connected to this the growing and developing art and design field on the African continent and how this is impacting perspectives around the value and worth of art and design education within Black African communities. This study has identified that there is a wealth of research still waiting to be undertaken in this field.

8.7   **Recommendations**

Chase (2011) identified that the history of narrative research, a research approach which this study undertook, has been shaped amongst other things by the stories of marginalised and oppressed groups. Giving voices to and amplifying the voices of marginalised people have been the 'goals for narrative research for several decades' and through the telling of collective stories members of these groups 'demand social change…It may be a demand that people who hold legal, cultural and other forms of power take action to bring about justice' (Chase 2011:428). The recommendations discussed as a result of analysing the stories told by the research participants' ties very much with this notion.

The findings from this thesis have raised the importance for educational research and policy needing to be aware of and take into consideration how the experiences of Black African art and design students as second generation immigrants are connected to race, ethnicity, culture and class and within this to further consider issues relating to immigration and generational status (Delgado Bernal 2001) which pose additional complexities to their educational experiences and their responsiveness to education.

Most of the participants refused to allow the barriers to hold them back, but this does not mean that the art and design space does not need to change. Through discussing the barriers faced by the research participants and the strategies they used to overcome these barriers, this research raises the importance of acknowledging, incorporating and accommodating cultural capital other than white middle class into the art and design educational space at the stages of access and entry into HE Art and Design as well as within the curriculum and pedagogy at secondary, tertiary and HE. The participants in this research would have benefitted from and felt more 'at home' in the art and design educational space through better incorporation and accommodation of their cultural capital and their cultural heritage.

The participants in this study would also have benefitted from better support and advice given to them and their parents on the routes into HE Art and design starting from secondary school. The institutional facilitating strategies in regards to participation in HE art and design that they were offered, needed to be more seamless, fair and consistent such that all received a similar standard of advice and capacity building. Institutional facilitating

strategies also needed to incorporate existing strategies within Black African communities that have positively worked in aiding access, entry and progression in HE Art and Design. With this in mind, it may be useful for educational institutions to consider to what extent, if at all their current strategies are facilitating participation and progression in HE art and design for potential and existing Black African art and design students.

Having identified facilitating strategies through this research, these could now be disseminated to Black African communities in order to encourage them to not only see but also use the knowledge and skills that already exist within their communities (Yosso 2005) in order to assist young people in Black African communities in participating in HE Art and Design.

The research findings have implications for primary, secondary and tertiary education. They provide, for teachers and influencers, a useful theoretical and practical resource based on the personal narratives of Black African students. As a resource it can be used amend teaching and learning practices in addition to the curriculum content. It can also be used to refine educational recruitment procedures and protocols so that they better accommodate differences in terms of prior educational experiences and the confidence that individual BAME students may have in their own agency.

The narratives presented in this study identify an encouraging student voice for change. Thus, educational policy should look to include consultative processes to ensure that the experiences of students with identifiable ethnic heritage are heard and acted upon.

This research forms part of a growing body of diversity research in art and design education. The use of theories such as Critical Race Theory in the field of art and design education offers up new ways of analysing and understanding student experience. Educational policy change needs to take into consideration research such as this and the implications it has for the general student population.

This study identified that not all HEIs were open to engaging with live research. There was a refusal of access to potential participants and a poor quality of response from some HEIs. A

recommendation from this research experience is that there needs to be a directive for HEIs to pro-actively engage with live research.

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PREVIOUSLY STUDIED HE ART AND DESIGN								
NAME	AGE	AFRICAN HERITAGE	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	GENDER	COUNTRY ATTENDED SECONDARY SCHOOL	INSTITUTION ATTENDED FOR POST-16 EDUCATION*	ROUTE TO HE ART AND DESIGN AFTER GCSE	ART AND DESIGN DEGREE STUDIED and YEAR GRADUATED
ASA	33	NIGERIAN	UK	FEMALE	UK	SIXTH-FORM & FE COLLEGE	A LEVELS & FOUNDATION COURSE	GRAPHIC DESIGN (2005)
BEN	27	NIGERIAN	UK	MALE	UK	SIXTH-FORM	A LEVELS & FOUNDATION COURSE	FINE ART (2009)
ELLA	34	CONGOLESE	CONGO	FEMALE	CONGO	FE COLLEGE	2 YEAR BTEC COURSE	FASHION (2013)
IMAN	26	SOMALI	SOMALIA	FEMALE	UK	SIXTH-FORM	2 YEAR FOUNDATION DEGREE	GRAPHIC DESIGN (2009)
LAKER	27	UGANDAN	UK	FEMALE	UK	SIXTH-FORM COLLEGE	A LEVELS & FOUNDATION COURSE	GRAPHIC DESIGN (2009)
LIDIA	36	ETHIOPIAN	ETHIOPIA	FEMALE	UK	FE COLLEGE	2 YEAR GNVQ COURSE	FASHION (1998)
NGOZI	24	NIGERIAN AND SIERRA LEONIAN	UK	FEMALE	UK	SIXTH-FORM COLLEGE	A LEVELS	HISTORY OF ART (2010)
PETER	21	MAURITIAN	MAURITIUS	MALE	UK	FE COLLEGE	A LEVELS & FOUNDATION COURSE	GRAPHIC DESIGN (2013)

*All participants completed Post-16 education and degrees in a UK institution

PLANNING TO STUDY HE ART AND DESIGN								
NAME	AGE	AFRICAN HERITAGE	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	GENDER	COUNTRY ATTENDED SECONDARY SCHOOL	INSTITUTION ATTENDED FOR POST-16 EDUCATION*	ROUTE TO HE ART AND DESIGN AFTER GCSE	ART AND DESIGN DEGREE TO BE STUDIED
ABENA	18	GHANAIAN	GHANA	FEMALE	UK	FE COLLEGE	A LEVELS (was about to undertake Foundation course at time of interview)	FASHION
IQRA	18	SOMALI	HOLLAND	FEMALE	UK	SIXTH-FORM & FE COLLEGE	2 YEAR BTEC COURSE	TEXTILES (was about to undertake degree at time of interview)

* All participants completed Post-16 education and degrees in a UK institution

DID NOT STUDY HE ART AND DESIGN								
NAME	AGE	AFRICAN HERITAGE	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	GENDER	COUNTRY ATTENDED SECONDARY SCHOOL	INSTITUTION ATTENDED FOR POST-16 EDUCATION*	HIGHEST ART AND DESIGN QUALIFICATION	DEGREE STUDIED
LIZ	31	GABONESE	UK	FEMALE	UK	SIXTH-FORM	GCSE	POLITICS & SOCIOLOGY
TOYIN	30	NIGERIAN	NIGERIA	FEMALE	UK	FE COLLEGE	GCSE	BUSINESS
SAM	32	NIGERIAN	NIGERIA	FEMALE	UK	SIXTH-FORM	A LEVEL	MARKETING
MICHELLE	18	ZIMBABWEAN	ZIMBABWE	FEMALE	UK	SIXTH-FORM COLLEGE	GCSE	LAW

* All participants completed Post-16 education and degrees in a UK institution

APPENDIX 2: ETHICAL APPORVAL

University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

College of Arts & Social Sciences
Room 626 Maxwell Building
The Crescent
Salford, M5 4WT
Tel: 0161 295 5876

12 March 2013

Sylvia Theuri
University of Salford

Dear Sylvia

Re: Ethical Approval Application – CASS120009

I am pleased to inform you that based on the information provided, the Research Ethics
Panel have no objections on ethical grounds to your project.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Woodman
On Behalf of CASS Research Ethics Panel

APPENDIX 3A Interview Guide for art and design graduates

2013

Project Title: *Black African students and the art and design education space*

Identity

1. *Where were you born?*

2. *Where did you grow up?*

3. *Where do you call 'home' (country, city)?*

4. *What is your family's country of origin?*

5. *Where were your parent/s born?*

Social class

6. *How would you describe your parent/s' class? (upper, middle, lower)*

7. *Who was the main breadwinner in your family (growing up)?*

8. *Who was/were your carer/s/guardian/s (growing up)?*

9. *Did your parent/s own their own home (growing up)?*

10. *What were there occupation/s (growing up)?*

11. *At what level did your parent/s complete their education?*

12. *If they went to university; What did they study? Where did they study?*

Educational History

13. *Where did you go to primary school?*

14. *Where did you go to secondary school? What type of school (comprehensive,*

   grammar, private)?

15. Which institution did you attend for further education? (e.g Sixth form-attached to secondary school or college) What did you study? Did you do an art and design foundation course?

16. Which institution did you attend for Higher Education? What did you study?

17. If you have already graduated what jobs have you held since graduation? (only ask if participants have finished studying)

<u>*Introductory question*</u>

18. When would you say you realised you had an interest in art and design?

<u>*Engagement with art and design*</u>

19. What can you recall about your experiences of visiting galleries and museums with your family/friends when you were younger?

What are your experiences of visiting galleries and museums now?

What can you recall about your experiences of reading about art and design with your family/friends when you were younger?

What can you recall about your experiences of talking about art and design with your family/friends when you were younger?

