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Black Deaf or Deaf Black?

An investigation of identity in the British Black Deaf community

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Contents

Tables and Figures

Declaration

I certify that this dissertation is my own independent work and has not been presented

previously for any other degree.

Signed…………………………………………….. Date ……………

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Abstract

This thesis explores some of the life experiences of a group of Black[1] Deaf[2] individuals and the influences affecting their identity development. It also investigates the different attitudes to deafness within the Black hearing community. A quantitative survey was conducted with 57 respondents to explore attitudes to deafness amongst Black hearing people. The survey revealed that Black people perceived deafness as mild to moderate disability, a finding also echoed in the informants own accounts of interacting within the Black hearing community.

The main study with the informants was conducted using qualitative methods. This explored the informants' childhood family experiences, education, employment, and interactions with the Black hearing and Deaf communities. The qualitative study questioned whether Black Deaf people should be referred to as Black Deaf or Deaf Black. It revealed that Black Deaf people assumed a diverse range of identities. For example, for some informants' the terms Black Deaf or Deaf Black had different meanings, but for others these terms were interchangeable. A group of informants resisted any attempts to categorize their identities. They constructed an identity, which did not prioritize race or deafness but was negotiated in different contexts.

Many of the informants based their identity choices upon their personal experiences and attitudes towards the Deaf and the Black communities. Their experiences with these groups also influenced which community they felt more closely attached too.

From exploring the personal identities of Black Deaf people a picture of their collective identity began to emerge. Three different groups of Black Deaf people were identified. These were labelled the Aspirers, Drifters and the Inbetweeners. These labels were chosen to encapsulate their characteristics and attitudes towards the development of the Black Deaf community.

The study contested the possibility of a unified Black Deaf identity. It highlighted that the informants' identity formation was a continual process and open to constant negotiation. It indicated that other influences aside from race and deafness affected the informants' identity development, which must be considered in any further analysis of identity construction amongst Black Deaf people.

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[1] Throughout this study, unless otherwise stated the term Black will be used to denote people of Afro-Caribbean and African origin. It is a unifying term for people who face discrimination on the basis of their skin colour.

[2] Throughout this study the lowercase deaf will be used when referring to the audiological condition of deafness. Deaf with a capital D will be used to denote deaf people who consider themselves as belonging to a linguistic cultural minority.

Chapter Outline

Chapter one: The individual and society.

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical debates on race and social policy, cultural studies, deafness and disability. The reader is introduced to some of the main themes in these debates, and to selected theories of personal and group identity development.

Chapter two: Entering the field

This chapter explores the different methodologies in this study. It considers the benefits and pitfalls of quantitative and qualitative research methods and the practicalities of undertaking research with Black Deaf people. The community study is introduced in this chapter. This explores attitudes to deafness and deaf people within the Black hearing community. The findings are compared with an earlier study, exploring public attitudes to deafness by Claire Bunting.

Chapter three: Accessing the Black Deaf community

This chapter explores some of the practicalities in gaining access to members of the Black Deaf community. It examines some of the methods used to recruit and interview informants. It also provides an account of the researcher's experience of recruiting and using Black sign language interpreters for qualitative interviewing and the benefits and pitfalls of this process.

Chapter four: Family values.

This chapter gives an account of the informants' experiences in the family. It examines their perception of family life and their relationships with family members. The complexities of family relationships are explored from their experiences of communication and gaining access to their cultural heritage.

Chapter five: Snakes and ladders- the experience of education

This chapter gives an account of the informants' educational experiences. It explores their experience of learning and the type of relationships they formed with teachers and deaf peers. The chapter highlights how the informants' were immersed into a number of different cultures at one time: a school culture, Deaf culture and in some cases a home culture.

Chapter six: Facing reality- employment and unemployment

This chapter explores the informants' experiences in the labour market from two perspectives the job seeker and employee. It highlights how the labour market represents a challenging area for Black Deaf people, both in relation to working with hearing people, and working in poor deaf awareness environments.

Chapter seven: Personal identities and social modeling

This chapter explores the informants' feelings about deafness and their involvement in the Deaf community. It examines their language choices and its' influence on their Deaf identity development and affiliation to the Deaf community. The chapter provides an overview of the informants' understanding of the Deaf community and its culture. It ends with an examination of the social identity of Deaf people which questions whether Deaf people should be considered as part of the disabled community.

Chapter eight: The Black Deaf community.

This chapter explores the social identity of the Black Deaf community and their experiences in the hearing world. It also looks at the informants' racial identity awareness and how this occurred. The nature of the Black Deaf community and those who are identified as members are also explored. They include groups of individuals labelled the Aspirers, Inbetweeners and Drifters.

The chapter also discusses Black sign language interpreters and their role within the Black Deaf community. This is followed by an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Black Deaf community.

Chapter nine: Black Deaf or Deaf Black?

This chapter examines how the informants became aware of being both Black and Deaf. It highlights the influences affecting their self-identification and how they describe themselves in relation to the terms Black Deaf or Deaf Black. A range of Black Deaf identities are explored.

Chapter ten: Conclusion

This chapter forms the conclusion to the study. It provides a brief overview of some of the main influences examined in the previous chapters. Since the findings raised several social policy implications relating to Black Deaf people these are analyzed.

The chapter also considers the different places of location for Black Deaf people. It questions whether they should be considered as belonging primarily within the Deaf community, the Black hearing community, or constituting a separate and distinctive group.

Chapter One: The individual and Society

1.0 Introduction

The concept of identity has been the subject of much interest and debate. This is reflected in the numerous studies and theories across various discourses and the difficulties in its conceptualization. In common sense language, identity often refers to a sense of who we are and what we represent. It is a form of categorization based on the experiences and interactions of individuals with others and the social reality of their position in society. It is much about difference as it is about shared commonalties.

Most individuals have a range of different and potentially contradictory identities at different times. These can be personal cultural or political. Each individual identity is a composite of personal experiences and the cultural contexts in which they move. They are shaped by personal values, the social environment and external political constructions, which permeate our society. These are often based on differences between groups in relation to class, racial origin, sexuality, gender or disability. Identities are thus inclusive and exclusive categories.

Since identity can only be constructed in relation to the other, discursive practices act as a magnet (a place of location and attachment) for different groups in society. The 1960s characterized by black movements, feminism and gay liberation placed identity at the centre of modern politics. It led to dilemmas of how to support the collective needs of diverse communities and the specific needs of individual members. Although common identities often serve as a principle of mobilization and organisation, a unified identity does not exist. Differences live within identities and these are often marginalised to highlight external differences between them and others. Thus, identity is not neutral. It involves conflict between different individuals and communities, which the findings of this study support.

Within this first chapter a range of different perspectives on identity, deafness, disability, race and ethnicity, and social policy is explored. These have had an important influence on the lives of Black Deaf people. Since there is no single volume of literature looking at the identities of Black Deaf people, this chapter will analyze the main themes in these discourses. It will analyze their relationship to the social identity of Black Deaf people and its impact on their life experiences. The first part of this chapter examines theories relating to personal identity formation, and the psychosocial stages that individuals undergo to achieve this.

1.1 Individual identity theories.

Many theories of personal identity development (Winncott 1965; Piaget 1972; Erikson 1959) focus on the individual and the psychosocial challenges they face. These theories do not explore the individual's cultural environment or the impact of the social surroundings. Winncott's (1965) identity development theory emphasized the importance of the mother in the child's development; whilst Piaget's (1972) highlighted how children interacted in the social environment and developed new forms of knowledge. Although Piaget's theory does not deal directly with identity, his model of the development of knowledge of the self and its relationship to the world is an important aspect of identity formation. In contrast to Piaget's theory, which focused on the development of knowledge of the self and Winncott's focus on the internal relationship between the mother and child, Erikson's ' Eight stages of man' interconnects all these themes.

Erikson (1959) believed that the identity process could be explained by the universal psychosocial development of individuals. His identity development model details how early life stages of individuals become transformed into something new at different stages in the life cycle. (See Erikson 1968) In the eight stages of man, which begins from birth to old age, Erikson posed that eight crises in the psychosocial stages must be resolved before a person can achieve a healthy identity. Within the first two stages of this model (basic trust vs. mistrust, and autonomy vs. shame and guilt) the precursor to identity emerges. This occurs during infancy with identity

formation finally being achieved in adolescence. According to Kroger (1989:6) a distinction is

made between the identity solutions of introjection during infancy, identification in childhood

and the process of identity formation in adolescence. Erikson's model suggests that identity

development continues throughout the life cycle:

' Identity formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence, it is a life long development
largely unconscious to the individual and to his society'
(Erikson 1959:113)

Erikson's theory of identity development has been criticized for seeming to only reflect the male

experience. The model's focus on individuation issues and intimate relationships in different

stages of the individual's development have been cited as evidence. (Gilligan cited in Kroger

1989) Some theorists have argued that the model should be modified and extended to reflect

both male and female development. (Kegan 1982, Franz and White 1985 cited in Kroger 1989)

James Marcia (1966) elaborated and expanded Erikson's development theory by identifying four

types of identity statuses: achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion. <u>Identity</u>

<u>achievement</u> is the outcome of identity resolution where individuals display a commitment to

vocational and ideological values. <u>Moratorium</u> reflects identity conflict and exploration, and

vague commitments. <u>Foreclosure is </u>where individuals prematurely interrupt the adolescent

process of identity formation. These individuals remain attached to child hood values; and

<u>Diffusion </u>represent individuals who are unable to make an identity commitment. These

individuals tend to have the least developed identity status.

Although Marcia's development of Erikson's model begins to incorporate social issues within

the identity process, it still remains like the models of Erikson, Winnicott and Piaget

individualistic and psychological. None of these theories offer a complete model for

understanding the identity development of Black Deaf people. What they do provide is an

insight of the different psychosocial stages involved in the process of individual identity

formation.

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Sociological models of identity

Other models that deal with disability and race also focus on the individual. These are evident in the models proposed by Goffman, Higgins and Cross. They also emphasized the role of the individual in constructing and managing their identity. These will now be briefly explored.

The work of Goffman (1968) is useful in understanding what is meant by stigmatised identities. He defined stigma as 'the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance' (1968:1) Stigma originally referred to the branding or marking of individuals who had transgressed the values of society. Today the term refers to some form of disgrace or discredit, which in itself is perceived as a transgression. (Oliver, 1990).

Goffman identified 3 types of stigma: physical deformation, blemishes of the individual character, and tribal stigma associated with a person's race, religion and nationality. He argued that a stigma theory is developed from incorporating all or some of these imperfections. According to Goffman a stigmatized person could manage their identity by seeking acceptance in society by learning new skills or recognizing the limitations associated with being stigmatised.

Goffman's theory has been an influential major framework used to understand the experience of disability. However because it reduces the process of stigmatization to an individual problem, disabled people has rejected it. One of the theory's weaknesses is that it fails to address issues facing individuals with more than one stigma. The stigma of physical deformity and racial difference is one example. Whilst Goffman's theory introduces and discusses the community, the process of identity development is still reduced to the individual. Thus this theory does not provide an adequate framework for understanding how Black Deaf people construct and manage their identities.

Goffman's theory indicated that Black people faced a tribal stigma. However, a number of

theorists, mostly American, have formulated development models to explain how Black people

develop a healthy racial identity. Cross (1978) concluded that Black people's racial identity

formation is characterized by four psychological stages. These are: Pre encounter, Encounter,

Immersion-emersion, and Internalization. The pre encounter stage is characterized by attitudes

that are very pro white and anti Black. The encounter stage is marked by a challenge to

individual assumptions about their racial attitudes; the immersion-emmersion stage involves a

withdrawal from interactions with other ethnic and white groups and attempts to connect with

Black people through participating in their activities. The final stage of internalization is where

the individual achieves inner security and self-confidence with his Blackness. This person moves

towards pluralistic and non-racist perspectives.

The Cross model indicated that Black individuals in western societies encounter different

challenges to non- Black individuals, in the process of achieving a healthy racial identity. This is

in addition to the identity development stages that each individual has to resolve identified in

the psychosocial development models.

Cross's model is a useful reference in understanding the range of different emotions that

characterise Black individuals undergoing the process of forming and accepting their racial

identity. As a model it could be adapted to explain how Deaf individuals accept their Deaf

identity. For example the pre encounter stage could be marked by a pro hearing and anti deaf

attitude; whilst the encounter stage with Deaf peers could act as a challenge to any negatively

held assumptions about being Deaf.

The model proposed by Cross, however is inadequate in explaining the racial identity formation

of Black Deaf people. It presupposes that the process of racial development is marked by

conscious feelings of being racially different which was characterized in the pre-encounter stage

with anti Black and pro white feelings. In chapter 8, it is shown that Cross's model has limited validity for the Black Deaf informants in this study.

The model proposed by Higgins (1980) provides perhaps the most inclusive model for understanding the position of Black Deaf People. He uses the term 'outsiders' to refer to the Deaf person's sense of not belonging in a world controlled by those who are hearing. Deaf people are not the only outsiders, individuals who are physically impaired, Black people, and gay people are also included. Like Goffman's stigmatized individuals, outsiders deal with their status in different ways. Some deaf outsiders may pass for 'hearing' in the same way that some fair skinned Black people may pass for white. Alternatively they may chose to isolate themselves or form groups and communities with other outsiders.

Higgins uses the term 'master status' to refer to the main characteristic for which individuals are stigmatised at the expense of other features. Blackness is often considered to be the 'master status' for Black Deaf people because deafness is invisible. Deafness becomes a discrediting feature once it is exposed. Deaf people are stigmatized because of their hearing loss and methods of communication. For White Deaf people deafness is their 'master status'. The use of sign language is perceived as a negative characteristic of being deaf. The term spread is used to describe this further discredit to the stigmatised individual. Higgin's theory thus provides a framework for understanding how society may perceive a Black Deaf person's social identity.

There are some similarities between all the identity models proposed by Erikson, Goffman, Cross and Higgins. They all focus on the role of the individual in shaping and managing their identity. Some like Erikson and Cross have parallels. These models both focus on the different stages presented in the form of challenges which individuals have to overcome. Whilst the theories of Goffman and Higgins begin to introduce external influences such as the community on identity development, the individual is still ultimately perceived as controlling this process.

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Thus the psychosocial development theories presented here provide an understanding of how individual identities develop and may be understood. They do not, however explain how groups or collectives develop their identities. This will be explored through cultural studies discourses and conceptions of identity.

1.2 Exploring identity through different models

This section explores the different conceptions of identity and the context in which these have occurred. It examines the work of Hall (1992a) who has explored both psychosocial and sociological models and discusses them in terms of the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject and the postmodern subject. The section begins with a brief analysis of the influences affecting the changing conception of the individual.

Changing conceptions of the human subject

The changing conceptions of identity are products of changes in society. Many national cultures and identities are constructed by producing histories, events, stories and images to which people can identify. These are often represented as unified and continuous and part of the nation's tradition. Benedict Anderson (1983) has suggested that individuals develop their own vision of the nation the 'imagined community'. Differences between nations stem from differences in their conceptualization. National culture is thus a product of the past and the present. It can serve as a form of identification and representation for different communities. It has the ability to bring people of different classes, cultures and races together and present them as having a single cultural identity.

National cultures are also symbols of cultural power. Europe's historical conquest involving the suppression of different cultural groups led to the creation of a cultural hegemony across the world. An example of this is evident within the United Kingdom where English culture is promoted as the essentially British culture due to its' precedence over the cultures of Scotland,

Wales and Ireland. Since all modern nations are 'cultural hybrids' (Hall; 1992a) the forging of a national cultural identity serves to unify and represent these individuals as having one culture.

The process of globalization has had an influence on the development of national identities. It has increased connections between different nations, and created greater cultural homogenization. It has led to the erosion of some national identities and the development of new global ones. Time and space continues to affect all systems of representation. Its compression has increased the pace of global processes allowing different locations to appear nearer and important events more powerful. Globalization has played a part in the de-centering of the subject. The forces of change, which cut across countries and communities, dislocating national cultural identities has led to greater integration between people.

Thus the conception of the human with fixed capacities and a sense of their own identity has become de-centred in discourses and practices. The conceptualization of the modern subject has shifted in three stages resulting in the birth of the 'sovereign individual' during the renaissance and enlightenment periods of the 16th and 18th centuries.

The philosophers of the Enlightenment such as Descartes (1596-1650) and John Locke (1632-1702) greatly influenced the initial conception of the individual. Descartes suggested that individuals, known as the Cartesian subject is a conscious subject who is rational and knowledgeable with the capacity to reason and think. Locke defined an individual in terms of an identity, which was constant, and in tune with all aspects of itself. This sovereign individual is very much apart of the processes of the modern world. He is the origin of reason, knowledge and practice and yet also subjected to them.

The development of modern societies has led to more complex social structures. Darwinism and the rise of new social sciences such as psychology and sociology have created a broader set of conceptual foundations. Psychology focused on the study of the individual and their mental

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processes, whilst sociology located the individual within group processes. Several philosophies have influenced the conception of the subject. Hall (1992a) cites the work of Marx, Freud, de Sanssure, Derrida, Foucault, and the social movement and theory of feminism.

Conceptions of identity

Hall (1992a) has distinguished three different conceptions of identity. The enlightenment subject, the sociological subject and the post- modern subject.

The enlightenment subject represents a person who is centered, and unified with capacities of reason, possessing a 'centre' consisting of an inner core at birth which develops as they mature. This is fixed in nature and refers to a personal identity. This conception of identity is individualistic and often referred to male identity.

The _sociological subject_ is not independent from the culture and values of their environment. Their inner core is formed from the interactions of the self and society and its relationship with significant others. The Sociological subject's inner core is constantly modified by interacting with various cultural identities because the subject internalizes the values and meanings of these identities.

Hall argues that this sociological conception of identity which stabilizes the subject and the cultural world they inhabit are now shifting. The once unified and stable subject has become fragmented. Her identity has become contradictory and un-unified as a result of structural and institutional changes. This has resulted in the formation of the third conception of identity the postmodern subject.

The _postmodern subject_ has no fixed or essential identity. These subjects are influenced by the predicaments of change in contemporary societies. They assume many different identities at different times, some of which are contradictory and often in conflict with each other.

Since change is a characteristic of modern societies the post -modern subject is very much a product of this changing environment. The forces of modernity involving rapid and constant change, fragmentation and a break with tradition can lead to the displacement of one structure with several others. Laclau (1990) refers to this as the process of dislocation. He sees modern societies not having a centre - a single organizing structure, but structures that are subject to dislocation from different external forces. These societies are characterized by difference and the formation of many new identities.

In the next section race and racism, the thesis continues to explore the changing conceptions of identity by examining the development of racial theories during the last century. It will provide an analysis of the socio-economic, political and cultural influences on this process and how groups begin to identify with each other.

1.3 Race and Racism

In this section an historical analysis of ideas on race and its impact upon social processes and social relationships will be explored. This will be used to aid our understanding of the concept of race and racism and how their meanings have changed over time. It will also highlight how the development of racial ideologies have shaped and influenced the development of identities. This first section explores some of the changing ideas about race.

Changing Ideas of Race

The term race was first used to refer to groups of people sharing a common origin and history. Racial difference was explained by environmental factors or divine intervention. By the 18th century race was used to refer to different types of people defined on the basis of physical characteristics. Across Europe debates on the origins of man and differences between human groups proliferated. According to Banton (1987) the concept of race was linked to a specific historical period and culture. Its change in meaning over time suggests that an analysis of the term should be placed within the context of the philosophical debates of the period.

Cox (1970) located some of the earlier ideas about race as emerging during the period of European expansion in the 15th and 16th centuries as part of an economic policy by the ruling classes to justify their exploitation of black labour. Other theorists (Jordan 1968, Manning 1990) suggested that slavery transformed the image of Africans. The development of different slave caricatures aided the construction of racial ideologies and images of the 'other' in colonial discourses. Scientific studies also played a role. Three notable theorists of this period were Robert Knox, Comte Arthur de Gobineau and Charles Darwin.

The use of racial categories as a basis for understanding social and cultural difference had a great influence on early sociological studies, and facilitated the development of 'race relations' as a field of study. More contemporary ideas about race and the study of racism emerged from historical processes, such as Nazism in Germany. (Benedict 1983) During the interwar and the postwar period American writers began to study issues of segregation, immigration and racial consciousness. (Park, 1950; Myrdal, 1969) Some of these studies provided the foundation for later sociological studies on race, which helped it to become an established field within social sciences. Thus race as a field of study shifted from scientific and medical discourses to social science after the war. (Mason 1995:7)

Political theory approaches to 'race'

Several political approaches to race emerged after the war. These were influenced by the work of American sociologists. They focused on immigration patterns and the experiences of black and ethnic minorities in various social contexts such as the labour market and housing. (Banton; 1959, Patterson; 1963, Rex and Moore 1967; 1970; Rex and Tomlinson 1979) By the 1960s and 1970s these studies evolved from exploring immigration patterns to the experiences of Black migrants settling and interacting with the indigenous white population. The theorists Rex and Banton were very influential writers during this period. Banton (1967) referred to the study of race as the 'race relations problematic' which became the dominant approach to racial studies at that time. Rex brought a class perspective to the field, asserting that structural conditions such as occupational segregation, class exploitation and the formation of an underclass which emerged

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from the stigmatized roles performed by migrants had an influence on race relations in European societies.

By the 1980s several critiques of early race relations studies began to emerge.

(Miles 1982; CCCS; 1982 Gilroy 1987) This emergence followed debates in academic circles and amongst black activists, about the predominance of ethnicity in early race relations studies. Academics and Black journals voiced their concerns about the focus of these studies and how they were conducted. Questions were also raised about who controlled, financed and undertook race relations research and their possible impact on the construction of race relations as a field of study. (Solomos; 1989) The failure of race relations studies to deal adequately with the role of racism and the way in which social and economic relations in Britain were structured by and through racism, emerged as important issues. (Gilroy 1987; CCCS 1982)

Miles questioned the validity of the sociology of race from a Marxist perspective. He argued that race is an ideological construct and its use by sociologists only serve to legitimize beliefs about biological differences between humans.

" Race is an idea that should be explicitly and consistently confined to the dustbin of useless terms'. (1982:93)

According to Miles races are a construct within the context of politics and social regulation. The political actions within migrant labour communities are components of class conflict, because race has no social impact of its own. The process of racialisation disguises social relationships and class-consciousness. Black people are thus a racialised faction of the working class. Their economic migration into Europe, led to biological characteristics being utilized to divide and construct different social collectivities.

Miles thus asserts that racism, an interconnected process of capitalism should be the main focus of analysis. This must be understood in the context of the historical and material conditions that led to the process of racialisation.

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The Centre of Contemporary Cultural studies in Birmingham produced a volume of work critiquing early race relations studies. They stressed variations in the relationship between capitalism and race. They recognised the 'historical specificity' of colonialism and imperialism. The authors argued that race is the medium through which class relations are experienced. It affects the nature of class struggle and the way in which it is formulated both historically and in modern times. Race is seen as a modality, which interacts with class and gender. Racism is not an autonomous ideology but a set of changing ideas that are materially rooted. (Williams; 1989)

This framework was used to provide a method of understanding the various forms of institutionalized racism within Britain and the historical diversity of Black resistance against slavery, capitalism, colonialism and imperialism. The CCCS analyses of the use of race to explain and formulate state policies have shown that the presence of Black people have been constituted as a threat to Britain's national and cultural unity. Lawrence (1982) has critiqued early race relations studies as pathologising Black communities by problematising Black families, Black youths and Black cultures.

The CCCS were also critical of Marxist approach to race and racism as expounded by Miles (1982). In contrast to Miles the CCCS (1982) argued that the concept of race is more than a process of political and social regulation. It is an open political construction, which is constantly fought over and contested. The social and political actions of Black people played an important role in developing an inclusive notion of Black identity, one that also recognized the cultural diversity of its members.

According to Solomos and Beck (1996) the work of the CCCS fuelled debates about the role of research in race relations. Many of the political struggles of the 1980s within the Black communities were reproduced within the discourses of race relations. Several inaccurate assumptions were made about racial and ethnic identity because these discourses located Black individuals within a sociological model. The sociological model assumed that individuals could

adopt their ethnic identity in a unitary fashion. Those who failed to do so were characterized as experiencing an identity crisis or being caught between two cultures. Solomos and Beck argue that these theories have been applied to the studies of Black youth and used against them in political discourses, particularly in debates concerning their loyalty to the sovereign state.

This reminds us how politicized research in race relations has become. The findings of race relations research have been utilized by government and other agencies to legitimize political policies. (See the Moyihan report 1967) Racial studies can no longer be considered as separate from its contextual and political environment or the interests of governments and other agencies. Thus the role of race relations research not only serves to support Black and minority groups but also acts as a method of extending government control and institutional power over them (Edelman 1971)

Solomos and Beck (1996) have highlighted that the focus of race relations research on minority communities, seems to suggest that they are the only communities at odds with their ethnic identity and position in British society. The limited discourses available on ' majority/ white identities', imply that these are often considered as homogeneous and less problematic. This assumption underscores the belief that socio-cultural groups remain fixed and impermeable. It fails to acknowledge the changing nature of Britain's social and cultural life or the context in which this occurs. Gilroy (1987) asserts that this 'ethnic absolutism' is far from secure because it simply reflects the racial common sense view of Black and white cultures.

Black feminist theories

The emergence of Black feminist writers in the field of the sociology of race provided an analysis of racism in relation to gender, sexism and sexuality. Black feminist writers challenged white feminist theories. In the article 'White woman listen!' Carby (1982) highlighted how the role and experiences of Black women are often absent from historical accounts. History has either ignored their presence or constructed Black women as inferior to white women. Carby argues that there

is no single source of oppression for Black women. Black women have to deal with triple oppressions of gender, race and class, which occur simultaneously.

The three central concepts of 'family, patriarchy and reproduction' are the terms used by white feminists to explain how female oppression can be understood. Black feminists however argue that this unitary nature of female oppression fails to adequately explain or reflect the oppressions and experiences of Black women. Whilst Black and white women both agree that the family is often a source of oppression, Black feminist argue that it also acts as a mechanism against racist oppression. The term 'Black family" is a political construct which designates a constituency to be mobilised in the political and cultural struggle against racism. (Knowles and Mercer 1992)

White feminists' theory focus on patriarchy is also considered an inadequate concept for understanding the oppression of Black women. Carby asserts that because racism prevents Black men from having the same relation to patriarchal hierarchies as white men, Black women feel a sense of solidarity with them. This has created difficulties within feminist politics which seeks to exclude men and locate them in antagonistic relationships to women.

Only on the issue of ' reproduction' rights are the concerns of Black and white feminists identical where both aim to defend the rights of women to control their reproduction. However, because of differences in attitudes amongst the medical profession towards Black and white Mothers, Black feminists argue that there are differences in the way in which Black women can access their rights. (Knowles and Mercer, 1992)

For Black feminists, the oppression of Black women arises from race and gender differences, where race is given political primacy over gender. Their view is contrary to the position held by white feminists who give primacy to their gender. Knowles and Mercer (1992) indicate that establishing rival primacies involves difficult negotiations between the politics of gender

equality and racial equality. A Black woman's political primacy can only be established in relation to the context and issues in which they occur.

White feminist theory has been criticized by some Black feminists for racism and having little relevance to Black womens' lives. Carby (1982) has argued that within the British white feminist movement white women have failed to see themselves as oppressor in fear that this will be at the expense of concentrating on their experience of oppression. Other theorists such as Knowles and Mercer (1992) have argued that white feminist theory is narrow and eurocentric failing to have any impact on anti racist struggles, due to being so ill informed about the experiences of Black women. Knowles and Mercer assert that there is no general relationship between race and gender only a temporary and specific relationship which emerges in particular instances.

The work of Carby reflects a much wider trend amongst Black feminist writers challenging the exclusion of Black women from both feminist and race related discourses. Black feminists are re writing 'his-story.' Feminist writers such as Bell Hooks, (1982; 1992) Collins (1990) and Davis (1982) have developed critiques of the limits of feminist theory particularly in relation to its ability to deal with issues of race and class, and other sources of oppression for women. The contributions of Black feminists have led to greater theorization of the historical links and inter-relationship between racism, sexism and class.

The debates between Black feminists and white feminists in Britain and the United States has led to a growth of literature exploring the experiences and position of Black and minority women. The impact of Black feminism on race relations discourses has led some theorists to call for a revision of class analysis incorporating political movements which have developed around other forms of identity. (Anthias 1992 Gilroy 1987) Others have begun to utilize post structuralism and post modernism as frameworks and have returned to analyzing different cultural forms amongst Black and ethnic minority communities. These will now be explored in the next section, which looks at the emergence of cultural politics and the discourse of identity.

1.4 Cultural Politics

The development of new cultural theories seeking to explain how new forms of identity are

formed through difference emerged in the 1980's. These have led to new debates about ethnicity

and cultural identity and its role in understanding people as social entities. The development of

new theories on this issue have been influenced by writers who utilize post modernism and

postcolonial cultural frameworks. (Hall, 1987; 1990 1992a; West 1995, Mercer; 1994) The central

theme running through these theories is the conception of the human being not having a fixed or

unified identity but one which is contradictory and subject to negotiation and change.

Studies have emerged exploring racialised discourse in cinema, literature, art and other forms of

the media. These studies examine how cultural forms represent race and ethnicity. This new

focus has led to a reexamination of the concept of racism which is no longer considered as a

single uniform process but one which is multifarious:

*" a single monolithic racism is being displaced by a mapping of the multifarious historical
formations of racisms' (Goldberg; 1990:)*

Barker referred to this as the 'New Racism' (1981). This was manifested by the state institutions

and the white ruling classes to protect and preserve British culture from foreign influences. The

emergence of new racism highlighted how ideas about race and racism are historically

determined and subject to change. Thus within contemporary society, ideas about race were

closely associated with culture.

The Rushdie Affair fuelled debates about the existence of many different cultural and political

identities subsumed within the category 'Black'. It led to a need amongst theorists to examine

how Black and ethnic minorities construct cultural identities within modern social, political

processes. The first studies to appear analyzed the cultural politics of racism in relation to the

social construction of race and difference in cinema and literature. They showed that within

contemporary society an understanding of race and the articulation of racist ideologies could not

always be reduced to economic political or class relations.

Hall (1992a) has provided a periodisation of Black cultural politics, which he argued, occurred in two phases. The first phase was marked by the use of the term 'Black'. This was a political category to unite and build a uniform identity for communities of different histories and cultures and to denote their common experience of racism and marginalisation in British society.

This first phase was noted for its critique of the marginality of Black representation and the way in which Black people were located as the invisible other in white aesthetic and cultural discourses. Several critique strategies were developed to support Black artists in accessing the rights of representation and contest their marginality. These include developing a counterposition of positive Black imagery, which Hall referred to the 'relations of representation'.

According to Mercer and Julien (1996) theories about difference, identity and ethnicity were highly contested. The individual subjectivity of the Black subject was denied because they were often expected to represent a whole social category.

West (1995) has argued that the modern Black Diaspora problems of invisibility and namelessness must be understood in relation to the lack of power amongst Black people. He has argued that this has hindered Black people's ability to contest negative and degrading stereotypes and represent the diversity of the Black community. West perceived the response of Black artists as 'moralistic in content and communal in character'. Black artists represented Black communities as monolithic and homogeneous to replace former misrepresentations.

According to West the attempts of Black artists to challenge racist cultural practices were met by an acceptance of non Black conventions and standards. They used assimilationist methods to show that aside from cultural and historical difference they were really like white people. This type of response tended to camouflage differences amongst Black people in relation to class, gender and sexuality.

The second phase within Black cultural politics was marked by a shift from the relations of representation to a politics of representation. It marked the end of innocent notion of the essential Black subject and led to debates about how images of reality exists outside the discourse. It was during this phase that the diversity of cultural identities and the social, historical experiences of Black people who make up the category 'Black' became recognized. 'Black' a politically and culturally constructed category was no longer perceived as fixed and static. It had no guarantees because it was not rooted within fixed transcultural or transcendental racial categories.

For Hall (1987) sometimes it is significant political events that allow individuals to recognise the self through difference. A 'Black' identity has always been an unstable identity one, which is constructed through narratives and history. It is a learned identity, a process which occurred at different times for different people. Hall uses Jamaicans as an example who for centuries never regarded themselves as Black until the late 1970's following the impact of the civil rights movements across the world, the culture of Rastafaria and reggae music. He argues that although the presence and absence of Africa has become a signifier of new conceptions of Caribbean identity, 'old Africa' is lost and has been transformed. It lives within the minds of these people acquiring an imaginative and figurative value- the 'imagined community'. It has become what Caribbeans have made of it through politics, memory and discourse.

Thus this new politics of representation entails a shift in Black politics to 'the war of position', the struggle around positionalities. It entails relating the Black subject in relation to class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity and avoiding the assumption that these categories remain fixed. It indicates the existence of a plural Blackness.