What are your experiences of talking about art and design with your family/friends now?

<u>*Decision making and educational experience*</u>

20. How was your decision to study art and design informed?

How did you come to the decision to study art and design? (at secondary school, post-16, foundation and at HE)

21. *How would you say others (family/friends/teachers) viewed your decision to study art and design? (at secondary school, post-16, foundation and at HE)*

22. *How did you find the transition from GCSE to accessing and/or entering*

FE art and design

HE art and design?

How did you prepare for the process of applying and entering into HE?

23. *What were your experiences of studying art and design at secondary school?*

24. *What were/are your experiences of studying art and design at FE and/or HE?*

25. *What were your experiences of studying art and design at primary school?*

26. *Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not discussed so far? Or anything previously mentioned that you would like to expand on?*

APPENDIX 3B Interview Guide for participants who did not study HE art and design

2013

Project Title: *Black African students and the art and design education space*

Identity

1. *Where were you born?*

2. *Where did you grow up?*

3. *Where do you call 'home' (country, city)?*

4. *What is your family's country of origin?*

5. *Where were your parent/s born?*

Social class

6. *How would you describe your parent/s' class? (upper, middle, lower)*

7. *Who was the main breadwinner in your family (growing up)?*

8. *Who was/were your carer/s/guardian/s (growing up)?*

9. *Did your parent/s own their own home (growing up)?*

10. *What were there occupation/s (growing up)?*

11. *At what level did your parent/s complete their education?*

12. *If they went to university; What did they study? Where did they study?*

Educational History

13. *Where did you go to primary school?*

14. *Where did you go to secondary school? What type of school (comprehensive, grammar, private)?*

15. *Which institution did you attend for further education? (Sixth form-attached to secondary school or college) What did you study?*

16. *Which institution did you attend for Higher Education? What did you study?*

17. *If you have already graduated what jobs have you held since graduation? (only ask if participants have finished studying)*

Introductory question

18. *When would you say you realised you had an interest in art and design?*

Engagement with art and culture

19. *What can you recall about your experiences of visiting galleries and museums with your family/friends when you were younger?*

    What are your experiences of visiting galleries and museums now?

    What can you recall about your experiences of reading about art and design with your family/friends when you were younger?

    What can you recall about your experiences of talking about art and design with your family/friends when you were younger?

    What are your experiences of talking about art and design with your family/friends now?

Decision making and educational experience

20. *How was your decision to study your chosen subject informed?*

    How did you come to the decision to study your chosen subject?

21. *How would you say others family/friends viewed your decision to study your chosen subject?*

22. *How did you find the transition from GCSE to accessing and/or entering*

    FE

    HE?

23. *Up to which level did you study art and design? (ask questions 25-30 based on this answer)*

24. *Did you consider doing further studies in art and design? How did others (family/friends/teachers) view that?*

25. *How did you arrive at the decision not to continue with further studies in art and design?*

   What are your thoughts now on that decision?

   Do you think you would study art and design in the future?

26. *What were your experiences of studying art and design at secondary school*

27. *What were your experiences of studying art and design at FE?*

28. *What were your experiences of studying art and design at primary school?*

29. *Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not discussed so far? Or anything previously mentioned that you would like to expand on?*

APPENDIX 3C Interview Guide for current art and design students

2013

Project Title: *Black African students and the art and design education space*

Identity

1. *Where were you born?*

2. *Where did you grow up?*

3. *Where do you call 'home' (country, city)?*

4. *What is your family's country of origin?*

5. *Where were your parent/s born?*

Social class

6. *How would you describe your parent/s' class? (e.g. upper, middle, lower)*

7. *Who is the main breadwinner in your family?*

8. *Who is/are your carer/s/guardian/s?*

9. *Do your parent/s own their own home?*

10. *What is/are their occupation/s?*

11. *At what level did your parent/s complete their education?*

12. *If they went to university; What did they study? Where did they study?*

Educational History

13. *Where did you go to primary school?*

14. *Where did you go to secondary school? What type of school (comprehensive,*

    grammar, private)?

15. *Which institution are you attending for further education? (e.g Sixth form-attached to secondary school or college) What are you studying? Have you done an art and design foundation course?*

16. *Which course are you studying?*

Introductory question

17. *When would you say you realised you had an interest in art and design?*

Engagement with art and design

18. *What can you recall about your experiences of visiting galleries and museums with your family/friends when you were younger?*

    What are your experiences of visiting galleries and museums now?

    What can you recall about your experiences of reading about art and design with your family/friends when you were younger?

    What can you recall about your experiences of talking about art and design with your family/friends when you were younger?

    What are your experiences of talking about art and design with your family/friends now?

Decision making and educational experience

19. *How was your decision to study art and design informed?*

    How did you come to the decision to study art and design? (at secondary school, post-16, foundation and at HE)

20. *How would you say others (family/friends/teachers) viewed your decision to study art and design? (at secondary school, post-16, foundation and at HE)*

21. *How did you find the transition from GCSE to accessing and/or entering*

FE art and design

HE art and design?

How did you prepare for the process of applying and entering into HE?

22. *What were your experiences of studying art and design at secondary school?*

23. *What were/are your experiences of studying art and design at FE and/or HE?*

24. *What were your experiences of studying art and design at primary school?*

25. *Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not discussed so far? Or anything previously mentioned that you would like to expand on?*

2010-11 total number of **Black African students** studying undergraduate courses in the UK:
68,495

Percentage studying Creative Arts and Design:
Black African: 3.7%

Percentage studying Subjects allied to Medicine:
Black African: 24.86%

Percentage studying Business and Administrative studies:
Black African: 17.18%

Percentage studying Social studies:
Black African: 12.3%

HESA DATA (2012)

2011-12 total number of **Black African students** studying undergraduate courses in the UK:
70,705

Percentage studying Creative Arts and Design:
Black African: 3.8%

Percentage studying Subjects allied to Medicine:
Black African: 24.3%

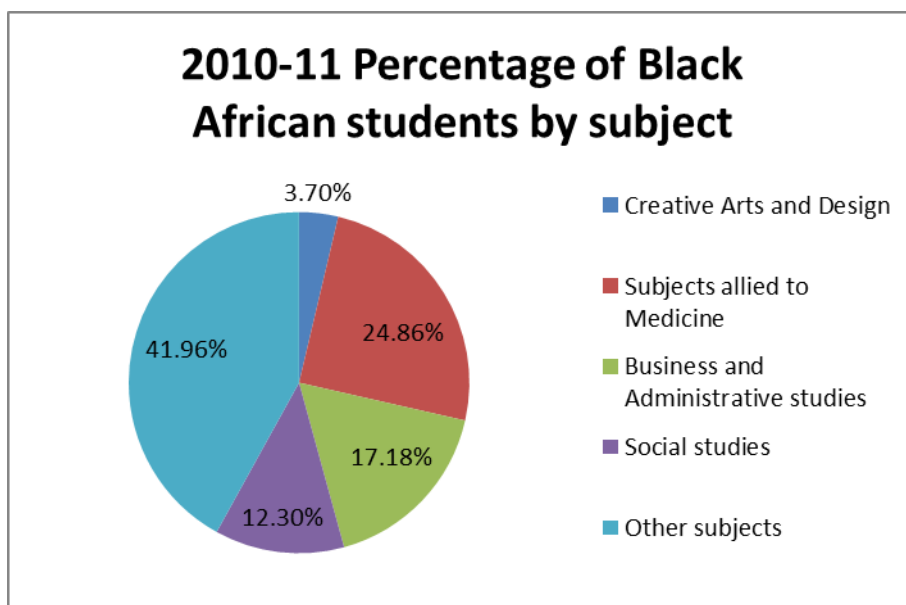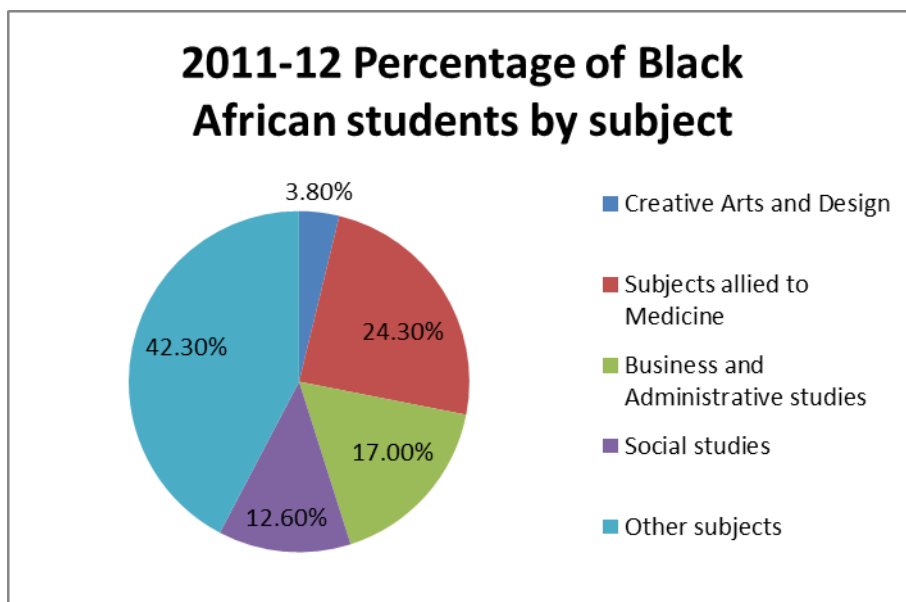Percentage studying Business and Administrative studies:
Black African: 17%

Percentage studying Social studies:
Black African: 12.6%

HESA DATA (2013)

APPENDIX 4A

2011-12 Percentage of Black African students by subject

- Creative Arts and Design
- Subjects allied to Medicine
- Business and Administrative studies
- Social studies
- Other subjects

3.80%
24.30%
42.30%
17.00%
12.60%

2010-11 Percentage of Black African students by subject

- Creative Arts and Design
- Subjects allied to Medicine
- Business and Administrative studies
- Social studies
- Other subjects

3.70%
24.86%
41.96%
17.18%
12.30%

Higher Education Statistics Agency data received in 2012 and 2013 respectively. This data is based on students studying at undergraduate level in the United Kingdom.

APPENDIX 5 PARTICIPANT NARRATIVES

A Ruptured Journey

Liz's story

In her narrative Liz noted that none of the advice from her parents and teachers was suited to helping her enter art and design education. She recalled studying expressive arts (Drama, Music and Dance) and art and design at GCSE, which she enjoyed but as soon as they were over she felt that her mother encouraged her to focus on more 'serious' academic subjects to prepare for university. Liz talked of not having good relationships with her art and design teacher; there was no personal connection or encouragement to go further, she enjoyed art and design at home in her own time but did not get the same feelings when studying it at school. Liz felt that if she had perhaps had better relationships with her art and design teacher she may have continued further with the subject. Liz felt that secondary school was a difficult space to be in, it was predominantly White and she did not feel comfortable or as though she belonged there. Her mother, who was a teacher and had worked in many of the schools in the local areas, was adamant that Liz and her siblings would go to the best school in the borough, but Liz noted that she would rather have gone to 'more failing' but multi-cultural school. Liz highlighted that she did not have any Black role models in art and design; she didn't know any Black artists or designers and was not taught by any Black teachers, she therefore could not see herself and where she could fit in art and design. Liz felt that whilst her mother's main motive for working and career was to have a stable income and secure future, Liz believed that her outlook and expectations of life and what she wanted to gain from her career were different to her mother's, she was interested in doing a job that she enjoyed and had a passion for. Liz also felt that her mother didn't understand the art and design and could not relate to it. Art and design was seen by her mother as something that Liz could do in her spare time. Liz also felt that her mother saw art and design as a risky career prospect and therefore out of protection, steered Liz away from it.

On speaking about her immediate and extended family, Liz felt that most of them could not see art and design as a suitable career path. Liz talked of being an obedient child and listening so much to what her mother wanted her to do, that in the end she felt that it

became detrimental. She also felt that she spent a lot of her childhood years trying to follow a path that she felt was suitable for someone like her. But she also commented that perhaps she listened too much to her mother, and she should have rebelled a little more as her brothers did. Liz felt that she did not assert herself enough but also felt that she did not have the confidence to.

As a result of encouragement and guidance from her mother, Liz studied for an undergraduate degree in sociology and politics. It was a degree that she did not enjoy, but she felt that every time she told her mother she wanted to change course, her mother convinced her this was the best degree for her, and so despite being unhappy she stayed and completed the course. Liz recalled the time spent on her degree as a bad time in her life, she was very unhappy with the course and the university she went to. Her sociology and politics degree and the fact she went to a Russell Group university was very much viewed as a positive by her family- although she had not enjoyed her time there.

Despite not particularly enjoying the degree, Liz went on to study sociology at Masters Level. However Liz did point out that her peers on her sociology Masters course, who were simultaneously engaging in art and design whilst studying other subjects, motivated her to also follow her passion. Through them she felt that she saw that it was possible to have a career in the creative industry. At the time of the interview Liz was doing some freelance writing, and working towards writing for theatre, she was aware that she was not earning a great deal of money, but commented that she was much happier in a career that allowed her to express her creativity than she had ever been in anything else she had done before.

Liz was able to participate in and experience art and design education as far as GCSE level.

Sam's story

Sam was born in Nigeria and lived there until she was 15 years old. When she was 15 she moved to England. Sam did part of her secondary school education in Nigeria and studied for her GCSEs in England. Sam commented that she initially found it difficult to settle in the England, and revealed that she had been picked on and teased when she was in secondary school. Sam did not study any art and design subjects at GCSE. However, when she chose her A Levels she chose to study

photography. She noted that she had chosen to study photography as she thought it would help her when she went to university where she had wanted to study marketing and advertising. Sam initially became interested in photography when her mother bought her an SLR camera as a present when she arrived in England. She had used the camera to mainly take photos of her siblings, but it was an activity she enjoyed. However, Sam also revealed that as she had grown older her artistic and creative background was something that she tried to hide from others.

When talking about her family, Sam noted that art and design was not a topic that had come up in conversation when she was growing up. She felt that it was not something that her family was interested in discussing. She did however; note that her mother had a lot of African art around the house. Sam recalled that around her family and friends, most did not ask her how she was doing in her A Level photography course, they mainly focused on her other A Level subjects; business and law. Sam believed that this may have been because her family and friends did not know a great deal about photography and simply saw it as taking a few photos.

Sam recalled that it was the photography course at A Level that she dedicated the most time to and performed the best at in terms of grades. Sam received an A grade for her photography A Levels. She received a lot of support from her tutor who encouraged her to take it further. She recalled that she had enjoyed the course and found it really interesting and as a result she had dedicated a lot of time and energy to it.

Sam felt that there was a strong family influence, in particular her mother, which played a large part in her deciding not to pursue photography beyond A Level. Her mother was not keen on her taking it further as she did not see it as a legitimate degree or future career. Sam felt that because her mother was not keen, she did not choose to study photography as a degree, she was quite focused on pleasing her mother. Sam revealed that her A Level photography teacher had encouraged her to go further with the subject and study it at degree level, especially as Sam had received an A grade for her photography A Level. Sam commented that although she had received her highest A Level grade in photography her mother was more focused on the grades she received for her law and business A Levels, she felt that her photography grade did not really matter.

Although Sam had stopped studying photography at A Level, she felt that she did not completely leave the subject behind. Sam felt that now her job role was in marketing, she was able to utilise her photography skills and experience, and she also commented that she would like to perhaps take up photography again and do some extra courses.

Sam was able to participate in and experience art and design education at A Level only.

Michelle's story

At the time of the interview Michelle she was just about to enter the first year of her law degree. Michelle was born in Zimbabwe and lived there until she was 10 years old when her family moved to England. Michelle recalled that in her spare time she would, paint, doodle, take photos and write poetry, she enjoyed being creative. But Michelle noted that she did not show her family the creative work that she did in her spare time. Michelle commented that she enjoyed going to museums and art galleries as much as she could. However she did not recall going to art galleries with her family when growing up, only to museums. Art was not a topic that Michelle recalled discussing with her family, she did not feel that it was a topic that particularly interested her parents.

Michelle talked of having always enjoyed art and design, she chose to study it as a BTEC during secondary school in year 8 and 9, and then decided to study GCSE photography. She talked of really enjoying studying BTEC art and design where she received a lot of encouragement and support from her teacher. Michelle commented that she had kept all her BTEC art and design sketchbooks, as she had enjoyed the different projects she did as part of the subject. She recalled that the majority of art and artists she was taught during her BTEC were Western artists and she did not recall being taught about African art and artists (this was the same when studying GCSE photography). Michelle commented that she initially enjoyed studying photography but when the class was given a new teacher, she felt that the teacher taught the subject in such a way that it took away her enjoyment of it. Michelle felt that the coursework, portfolios and sketchbooks formalised the subject to such an extent that she felt her creativity became stifled. Michelle also noted that her photography teacher had favourite students who received the majority of the teacher's support and encouragement, and other students including Michelle received less attention. Due to that negative educational experience Michelle decided not to continue with photography as an A Level.

Michelle commented that she was gifted academically and was good at most subjects, but she had decided in Year 8 that she wanted to be a lawyer as she felt it was a career that incorporated an element of all the subjects that she enjoyed. Michelle felt that she was not overtly pushed or pressured by her parents to follow any educational pathway, and they left her to make her own decisions. However, Michelle highlighted that although there was no overt pressure from her parents, there were subtle signs as to the subject areas they did not want her to follow. Michelle felt that within her community there was a perception that studying art and design subjects would

not lead to successful careers in the future. She felt that young people within African communities were influenced by community perceptions of the right type of subjects to study and acceptable degree courses. Michelle felt that there was an underlying assumption that it was not possible to have a successful career after studying an art and design degree.

Michelle commented that although she had not studied an art and design subject beyond GCSE she still did a lot of drawing, painting, poetry writing in her spare time. And in the future Michelle hoped that she could perhaps start an art and design based business, as well as pursue singing alongside her law career. She also made an effort to go to art galleries and museums.