According to West (1995) the politics of representation is not simply about Black people gaining access to representation and contesting stereotypes by producing positive images. It is about

sustaining discursive and institutional networks that deconstruct earlier Black strategies for identity formation, and constructing a response that articulates the complexity and diversity of Blackness in the modern and post modern world.

Hall (1992a) suggests that ethnicity should be ideologically contested. It should be removed from discourses of sociology of race and ethnic relations and expressions of nationalism. He asserts that within Black cultural productions a new concept of ethnicity has emerged. It is one which embraces difference and partly relies upon the cultural constructions of new ethnic identities.

The developments of these new ethnicities are the product of global and local influences. They challenge what it means to be Black by highlighting that the Black experience is a diaspora experience one that contests what it also means to be British. (Gilroy 1993) Hall suggests that we should no longer think of a human being as possessing one single identity but utilizing a range of different identities. He draws on feminist and psychoanalysis discourse which highlight that Identification is constructed through ambivalence. For Hall then identity is constructed across difference and lives within the politics of difference.

To summarise, this section has explored the personal and psychological identity models of Erikson, Goffman Higgins and Cross. It has also examined the new cultural politics as discussed by Hall, West and Mercer. An analysis of the psychosocial models have shown that the development and management of identities is considered to be determined by the individual. Whilst none of these theories provide an adequate framework for understanding the identity development and choices of the informants in this study they do suggest which identity and community the informants may primarily identify with. This will now be examined in relation to how these theorists would discuss the identity development of Black Deaf people.

An Eriksonian exploring the identity development of Black Deaf people would probably view Black Deaf people as having to overcome the limitations of Blackness and deafness. They would be expected to overcome these challenges as separate stages in the same way that each stages of Erikson identity development models must be resolved in order to form a healthy identity. Erikson would perceive being Black and Deaf as simply another challenge to the identity development process. This challenge would perhaps involve learning how to deal with the difficulties of communication and the experiences of racial discrimination. In the context of Erikson's model Black Deaf people would probably be expected to fully integrate into the Black and white hearing communities once they have surmounted these difficulties.

The framework proposed by Goffman would probably suggest that Black Deaf people would try to gain acceptance into two communities. Goffman's theory of stigma would identify the informants as having to negotiate their identities within the Black and the Deaf communities. Since Black Deaf people face both a tribal stigma for being Black and the stigma of physical deformation for being deaf coping with multiple stigmas would be difficult due to the prevalence of disability discrimination and racism in society. Goffman's framework suggest that Black Deaf people would either choose to deal with their difficulties by trying to gain acceptance within the Black and Deaf communities, or recognise that as stigmatised individuals they will never be accepted.

Theorists choosing to explore the identity development of Black Deaf people using Higgins approach would identify that Black Deaf people would face two main choices. The first would be to choose whether to identify with the Black or the Deaf communities. It would involve choosing their 'Master Status'. Whilst some informants would either chose to pass as hearing so that they could be in the Black community others may wish to avoid any contact with Black hearing people. These informants would interact mainly within the Deaf community having identified themselves as 'outsiders' as a result of disability discrimination. On the otherhand theorists using Higgins framework would also identify that some informants would feel like

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outsiders within the Deaf community due to racism and exclusion. These informants would be expected to form their own community of outsiders with other Black Deaf people.

Theorists exploring the identity development of Black Deaf people using the Black feminists' model of multiple oppression would probably suggest that Black Deaf people can not be simply understood in terms of Blackness or Deafness. They would argue that Black Deaf people must be examined in relation to their gendered position, social class, race and disability. The multiple oppression theorists would view the identity development of Black Deaf people as an interactive process based on all these different influences.

Finally, theorists using the sociological model to explore the identity development of Black Deaf people would locate the informants firmly within the Black hearing community. This would be on the basis that 'black' an open political construct and one which is continuously being contested, recognizes the cultural diversity of its members. Whilst this model suggests that Black Deaf people belong within the Black community there are no mechanisms of support for the informants to deal with their experiences of disability discrimination both within and outside the community. The limited knowledge and recognition of Deaf people and Deaf culture within both race relations and disability discourses indicate this.

This summary has speculated how some identity theorists would expect the identity development process to occur for Black Deaf people. These will be revisited at the end of the thesis to consider how accurately they reflected the experiences and identity choices of the Black Deaf informants.

1.5 Social policy in relation to race and disability

In this final section on race and racism, the relationship between race, disability and social policy will be explored. It will begin by providing a snapshot of government's policies towards Black immigrants and how these have shaped their experiences of living in Britain. It will also highlight parallels between the social policies of race and disability.

The postwar migration of Black immigrants to Britain occurred in response to the British government's national labour shortage. The reconstruction of Europe offered Caribbean migrants employment and new opportunities. Many migrants filled vacant positions in Britains public and industrial sectors such as the National Health Service (NHS) and London Transport. The government's laissez faire attitude towards them meant that the only support available came from voluntary organisations. (Williams ;1989)

Limited government support and hostile attitudes from the indigenous white population made the process of settlement and integration difficult. Many Black people were perceived as a threat to jobs, homes and public resources. The difficulties faced by Black immigrants found expression in the 1958 Notting Hill riots. This resulted in the state constructing Black immigrants as a social problem. It led to the formulation of state policies on integration and immigration control throughout the 1960s to the 1990s. Law (1996) has described the British government's policies towards Black immigrants as maintaining neutrality towards race specific demands from both Black and white voters and the marginalisation of race relations issues in political agendas. This was achieved by establishing independent bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality, and placing this responsibility within the administration of local councils.

Some theorists argue that one of the obstacles towards racial equality is the racially neutral approach in political policy and professional discourse. Because this masks eurocentrism, it also encourages the use of coded language which evokes stereotypes and assumptions towards

particular racial groups (Reeves; 1983). The use of direct reference to race in some social policies areas such as law and order and its absence in others i.e. education and housing, indicates how selective this process is and the effect it has on discrediting and criminalizing Black communities.

Thus the state's overt policy of encouraging tolerance, equal opportunity, and cultural pluralism masked a more restrictive and racist policy towards present and future Black immigrants in Britain. This was characteristic of Britain's race relations policies because whilst the Race Relations Acts served to promote good relations by passing legal prohibitions on discrimination, tighter restrictions were set up for Black immigration into Britain. Both race relations legislation and the politics of anti racism failed to combat racial discrimination and disadvantage. (See section 1.6 for a more detailed discussion of policies relating to disability).

According to Law (1996) there are four types of equality. The first relates to equality between human beings; the second, equality of opportunity, i.e. where each person has access to education employment and social resources; the third, equality of condition, the notion that material conditions of life should be equal across all social groups; and finally, equality of outcome, a situation where social economic and political opportunities are available to all.

Turner (1986) summarized some of the arguments against equality. He has highlighted how some components of equality are incompatible, particularly those relating to personal liberty and the choices of individuals. He asserts that racial equality may only be achieved through social and political regulation that could result in a totalitarian state. Turner postulates that a 'drift to equality' based on the development of egalitarian values, positive social relations, and the mobilization of social groups aiming for equal social rights, may be the way forward.

This 'drift to equality' has not yet occurred for Black or disabled people living in Britain. Any gains secured through legislation such as race relation acts, or disability discrimination acts have been hard fought and only achieved after years of oppression.

Despite the existence of anti discriminatory legislation the individualistic nature of rights based law only enables individuals not groups to address inequality and disadvantage. As a result, disabled people have described the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act as a 'bigots charter' due to its failure to establish a clear principle of equal treatment. The act's exemptions and justification clauses and a lack of effective enforcement mechanisms, thus remain a barrier towards equality. (Gooding; 1996)

The equal opportunities legislation such as the Race Relations Acts and the Disability Discrimination Acts have been considered protective rather than pro active or preventive. Individuals have to use the legal process to exercise their rights to equality. The individualistic nature of this legislation has weakened its ability to have any real impact on disadvantaged social groups because the structures that give rise to inequality remain in tact. (Lustgarten and Edwards; 1992) Gregory (1987) argues that anti discrimination legislation is simply part of a process of containment to protect the structures of capitalist society. In isolation such legislation cannot achieve racial, disability, or gender equality.

Law (1996) has identified that key elements of anti racism defined by the UNESO (1967) fail to provide adequate solutions to tackling racism and racial discrimination. The first solution of changing the social situation which gives rise to prejudice such as inadequate housing and employment does not acknowledge the mechanisms which reinforce inequalities and undermine anti- racist approaches. Law argues that to combat racial inequalities a wider programme to tackle social inequality must be developed.

The second solution of preventing racist people from inciting racist behaviour, is also considered to be inadequate. Law has highlighted the difficulties of controlling this by indicating that

prejudice individuals do not always express their views in a systematic and un-contradictory manner.

The final approach, to utilise educational resources to promote ' racial understanding and harmony' is also considered as weak. Not only does it raise questions and problems about the burden of representation for Black artists, but also fails to fully conceptualize how the media is used. Several media discourses have emphasized the role of human agency and the audience. They have stressed the importance of examining the social, political and economic context in which consumption occurs. (Silverstone; 1994)

Parallels between the social model and the politics of race

Discourses of social policy in relation to race appear to be interchangeable with social policy discourses relating to Disability. Within the field of disability the dominance of the medical and individualistic model has ensured that social policies are designed to establish services that deal with individual needs in relation to health and rehabilitation. The collective and civil rights needs of disabled people have been ignored and unacknowledged. This is parallel to the social policies designed to overcome racial inequality and the experiences of racial discrimination faced by the Black community.

The social model of disability draws on concepts and terminology used in race relations discourses. Parallels can be seen in the way that disabled writers denote their experiences as embedded in the culture of society and its institutions. This is very similar to the experience of institutional racism faced by Black people. Institutional racism challenged the notion that racism was simply a manifestation of prejudiced attitudes of white people, but instead structured within the organization of European societies.

Further similarities between the social model and the politics of race are evident in the terminology used. Disabled writers have begun to describe their experiences as a form of social

oppression to ensure that legislative acts and social policies are designed to alleviate oppression. This parallels the politics of race and subsequent race relations acts to eliminate discrimination faced by Black people.

The embodiment of policies and practices of disability discrimination within state institutions and structures has resulted in the disabled movement organizing protests to demand equal rights and access to welfare provision. The disabled movement has taken on the features of the Black social and civil rights movements of the 1960s. It has engaged itself in the politics of identity to counter charity representations and the dominance of negative images of disability (Hevey; 1992).

However like the Black social movements demands for equality and an end to racial discrimination, the impact of the disability movement has been limited. Recent research has shown (Baighole; 1997) that in the areas of race and disability the European Union have made no attempts to recognise the demands of Black or disabled people. In fact in the area of race and immigration they have moved towards a 'Fortress Europe' and placed issues of racial equality low on the political agenda. In terms of disability the European Union have simply adopted a policy of recommendations and actions programmes, to promote the social and economic integration of disabled people in society.

This brief sketch on race and social policy has indicated that Black and disabled people have always occupied a position of social and economic disadvantage. Many of the legal avenues established to redress these inequalities fail to provide an adequate solution to the experiences that Black and disabled people face as a group. The individualistic nature of rights based law once again reduces the difficulties of discrimination and inequality to an individual problem.

In the next section of this chapter the politics of disability will be explored. This will examine how disabled identities have been constructed through the medical and social models of disability.

1.6 Disability politics

Within disability politics several disability models have emerged. Each of these models reflects the diversity of attitudes and approaches to disability. Four models of disability have been identified. These are the medical model, the administrative model, the philanthropic model, and the social model.

Within the *medical model* of disability, the individual is problematised. Disability is perceived as deficiency belonging to the individual, in need of cure and management. The *administrative model* often considered as an extension of the medical model, refers to support systems for disabled people. This model is based on a needs approach, and derives from professional concerns and assessments of disabled people. The *philanthropic model* denotes the public image of disabled people. This image is also based on the medical model of disability. It is often used to maximize public sympathy for charitable causes. The <u>social model</u> of disability challenges the medical, administrative and philanthropic model. It represents the opinions of disabled people and how they defined their experience of disability.

The following section will examine these models in greater detail. It will begin by introducing the different categories of disability and their meanings.

Categories of disability

In 1971 research undertaken by Harris identified three categories of disability. These were impairment, disability, and handicap. These categories were modified and adopted by the World Health Organization in 1981. They are shown in table 1.1

Table 1.1 Categories of disability

Impairment is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental or sensory abnormalities (Barnes, 1991)

Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on a equal level with others due to physical and social barriers. (Barnes, 1991:2; Finkelstein, French, 1993:28)

Handicap: refers to the disadvantage the individual encounters as a result of the impairment and/ or the disability when compared with his or her peers. (International classification of handicap in French, 1994:13)

Models of disability

The medical model of disability

The medical profession and its associated agencies have created a model of disability, which focus on the abnormalities of individuals. This model problematises the individual and suggests that the difficulties Deaf and disabled people face derive from their impairments not the disabling environment. This perception of disability dominates most clinical practice. For deaf people, it is illustrated in the development of hearing aids and cochlear implants to reduce the effects of deafness.

Administrative model of disability

The administrative model of disability refers to areas such as education, employment, social benefits and social service support. Administrative practices are used to assess the eligibility of specific services for disabled people. These practices often enable some disabled people to access specific benefits and services, whilst denying that opportunity to others.

Some disabled writers (Oliver 1990, Finkelstein 1991, French 1994) view the administrative model as an extension of the medical model. They argue that the lives of disabled people are still being managed and tightly controlled. According to Finklestein (1991: 231):

"The administrative model of service provision dominates all services in the UK whether these are provided by statutory agencies or voluntary charities or demanded by pressure group organizations. Facilities for disabled people are constructed on the foundation of the administrative model which assume services can be delivered in separated but tightly linked cure and care areas of intervention".

Philanthropic model of disability

The philanthropic model of disability is used to describe how charities and fund-raising initiatives portray disabled people as helpless victims of illness and disease. Disability is often synonymous with illness and suffering .The majority of media reports focus on medical treatments and miraculous cures. (Barnes1994: 42) Disabled people are very rarely shown as productive members of society.

Many of these negative images have perpetuated stereotypes and misconceptions about impairment. This is particularly evident in television charity marathons such as 'Children in Need.' Here disabled people are 'marketed' to ensure that charities receive maximum public sympathy for their fundraising events. (Barnes, 1994; Oliver, 1990; French, 1994)

All of these models adopt a problem-centered view of the impaired individual and have been rejected by disabled people. Within disability discourses disabled people have developed their own theories on disability. This is embodied in the social model.

Social model of disability

The social model of disability has become the new orthodoxy for disabled people. It challenges the medical model of disability by suggesting that disabled people are oppressed, denoted by their systematic experiences of exclusion. Disabled people want disability to refer to inadequate social responses to impaired individuals, not the impairment of individuals. This means locating the problems associated with disability away from the individual towards restrictive practices within society.

Some disabled writers and activists view disability as a social construct, created by institutions and organizations, which restrict and disable them. Their experiences of discrimination are compounded by assessment practices, which intrude into their private lives. (French, 1994)

The failure of social and physical environments to take into account the needs of impaired individuals thus forms the basis of the social model of disability.

Other disabled writers and organizations view disability as a form of social oppression. (Leonard, 1984; Sutherland, 1981; Union of the physically impaired; 1976). Oliver (1990) argues that if disability were defined as a form of oppression it would influence social policies for disabled people. Other theorists (Abberley, 1987: 5) argue that there are normally two main consequences within oppressive theories of disability, which would make it difficult to define as social oppression:

"Oppressive theories of disability systematically distort and stereotype the identities of their putative subjects, restricting their full humanity by constituting them only in their 'problem ' aspects. The more fashionable but equally unacceptable liberal reaction to this view is to deny all differences- similar to the assimilationist perspective"

There are many strengthens and weaknesses within the social model. These will now be explored.

Strengths of the social model

The social model has been a considered as a major force in de -constructing the personal tragedy theory of disability (Oliver 1991). It has helped several disabled people overcome some of the barriers and fears in their lives. One disabled writer (Crow 1996:216) states that the social model of disability has helped her to "confront, survive and even surmount countless situations of exclusion and discrimination".