Michelle was able to participate in and experience art and design education up to A Level only.

An undeviating journey

Ngozi's story

Ngozi identified that she had been interested in the art and design from when she was young and studied art and design at GCSE. She recalled enjoying her art and design lessons, and initially wanting to go further and become an architect, however she did not get the required science grades at GCSE in order to take physics at A Level, which she would have needed to study architecture at university. Ngozi felt that her science teacher was to blame for her not getting the required grades, and she felt this closed the door to pursuing architecture. Re-thinking about what she wanted to do; Ngozi commented that she was also interested in the social context around, and the history behind art, which lead her to studying history of art at university. Ngozi talked about going to museums with her father when she was younger, but she did not recall going to art galleries with either of her parents. Ngozi's parents separated when she was young and her mother was the main breadwinner growing up. Ngozi commented that she thought her mother was very liberal and allowed her and her siblings to pursue the educational and career paths that they were interested in as long as they were happy. Ngozi noted that there were paintings and artworks in the house, mainly from Africa. She recalled her mother and her siblings saying that she was the artistic one in the family and Ngozi therefore felt that entering into the art and design seemed a natural trajectory for her to take. Ngozi talked of making choices in

regards to GCSE, A Level and degree subjects based on what she liked and what she enjoyed studying.

Ngozi talked of having a very supportive mother and siblings. Ngozi commented that her mother, being aware that as an immigrant she did not fully understand the education system in the UK, sought the help of colleagues at work who directed her in regards to neighbourhoods to live in and the best universities for her children to apply to for the courses they wanted to study. Ngozi felt that she discussed a lot of her decisions around educational choices with her mother who did her own research by talking to colleagues at the trade union organisation she worked for. Ngozi commented that her mother's colleagues helped her source information around university league tables and how to understand them, as well as the best universities to attend based on subject areas. Ngozi also mentioned that she did a lot of personal research. Utilising her and her mother's research they both went to a number of open days for different universities. She did not identify career advisers as being particularly helpful.

When she completed her GCSE Ngozi did not recall receiving any encouragement to pursue art and design further, she felt that she had attended an 'underachieving' school such that students going on to attend Sixth-form was a great achievement for the school. She felt that there were certain teachers that did not believe that she would do well in her exams. Talking of her experiences of art and design at GCSE, Ngozi recalled that she enjoyed the subject and worked hard at it. But she felt that art and design did not have a particularly strong reputation at the school and it was considered an easy subject to take, such that a lot of students did not take it seriously. In regards to the curriculum she talked of subject matter that was predominantly Eurocentric, but highlighted that the teachers allowed students to develop their creativity, such that there was freedom to explore subject areas that were of personal interest, this meant that Ngozi was able to do a project based around the death of a favourite RnB singer. Ngozi felt that with the art and design curriculum, they touched upon African art but it was very materialistic, and the lack of diversity in the curriculum meant that she never really considered looking at Black artists for any of the art and design projects she did during GCSE and A Level. Ngozi did not recall being taught by any Black teachers in art and design GCSE, A Level and Degree level.

Similarly in her degree course, Ngozi felt that the curriculum was very Eurocentric, there was no diversity. She felt that this was partly due to the lack of knowledge and expertise of the faculty in art outside of the Western canon, and thus as a student she was limited to what they knew. Ngozi noted that the uni she went to was in a city which had a diverse population and thus there were Black students studying there, but they just did not study the art and design subjects.

Ngozi felt that now on her Masters course, she had engaged more with art and design from diverse backgrounds. She entered the course wanting to know more about Black art and Black artists, and such had been able to dictate what she wanted to gain from the course. She had pursued it and felt that the tutors on her Masters course had encouraged it. She felt that perhaps this was due to the fact that although the tutors were White, not all of them were British (she mentioned a Dutch tutor and a tutor who had an Israeli background).

Ngozi was able study and progress in HE art and design. The narrative she presented was one in which access, entry and progression in art and design education was a natural and as such relatively smooth, although she did experience some barriers which impeded her journey but did not take her off course.

Ben's story

Ben talked of having always drawn and engaged in making artwork from when he was a young boy. Ben commented that when he was younger he used art and design as an outlet for his emotions, and for him the artwork he created was very private and he did not share it or talk about it with his parents. Ben commented that when he was fifteen years old and at secondary school he began to receive praise from students, and teachers were giving him high grades for his artwork. It was at this point that he began to understand that drawing was something that he was talented at because a large number of people were seeing his work and commenting positively about it.

Ben also saw continuing his education in art and design from GCSE onwards as a natural progression as art and design was his main passion. Ben commented that he did not receive a lot of support or encouragement from his parents to pursue his interest in art and design

beyond secondary school as they did not feel that it was something that was lucrative or that he could make a living out of. His parents instead encouraged him to pursue subjects such as medicine and law. However Ben chose to continue with art and design as he was not interested in the other avenues suggested by his parents. Ben recalled that he went to museums with his family when he was younger and it was something he enjoyed, but he did not recall going to art galleries or exhibitions with his family. Ben also felt that when he was growing up art and design 'just wasn't the thing to talk about at home'.

Although Ben did not study the degree subjects his parents wanted him to, he felt that his parents were still proud of him for attending university. Ben recalled that as he became older, and he was also becoming more successful with his art work he was more confident to share his passion for art and design with his parents.

Ben studied art and design at GCSE and A Level at the same secondary school, followed by a foundation course in art and design; he then went further to study fine art at degree level. Ben felt that the majority of what he did to enter and progress in art and design education was through his own individual perseverance. He recalled asking teachers where was the best place to study art and design and how to progress further but he felt that any final decisions, he made by himself. Ben felt that during secondary school, the teachers encouraged him to engage in art and design and to progress into further and higher education with it, but they did not encourage his style of drawing which he felt was slightly unorthodox. They wanted him to draw in a style that he was uncomfortable with and he found this limiting especially as it was within a creative subject area, he persevered with his style despite the discouragement from teachers.

Ben did not recall being taught by any BAME teachers at GCSE, A Level or foundation course. He also recalled that the curriculum taught was predominantly Eurocentric and he felt quite limited, he went out to libraries seeking more knowledge on a wider art and design history and theory. Ben that at school his art and design class was predominantly White and he was the only Black student. Ben however felt that it did not matter that he was the only Black student, the passion and engagement with art and design gave everyone a common ground. Ben recalled that a number of friends that he spent time with during secondary school did

not share or understand his interest in art and design, they did not see it as 'cool' subject and he talked of 'loosing' friends who could not understand why he was interested in pursuing art and design. Ben also commented that he felt that it was just as possible for those from a BAME background to be successful in art and design as anyone else, but this meant that they needed to 'get the racial barrier thing out of their minds' in order to be able to progress.

Ben recalled enjoying his time at university, but he also recounted some negative experiences. Similar to secondary school, Ben recalled that during university a number of tutors were not encouraging of his art practice, he focused on pencil drawings and photorealism and this was considered too traditional and old fashioned by some tutors, they wanted him to create more contemporary and conceptual artwork. Ben felt that they wanted him to explore other ways of expressing his creativity, other ways of making art, but he felt that he had found an artistic style that he was passionate about. Ben commented that his grades suffered for the first two years of his degree, but by the third year he had found a way to express himself through his artwork and to convey his passion in such a way that the tutors began to see where he was coming from and became encouraging of his art style. Ben commented that he was taught by a Black male tutor on his degree course and this tutor was one of a few who encouraged him to keep pursuing the art practice that he was doing and felt comfortable with. The curriculum on his degree was quite broad, and the Black male tutor encouraged looking at Black art. Ben recalled that the degree tutors encouraged him to create artwork that was connected to his Nigerian heritage and culture; they felt that he would be able to relate to it. However Ben felt that although he could relate to it to some degree, he felt that he was more connected to British culture having grown up in Britain, and it was not the type of artwork that he wanted to make and he did not pursue it for long.

After completing his degree, Ben dedicated all his time to developing his 'craft' and also to 'finding himself in the art world'. He recalled spending twelve to fourteen hours a day drawing and during that time he did not interact with anyone else. Ben was living at home during this time and he commented that he felt 'selfish' for focusing on his artwork and not going out to do a 9 to 5 job and help support his family, but at the same time he also

strongly believed that he would be successful with his artwork. Ben recalled that it was a difficult time in his life as his parents were not happy with what he was doing; he felt that they didn't understand why he was not working and earning a living. Ben felt that it was more important to pursue what he loved, he placed a great deal of importance on happiness, and felt that he had to take risks in order fulfil that purpose.

Ben commented that during his art and design education he was taught how to develop his practice, where his work may fit in the art world as well as in relation to the history of art, but he did not feel that he was taught how to sustain himself financially as an artist, '*I had no idea*, how I was gonna make money as an artist in university, *no idea'*. He felt that when he started to put his artwork on the internet that was when he received support and information about exhibiting artwork, entering competitions and it was from this that he began to build a successful career. He realised that he could make money from commissions, and there were also cash prizes for the competitions he entered.

Ben was able to study and progress in HE art and design. The narrative he presented was one in which his access, entry and progression in HE art and design was affected by barriers which made the process more challenging but he was focused and determined to study and progress in art and design.

Laker's story

Laker talked of having always been interested in art and design. She recalled enjoying her art and design lessons in school and drawing in her spare time when she was younger, she believed that art and design was something that she had a talent in. Laker also recalled that initially, when she was younger and in primary school, she was not keen on following a career path in art and design, as at the time she thought that artists did not make much money. Laker revealed that money had always been an issue when she was growing up as her father was in and out of employment. And so, Laker was conscious that she did not want to be in and out of employment like her father. As she grew older money became less of a focus for her, and Laker also came to the realisation that art and design was all that she wanted to do.

Growing up, Laker did not recall many conversations about art and design with her parents. But she did observe that her mother was more interested in art and design than her father, and took Laker

to a few galleries and museums when she was younger. Laker commented that there was a lot of African artwork in her family home, pieces that her parents had collected during their travels abroad. Laker noted that there was always a lot of pattern and colour in her family home and this very much informed her and the type of work she created. Laker studied art and design and graphic design at GCSE, and then graphic design at A Level. She then took a gap year in order to decide what to do after completing her A Levels. During her gap year she travelled to Brazil and in her free time there she was keen to participate in art and design based activities which included painting a wall mural. The time spent in Brazil helped her decide that art and design was what she wanted to do, as when she was given a choice of what to do in her free time she found herself only wanting to create artwork.

When talking about parental expectations, Laker commented that her father would have preferred her to pursue an education and career in something other than art and design. He often encouraged her to study architecture as a compromise, but Laker was not interested in architecture. Laker felt that her father could not see any career prospects in art and design. His desire was for her to be a doctor and if she insisted on studying art and design then being an architect was the closest he could see to a viable career in art and design. Laker felt that her father's stance was a result of growing up in Uganda with very little money and therefore he wanted more for his children. She thought that her father coming from Uganda, where perhaps it was harder to make a living as an artist, could not see how she could survive as an artist. However Laker believed that it was easier to be an artist and/or a designer in Europe than in Africa. In contrast to her father, her mother encouraged her to study a degree and follow a career path in whatever she enjoyed.

Laker also talked about enjoying her art and design lessons at GCSE and receiving a lot of support and encouragement from her teachers to pursue art and design beyond GCSE level. Similarly she enjoyed her A Level graphic design course and again had supportive teachers who encouraged and nurtured her talent and interest in art and design. Although her father was not keen on her choice to pursue art and design into A Level and further, Laker commented that her parents separated at this stage and so her father had less of an influence on her choices. When it came to educational decision making Laker felt that she relied on her teachers and tutors, she commented that her mother had little knowledge on the educational pathways in art and design and she felt that it would have been helpful to have had a family member or friend who understood the process of access and entry in art and design education. However, Laker felt that her mother was helpful in terms of emotional support.

She recalled an easy transition from GCSE to A Level; this was followed by Laker studying on a foundation course which had a specific focus on graphic design. From the foundation course Laker then moved on to a degree course in graphic design. On her foundation course Laker commented that she received advice from tutors who encouraged her to continue on to a graphic design degree. Laker had a preference for graphic design over fine art, she felt she had not connected with fine art as much as graphic design. She had also received a higher grade in graphic design compared to art and design at GCSE and this also encouraged her to focus on the subject.

Looking back at her educational experience, Laker did not recall studying art and design with any BAME students at secondary school, during her foundation course she recalled studying with one other Black student and one Asian student, and on her degree there was one Asian student. Laker did not recall being taught by any BAME teachers or tutors throughout her time in art and design education. In regards to the curriculum, Laker noted that at secondary school she was only taught about Western art and design, she felt that there was a similar curriculum content on her foundation course although she noted that it was more open and students were able to include a wider range of artists that interested them. Laker explored the work of Black artists and designers, as she felt they were covering similar subject matter, some of the things that mattered to them also mattered to her *'like colonialism, race, coming from a minority culture, being a minority in a culture like this, and aesthetically often they are inspired by the same things that inspire me'*.

At the interview Laker commented that she saw herself as straddling between making graphic design work and fine art work and identified herself as a practising freelance graphic artist. The type of artwork she did covered a range of outcomes including illustration, graphic design, set design, textile design, printing and design for wear. She had been a freelance graphic artist since graduating from university. Laker felt that after a few years of freelancing, it was now becoming much more lucrative and she was busy creating a lot of work for different projects.

Laker was able to study and progress in HE art and design. The narrative she presented was one in which access, entry and progression in art and design was natural and as such relatively smooth. Although she did experience some barriers which impeded her journey it did not take her off course.

Peter's story

Peter recalled always having had a passion for art and design and was focused on pursuing an education and career in art and design. He recalled always drawing when he was younger and when

he started secondary school he realised that it was possible to make a living from creating art and design work. He remembered in particular his year 8 teacher encouraging him in art and design. Peter commented that it was when he was in Year 11 that he realised that the type of work he created had more of a graphic design focus; he commented that his GCSE art and design teacher was the one who encouraged him to continue his art and design education with a focus on graphic design.

Peter talked of his family in Mauritius, and his uncle in particular who was a fashion designer, having a great influence on him and his interest in art and design. Peter recalled going to Mauritius to visit his family and spending time watching his uncle create fashion pieces. He believed that spending time with, and watching his uncle in his creative environment influenced him. The colours and the themes that he saw in his uncle's work could also be seen in the work that Peter created. Peter was particularly inspired by his uncle pursuing art and design in Mauritius in what he saw to be an environment that was not particularly encouraging. Peter believed that his uncle's focus and determination had helped him to have a successful career as a fashion designer. This was the example that Peter gave in regards to engaging with art and design outside of the classroom; he did not recall going to any art galleries with family to look at artwork when he was growing up.

Now that he had chosen to study a degree in graphic design and pursue a career as a designer, Peter observed that his parents had taken a real interest in the work he was doing and would engage him in conversation as well as encourage him in his chosen area of interest. Peter had also observed that his younger sister had taken a particular interest in his art and design work and was asking a lot of questions and trying out some of the techniques that Peter used in his work.

When making decisions of what subjects to take at GCSE, Peter recalled his art and design teacher at secondary school being a positive influence and encouraging him to continue with the subject. Peter commented that after completing his A Level in graphic design he was still undecided on which area of art and design to specialise in, he therefore decided to undertake a foundation course to help him come to a decision. The particular foundation course he chose to do was influenced by the head tutor of the foundation course, who spoke to Peter and highlighted the positive aspects of the course and how it could help Peter move forward in his art and design educational journey. He recalled that when he went on to study a foundation course, he really enjoyed the experience and was further convinced that art and design was what he wanted to study at university and then continue with as a career focus. Peter recalled that his parents were very supportive of his educational decisions and his mother in particular was not surprised by his choices as she had noted

his connection with his uncle in Mauritius. Peter recalled that his parents' had not been to university and so when it came to decision making about higher education they trusted Peter's judgment and supported the choices he made.

Peter talked about being chosen to be part of a widening participation scheme whilst he was on his foundation course. He recalled that most of the participants on the scheme were Black and the first in their family to attend university. The scheme was designed to help prepare him for university applications by helping him create a portfolio and also prepare him for interviews. The scheme culminated with students' receiving an interview for a place on a degree course at the HEI that was participating in the scheme. Peter's experience of being part of the scheme was fraught with difficulties. He found it a challenge to attend all the workshops that were part of the scheme. Peter noted that this was partly due to having a large workload and also to his own laziness. As a result of not attending one of the workshops he did not complete all the work that was expected of him as a participant of the scheme, and this resulted in Peter receiving criticism when he went for the interview, including being told that his work was not the standard of work that the institution was looking for. Peter recalled leaving the interview feeling very disheartened and unsure of what to do next. Peter commented that he decided to work harder and reapply to the same HEI that had rejected him after the interview. He recalled receiving support from his foundation course tutor who encouraged him to reapply and also gave him help with interview preparation. As a result Peter was successful in the second interview and received a place at the HEI which had originally turned him down.

Although Peter recalled that most of the art and design curriculum at secondary school was Western art and design, he noted that there were a few opportunities where his teacher incorporated art and design from other cultures into the curriculum. He also commented that he was taught by two BAME art and design teachers at GCSE level. Talking about his experience on his A Level graphic design course, Peter noted that there were students from BAME backgrounds. Peter highlighted that the degree he studied on was a fast pace course and he felt that the tutors were not as available to the students as he would have wanted, he noted that he would have liked to receive more support and encouragement whilst he was on the course. He recalled emailing the course tutor on a number of occasions to ask for help but not receiving any response. As a result Peter felt that he had to rely on his own induvial strength and determination to complete the course. Peter recalled that the lecturers who taught him on the degree were all white and including him there were three students from BAME backgrounds.

Peter was able to study and progress in HE art and design. The narrative he presented was one in which access, entry and progression in art and design was natural and as such relatively smooth. Although he did experience some barriers which impeded on his journey it did not take him off course.