Weakness of the social model

Crow (1996) like other disabled writers felt that the social model does have its weaknesses. Its focus on the disabling barriers has become so rigid that there is a danger of impairment being viewed as separate from the experiences of impaired individuals:

" The social model of disability rejects the notion of impairment as problematic, focusing instead on discrimination as the key obstacle to a disabled person's quality of life...It is this rejection of impairment as problematic that is the social model's flaw ' (Crow 1996: 216)

Impairment is relevant. Pain, chronic illness, and depression do affect individuals and can make lives difficult. The difficulties associated with impairment will persist regardless of whether disabling barriers have been removed. Failure to acknowledge this could lead to a " false

consciousness". It would also make it taboo within the disability movement creating new

constraints on the self-expression of impaired individuals. Crow argues for the integration of

both impairment and disability within the social model as failure to do so would leave the

disabled movement "open to misappropriation and misinterpretation" (Crow, 1996: 217)

The disability movement's rejection of medical and rehabilitation intervention, without

providing alternative solutions, is viewed as an additional flaw within the social model. Some

individuals have impairments that necessitate professional intervention. It is, therefore

important that appropriate support be provided to these people. Not all impairment is

problematic nor does it cause the entire disadvantage, which impaired people, face. However,

the recognition of the role of impairment in the lives of disabled people enables them to

acknowledge and recognize the experiences of their bodies.

" We need a renewed social model of disability. This model would operate on two levels: a more complete understanding of disability and impairment as social concepts and a recognition of an individual's experiences of their body over time and in variable circumstances" (Crow, 1996: 218)

Post modernist model of disability

More recently, some theorists have argued that disability should be viewed within a post

modernist framework. The post-modernist model of disability allows individuals to construct

their own realities. It challenges essentialism and the belief of an absolute reality or truth. Corker

(1998: 41) argues that there are different Deaf and disabled realities. She asserts that post

modernism is useful in understanding how deafness and disability have been constructed, in

particular the role of global and local differences in ideology and culture.

1.7 Disability models and the Deaf community

The existence of several models of disability highlights the diversity of attitudes and approaches

to disabled people. The next section will explore the historical perception of deafness as a

disability and the relationship between models of disability and deafness.

Deafness and disability

Some of the earliest references to deaf people appear in The Bible. These refer to restrictions of inheritance rights and the nature of their mental health. (Wrigley, 1996). The idea that deaf people were incapable of thinking for themselves was widespread. The doctrines of Aristotle which described deaf people as 'deaf and dumb', persisted for thousands of years.

The documented history of deaf people in British society provides us with few details of the experiences of poor and non-white deaf people. The history of deaf education, the development of educational organizations, and the personal achievements of deaf individuals are the prime focus. (Jackson;1990; Grant, 1990). However, these studies and primary sources[3] suggest that deaf people were perceived in relation to their social status in society. The representation of deaf people in professional occupations such as law and academia suggest this. Deaf people by virtue of social class not impairment suffered oppression. The experiences of those from the poor and lower classes remains inextricably linked to the documented history of the sick, poor and disabled during the early 19th century.

The lack of detailed information on deaf people from lower social classes was partly due to BSL[4] not having a written form. Deaf history thus passed to generations of other deaf people in a form of 'oral history', which was mediated through sign language (Jackson 1990)

The welfare state institutions had a profound influence on ideological thought. It affected how disabled people were perceived .The development of institutions and classifications under the poor law were part of the process of medicalisation. By the 1940's[5] legislative acts paved the way for Deaf people to be offered more social and economic opportunities. In particular, the

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[3] The British Deaf Mute is a publication for Deaf people in the early 19th century

[4] British Signed language is the signed language of the UK.

[5] The 1944 Disabled person's employment act, The 1944 Education Act, The 1948 National Health Service Act and the 1948 National Assistant Act.

national assistance act of 1948 formalized institutional support and empowered local authorities to undertake an assessment of needs.

Deafness has always therefore, been perceived by social policy makers and society as a disability. Long before legislative acts were passed in parliament, the poor deaf were looked upon as disabled. Only upper class deaf people were able to enjoy the same privileges as hearing people.

In the next section, the various models of deafness will be explored. The first part examines the medical model of deafness and its impact on the lives of deaf people. It is followed by an exploration of the social model of disability in relation to the Deaf community. The final part of this section analyses the linguistic model of deafness and aspects of Deaf culture and community.

The medical model and deafness

Within the medical model of disability, deafness is often defined on the basis of audiological tests, which are used to measure hearing. Four categories of hearing loss are commonly delineated: slightly hearing-impaired, moderately hearing impaired, severely hearing-impaired, and profoundly hearing impaired (Densham, 1995: 159). This classification of deafness has placed it within a deficiency model. Since 90% of deaf children are born into hearing families (Kyle and Woll, 1985) this has increased medical research on the causes of deafness, its management and prevention. These have included a national screening programme for young babies across the UK, the development of hearing aids, surgical procedures such as cochlear implants, and more recently research into genetics.

Psychology, Psychiatry and deafness

Other fields of medical practice have been pathologised. In the *Mask of Benevolence*, Lane (1992: 36) demonstrated that within the psychological literature spanning a period of 20 years, psychologists have used negative labels to describe deaf people's social, cognitive, behavioural and emotional make up.

Until the late 1970's deaf people were regarded as linguistically deficient (Furth and Youniss, 1965; Furth, 1971 cited in Dant and Gregory 1990) whereas other studies have pathologised the position of deaf people. Mykleburst's study (1960) believed that early childhood deafness could adversely affect the personality of deaf people to the point that they would suffer:

" A lack of apprehension, worry and concern with oneself and the manifestation of obliviousness in regard to their true circumstances" (Mykelburst 1960 cited in Basuger (1964:72)

Legacy of the medicalisation of deafness

The dominance of the medical model permeates all clinical practice and other support services for disabled people. It fails to consider the disabled person's point of view or the impact of the disabling environment. Individuals whose impairments cannot be helped by medical intervention but still have to undergo medical assessments that affect important decisions in their lives demonstrate this (French 1994). The medicalisation of deafness has left deaf people struggling to assert their position as a linguistic minority. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

The social model of disability and deafness

Despite the social model, constituting the views of disabled people, there is limited literature on the perspectives of Deaf[6] people. A lack of awareness amongst the Deaf community of disability discourses and models other than the medical model has been suggested (Corker 1998:9). Deaf people have been excluded from the development of the social model theory and therefore a discourse relating to sensory impairment has been limited.

In *Deaf disabled or Deafness Disabled?* Marian Corker has begun to explore some of the difficulties within the social model's theory and dialogues from a Deaf perspective. Corker asserts that theorists of the social model fail to consider the role of language discourse and also exclude cultural processes. She argues that these weaknesses fail to provide Deaf people with an

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[6] Deaf with a capital D denotes deaf people who consider themselves as belonging to a linguisitic minority. A lower case deaf will be used when referring to the audiological condition of deafness.

acceptable alternative to the medical model. (1998:38) Corker argues that deafness and disability must be re-conceptualized within a post modernist, post structuralist framework where both discursive and materialist factors are included. Without this inclusion, linguistic, social or attitudinal oppression cannot be deconstructed, thus restricting any changes for Deaf and disabled people in society.

Deaf Disabled?

Deaf people have generally not accepted the disability framework, because they do not see themselves as disabled. They recognize that there are financial benefits in classifying themselves as disabled, but feel that disability as a form of self identification requires a disclaimer (Padden and Humphries, 1988: 45). Other writers, notably Ladd and John (1991: 14) believe that it is important for deaf people to link with the disabled movement if only to free themselves from the category of disability.

Many deaf people do not see themselves as disabled because disabled people are members of the 'hearing world'. Disabled people use the same language as hearing people and participate in hearing culture. However, some authors recognize that there are commonalties between deaf people and disabled people. Finklestein (1990:265) has drawn parallels between the language oppression experienced by deaf people and mobility oppression faced by physically disabled people. In Wilcox's study (1989) language oppression appeared greatest in education. Here, deaf students' experience of inequality with hearing teachers was viewed as a form of 'cultural oppression'.

Despite Deaf people having similar experiences to disabled people they do not see themselves as disabled. They seek legislative recognition to exist within society as a minority group with a distinct language and culture (Ladd and John, 1991: 14- 15). A look at the linguistic model of deafness provides us with a greater understanding of the Deaf community.

The linguistic minority model of deafness

The linguistic model of deafness asserts that deaf people make up a cultural linguistic minority. There are between 40- 60,000 Deaf people in Britain who considers themselves as belonging to this group (Corker, 1997:9). These include: deaf children of Deaf parents, prelingually and postlingually deaf people, and individuals deafened early in their childhoods. BSL is the main language used by members of this community. It is usually acquired before mastering English. (Haugen et al, 1981)

The Deaf community does not live or work in a specific geographical locations but are geographically spread across the country. They meet for local, national and international activities and events such as the Deaf world games, Deaf rallies and events.

Membership to the Deaf community

Woll and Lawson (1981: 280) have identified that membership to a Deaf community is dependent upon the following factors: self identification as member, British sign language use; endogamous martial patterns, and participation in organizations and social activities in the Deaf community. There is conflicting opinion on the conditions for membership of the Deaf community. Some writers (Higgins 1980: Lawson 1981) state that audiological deafness is necessary. This, is in addition to identification with the Deaf world, shared experiences of deafness, and participation in Deaf culture.

Other theorists like Ladd (1988) believe that hearing people can be part of the Deaf community especially those who work in Deaf related occupations and share their concerns. Baker and Cokely (1980) have suggested that becoming a member of the Deaf community can be achieved through a combination of audiological, linguistic, social and political avenues.

Deaf culture

At the core of the Deaf community is a culture 'a set of learned behaviour of a group of people who have their own language, values, rules for behaviours and traditions" (Padden; 1980: 4). Deaf culture has at its heart the use of sign language and other features of Deaf communication.

This includes regular eye contact, vivid facial expressions, and body language. Like most other languages, sign language is saturated in cultural attitudes. According to Kannapell (1993):

" ASL [American Sign Language] is a powerful tool for identity in the Deaf community along with cultural beliefs and values that are expressed through ASL... the knowledge of ASL alone seems not to be in the core of the Deaf community. Everything else, shared common experiences and cultural beliefs and values which are attached to ASL also seem to be important requirements for admittance to the Deaf community" (1982 quoted in Kannapell 1993:20)

The term 'Deaf culture' is relatively new to Britain's Deaf community. It emerged in the 1980's along with the new BSL sign for culture. Previously Deaf culture was described in Britain as 'deaf ways' (Kyle 1991). This suggests a growing sophistication and politicization within Britains Deaf community.

Most literature on Deaf culture focuses on the American Deaf community. These studies provide an historical analysis (Padden & Humphries, 1988), personal perspectives of aspects of Deaf cultural life (Wilcox, 1989) and a sociological perspective (Higgins, 1980). The literature on British Deaf culture remains limited but American Deaf culture has often been viewed as interchangeable with British Deaf culture (Kyle, 1991, although See Ladd 1999 unpublished Phd thesis)

The method of Deaf cultural transmission has been a source of interest and debate due to its unconventionality compared to other cultures (Padden 1995: 86). Deaf culture has traditionally been passed on when deaf children were educated at residential schools, and came into contact with Deaf children of Deaf parents. Deaf culture is thus inextricably linked to Deaf education. (Padden, 1980; Schein, 1968; Higgins, 1980; Lawson, 1981; Ladd, 1988)

A central feature of the Deaf community is shared cultural values, language, goals and experiences. However, the possession of these characteristics does not guarantee membership and acceptance for all Deaf people to the Deaf community. An examination of the available literature on Black Deaf and Black disabled people will illustrate this.

1.8 Race, disability and deafness

Black disabled groups: Hidden minorities?

The racialisation of Black people and their construction as a problem in British society has dominated studies on the Black community. There are few studies, which explore the richness, strength and existence of Black expressive cultures (CCCS, 1982; Gilroy, 1987). This has limited any understanding of the ethnicity of this group or the individuality of its members.

Black disabled people have fallen into this category. The lack of acknowledgement amongst service providers of their cultural distinctiveness has led to inappropriate service provision and their continual marginalisation within the wider disability movement.

Stuart (1996) recommended that more studies should focus on the experiences of Black disabled people as British citizens and the way in which they have been marginalised by society. He argues that Black disabled people need to construct their own identities to help others understand their experiences and the multi- dimensional nature of racism. Simultaneous oppression is seen as the key to understanding the position of Black disabled people. Stuart sees this occurring on three levels: through resource discrimination, limited individuality and identity, and isolation within the Black community.

Disability organizations and Black disabled people

The number of disability organizations that involve Black and ethnic minority disabled people remains small. Black disabled people who have been employed in this sector described facing disabalism, racism and sexism. Disability groups and those who run them seem as susceptible to racism and prejudice like other groups in society. Black disabled people are thus confined to the fringes of these organisations where they have limited influence:

" Black disabled people are not readily accepted in the ranks of the predominantly white disabled community as here they are victimized and hindered because of the lack of understanding around issues of race and racism " (Hill, 1990)

Inappropriate service provision for Black disabled groups

Disability services are often planned and provided by white able bodied people with white disabled people in mind. The planning of these services fail to consider the cultural diversity of the disabled community. In some cases this has left Black disabled people excluded or unable to access services established to support them. Information Officers sometimes unwittingly discriminate between claimants by restricting the type of advice offered (Hill 1991; Stuart 1993;1996). This resource discrimination results in frustration and hostility, and a reluctance to take up public services. Black disabled people are thus forced to rely on the help of the extended family, which has slowly eroded. (Hill, 1991)

Research undertaken by GLAD (1988) highlighted that 68% of disabled African-Caribbean people live alone. Further research on Black carers (McCalman 1990) revealed that there was little support within the extended family.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, attempts were made by statutory and voluntary organizations to change the poor uptake of services from Black and ethnic minority communities. A number of the disability organizations initiated short-term service development projects. However, these were usually run by Black non-disabled workers with little or no experience of disability. Their long-term impact was thus fleeting.

Black disabled people are thus confronted with additional difficulties both within and outside the disabled community:

" *Black Disabled people I have found to my cost, are a discrete and insular minority within a minority. We have been unfairly and unjustly saddled with restrictions and limitations, subjected to a history of purposeful unequal treatment and relegated to a position of political powerlessness and disenfranchisement in a society where even the label "second class citizens" seems wholly inadequate to identify our social status' (Hill cited in J. Morris, 1991)*

Many disability organisations were developed by white middle class intellectuals who were sympathetic to the disabled cause. Only recently have disabled people had a voice within these organizations. These individuals are perceived as the voices of the white middle classes with mild or discreet impairments. They too have not addressed issues of race and disability, or the

experiences faced by Black disabled people. Despite the parallels between the social model and the politics of race, there remains limited scope within national British organizations to discuss the concerns of Black disabled people (Morris: 1991). The social model has failed to acknowledge their presence within the disability movement, despite attempts to address this internationally. The institutional discrimination described within the social model of disability thus remains a barrier for Black disabled people within the disability movement itself.

The Black Deaf community

There is no information on the position and experiences of Black Deaf people in the UK. Most of the available information relates to Black Deaf people in America. By virtue of their racial origin, and historical heritage, Black Deaf Americans cannot be considered as having an interchangeable history and experience with their Black British counterparts.

The literature on Black Deaf people in Britain focuses predominately on barriers to accessing services and inappropriate service provision. Studies undertaken by Deaf voluntary organizations have been primarily concerned with this in order to improve their service delivery practices. A recent study by Ahmad et al (1998) examined statutory services for Deaf people from Black and ethnic minority communities. It explored policy issues and politics, and highlighted areas of good practice within these sectors. The study also exposed the way in which Black Deaf people were often overlooked in the provision of services.

Other literature which makes reference to Black Deaf people exists as part of the Open University's 'Issues in Deafness' course (1991). This makes reference to Black Deaf people belonging to the 'Other' Deaf community. In many ways its' title reinforces the notion that even within a minority community they still constitute a further minority and are treated as such.

Many of the in- depth studies on Black Deaf people are American notably Hariston (1983) *Black Deaf in America: Are we really that different?* This provides an insight into the experiences of Black Deaf people and gives profiles of individuals who have excelled within the Black Deaf

community. As a result of America's segregation policies, segregation amongst Black Deaf and white Deaf people occurs almost by mutual arrangement. (1983:80)

Other studies and research on the American Black Deaf community have highlighted the existence of a distinctive Black variant of Sign Language. Differences in ASL grammar, lexicon, and phonology of Black Deaf signers exist compared to their white counterparts. (Woodward, 1976).

American studies have also explored issues of identity (Aramburo, 1989; Valli et al 1992) These studies examine whether Black Deaf people identify themselves as primarily Black Deaf or Deaf Black. In Aramburo's study Black Deaf people who identified primarily with the Black community did so because of the invisibility of deafness and the visibility of their race. Black Deaf people who identified themselves as Deaf Black were born into Deaf families. They had been immersed into the Deaf community having grown up in residential schools.