Abena's story

At the time of the interview Abena was waiting to begin a foundation course in art and design. Abena identified her interest in art and design as having started when she was very young and living in Ghana. She recalled watching the local tailor at work making clothes, and then taking scraps of material home to make clothes for her dolls. She noted that she did not have any formal art and design education in Ghana. But when she came to the UK when she was 10 years old, she had formal art and design lessons and so continued to cultivate the art and design interest that she had picked up in Ghana. Abena highlighted that her interest in art and design was very much focused on fashion and textiles and she was less interested in fine art.

When she first came to the UK Abena recalled going to museums with her parents and siblings, she saw this as an activity that was undertaken as a way to introduce her to the British culture, but it only happened on a few occasions. However, attending museums was now an activity Abena did alone. Abena commented that she had invited her mother to attend art exhibitions with her but her mother was not keen to attend, and so Abena had stopped asking. Abena also noted that she did not talk about art and design with her parents, however her older sister had an interest in fashion so at times she would talk to her sister about fashion and show her some of her art and design work. Abena commented that her sister was encouraging and supportive of the art and design work she did. She also identified a family friend who was also of Ghanaian heritage, who was supportive of Abena studying art and design. The family friend was a tailor in her spare time and this generated a small income. Abena described the family friend as a mediator between Abena and her mother when they were discussing Abena's educational decisions. Abena felt that the family friend helped her to find the right words to use when talking to her parents about wanting to study art and design.

Abena recalled that when she was choosing her GCSE options her mother wanted her to focus on subjects such as science, and since Abena was excelling in science she was comfortable with Abena choosing graphic design and textiles at GCSE. Abena recalled enjoying her textiles GCSE classes in particular and she often did textiles work during lunchtimes and after-school. Abena felt that she was encouraged by her teachers to pick art and design based subjects as they saw that she had a

talent in it. When it came to making a decision on what to study at post-16 Abena wanted to study textiles at college and was adamant that she would study the subject even if her parents were not encouraging or supportive. She noted that her mother wanted her to concentrate on her biology and chemistry A Levels rather than textiles, and when it came to the second year of A Levels and the workload for textiles increased her mother encouraged her to drop the subject and focus more on her science based subjects. Abena commented that choosing to stop studying textiles was a difficult decision as it was a subject that she enjoyed very much. Abena felt that whilst her father was more supportive, he often took a periphery role in her educational decision making. Abena finally decided that she was not able to manage the workload and dropped textiles in her second year of A Levels.

Abena felt that one of the reasons why her mother was not supportive of her studying textiles beyond GCSE level was because she believed that there would be limited career prospects for Abena, particularly as Abena was from a minority ethnic group. Her mother was more encouraging of Abena pursuing science based subjects as she believed that this would offer a wider range of career options for Abena.

During the time that the interview took place; Abena was waiting to start an art and design foundation course for one year. Abena was particularly excited about studying on the foundation course as she was keen to spend some time solely focusing on developing her art and design skills and knowledge. Abena recalled that it was a 'tough battle' to persuade her parents to allow her to study on the foundation course, but eventually she was able to convince them that the course was something that she needed to do for herself. However, Abena also commented that whilst her mother had eventually agreed to her studying a foundation course, Abena felt that she may have been a little disappointed that Abena had not focused on science. Abena had chosen to study the foundation course at the same college that she had studied her A Levels, and one of the deciding factors for her was that the foundation course was free to study at her current college. She did not have the finances to study the foundation course at an institution where she would have to pay tuition fees.

Abena talked about having to go through an interview process to gain a place on the foundation course. She recalled that she prepared the portfolio herself (she did not show it to anybody) and mainly showed her first year A Level work. She described the interview as being informal and relaxed, the head of the course asked her a few questions, mainly focused on why she wanted to study the course, which she was comfortable answering and at the end of the interview she was offered a place. She found the whole process relatively smooth.

Abena talked of having attended a secondary school where she was one of the only Black students in the school, and therefore in her textiles and graphics lessons she was the only Black student. When she went to college she noted that there were a larger number of BAME students compared to her secondary school, she also observed that the majority of BAME student at her college studied science rather than art and design. She did not recall being taught art and design by any BAME teachers.

Within her family, Abena was the only one who had a focused interest in art and design. Abena felt that the other members of her family were creative but they had chosen not to explore that side of themselves.

Abena was able to study and progress to FE art and design. The narrative she presented was one in which access, entry and progression in art and design had so far been relatively smooth. Although she did experience some barriers which impeded her journey it had not taken her off course.

Iqra's story

At the time of the interview Iqra had been accepted to study textiles at a post-92 London university. Iqra recalled that it was during her time at secondary school that she discovered that she had an interest in art and design. She also recalled going to art exhibitions with her friends during this time. When it came to choosing her options at Year 9 Iqra chose both art and design and textiles as she enjoyed the creative subjects. Whilst Iqra had studied both textiles and art and design at GCSE, she stated that she had a personal preference for textiles and she took this subject further by studying a BTEC fashion course at post-16. During her time at secondary school Iqra recalled that she felt that there were boundaries placed around the work she could create in her art and design classes. Iqra talked about being given set briefs during the lesson and whenever she tried to deviate from the brief and inject her creativity and personality she was discouraged and she felt she received lower marks for her work. Iqra recalled getting on well with both her art and design and textile's teacher and also that her textiles teacher was a Black woman.

Iqra commented that her parents encouraged her to focus more on her maths and science and less on art and design and textiles as they were seen as easy subjects. Even though her parents were not particularly encouraging of Iqra pursuing BTEC fashion instead of A Levels in maths and science, Iqra was determined to do what she thought was the best course for her and for her future, despite a

lack of support from her parents. She recalled receiving support from her teachers at school when she was making choices for post-16; she felt they were more knowledgeable than her parents. Although Iqra's mother had an interest in textiles, she made clothes at home and had attended some courses, she was not encouraging of Iqra studying the subject. Iqra commented that in general she did not talk to her parents about art and design, however at times she had shown her work to her mother and asked her opinion on some of her textiles projects.

When it came to deciding on attending university, Iqra was initially put off by the thought of getting into debt as a result of studying for a degree, but then changed her mind and decided to apply. Iqra talked of receiving little support from her college in regards to university applications. Instead she relied on online reviews of universities and advice and suggestions from friends, as well as her own 'instinct'. When preparing her portfolio Iqra commented that she had to ask for help from tutors and she also asked some of her fellow students. Iqra commented that she decided last minute to attend university, and as a result she recalled applying to the wrong course, and not realising her mistake until she was in the interview and the lecturers highlighted that they felt she was better suited to a different course.

Although Iqra had experienced some barriers which impeded her journey, it had not taken her off course.

An arduous journey

Iman's story

Iman talked of always being interested in art and design, she felt that she had always been a creative person; she enjoyed her art lessons during years 7, 8 and 9. Iman recalled doing extremely well in a design competition in one of her art and design lesson when she was in year 8. When it came to making choices for GCSE subjects Iman voiced her interest to her father and art and design teacher at a GCSE options evening. Iman recalled that her father commented that he felt that there were limited job prospects in this field, and her art and design teacher did not alleviate her father's worries in any way or highlight that they thought Iman had the potential to do art and design, but agreed with her father. Iman felt that because her family were refugees and part of a minority ethnic group in the UK, her

father wanted to encourage her into a career that he felt was more secure. Therefore she was not able to study art and design at GCSE level and onwards, but instead focused on science and maths.

Iman went on to apply for a degree in Pharmacy, but then began having doubts as to whether that was a career she could do long term. As a result of the doubts she took a gap year and went to study Arabic in France, and she commented that during her time there she began to re-think her choices and what she wanted to study at university. She wanted to study something that was more creative, and when she returned from her year in France she began to look for courses in art and design. Iman found a foundation degree course in new media which agreed to take her on even though she did not have any art and design qualifications.

Iman talked very positively of one of the foundation degree tutors who interviewed her for a place on the course. He asked her why she wanted to do the course considering she had not studied art and design beyond Key Stage 3, she said that she was not happy continuing on a path in the sciences and wanted to move into a more creative area. Iman was asked to complete a project and then return, the same tutor looked at her work and offered her a place on the course. Iman recalled that she did not discuss her decision with her parents, but after she was offered a place on the foundation degree, she then told her parents she was not going to study pharmacy but art and design instead. Iman was surprised at her father's reaction; he supported her decision to study art and design and told her that she should do what she felt was best for her.

Iman's experience of two years studying on the foundation degree was a very positive one. She talked about receiving very good institutional support whilst she was studying. Iman commented that the course was aimed at people who had no formal experience or qualifications in art and design, so they were all in a similar position. She also felt that the other students on the course were supportive of each other and willing to invest time in and help each other out. Iman felt that she was able to engage with topics she found interesting through art and design. As a young Muslim woman there were issues around this that she wanted to explore through her art and design work and also utilise this opportunity to

challenged preconceived notions about what it meant to be Muslim. She felt that the tutors and students were very receptive to her ideas, and as time progressed Iman felt that she had 'normalised' the topic of Muslims in her class. She talked of very much enjoying her two years on the degree, and she felt that she grew and developed a lot as a person.

After completing her two years on the foundation degree, Iman went on to do a third year on a degree course at a local university. She joined an existing group of students who had all done two years on the degree and along with Iman they were now doing their final year. Iman's experience of this third year was largely negative, she was unhappy during her time there and she commented regretting having entered the third and final year of a degree course. She felt that the other students were more advanced than her having already completed two years, and perhaps also having had previous experience of GCSE and A Level art and design. Iman felt that she was disadvantaged having only ever formally studied art and design for two years and then moving on to the final year of a degree course. Unlike on her foundation degree course, Iman did not feel that she received the right amount of support considering where she had come from. She felt that for the majority of time she was left to her own devices, and she recalled that she did not have a space in the design studio and therefore worked mainly from home. Iman felt that moving onto the degree course had been too much of a leap, and as a result of the difficult transition and lack of support, she lost her confidence and did not do as well as she could have done on the course. Iman was very critical of the tutor assigned to her, who she felt was always busy and difficult to talk to, she also felt that he had not had much exposure to Black people. On the degree course she felt uncomfortable as the only Black and Muslim girl. Iman also felt that as she came in the last year, the other students weren't as invested in her and her work and did not offer as much feedback and response to her work as they did with each other.

Iman had discussed what to do at the end of the foundation degree with her course tutors and they felt that she was ready to move on to the third year of a degree course. Iman trusted them and felt that if they thought she was ready then she must be, she noted that she did not do much research of her own in this regard but trusted her tutors' judgments. Iman also attended an interview for the degree course, and the degree course tutor also said that they thought Iman was capable of going straight into third year. She also thought

that she may have chosen the wrong degree course, which she liked the sound of but she did not feel that it truly prepared her for the realities of working in the graphic design industry.

In regards to the curriculum, Iman commented that on the foundation degree she was taught and exposed to artists and designers from a range of different backgrounds. During her final year on the degree course, Iman felt that she was limited in regards to useful advice, and although she continued to make work around her religion she felt that her tutor was not able to advise her effectively because he had not been exposed to that type of work.

Talking about her secondary school experience, Iman went to a Muslim school and she felt that the focus on art and design limited. She recalled that not many students took GCSE art and design and she felt that they weren't particularly encouraged to take GCSE art and design both by parents and teachers. Similar to Toyin, Iman also felt that because it was a school predominantly of minority ethnic students, there wasn't as much of an interest in art and design. She commented that the focus was more on students moving towards careers in medicine, law and dentistry. She gave an example where she felt that her teacher had expectations that because of her background she would be focusing on science and maths over other subjects. Her experience of the secondary school art and design curriculum was quite traditional; she did not recall learning about any Muslim artists or being exposed to a diverse range of artists and designers. Throughout her whole art and design education from GCSE to degree, Iman did not recall being taught by any BAME teachers.

After graduation, Iman worked in the design industry for two years, doing freelance work as well as working for different companies. After two years she left the industry, she felt that Graphic Design work was too technical for her, and not as creative and open as she had believed it would be based on what she learnt during her degree. She commented that she did not feel that the degree course prepared her well enough for the technical aspects of the industry; she thought that the foundation degree did this quite well but not the degree course. She enjoyed her time studying, but could not see where she would fit as a creative person in the design industry.

Iman was able study and progress in HE art and design. The narrative she presented was one in which access, entry and progression in HE art and design was a challenge with a number of barriers impeding her journey, the transition into and experience in HE art and design was particularly problematic and caused a number of issues for Iman.

Ella's story

Ella was born in Congo where she lived until she was 16 years old, she then moved to England with her family. At the time of the interview Ella had just completed her degree in fashion and talked of relocating back to Congo to be with her husband. Ella felt that having studied fashion, she could travel anywhere and continue working in fashion.

Talking about her educational experience, Ella recalled that when she arrived in England she was unable to start secondary school straightaway as there were immigration issues which had to be resolved first. Ella had to wait over a year before being able to resume her education. As a result she studied her GCSEs at an FE college. The GCSE subjects she studied were; maths, physics, chemistry, biology and english, her main focus at that time was on the science based subjects and her aim was to go on to study A Levels and work towards a career in medicine. Ella felt that to pursue a career in medicine was the familial expectation. Ella studied similar subjects at A Level focusing on maths, chemistry and biology. Ella however, found that again due to her immigration status she was not able to go on to university straight after finishing her A Levels. She therefore started working in retail as she waited to gain permanent residency in the UK. By this time Ella was 21 and recalled feeling frustrated at having to take these breaks within her educational journey.

During the time she was working in retail, Ella began to find a growing interest in fashion, becoming less and less sure that medicine was what she wanted to study. Her interest in fashion was something that Ella commented that she did not know she had in her. She believed that being exposed to the fashion industry through her job awakened a curiosity and interest in fashion. Ella became particularly interested in the area of buying merchandise for the company she worked for, and began to research how she could progress and become a fashion buyer. While working in retail Ella became pregnant, and decided to take some time out from working to look after her daughter, one of her reasons for making that decision was because she felt that childcare was too expensive.

During the time she was at home looking after her daughter, Ella decided that she would like to learn how to make clothes, so that she could make some outfits for her daughter using African

textiles. At the same time she still had the interest in becoming a fashion buyer and her research had shown her that she needed to be a fashion graduate to enter that field. However, Ella felt that with a young daughter at home she was not yet in a position to go to university to pursue a degree in fashion. Therefore, she decided to start doing evening courses at her local FE college. She started with evening classes which focused on garment construction and pattern cutting. The courses took two evenings a week of her time, meaning that she had to find childcare in order to attend. Ella recalled that she 'took to it' very well, and could see that even her teachers were impressed with her ability. Ella recalled that she explained to the teachers on her evening classes that she wanted to study fashion at university but that she did not have any art and design qualifications, as her focus had previously been on the sciences. They encouraged her and guided her, helping her to progress and moved forward in ways that worked around taking care of her daughter. When Ella's daughter was old enough to start reception, Ella went on to do a full time BTEC course which then lead her on to pursuing a degree in fashion.

Ella talked of her FE college and tutors being instrumental in her accessing and entering HE art and design. She felt that the tutors at college nurtured her and instilled a confidence in her which meant that she began to believe that she could go further and do a degree in fashion at an educational institution with a good reputation in the arts, whereas initially she had been aiming to go any institution that would take her as she believed that she did not have strong art and design skills. Ella recalled that as a result of the support from her FE college tutors she began to believe in her creative abilities. Ella commented on how she had participated in widening participation scheme at her college which had helped her secure a place on her fashion degree course. Through the scheme Ella recalled that she was guided on how to access and enter university, but during her discussion of her experience of the scheme Ella also highlighted the specific insider knowledge that was necessary to access and enter into some HE institutions successfully. As well as the support and encouragement from her tutors, Ella commented that she also wanted to be a positive role model to her daughter and did not want to be labelled as a 'single mum on benefits'. Therefore she also chose to pursue higher education for her daughter in order to encourage her daughter's aspirations.

Whilst Ella had talked of a lot of support and encouragement from college tutors, she also revealed that her parents were less supportive of her decision to study fashion. They would have preferred her to study medicine. Ella recalled her mother in particular saw what she was studying as simply making clothes for people; Ella felt that she did not see that there was more to it than that. Ella commented that her parents were pleased that she had chosen to attend university but not pleased

with the subject she had chosen to study, as they did not see a career in the fashion industry as lucrative. Ella also noted that her mother saw studying fashion as something someone did if they did not have the grades to study a more academic subject. Ella felt that her mother's perception was based on her own educational experience in Congo. Ella recalled that she had invited her parents to her end of year fashion show, and there they had been able to see her work on display along with other students, as well as watch fashion shows and meet Ella's tutors. By attending the end of year fashion show Ella felt that her parents had come to a better understanding of the time and effort and the amount of work that went into her fashion degree.

Ella commented that talking about art and design or going to museums and galleries was not something that she did very often with her family. She recalled that these were activities that she did predominantly on her own, and at times she took her daughter with her. Ella talked of the largely poor response she would receive from her friends when she told them that she was attending art exhibitions, they often wondered why she went, and they viewed it as mainly an activity for white people. Ella noted that despite this she continued to go to art exhibitions as it was something she enjoyed doing, and she would meet other Black people at some of the exhibitions she attended.

Ella's story also was one of self-motivation and perseverance to enter, continue and complete a degree in fashion. She talked of having to work around her daughter's schedule, working from home instead of the studio spaces at college and university, having to come home earlier than other students in order to pick up her daughter from school, and working through the night whilst her daughter slept. She talked of the challenges she met when studying at HE, and in particular identified racism and the marginalisation of Black and Black African students and their culture in the institution where she studied. She recalled moments where she felt her interest in African fashion was disregarded by tutors and students, this was hard for Ella as her African heritage was very important to her and was a part of her identity and a significant part of her work on the fashion degree. This experience was in contrast to her time at FE college where she felt that her ideas were supported and she was able to include aspects of her heritage in her work.