Aramburo's study provided an insight into the identity positioning of Black Deaf people and their relationships within the Black hearing community. However, there were few details of how this process occurred or the nature of their relationship with white and other ethnic minority individuals. Little information was provided on the impact of the social environment or how personal experiences influenced identity choices.

However, Valli et al's study (1992:60) described an ' inside v's outside' syndrome. In this study Black Deaf people primarily identified themselves as Deaf but were aware that they would be treated as Black because of the invisibility of deafness. They noted that for some Deaf people their identity was defined depending on those around them. For example in a Deaf group they identified with Black first but in a hearing group they felt Deaf first. Similarly in the company of white people Black Deaf people felt Deaf first, and Black first with Black people. Valli et al's study has shown that Black Deaf people's dual ethnicity is often negotiated during social interactions. Whilst Valli et al acknowledge that further research is needed in this area, their present findings rest on the assumption that Black Deaf people are consciously aware of having

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a range of different identities which are negotiated and positioned in different situations. The study presupposes that all Black Deaf people have a developed sense of their racial identity and Deaf identity.

This study's contribution to the sociology of deafness

American studies have begun to explore the way in which Black Deaf people are choosing to define themselves. However, they provide little information about what influences these choices other than the distinctiveness of 'race' or immersion into Deaf culture. This thesis seeks to provide an in-depth insight into the influences affecting the identity development of a group of Black Deaf people. It explores their social interactions within different contexts. These include the family unit, school, the labour market and the Black hearing and Deaf communities. This study will show that identity development for Black Deaf people involves a series of choices based on experiences, level of awareness of the Deaf and Black communities and acceptance of themselves as Deaf and as Black. It will also demonstrate through an exploration of their personal experiences the complexity of their identity development and how this is influenced by factors aside from race and deafness.

From exploring the range of attitudes to deafness within the Black hearing community and the informants' experience with different 'racial' and social groups, the study begins to develop a picture of Black Deaf people. It identifies members of the Black Deaf community and the roles they play in its development.

1.9 Summary

This chapter looked at models of individual identity development, cultural studies discourses and a range of perspectives on race, and disability. It also examined the impact of some social policies on the lives of Black and disabled people.

The second half of the chapter explored the politics of deafness and disability. It looked at the four models of disability and their relationship to the Deaf community. The chapter highlighted that the language and terminology used to construct the social model drew on race relations discourses. This model identified the disabling environment as the main barrier facing disabled people.

The strength and weakness of the social model was explored both from the perspectives of disabled people and Deaf people. This shifted the focus of analysis to the Deaf community and their position as a linguistic cultural minority. The chapter examined the Deaf community's culture and conditions of membership. This was followed by an exploration of discourses on the Black and Deaf communities.

The chapter ended with an outline of this study's contribution to the sociology of deafness.

Chapter 2: Entering the field

Part one: Research methods

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part looks at the process of undertaking the fieldwork for this thesis. It explores the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods within the study and the benefits and disadvantages of both. The second part introduces the community study and profiles of the respondents. This is followed by the research findings on attitudes to deafness in the Black hearing community.

Since language oppression is often seen to be at the heart of the experiences of Deaf people it was essential that the chosen methodology did not replicate this. Qualitative research methods using in-depth open-ended interviews were, therefore used. This provided a method of communicating with the informants that would fully reflect their thoughts and feelings. The skill of a Sign Language Interpreter was utilised to achieve this.

2.2 Using Multiple Methods

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this study. Quantitative research methods were employed in the community study, (exploring attitudes to deafness in the Black hearing community), and qualitative in the major study with the Deaf informants. The use of these approaches involved different methods of data collection. Whilst some researchers (Denzin 1970) believe that combining both quantitative and qualitative methods can help to validate conclusions, others claim that it does not. (Bryman 1988:133; Fielding & Fielding 1986). They assert that differences in data sets can only be understood in relation to the purposes for which they are created, and thus should be seen as complementary tools rather than a source to validate conclusions.

The Quantitative enquiry

The community study aimed to provide a quantifiable overview of the range and nature of

attitudes to deafness in the Black hearing community. Quantitative social survey techniques

were used in the form of standardized questions. Its prime concern with causality, measurement

and generalisability made it a suitable approach for this part of the study.

Quantitative methods had been used in Bunting's study on public attitudes to deafness. To

compare the findings of this study and the community study, the researcher used the same

techniques.

Benefits and disadvantages of quantitative approaches

Quantitative methods provide a clear and objective method of data collection and analysis. They

produce verifiable data which can be replicated, and re-tested to construct and measure specific

concepts for further development.

However as a methodology, quantitative methods are not able to explore or explain the

complexities of real life experiences. Their prime concern with objectivity and systematic

methodology restricts the use of this method in understanding speculative or abstract theories.

Using quantitative methods in the Community study

The use of quantitative methods in the community study enabled the researcher to compare the

findings of the community study with Bunting's study on public attitudes to deafness. The

researcher used codes to categorise the Black hearing community's responses. These responses

were measured and categorized according to a number of variables such as age, gender,

ethnicity and social class, enabling the researcher to develop a broad and generalized picture of

Black hearing community attitudes

The Qualitative enquiry

Qualitative research methods were used in the main study with Black Deaf informants in the form of in-depth interviews. These provided a more detailed exploration of attitudes to deafness in the Black hearing community based on a Black Deaf person's perspective.

One of the main features of qualitative research methods is that it enables the researcher to explore the perspectives and experiences of the informants. It was thus a suitable method for exploring the experiences and process of identity development of Black Deaf people.

Benefits and disadvantages of qualitative methods

Qualitative methods emphasize the importance of forming direct and personal contact with the informants to understand their realities and experiences. As a methodology it enables the researcher to gain an insight of the informants' external behaviors and internal states, and the interrelationships between different themes in their narratives. Qualitative methods make it possible for the researcher to challenge any possible misconceptions about the subjects under focus. (Bryman;1988, Brannen;1992) Its concern with uncovering meaning, identifying different experiences, and reducing the inequality between the researcher and informant (Oakley; 1981) made it a suitable methodology for this part of the study.

Disadvantages of qualitative methods

Qualitative research using in-depth interviews provides an insight into how the respondents think and feel. However, there is always a possibility that what the informants say and the realities of their situation are two different things. In-depth interviews are subject to deceptions, distortions or exaggerations. This has to be considered when analyzing the informants' accounts. It requires the researcher to have methodological skills and integrity to maximize the validity and reliability of the data. (Strauss 1987; Mason 1996)

Using qualitative methods with Deaf respondents

In contrast to quantitative methodology qualitative approaches usually work with a much smaller group of respondents and produces more detailed data. This methodology was thus used for the major study with Deaf informants. This part of the research required information on the informants' personal experiences and attitudes to the Black hearing and Deaf communities.

Although a standardized social survey questionnaire exploring the informants' experiences could have been used to collect this data, given the lower literacy levels of deaf people (Conrad, 1979) this would have been difficult. It would also fail to produce the detailed responses needed to understand the process of their identity development. Other possible difficulties include translating the questionnaire from English to BSL, a process that would not capture the contexts of the informants' responses or permit the researcher to seek clarification or additional information.

The use of qualitative methods aimed to make the interviewing process for Deaf people a relaxing and non threatening experience by encouraging them to chose their own methods of communication. As a methodology the informants were able to define the boundaries of the interviews. Interview questions were developed in response to their disclosures, a method useful in generating ideas, theories and strategies.

In the next part of this chapter the findings of the community study are discussed.

Part Two: Attitudes to deafness in the Black community

2.3 The Community study

Aims

During May to October 1996 a survey was conducted within the African and Afro Caribbean communities to find out their views and attitudes towards deafness and deaf people. The study was also undertaken to provide background data on the experiences of Black Deaf people within the Black hearing community.

The Respondents

A total of 57 interviews were conducted in London. These interviews were face to face with the respondent and lasted approximately half an hour. The respondents were recruited from the following places: churches, Afro Caribbean community centres, and various working environments and educational institutions. The study aimed to interview an equal number of men and women [30: 30] but the researcher experienced difficulties recruiting Black hearing males. Men aged between 49-58 years were particularly difficult to recruit.

The desired sample consisted of six age categories each within a ten-year range i.e. 18-28 years, 29-38 years etc. There were 5 male and female respondents for every age category. The profiles of the 57 respondents are as follows:

Table 2.1 The respondents' personal profile.

GENDER	RESIDENCE IN YEARS IN UK	WHERE BORN	ETHNICITY	MARITAL STATUS
Male	41% 30-40yrs 26% 20-30yrs 18% 40yrs + 11% 10-20yrs 4% up to 10yrs	48% Caribbean 33% England 15% Africa 4% Europe	67% African Caribbean 15% African 7% Black British 7% Other 4% Europe	51% Married 26% Single 7% Divorced 4% Widowed 4% Separated 4% Other 4% Not Stated
Female	43% 20-30yrs 40% 30-40yrs 10% 40yrs+ 7% 10-20yrs	63% Caribbean 37% England	80% African Caribbean 14% Black British 3% African 3% Black Other	40% Single 30% Married 13% Divorced 13% Widowed 4% Separated

Table 2.2 The respondents' educational attainments, work class and types.

Gender	Age finished education	Work class	Work type
Male	41% at 18yrs 26% at 16yrs 15% at 14yrs 7% at 15yrs 7% at 17yrs 4% Still in education	45% Employed 37% Retired 7% Unemployed 7% Student 4% Self Employed	33% Skilled Manual 19% intermediate/manual 15% Unskilled 11% Professional 7% Managerial/employer 7% Other 4% No response
Female	33% at 16 yrs 30% at 18yrs 20 % at 15yrs 4% at 14yrs 4% at 17yrs	57% Employed 34% Retired 3% Student 3% Unemployed 3% Other	47% Intermediate /Junior non manual 23% Unskilled manual 10% Semi Skilled/Personal Service 7% Managerial Employer 7% No Response 3% Other

Hearing difficulties amongst the respondents

Out of the 57 respondents interviewed only 26% reported having difficulties with their hearing whilst the remaining 74% reported no difficulties. Only a few respondents (3) wore hearing aids. Out of these respondents none reported hearing difficulties whilst wearing an aid.

The respondents' level of contact with deaf people

Three quarters of the respondents (75%) had contact with deaf people whilst the remaining 1/4 (25%) had no contact at all. The respondents reported having contact predominately in England

(88%) with 8% and 4% respectively in the Caribbean and Africa. Most of the respondents had

contact with deaf people at work. Table 2.3 shows the frequency of contact between the

respondents and deaf people and Table 2.4 shows the areas of contact.

Table 2.3 The respondents frequency of contact with deaf people

Frequency of contact with deaf people	% of sample
Rarely	35%
Sometimes but not often	35%
Nearly all the time	16%
Fairly often	14%

Table 2.4 The respondents' area of contact with deaf people

Areas of contact	% of sample	Age of deaf contacts	% of sample
Work	40%	Adolescents	30%
Socially	30%	Cross section of ages	24%
Home & Family	19%	Elderly	21%
Casual / Ad hoc	11%	Middle Age	17%
		Children	8%

Methods

A sample of six interviews was conducted with randomly selected members of the Black hearing

community. These interviews consisted of 40 questions about deafness and deaf people. The

questions were adapted from an earlier study on public attitudes to deafness.[7] This study was

commissioned by the DHSS[8] and the Health Education Council. It aimed to test the publics'

knowledge and attitudes to deafness and deaf people, and gather information for a health

education programme. It used a random sample of 700 people, and a total of 537 interviews

were analyzed.

The community study consisted of a mixture of pre coded and open questions. Further response

codes were developed after data collection. These codes were based on an analysis of the

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[7] Public Attitudes to Deafness by Claire Bunting 1981

[8] Department of Health and Social Security

response categories. Draft tables were then drawn for each question and the frequencies of each response tallied. Individual response sheets for each respondent were also completed to gain an overview of each respondents' attitude to deafness as a whole.

The pilot

The pilot for the community study revealed that the survey was lengthy to administer and contained some questions that would be irrelevant to the main study. These questions tested the respondents' knowledge of environmental aids for deaf people, and knowledge of Deaf media. A self-completion sheet which asked the respondents to tick a range of words they felt described deaf people were also included. The respondents often completed this incorrectly or not at all. The researcher omitted these questions from the survey. A further 57 Black-hearing men and women were then interviewed for the study.

Research Questions

The respondents were asked several questions to test their attitudes towards deaf people and deafness. These questions are summarized as follows:

- Questions that explore whether the Black hearing community has stereotyped views of deaf people.

- Questions that examine the Black community's level of deaf awareness.

- Questions that examine perceived social and functional difficulties of deaf people that would affect their suitability for different types of employment, parenthood and social interaction with others.

- Questions exploring the level of interaction Black deaf people have with the Black hearing community.

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Part three: The research findings

2.4 Stereotypes of deaf people

" People with disabilities their biggest disability is people without a disability being prejudice and ignorant' (Black hearing woman 35yrs)

To explore if the respondents felt that they could distinguish deaf people from those who were 'hearing' general questions were asked about the appearance of deaf people, their features, speech and mannerisms. This was to determine if a stereotype of a deaf person existed. The researcher used open questions and the respondents' responses are presented in table 2.5

Because some of the respondents gave more than one answer, the overall percentages add up to more than 100. Overall (84%) of the respondents felt that deaf people could not be distinguished by their appearance.

Table 2.5 How the respondents know that a person is deaf or has poor hearing.

Differences between deaf and hearing people	% of sample
Speech	89%
Facial expressions	37%
Hearing aids	32%
Attitude	32%
Hand movements	18%

Table 2.5 highlighted that none of the informants believed that deaf people were physically different to those who were hearing. A deaf person's speech was considered to be the main difference between deaf and hearing people. Eighty nine percent of the respondents reported this. Table 2.6 provides a more detailed breakdown of the reported speech differences between deaf people and hearing people.

Table 2.6 Speech differences amongst deaf people

Differences in speech	% of sample
Louder	67%
Slurred	44%
Flat Tone	30%

Table 2.6 showed that the difference in speech was often described by the respondents as speaking loudly a characteristic, which can be attributed to a deaf or hearing person. A further 32% of respondents felt that deaf people had a distinctive attitude and described this as ' a slow way of doing things' or being unaware of what was happening around them. A person who is slow or ambivalent to their surroundings could be a deaf or hearing person.

The respondent felt that a deaf person's use of a hearing aid was the only visible difference, which distinguished them from hearing people. These findings are similar to Bunting's findings. Both studies showed that many of the 'unusual' characteristics associated with deaf people could be considered as exaggerated behavior and applicable to anyone at a given time.

A comparison between the community sample and Bunting's study

The Black community's responses to questions about deaf peoples' speech were identical to Bunting's study. Both surveys revealed that the respondents (89% respectively) felt that deaf people had a distinctive voice. However, a higher percentage of Black hearing people felt that deaf people spoke loudly and slurred their speech. The following table illustrates these comparisons.

Table 2.7 Comparison between the Black sample and Buntings sample on deaf people's speech.

Differences between a deaf person's speech and that of a hearing person's speech	Community sample %	Buntings sample %
Louder	67%	51%
Slurred	44%	32%
Tone	30%	13%

A comparison between the community sample and Bunting's sample showed that 32% of Black hearing respondents and 18% of Bunting's sample, believed that hearing aids was a

distinguishing feature of deaf people. Black hearing people also identified deaf people's facial expressions as an indicator of deafness. Both studies revealed that the respondents had similar perceptions of deaf people. Hearing aids, unusual speech, and a failure to respond when approached were characteristics of deafness noted by both groups.

Use of hands by deaf people

More than half of the respondents (72%) believed that deaf people used their hands more than hearing people. The respondents gave reasons for this, the first was to express themselves whilst communicating (63%) and the other to communicate through sign language (59%).

11% of respondents felt that the use of hands by a Deaf person was a characteristic of the individual, which became more noticeable in heated conversation. Whilst 17% of respondents believed that deaf people did not use their hands more than hearing people.

Hearing aids limitations

The respondents were asked questions about the limitations of hearing aids.

Table.2.8 Deaf people and their use of hearing aids

Can all deaf people be helped by a hearing aid	% of sample
Yes, all	33%
Some, but not all	31%
No, not all	36%

Questions examining the respondents' awareness of hearing aids showed similar responses with Bunting's study. 33% of the respondents believed that all deaf people could be helped by an aid. Bunting's study showed that 32% of respondents believed this. Both surveys revealed that hearing people were aware of the limitations of hearing aids: Sixty seven percent of the Black hearing community and 62% of Buntings sample believed that not all deaf people could be helped by an aid.

Perceptions of deafness amongst the deaf

The respondents were then asked whether they felt deaf people hid their deafness.

Table 2.9 Do deaf people hide their deafness?

Deaf people hide their deafness?	% of sample
Yes, they do	18%
Some	41%
No, they do not	41%

Overall 59% of the respondents felt deaf people might or did conceal their deafness. The

respondents suggested a number of reasons for this.

Table 2.10 Reasons why deaf people hide their deafness.

Reasons for hiding deafness	% of sample
Embarrassment/Self conscious	45%
Fear of discrimination	30%
Pride / vanity	19%
Personal Problem/private matter	6%

Of the sample 45% of respondents felt that deaf people were embarrassed about being deaf.

Other reasons included the fear of discrimination or bullying.

" Deaf people hide their deafness especially in the work situation. They are scared of discrimination and that employers won't want to take them on' (Black hearing woman 45years)

The remaining respondents believed that deaf people were proud about their deafness and did

not want others to know that they were deaf. These respondents believed that deaf people did

not want to feel different to others.

A comparison between the community sample and Bunting's sample

Both studies revealed that more than half of the respondents felt that deaf people concealed their

deafness. They both suggested that deaf people were proud people and would be embarrassed if

other people knew that they were deaf. However amongst the Black respondents 30 % believed

that Deaf people were scared of being discriminated against. This seems to suggest that Black

hearing people's own experiences of discrimination made them sensitive to the potential

discriminatory experiences of others. Some of the respondents also felt that deaf people viewed

their disability as a private matter and that there was no need to disclose this to others.

2.5 Communication

Communication strategies used with deaf people

The respondents were asked how they would communicate with a deaf person.

Table 2.11 Methods used to communicate with deaf people

Communication strategies	% of sample
Speak with greater care/clarity	88%
Face them/look at them	70%
Point/use hands to express them	47%
Shout /talk loudly	21%

Several respondents indicated that they would use clear speech and good eye when talking to a

deaf person, and other respondents indicated that they would shout. Of the sample who would

shout, this was predominantly the older respondent.

A comparison between the community sample and Bunting's sample

There were differences between the Black hearing community and Bunting's sample on methods they

would use to communicate with deaf people.

Table 2.12 A comparison between the Bunting's study and the Community study on strategies used to communicate with deaf people.

Strategies used with deaf people	Community %	Bunting's sample %
Eye Contact	70%	40%
Clear Speech	88%	28%
Use of Hands	47%	30%
Shout/Raising voice	21%	50%

Table 2.12 illustrated that Black hearing people were more likely to use their hands and maintain

eye contact with a deaf person than the respondents in Bunting's sample. They were also more

likely to speak clearly and less likely to shout when communicating with a Deaf person.

Sign language awareness

" Deaf people can do anything like hearing people if given the chance. Everyone should learn sign language' (Black hearing woman 34yrs)

All of the respondents made positive comments about sign language. Sign language was

referred to as 'fascinating' and 'accessible'. 93% of respondents did not know any sign language;

Of the respondents who did 7% stated that they knew a few signs.

2.6 Society and Culture

" There should be more charities to help these people especially those who are profoundly deaf. Deaf people can be apart of the community if they have greater opportunity to relate to others. Hearing people need to learn sign language because deaf people need help and encouragement " (Black hearing male 66yrs)

Social activities amongst the deaf

The respondents were asked whether deaf people socialized to the same extent as hearing people. 57% of

respondents felt that deaf people were less able to enjoy the social activities available to hearing people.

Table 2.13 To what extent do deaf people socialize?

To what extent do deaf people socialize compared to hearing people?	% of sample
Same extent as hearing people	41%
Less than hearing people	57%
More than hearing people	2%

The respondents were then asked why they felt deaf people socialized less. Almost half of the

respondents felt that deaf people were socially isolated. This was considered to be the main

reason for deaf people socializing less than hearing people. Many of the older respondents

stated this:

" There is no one to take them out... hearing people don't want to keep on explaining things to them"
(Black hearing woman aged 66 yr.)

Table 2.14 Reasons for deaf people socializing less than hearing people

Reasons why deaf people socialized less	% of sample
Social isolation	45%
Difficulties with communication	35%
Negative attitudes from hearing people	19%
Lack of confidence	16%
Other reasons	10%
Lack of friends to go out with	10%
Poor Deaf awareness at events	6%
Lack of Interpreters	3%
Preference to be in the company of other deaf people	3%

Other reasons included the negative attitudes of hearing people towards deaf people:

" The treatment of deaf people is very bad...hearing people don't have any patience with them'. (Black hearing woman 66yrs)

This led some respondents to feel that deaf people felt inadequate in the presence of hearing

people:

" They are conscious of themselves- embarrassed about their hearing. Deaf people are more comfortable in a group of their own peers" (Black hearing man 53yrs)

However, 40% of respondents felt that deaf people could enjoy the same level of social

activities, as a hearing person and 2% believed that they had a better social life.

The respondents were then asked further questions about social opportunities for deaf people.

Many believed that there were specific groups and clubs for them. This is shown in table 2.15

Tables 2.15 Are there specific groups for deaf people?

Are there specific groups for deaf people?	% of sample
Yes, there are specific groups for the deaf	70%
Some,	15%
No, there are no specific groups for the deaf	15%

When the respondents were questioned if they could socialize with a deaf person nearly all

respondents (95%) believed that they could. The remaining 5% of respondents stated that they

could not. These respondents felt that their inability to communicate with a deaf person, would

make socialising difficult.

A comparison between the community sample and Bunting's study

Questions which explored the extent that deaf people socialized showed parallel results with Bunting's findings. Fifty nine percent of Black hearing people believed that deaf people socialized less than hearing people. This is comparable to 52% of Bunting's sample. Three respondents from both studies stated that deaf people socialized to the same as extent as hearing people. These respondents believed that there were no differences between a deaf person's and a hearing person's ability to socialize.

The respondents of both studies suggested a number of reasons why they felt deaf people socialized less. These included communication difficulties, feelings of social isolation and negative attitudes of hearing people. Some members of the Black sample indicated that poor deaf awareness amongst event organizers and their unwillingness to arrange interpreters affected deaf people's ability to socialize widely. They also believed that deaf people preferred the company of other deaf people and thus were less likely to go out socializing with hearing people.

Deaf Culture

" Deaf culture is about exchanging different ideas and information on what is happening in the deaf community"(Black hearing woman 36yrs)

The respondents were asked if deaf people had a different culture to hearing people. Just over half the respondents (54%) felt that they did and were asked to define this. The remaining 46% of respondents believed that deaf people did not have a Deaf culture.

Table 2.16 Definitions of Deaf Culture

Definitions of Deaf culture	Overall percentage value of total sample	% Defined by men	% Defined by women
Socializing with deaf people	44%	45%	50%
Deaf Community – norms and networks	26%	9%	33%
Sign Language	20%	27%	17 %
Deaf Schools	8%	9%	8%
Other	20%	9%	33%

Forty five percent of male respondents and 50% of female respondents felt that Deaf culture involved socializing with other deaf people. Amongst the female respondents a further 33% stated that deaf people have their own norms and standards of behaviour known within the Deaf community. A small number of both male and female respondents identified the role of deaf schools and British sign language as an important aspect of Deaf culture.

Black culture.

The respondents were then asked to define Black culture. This question aimed to assess whether they believed there were noticeable differences between Black and Deaf cultures.

Table 2.17a The respondents' definitions of Black culture

Aspects of Black culture	% of sample
1.Social Life: music dancing	63%
2.Black Food	41%
3.The Black community	25%
4.The Black Churches	21%
5.Black History	12%
6.Black led events/traditions	10%
7. Discipline nature within community	10%
8.Language spoken	8%
9.Technology orientation	6%

25 % of respondents identified themselves as Caribbean and having a Caribbean culture. These respondents felt that Black British people did not have a culture compared to the culture that they had grown up with in the Caribbean. They perceived Black British culture as weak and often promoted as white culture.

" White people have taken over Black culture so it is difficult to define what Black culture is" (Black hearing male 53yrs)

The respondents believed that socializing, African and Caribbean food and Black communities were the most prominent aspects of Black culture. When asked to consider if deaf people could access Black culture, most respondents believed that they could.

Table 2.17b How accessible is Black culture for deaf people?

Can Deaf people access Black culture?	% of sample
Yes	84%
Some aspects only	11%
No, they can't access Black culture	5%

Socializing within the Black community, Black music, and attending Black events such as Black theatre were perceived as difficult for deaf people to access.

Similarities between Black people and deaf people

Similarities between the Deaf and Black communities were identified in the questions which asked the respondents to consider some of the possible experiences faced by Black people and deaf people.

Table 2.18 Commonalties between the experiences of deaf and Black people.

Common experiences shared by Black people	% of sample	Common experiences shared by Deaf people	% of sample
Racial Discrimination	78%	Disability Discrimination	55%
Racial Stereotyping	7%	Communication Difficulties	57%
Poverty/hardship	6%	Isolation	39%
Lack of opportunities	31%	Unemployment	6%
Intimidation	7%	Teased	6%
Culture	13%	Shared experience of Deafness	11%
Other	7%	Other	8%

Table 2.18 showed that the respondents felt that both Black hearing people and deaf people faced discrimination. Racial discrimination was identified as the most common experience faced by Black people. Disability discrimination and communication difficulties were considered to be common experiences faced by deaf people. Table 2.18 highlighted that there were several similarities between the experiences of Black hearing and deaf people.

Although these experiences were described using different terms they had a similar impact on Black people and deaf people. For example some respondents felt that Black people faced poverty and hardship, a condition that can lead to social isolation. Whilst this may be different from the isolation faced by deaf people, the impact of this experience is often the same.

Double disadvantage amongst Black deaf people

The respondents were then asked if Black Deaf people face a double disadvantage compared to white disabled people and Black hearing people; Of the sample 82% of respondents believed that Black Deaf people were double disadvantaged and 18% felt that they were not.

Table 2.19 Reasons Black deaf people face a double disadvantage.

Reasons why Black deaf people are double disadvantaged	% of sample
Discrimination both racial and disability	77%
Minority status within a minority community	17%
Poor self perception/lack of confidence	9%
Black Deaf people face a double discrimination only in the Black community	5%
Other	5%

Of the sample 77% of the respondents felt that Black deaf people faced a double disadvantage because of racial and disability discrimination. They considered being Black and having a disability constituted a negative minority status. A further 17% of the respondents suggested that because deaf people were disabled they were marginalised both within the Black hearing community and wider society.

It is of interest that 5% of respondents believed that Black deaf people were only at a double disadvantage within the Black communities and not wider society. These respondents suggested that the needs of disabled people were often marginalised and oppressed in order to focus on the external collective identity of the Black community.

The remaining respondents (18%) felt that Black deaf people were not double disadvantaged, their responses are shown in table 2.20

Table 2.20 Why Black Deaf people are not at a double disadvantage

Why Black deaf people are not doubly disadvantage.	% of sample
Disability is universal and can inflict anyone	45%
People are sympathetic and would be helpful	33%
Other	22%

Some respondents felt that the universal nature of disability and the belief that anyone could lose their hearing meant that Black deaf people did not face a double disadvantage in society.

Some informants perceived that the public were sympathetic towards disabled people, and would not discriminate against them.

Poor self-esteem and confidence amongst Black deaf people

Self-fulfilling prophecies were also perceived to be partly responsible for the disadvantage position of Black deaf people. 9% of the respondents believed that Black deaf people lacked self-esteem and confidence. They believed that Black deaf people failed to seek support, which held them back from potential opportunities.

2.7 Deaf people in the labour market

" More attention should be paid to the needs of people without hearing. Hearing people need training in Deaf awareness by employers and employers should employ Deaf people to give them their independence" (Black hearing male 66yrs)

The respondents were asked if deaf people have different types of jobs from those who could hear.

Table 2. 21 Do deaf people have different jobs from hearing people?

Do deaf people have different jobs from hearing people?	% value of sample
Yes	51%
Some	25%
No	24%

The respondents were then asked to assess a list of jobs they felt Deaf people could be employed to do.

Table 2.22 Jobs deaf people can do

Can deaf people do these jobs?	% of sample
Postman	93%
Plumber	86%
Shop Assistant	75%
Driver	74%
Receptionist	63%
Medical Doctor	52%
Pilot	44%
Fireman	33%
Telephonist	30%

Table 2.21 showed that overall the respondents (76%) believed that deaf people have different types of jobs to hearing people. Despite the overall percentage scores for all jobs being high the jobs which required some degree of hearing such as telephonist achieved a lower percentage value. Other comparatively low scoring jobs were roles which required further training or jobs involving a high level of responsibility such as a Doctor, or Pilot.

Of the sample 63% of respondents considered deaf people's inability to hear as the main reason why deaf people could not do some of the jobs listed in table 2.22. Other reasons related to issues of health and safety and discrimination on the part of employers. Table 2.23 highlights the types of jobs that these respondents felt were most suited for deaf people.

Table 2.23 Specific types of jobs considered as suitable for deaf people

Jobs considered suitable for deaf people	% of sample
Any Job	58%
Office work	12%
Jobs with no contact with public	9%
Manual jobs	7%
Artistic creative jobs	5%
Other	9%

Fifty eight percent of respondents felt that any job would be suitable for a deaf person:

" Deafness is only a hiccup for deaf people because of society, but it doesn't affect their natural ability as a person' (Black hearing female 35yrs)

The results in table 2.23 seem to suggest that the respondents were aware that a deaf person's capability was often not matched by available opportunities. It showed that some respondents felt that the most suitable jobs for deaf people involved minimal contact or communication with hearing people.

A comparison between the community sample and Bunting's study

Buntings study showed that 41% of the public thought that deaf people had different jobs to hearing people. This study revealed that 51% of Black hearing people believed that deaf people had different jobs to hearing people a difference of 10%.

The respondents of both studies were asked to suggest suitable jobs for deaf people. In this study 58% of respondents stated that any job would be suitable, suggesting that they felt that Deaf people were capable of doing any job. In contrast, Bunting's sample of respondents suggested that more practical types of jobs would be suitable for the deaf.

Unemployment

The respondents were then asked whether they felt Black deaf people faced higher levels of unemployment than their Black hearing counterparts.

Table 2.24 Black deaf people are they more unemployed?

Are Black deaf people more unemployed than Black hearing people are?	% of sample
Yes, they do face more unemployment	61%
No, they are not more unemployed	39%

Sixty one percent of respondents believed that Black deaf people faced higher levels of unemployment than Black hearing people, but 39% felt that this was not the case. Several reasons were suggested.

Table 2.25 Unemployment levels amongst Black deaf people

Reasons for greater unemployment amongst Black deaf people	% of sample	Reasons for less unemployment amongst Black deaf people	% of sample
Disability Discrimination	62%	More Black hearing people than Deaf People	50%
Poor self esteem and confidence amongst Black deaf people	24%	Sign Language gives Deaf people access	36%
Black deaf people are a minority within the Black hearing community	5%	Conviction and determination is strong amongst those with disabilities	7%
Other	9%	Deafness is invisible	7%

The respondents felt that disability discrimination was the main reason for higher numbers of Black deaf people facing unemployment. The comments of some respondents echoed this:

" Not all employers have the patience to continue to explain things so employ hearing people" (Black hearing woman 72yrs)

" Employers may think that Deaf people are not as capable as hearing people" (Black hearing woman 28yrs)

" Black Deaf people are treated unfavorably" (Black hearing woman 66yrs)

The 24% of respondents who felt that Black deaf people had poor self-esteem and confidence believed that this affected their ability to apply for job opportunities:

"Black Deaf people are reluctant to put themselves forward for these opportunities because they feel they will be rejected." (Black hearing female 55yrs)

'Black Deaf people lack confidence and devalue themselves" (Black hearing female 71yrs)

The 5% of respondents who believed that Black deaf people would face greater levels of unemployment compared to their hearing counterparts based this upon their minority status within the Black community. They felt that this would affect their ability to network and gain information from other Black people.

The remaining 9% of the respondents identified reasons related to difficulties for deaf people gaining access to information within the Black hearing community.

Reasons Black deaf people are not more unemployed

Table 2.25 also showed that the respondents believed sign language could enable deaf people to access jobs. They perceived sign language as enabling deaf people to communicate. 36% of respondents felt that deaf people were not more unemployed than their Black hearing counterparts. The size of the Black deaf community was considered to be much smaller than the Black hearing community.

A few respondents felt that deaf people were stronger in mind than hearing people. They believed that deaf people had the determination to achieve their aims.