Ella was able to study and progress in HE art and design. The narrative she presented was one in which access, entry and progression in HE art and design was challenging with a number of barriers affecting her journey, making it more difficult. However Ella was focused and determined to study and progress in art and design.

APPENDIX 6 - TOYIN NARRATIVE EXTRACT RELATED TO SECTION 7.5.1

In her interview Toyin explained that during secondary school textiles was the subject that she was particularly drawn to and enjoyed, but as the below quote shows Toyin's relationship and the subsequent teaching she received from her textiles teacher was not very positive

> 'My textiles teacher was not very good. She shouldn't even have really been a teacher to be honest I don't know why she was there. She was always a bit irritated, especially with me because I was good at it because my mum knew it…I've always known how to sew…and I can put together a dress…she was just like mmm you don't need help. Whereas there were some things my mum, my mum taught herself a lot of it first like in Nigeria before she came over here and studied, like she went to (names university), she went to (names art college)…she doesn't use a pattern to cut, she just cuts…so things like that I would have loved to have learnt but my textiles teacher was like; do it yourself kind of thing, you know how to do it. So I remember like my final project it was me and my mum that worked on it, not me and my teacher' (Toyin)

Although it has previously been discussed that Toyin did not receive much support at home in regards to studying art and design beyond GCSE, this extract shows that there was a support from her mother who taught her textile skills and supported her with her work when her textiles teacher did not. It can also be seen in Toyin's extract the way in which her home culture and its cultural wealth was not supported nor encouraged in the art and design classroom. It is important to note here that Toyin's textiles teacher was a Black woman but Toyin did not have a strong or supportive connection with her. Toyin's experience corroborates research by Maylor (2009) which challenges assumptions that 'Black pupils will automatically see Black teachers as role models…and make a connection between the behaviour modelled by Black teachers and their own behaviour, aspirations or achievement' (Maylor 2009:1) there are many instances when 'automatic' relationships and connections are not made. Whilst it was noted in the previous chapter that Maylor (2009) had identified that some Black teachers entered the teaching profession so that they could challenge Black educational inequality (Maylor 2009), Maylor also recognised that some Black teachers felt that challenging inequalities in education was a burden placed on them which they did not necessarily want. Dash (2010) noted that he had assumed, during the

conduction of his research on African Caribbean pupils in art education, that 'educators of African Caribbean backgrounds would…have a vested interest in pushing for curriculum change' (Dash 2010:79) but instead found that there was not a great deal of difference between the Black and white teachers he interviewed in terms of wanting to diversifying the curriculum. The findings by Maylor (2009) and Dash (2010) add an interesting dimension to the argument put forward (Theuri 2015) that a diverse teaching force will help in the creation of a diverse curriculum, as they highlight differing opinions by Black teachers bringing to light the complexity of experiences and expectations of Black group members in the educational arena. In Toyin's case elements of both Maylor (2009) and Dash (2010) arguments are visible when looking at the overall relationship she had with her Black teacher and the way the skills gained at home were neither supported nor encouraged by her Black teacher, nor was her teacher willing to teach her skills that she wanted to learn, subsequently this negatively affected her educational experience. For Toyin having a Black art and design teacher did not work as a facilitating strategy.

END NOTES

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[i] The earliest date that statistics were made available to me by the Higher Education Statistics Agency

INTRODUCTION

[ii] It should be noted that in the research Hatton refers to all BAME students when she uses the term 'Black'. It should also be noted that this is an unpublished doctoral research which had an embargo placed on it and so it was not possible to see the entire thesis for critical analysis. The researcher allowed me to see the introduction and conclusion only, but I deemed it necessary to include this work in my review of literature as it focused on areas that were directly relevant to the research I have conducted.

[iii] See Chapter 3 for a detailed explanation of Critical Race Theory

CHAPTER 2

[iv] According to Aspinall (2011) 'the findings of the 2011 Census Development Programme, for example, showed that the need for more information on the 'Black African' group was the third highest priority amongst some 22 listed (Aspinall 2011:46)

[v] It was noted by Daley (1998) that 'in 1991 Black Africans were the most qualified ethnic group in Britain with 26 per cent of the population over 18 possessing higher qualifications' (Daley 1998:1708).

[vi] However this has not always been the case, Caribbean immigrants came to the UK wanting to educate themselves and their children but faced many barriers based on racism and discrimination forcing many to forego their educational aspirations (BBC 2002). A comparison of BAME groups based on educational achievement without understanding their individual histories has been problematized by Gillborn (2008).

[vii] According to Daley (1998) despite having permanent residence in the UK, many also had second homes and business ventures in Africa and according to Oguibe (1994) majority of Africans never saw Britain as 'home'.

[viii] Lam and Smith (2009:1249) highlighted that 'identity is not an 'either-or' matter: individuals may categorise themselves as well as adopt ways of feeling and thinking about themselves to varying degrees in relation to their multiple group memberships'.

[ix] Living within a community meant Black Africans had access to accommodation, African churches, childcare, food and hair care products, with many of these being more easily found in London (Daley 1998:1723).

[x] Comments made by David Starkey on BBC News Night in a debate on the August 2011 riots stating that 'Whites have become Black, a particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic gangsta culture has become the fashion…..Jamaican patois that has intruded in England…this is why many of us have a sense of a foreign country' (BBC News Night August 2011). This was followed by comments in September 2011 from Justice secretary Kenneth Clarke on the rioters stating that 'What I found most disturbing was the sense that the hard-core of rioters came from a feral underclass, cut off from the mainstream in everything but its materialism' (http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/sep/05/punishment-rioters-help)

[xi] Exhibition organised and curated by Rashid Araeen which focused on art created by Black Artists

xii Shonibare was awarded an MBE in 2004 and both McQueen and Ofili have won the Turner Prize, meaning that for two successive years, 1998 and 1999, the Turner Prize has been won by a Black artist.

xiii There have been other Asian female artists but none of African or Caribbean heritage.

xiv Such as The New Art Exchange in Nottingham and Rivington Place in London, meaning that there is no need for the larger art galleries to engage with the work of Black artists.

xv Indian students had the highest participation rate.

xvi Chinese students had the highest percentage of 23; Indian students had the second highest at 22.2.

xvii With the exception of Indian students.

xviii A good degree being described as an upper second class or first class degree.

xix Within this literature Black students are counted as one group. Percentages for Asian students with good degrees in arts courses were 44.7% and for White students it was 63.9%.

xx This is unlike Burke and McManus (2011) and McManus (2006) who acknowledge and discuss specific issues affecting BAME groups that may not affect all 'non-traditional students. And unlike Dean (2004, 2005) which looks at art and design HEIs in Scotland, but does acknowledge challenges faced by BAME art and design students.

xxi The review identified that there was however, a considerable amount of material on BAME participation in Higher Education (Okon 2005)

xxii Zimdars et al (2009) identified that the term arts referred to 'liberal arts', including humanities

xxiii See Chapter 3 for a detailed explanation of Critical Race Theory

xxiv Analysis of participation on HE courses by Connor et al (2004) identified that BAME students tended to study specific courses with dentistry and medicine accounting for 38% of undergraduate students whilst creative art and design accounted for less than 10% of the BAME student population. All figures were from 2001.

xxv Students who took part in the research were; 1st generation graduates, BAME students, recipients of Disabled Students' Allowance and students from outside the UK.

xxvi McManus (2006) also noted the government's (Labour) commitment to widening participation, especially with working class applicants, but with no regard or emphasis on which universities students were attending or which subjects they were studying.

xxvii The inclusive agenda took into consideration mature students, disabled students, women as well as geographical location/isolation, and race and sexuality.

xxviii This paragraph has been drawn from work done as part of a publication prepared during this doctoral project (Theuri 2015).

CHAPTER 4

xxix This research looked at African Americans and their college choices

xxx 'The term "narrative inquiry" fit my work best as a "sensitizing concept" rather than as a label that neatly situated it within a research paradigm' Bell, A. (2003). A narrative approach to research in Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 8, 95-110. Bell's (2003) understanding of the term 'sensitizing concept' was a term given to the world view and approach to research taken by a researcher

xxxi The earliest date that statistics were made available to me by the Higher Education Statistics Agency

xxxii No page number in book

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xxxiii Literature such as Connor et al (2004) has highlighted this. Please refer to literature review chapter.

CHAPTER 7
xxxiv I have also explored and discussed the experiences of Abena and Iqra, two participants who planned to studied art and design based degrees at university. At the time of the interview Abena was about to undertake an art and design foundation course, and Iqra was about to begin a degree in Textiles at university.
xxxv There were some participants, Sam and Michelle, who also received support and encouragement from teachers but this did not work as a facilitating strategy for them as neither of them studied HE Art and Design
xxxvi Whilst it can be seen that supportive Black educators worked as a facilitating strategy for some participants, it should be noted that there were exceptions and this is visible on Toyin's narrative. Toyin's secondary school Textiles teacher was a Black woman but Toyin did not have a strong or supportive connection with her (see Appendix 7 for analysis).