2.8 Parenting

" More provision should be available for deaf people. Black deaf people are invisible we don't see them so to me there is a problem linked to the parents of Black deaf children. Caribbean parents protect them without realizing it. In the Caribbean you have more direct contact with people with disabilities but over in England you don't. There appears to be a culture clash. When I was growing up in the Caribbean there was a boy who was disabled with his leg his nick name was 'peg leg' nobody excluded him or treated him any different he was just one of us over in England that doesn't happen" (Black hearing male 46yrs.)

Deaf and hearing parents

To examine the respondents' attitudes to the problems of raising a deaf child they were asked to

compare the levels of difficulties faced by deaf parents and hearing parents. Their responses are

shown in tables 2.26a and table 2.26b

Table 2.26a The levels of difficulties faced by deaf parents with hearing children

Extent of the problem	Deaf parents with hearing children
More than hearing parents	51%
Same as hearing parents	49%
Less than hearing parents	0 %

Table 2.26b The levels of difficulties faced by hearing parents with deaf children

Extent of the problem	Hearing parents with deaf children
More than deaf parents	57%
Same as deaf parents	43%
Less than deaf parents	0 %

Tables 2.26a and 2.26b showed that there was a marginal difference (6%) between the number of

respondents who felt that hearing parents had more difficulties compared to deaf parents.

However the respondents identified several difficulties they felt deaf parents faced.

Table 2.27 Problems facing deaf parents with hearing children

Problems faced by deaf parents with hearing children	% of sample
Disciplining children	58%
Respond to the needs of children in danger	32%
Parent- child forming a good relationship	19%
Access to advice services concerning their children i.e. educational services	19%

The most common difficulty identified by the respondents was disciplining children. Fifty eight percent of respondents believed that some deaf people would find disciplining their children difficult. Other concerns included responding to the needs of a child in danger i.e. crossing the roads or in a hazardous situation. The respondents considered a deaf parent's inability to hear children cry or communicate verbally to them in emergencies as a problem.

Nineteen percent of respondents felt that hearing children would have difficulties understanding their parents and deaf ways. They felt that this could affect their relationships.

A further 19% of respondents suggested that deaf parents would face difficulties gaining access to welfare services in order to support their children. Table 2.26b showed that the respondents believed that bringing up a deaf child was more difficult than being a deaf parent. The next table highlights some of the problems the respondents felt parents of deaf children faced.

Table 2.28 Problems facing parents of deaf children

Difficulties facing hearing parents with deaf children	% of sample
Communication difficulties	85%
Supporting deaf children into the Deaf world/coping with deafness	34%
Education- making the right choices	19%
Interactions with medical services	5%

Eighty five percent of respondents felt that communication would be difficult for hearing parents with deaf children. They felt that the child's inability to hear, and their parent's inability to communicate with them would lead to frequent misunderstandings.

Thirty four percent of respondents stated that parents would have difficulties coming to terms with having a deaf child. They believed that this would affect their ability to help them accept their deafness

The respondents perceived interacting with external agencies such as educational authorities and the medical profession to be difficult for parents. Nineteen percent of respondents felt that the parents of deaf children faced problems getting their child into the right school and ensuring they received appropriate educational support.

Five percent of respondents believed that parents of deaf children had more frequent contact with the medical profession, which they considered as stressful. Some respondents felt that this could affect their commitment to their deaf child:

" They get fed up after a while if they don't understand the child and this affects the child, patience is important and not many parents are " (Black hearing male 53yrs)

Another respondent indicated that parents of deaf children also had to deal with negative attitudes towards disability from other members of society:

"A deaf child has a handicap therefore they need more care and attendance. They could be exposed to hostile behavior so you have to think of special schooling. This doesn't fit into the framework of 'normal' society so there will be difficulties" (Black Hearing Male 60yrs)

2.9 Deafness as a disability

" I don't know a lot about deafness but it is not pleasant to not hear what is going on"(Black hearing male 72yrs)

How deafness rates as a disability

The respondents were asked to consider how deafness rated as a disability. They were given a choice of 4 different levels of severity to classify deafness: very severe, severe, moderate and mild.

Table 2.29 Deafness as a disability

How deafness rates as a handicap	% of sample
Very Severe	5%
Severe	19%
Moderate	37%
Mild	37%
Other	2%

Three quarters of respondents regarded deafness as a mild or moderate disability. Nineteen percent considered deafness as severe disability and 5% as very severe. Two percent of respondents stated that the severity of deafness was irrelevant. They believed that a person's inability to hear was a disability regardless of the severity.

Comparing deafness to other disabilities

The respondents were then asked to compare deafness with other disabilities. These were

ranked in order using 1 for the most severe disability and 6 for the least severe. Deafness was

compared with blindness, sickle cell anaemia, wheel chair use, mentally handicap, and multiple

sclerosis. These disabilities were perceived by the researcher as comparable in relation to the

disabling effect on the individual's life.

Table 2.30 Deafness compared to other disabilities

Severity of disability	Deaf % value	Blindness % value	Sickle cell Anaemia % value	Multiple Sclerosis % value	Wheel chair bound % value	Mentally handicap % value
1 Most severe	0%	32%	17%	21%	2%	28%
2	2%	17%	17%	29%	8%	27%
3	4%	8%	28%	28%	10%	22%
4	4%	16%	22%	22%	29%	8%
5	14%	27%	18%	18%	29%	8%
6. Least severe	78%	0%	4%	2%	16%	0%

Blindness was ranked as the most severe disability, then mental handicap and Multiple

Sclerosis. None of the respondents considered deafness as the most severe disability. It was

considered to be the least severe disability by more than half of the respondents (78%). This

ranking is consistent with the respondent's earlier categorization of deafness as a moderate to

mild disability.

Different types of deafness

The respondents were asked to rank four types of deafness in order of severity with the worst

type of deafness ranked at number 1 and the least at number 4. The categories of deafness

compared were born deaf, sudden deafness as an adult, partial deafness, and progressively deaf

over time. Table 2.31 illustrates how the respondents ranked these.

Table2.31 The worst types of deafness

Types of deafness	% of sample
Sudden deafness as an adult	88%
Progressively deaf over time	42%
Born deaf	37%
Partial deafness	0%

Many respondents felt that sudden deafness was the worse form of deafness. This was followed by progressive deafness. Partial deafness was considered to be the least severe deafness.

A comparison between the community sample and Bunting's study

Bunting's sample of the general public revealed that 35% described deafness as a severe disability. In contrast only 5% of Black hearing respondents considered deafness as a severe disability. This pattern was reflected in questions comparing deafness with other disabilities where it was consistently categorised as a mild condition.

By comparing the findings of both studies, some similarities were identified. Both rated sudden total deafness as the worst type of deafness and partial deafness as the least worse.

Is there a cure for deafness?

" I think that they should help deaf people find out how they lose their hearing and find a cure". (Black hearing woman 42yrs)

" Let's pray for them and ask the Lord Jesus Christ to heal them" (Black hearing male 34yrs)

The respondents were asked to consider if deafness could be cured. Table 2.32 illustrates that just fewer than half the respondents felt that there was a cure.

Table 2.32 Can deafness be cured?

Can deafness be cured?	% of sample
Yes there is a cure	42%
No , there isn't a cure	37%
Don't know	19%

Of the 42% of respondents who felt that there was a cure for deafness, the following responses were given:

Table 2.33 How deafness can be cured.

Cure for deafness	% of sample
Religion/ones faith	16%
Medical intervention	14%
Hearing aids	9%

2.10 Attitudinal surveys.

The respondents completed two attitudinal surveys. The first survey asked them to read a list of statements and circle a number, which was coded according to how true or false they believed that statement was.

Survey one

The first attitudinal survey sought to explore how the respondents felt about having contact with deaf people. The respondents were read fourteen statements and asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with them. Most of the statements were designed to measure the respondents' level of sympathy towards deafness. The statements were also designed to expose the respondent's feelings towards deaf people. The respondents who agreed with negative statements about deaf people appeared to perceive them as different from themselves. The respondents who disagreed with the negative statements about deaf people regarded them as similar to hearing people.

Table 2.34 and 2.35 provides a detailed picture of the respondents' attitudes to Deaf people based on the results of the attitudinal surveys.

Table 2.34 The female respondents' attitude to deaf people.

Age range of the female respondents	% of sample and nature of attitude
18-28	75% Mixed 25% Positive
29-38	80% Mixed 20% positive
39-48	100% Positive
49-58	80% Mixed 20% Positive
59-68	75% Positive 25% Negative
69-78	75% Negative 25% Positive

Table 2.34 shows that female respondents expressed mixed attitudes about contact and communication with deaf people. Females aged between 39-48yrs perceived deaf people as similar to them. However, women aged between 68-79yrs perceived deaf people as very different. Amongst the male respondents, there was a more noticeable mixed attitude to deafness and deaf people.

Table 2.35 The male respondents' attitude to deaf people

Age range of male respondents	% of sample and nature of attitudes
18-28yrs	80% Mixed 10% Positive 10% Negative
29-38yrs	80% Mixed 10% Positive 10% Negative
39-48yrs	80% Mixed 20% Positive
49-58yrs	50 % Positive 50% Negative
59-68yrs	80% Mixed 10% Positive 10% Negative
69-78yrs	80% Mixed 20% Negative

Table 2.35 showed that within each age range, Black-hearing males had mixed feelings towards deafness and deaf people.

Survey Two.

The second attitudinal survey comprised 20 statements, all of which described deaf people in a stereotypical and discriminatory way. The respondents were asked to assess how true or false they felt these statements were. Five categories of responses were available: certainly true, probably true, neither true or false, probably false, certainly false. These categories were used to measure whether the respondents felt that deaf people were like them or different to them.

This survey found that the majority of the female respondents believed that deaf people were very much like themselves. In each age category 80% of the respondents believed that deaf people were no different to hearing people. The male responses showed a more mixed attitude towards deaf people. Each male category comprised positive, negative, and ambivalent feelings towards deaf people and deafness.

Table 2.36 Female respondents' attitude to deafness

Age of female respondents	% of sample and nature of attitudes
18-28yrs	80% Positive 20% Negative
29-38yrs	80 % Positive 20% Negative
39-48yrs	80% Positive 20% Negative
49-58yrs	80% Positive 20% Negative
59-68yrs	80% Positive 20% Mixed
69-78yrs	50% Positive 50% Mixed

Table 2.37 Male respondents' attitude to deafness

Age of male respondents	% of sample and nature of attitudes
18-28yrs	80% Postive 20% Negative
29-38yrs	60% Positive 20% Negative 20% Mixed
39-48yrs	20% Negative 80% Positive
49-58yrs	50% Positive 25% Mixed 25% Negative
59-68yrs	60% Positive 40% Negative
69-78yrs	40% Positive 40% Negative 20% Mixed

2.11 Conclusions

The chapter showed that there were similarities between the responses of Black hearing people and the general public towards deafness and deaf people. These similarities were highlighted throughout this chapter. Some of the topics covered in the community study were not explored in Bunting's study. They include a comparative analysis of Deaf culture and Black culture; similarities between the experiences of Black and deaf people, and the experience of unemployment amongst Black deaf people. As part of this conclusion the next section will explore these issues.

Deaf culture and Black culture

Bunting's study did not explore Deaf culture or the Deaf community so a comparative analysis between the responses of Black hearing people and the general public cannot be made. Attitudes within the Black hearing community revealed that over half the respondents believed that deaf people had a culture. They identified deaf schools, the Deaf community and sign language as encompassing this.

When the Black respondents' defined Black culture several issues emerged relating to the respondents personal identities. Some respondents (particularly the older age groups) identified themselves as Caribbean as oppose to Black British. They considered Black British people as having a different culture compared to the culture they knew in the Caribbean. These respondents believed that Black culture had become difficult to define because of its' fusion with White European culture. Their comments suggested that a distinctive British Caribbean identity had been lost and replaced by a distinctively Black British identity.

The different perceptions amongst the respondents about Black culture could be generational. It could also reflect the weakening impact of Caribbean cultural values being passed on and experienced by Black people living in Britain. With the widespread break up of extended Black families and the proliferation of single parent households, the transmission of Caribbean culture is often incomplete or lost completely.

However, the respondents different perceptions of Black culture possibly also indicates the emergence and recognition particularly amongst the first and second generation of Black people, of a new culture and identity regarded as Black British. This new culture is a hybrid of aspects of Caribbean and British culture. Thus the culture defined by the respondents in this study was Black British culture.

Shared experiences of Black and deaf people

This study highlighted that the respondents believed that Black people shared similar experiences to disabled people. Table 2.18 provided a comparative analysis of the commonalties between Black and Deaf groups identified by the respondents. Different terms were used to describe their experiences but an analysis of their possible impact indicated that their outcomes would bee very similar.

Both groups were considered by the respondents as facing discrimination. Given the similarities between the experiences of Black people and those who are deaf, Eighty two percent of the

respondents felt that to be Black and deaf was a double jeopardy. They felt that Black deaf people faced discrimination both within the Black hearing community and wider society.

2.12 Summary

This study has shown that attitudes within the Black hearing community towards deaf people and deafness do not differ dramatically from Bunting's original sample of the general public. Differences do exist, but this seems to be in response to improved information in society. Bunting's study was conducted nearly 17 years ago.

Black hearing people appeared to be more Deaf aware, to the point of being able to define important aspects of Deaf culture. They also considered deafness as mild to moderate disability. Several respondents felt that deafness could be cured through medical intervention or spiritual healing.

The perception of deafness as a mild disability influenced the respondents' responses to other questions in the survey. Deaf people were perceived to be as capable as hearing people in areas of employment, social activities and parenting. Some of the perceived difficulties facing Deaf people highlighted many similarities to the minority position of Black people. As a result, several respondents felt that Black deaf people faced a double jeopardy, both within the Black hearing community and white society.

There are several important issues that have emerged from this community study. These will aid our understanding of the experiences of Black deaf people within the Black hearing community. During the course of the study these will be revisited.

The next chapter will explore issues relating to accessing the Black Deaf community. It examines the use of qualitative methods for interviewing Deaf informants and the practicalities of setting up and organizing meetings with Black Deaf people.

Chapter three: Accessing the Black Deaf community

3.0 Introduction

Chapter two provided an outline of the benefits and pitfalls in using qualitative and quantitative methods. In this chapter the process of undertaking qualitative work for this study is explored. By using qualitative methods to interview the informants, the researcher aimed to develop an understanding of their perspectives and experiences.

Black Deaf people are often absent from Deaf led initiatives. This has led to a lack of information and understanding of their social and cultural lives. Many of the written discourses on Black Deaf people often represented them as in need of 'special services' and thus only able to be understood in relation to those needs. To counteract much of the service needs based approach that has been adopted towards Black disabled people generally; Black Deaf people themselves were chosen as the main informants for this research. This was necessary to highlight the diversity of their experiences and to gain access to a wealth of details about their lives.

The chapter begins with an introduction to the aims of the qualitative study. It is then followed by information on the research participants and the methods used to recruit them. The practicalities of working with Deaf informants are then explored. This includes setting up and organizing interviews, working with sign language interpreters, using topic guides and video recording.

3.1 Research Aims

The aim of the qualitative study was to explore the life experiences and the identity development of 21 Black Deaf informants. Using in-depth interviews the informants' experiences within the family, education, employment and the wider Deaf community were examined.

3.2 Participants

Twenty-one Black Deaf people were interviewed. They were all of African or Afro-Caribbean origin. Most of the informants were born in Britain but a few came from Africa. They had spent part of their childhood in these countries before coming to England. In table 3.1 a brief overview of the informants' age, gender, method of communication, marital and employment statuses [9] are provided. A more in-depth profile is available in the appendix. This will help the reader to build a more detailed picture of the informants and their life experiences.

Table 3.0 Key for table 3.1

Main Methods of Communication
BSL- British Signed Language
OL- Oral methods of Communication

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[9] Pseudonyms have been used for the informants

Table 3.1 The informants' profiles

Code	Name	Age	Gender	Preferred communication	Marital Status	Work status
01	Janet	34yrs	Female	BSL	Married	Employed
02	Kathy	23yrs	Female	BSL	Single	Employed
03	Amy	32yrs	Female	BSL/OL	Single	Employed
04	Sarah	19yrs	Female	BSL	Single	Unemployed
05	Natalie	35yrs	Female	BSL	Single	Employed
06	Shamique	35yrs	Female	OL	Single	Employed
07	Derek	31yrs	Male	BSL	Engaged	Employed
08	Sandra	33yrs	Female	OL	Engaged	Employed
09	Judy	21yrs	Female	OL	Single	Student
10	Shola	21yrs	Female	BSL	Single	Student
11	Anne	27yrs	Female	BSL	Married	Unemployed
12	Maria	29yrs	Female	OL	Single	Unemployed
13	Francis	27yrs	Female	OL	Single	Unemployed
14	Samuel	32yrs	Male	OL	Single	Employed
15	Joshua	20yrs	Male	BSL	Single	Student
16	Jason	32yrs	Male	BSL	Single	Unemployed
17	Sharon	35yrs	Female	BSL	Single	Student
18	Matthew	31yrs	Male	BSL	Single	Unemployed
19	Nicky	32yrs	Female	BSL	Single	Unemployed
20	Roy	35yrs	Male	BSL	Married	Employed
21	Junior	30yrs	Male	BSL	Single	Employed

Statistical profile of the informants

Table 3.1 illustrated that the ratio of male and female informants was 8 males and 13 females.

The informants ages ranged from 18yrs to 35yrs, with the average age being 28yrs. Most of the

informants (fifteen out of twenty one) were single. The remaining five informants were married

or engaged to be married. Ten informants were employed; seven unemployed and four were

students.

An analysis of the sample

The informants in this study had a low age limit. This possibly reflects the lack of Black Deaf

people in Britain prior to the post war period. It also reflects Caribbean migration patterns of the

early 1950s. Many of the parents of these informants came to Britain as post-war migrants. They

were young 'able bodied' men and women often recruited to work in Britain's industrial sectors.

The absence of a large Black community prior to this period suggests the absence of a Black Deaf community. It is also suggested by historical accounts of Britain's Deaf community which makes no reference to Black Deaf people. (See Jackson 1990, British Deaf mute)

The Black Deaf informants in this study thus represent members of the first generation of Britains' Black Deaf community. They are faced with the challenge of creating their own community, and developing their own cultural values. This involves forging an identity, which recognizes their cultural distinctiveness, both within the context of the Black hearing community and the Deaf community.

3.3 Methodology

Qualitative research methods

The use of in-depth interviews as opposed to other forms of qualitative methods such as participant observation or written documents as a source of evidence seemed to be the most suitable research tool available.

The cultural context of the Black Deaf community and the researcher's need for additional communication support created access difficulties. As a group Black Deaf people were not easily identifiable. They had a small presence at Deaf clubs and activities across London which made it difficult for the researcher to make contact with them.

The impact of the researcher's identity

The researcher's identity of a Black hearing female, both facilitated and constrained the research process. Amongst the Black female informants the researcher's identity seemed to be an asset. She felt able to relax the informants and encourage them to discuss at length their personal challenges and experiences. The researcher's membership to the Black hearing community and knowledge of Deaf culture helped her to form cultural insights into the informants' experiences of interacting with Black hearing people.

The researcher felt that her gender constrained her ability to recruit Black Deaf male

participants. She was unable to enter their social arenas due to these being less defined and more

impermeable than their female counterparts. The researcher had no information on social places

frequented by Black Deaf men except for Deaf pubs. She felt uncomfortable approaching Black

Deaf males in this setting. This unease was partly based on her unfamiliarity with this group

and personal safety concerns. The researcher believed that a Black male researcher perhaps

would have been more successful in gaining access to Black Deaf men.

Finding informants: ' Snowballing'

' Snowballing' was the main method used to recruit the participants. This technique involved

selecting individuals who could recommend others as suitable informants. (Hessler; 1992) This

sampling technique[10] was chosen due to difficulties recruiting and identifying members of the

Black Deaf community.

The researcher began the fieldwork by making contact with two Black Deaf friends she had met

whilst volunteering for a local Deaf group. By explaining to them her interest and plans for

research on the Black Deaf community she was able to obtain the names and details of other

potential Black Deaf informants. These informants also provided names of individuals for the

study. This process continued until the desired sample size was achieved.

Gender issues using the snowball technique.

Snowball techniques and Black Deaf women

The snowballing technique was effective for recruiting Black female informants. This led to a

female-biased sample (13:8). Black Deaf women seemed more receptive and willing to take part

in the research. They also had a more accessible network. Black Deaf women were involved in

setting up groups aiming to empower other Black Deaf women; They participated in job clubs,

Deaf events and organizations. It would have been quite possible to interview greater numbers

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[10] A brief outline of the principles of sampling can be found in the appendix

of Black Deaf females, but this was declined in favour of achieving a more representative sample of the Black Deaf community. The researcher's focus of recruitment thus turned to Black Deaf male informants.

Snowballing techniques and Black Deaf men

Using snowballing techniques to recruit Black Deaf men achieved limited success. Despite the researcher renewing contact with each female informant and requesting information be passed to Black Deaf male friends or partners, only two Black Deaf men were recruited using this method. They were partners of two female participants.

Methods used to recruit Black Deaf male participants

To increase the number of male informants further steps were taken. The researcher increased her visits to the Deaf job club, and distributed posters to social services. Adverts were also placed on Channel four and BBC's teletext[11] services. The researcher also made contact with Black sign language interpreters for information on services or places with a large presence of Black Deaf males. Only one Black Deaf man was recruited by ' cold calling' methods e.g. without prior acquaintance or connection with the researcher or knowledge of the research. This informant was recruited at the Deaf job club. Other male informants were recruited by making contact with a mutual friend or acquaintance.

Black Deaf men as informants

Black Deaf men were visible at job centres but the researcher had difficulties recruiting them as informants. Some of these men were shy and others were suspicious of the researcher despite assurances of confidentiality. They would use a number of delaying tactics to avoid any involvement. One potential male informant remarked to the researcher that she would have difficulty recruiting Black Deaf men because they do not like to discuss their business. This proved to be accurate because despite the researcher achieving the target sample size of 10 male informants, the interview process was fraught with difficulties.

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[11] A television text service providing information to deaf and hearing viewers

Some of the difficulties the researcher experienced were similar to those encountered in the recruitment of Black hearing males for the community study. However, because the community study was targetted at members of the Black hearing community communication methods were not important. The size of the Black hearing community was also much larger than the Black Deaf community, which gave the researcher a much wider 'pool' of Black men to recruit from.

Unreliability of male informants

Many of the potential Black Deaf male informants failed to keep appointments for meetings, often after the second and third attempt of rescheduling. Due to the forgetfulness of some informants' and their inability to state that they were no longer interested in participating in the research, these meetings had to be abandoned.

Contact difficulties with male informants

Several informants could not be contacted via minicom[12]. This made it difficult for the researcher to alter appointment times or check if the informants were late or not able to attend. Four male informants failed to turn up for scheduled meetings. The difficulties in making contact with them resulted in wasted time and resources, as interpreters had been booked and journeys travelled. It was no longer viable for the fieldwork to continue due to constraints on time and resources. This led to a shortfall of the anticipated number of male informants for the study.

Unsuitable meeting places and interview methods

In addition to difficulties experienced in data collection some of the male informants wanted to conduct interviews in unsuitable locations such as pubs or at tube stations. This was impractical in terms of video recording and posed several personal safety issues for the researcher. One potential male informant wished to participate using a different methodology i.e. in a written

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[12] Textphone

format. Since this was inconsistent with the methodology used throughout the study this person was not used in the sample.

Before collecting primary data from the informants, information was gathered from other resources. This was achieved by attending Deaf youth clubs, pubs with a large Deaf presence, and several deaf run organizations. These visits provided background information on the social world of the Deaf community, and the professional bodies that exist to serve their needs and raise their concerns.

3.4 Setting up and organizing interviews

Finding a Black sign language interpreter

Before the researcher could organize any interviews with the informants two Black sign language interpreters were recruited. These interpreters (one male and one female) were chosen because they shared the same racial backgrounds and gender as the informants. The researcher aimed to reduce any potential communication barriers or inequalities based on these differences. Shared gender identities and racial identities were intended to facilitate a more open response from the informants; hence the male interpreter was recruited to interview all the male informants and the female all the women.

The researcher looked through the CADCP[13] register of sign language interpreters to find a Black interpreter. However, it was difficult for the researcher to assess their suitability for the study due to the limited information available. To overcome this problem the project supervisor and Black Deaf friends were approached for suitable contacts. They identified two Black interpreters both of whom worked within social services. These interpreters were fully employed and unavailable for extra work. They did however, provide the researcher with details of other Black interpreters. These interpreters were also committed in full time jobs.

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[13] Council for advancement for the communication with Deaf people

The difficulties the researcher faced finding a Black Interpreter were only overcome by a chance meeting with a trainee interpreter at an event for Deaf people. This interpreter expressed an interest in the project and was available and willing to interpret some of the interviews. The researcher and interpreter discussed the research aims, timetable, and preliminary dates and times for the interviews. Contact details were exchanged and communication later resumed. During this process the researcher received information from a friend concerning the availability of a Black male interpreter. He was also contacted and booked to interpret some of the interviews with the male informants.

Training Sign language interpreters

Before the interviewing process began both interpreters were given a guide to the types of questions that the informants could be asked. This was necessary to help the interpreters gain a clearer understanding of the research aims and the types of interview techniques to be used. It gave the interpreters an opportunity to seek further clarification on possible questions that were not easy to translate directly from Standard English to BSL.

The use of qualitative research methods aimed to facilitate a three-way conversation between the researcher, informant and interpreter. The interpreters were trained to encourage the informants to speak freely about their life experiences and perspectives.

Verifying the skills of Sign Language Interpreters.

Despite the researcher possessing signing skills the use of sign language interpreters was essential to the study. They possessed advanced sign language skills and demonstrated some familiarity with the Black variations of Sign Language. This enabled the researcher to concentrate on the content of the informants interpreted responses rather than the language, which at times were not 'pure' BSL, but a mixture of different variants of sign language.

The interviews were all videotaped and the Project Supervisor viewed six pilot studies. She informally assesses the Sign Language Interpreter's accuracy of interpretation from English to BSL and vice a versa.

Making contact with informants

All informants were contacted by minicom[14] and given a choice of dates and times to meet the researcher. These times were largely based around the sign language interpreter's availability, which was predominately at the weekend or in the evenings. When initial arrangements were made, the researcher sent written information to confirm dates and times of the meetings. All interviews except for one, (which was held in York) took place in London. These were usually in the informants' homes or in neutral meeting places such as Deaf clubs, local YMCA's or their place of work. Most Black Deaf informants lived in London.

3.5 The interview process

Video recording consent

Before the interviews commenced recorded consent was given by all of the informants to be videotaped. This was readily agreed with on the condition that the videotapes were confidential and would only be used for transcribing purposes. Whilst the recording may have affected some of the informants' ability to relax at the beginning of the session, within minutes of starting the conversation they soon ignored the camera.

Interview topics

The interview began by asking the informant to explain their current employment. This often led the researcher into a conversation on one of the subjects in the topic guide. The topic guide was a general list of possible questions that could be explored with the informants. It covered the family, education and training, employment, the Black community, and the Deaf community.[15] The topic guide was used to probe for information on the informants' perspectives, and experiences and any meanings attached to them. This required the researcher to be non-judgmental and to be able to communicate a sense of understanding and empathy.

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[14] Textphone

[15] The topic guide and excerpt from a transcript can be found in the appendix

Interview methods

All interviews were conducted in BSL and video recorded. The video recorder had a built in

microphone so that the questions and responses, which the interpreter translated from BSL to

spoken English, could be transcribed later. All interviews were transcribed following their

completion. Before the researcher could begin transcribing, each interview had to be transferred

from the recording tape onto a standard VHS videocassette. This took the length of each

interview (approximately 1 1/2 hours.) In total transferring all the interviews from one tape

format to another took 28 hours. This was necessary to enable the researcher to watch and

transcribe the interviews.

Transcribing

Transcribing the interviews was a lengthy process. It took approximately 12 weeks to complete.

Each interview took approximately two and a half days to transcribe. The researcher

experienced some difficulties transcribing. These were mainly due to the poor audio recording

of some interviews. These interviews had to be viewed repeatedly until the information was

accurately noted. When all the tapes were transcribed the transcripts were then typed up. This

took a further four weeks. Each transcript was approximately 6-7 pages long.

3.6 Sign language interpreters

Gender issues

As the research progressed the importance of the sign language interpreter increased. The

female interpreter developed a far greater involvement and understanding of the research than

the male interpreter. This was mainly due to the availability of Black Deaf female participants

compared to their male counterparts at the start of the project. The interpreter's consistent

involvement nurtured a clear understanding of the interview process. This was reflected in her

familiarity with the interview techniques required. The male interpreter became virtually

'redundant' because the female interpreter developed a greater familiarity, empathy and interest

in the research. Her rapport with the informants was evident in the content of the information they shared and their relaxed manner. It was for many informants the first time that they were able to share their experiences with hearing people. This was apparent by the frequent display of emotion in their language and their eagerness to discuss issues, which were important to them.

Benefits of using a sign language interpreter

The female sign language interpreter's involvement in the research extended beyond the role an interpreter. She became active in recruiting informants by disseminating information to Black Deaf people. In her spare time she worked as a voluntary youth worker which brought her into regular contact with young Black Deaf men. Her familiarity and friendships with this group paved the way for the researcher to recruit them as research participants. She was able to demystify the informants' fears and suspicions about the research and assess whether they would be suitable participants.

Disadvantages of sign interpreted interviewing

The three-way communication between the interpreter, informants and researcher was not always effective. This occurred for example, when a partially deaf informant could understand the researcher without the aid of an interpreter. This led the sign language interpreter to stop interpreting because he felt that the informant's speech was audible. This created difficulties for the researcher who could not fully understand the informant throughout the interview. It interrupted the flow of communication, which limited her understanding of their responses.

It thus became necessary for sign language interpretation to be resumed. This was of concern since there was a possibility of making the informant uncomfortable. In spite of the interview being videotaped repeated viewing did not solve the difficulty of poor voice quality.

3.7 Summary

This chapter provided an account of the aims of the qualitative part of the study and the methods used to recruit Black Deaf informants. The researcher used snowballing and informal networks. The effectiveness of these methods varied amongst both men and women. Black Deaf men were identified by the researcher as more difficult to recruit than their female counterparts. They were suspicious and shy of participating in research. Black Deaf women on the other hand were open to sharing their experiences and aspirations.

Black interpreters were also difficult to find. None of the formal processes set up for finding an interpreter were helpful. Black interpreters were found through informal networks. They were often fully employed and not always available for freelance work.

The researcher identified both strengths and weaknesses in using sign language interpreters in the study. On a positive level they enabled the informants to communicate their feelings and experiences in a relaxed and non-threatening environment. They also helped the researcher recruit members of the Black Deaf community. On a negative level, the researcher felt reliant on the interpreter because of her inability to conduct interviews without their communication support.

In the next chapters the findings of the qualitative study will be examined. Each chapter is divided into specific topic areas, family experiences, education, employment, the Deaf community, the Black Deaf community and identity choices amongst Black Deaf people.

The first chapter explores the informants' experiences within the family. It examines their perception of relationships with parents and siblings, and the use of communication at home. From the informants' perspective the chapter identifies a range of different attitudes to deafness within Black families and the impact this had upon their personal identity development

Chapter four: Family values

4.0 Introduction

The last chapter provided an introduction for the qualitative study, which explores the experiences of Black Deaf people. It outlined the methods used to recruit Black Deaf participants, and the methodology used in conducting each interview. This chapter explores some of the interview findings regarding the informants' family life. It begins by looking at the changing nature of the family considering the role of Black families both as socializing agent and transmitter of cultural heritages and values.

The informants' perspectives on their families attitudes towards deafness are also examined. Some informants felt that their families had accepted their deafness through knowledge of the Deaf community and Deaf culture. However, other informants described feeling rejected because they felt that their parents had tried to make them hearing.

Communication was central to the informants' relationships with family members. Family attitudes to deafness were often reflected in their communication processes. Where the informants felt rejected at home, they described having difficulties communicating with parents. Where there was acceptance, positive attempts were made by family members to communicate. Most informants believed that their families wanted them to speak, placing great emphasis on them to learn lip-reading skills.

The informants considered siblings as the most communicative members of the family unit. They often acted as go-betweens for them and their parents. Communication difficulties and breakdowns were common at home. For this reason, several informants felt isolated within their families. Their inability to access incidental information or family conversations prevented them

from learning about their cultural heritage or the experiences of other Black people. They felt

that deafness excluded them from the shared experiences of family life.

4.1 Family structures and influences

In our changing times there is no single model of the family. Whilst the nuclear family still exists

it has been joined by single parent families, gay partnerships and a growing number of people

who never marry. These changes in family structures often mean changes in the way in which

cultural heritages are transmitted and the development of attitudes towards ethnicity and one's

ethnic group. (Modood et al 1994:16) To understand the nature of the informants' families, this

brief section will provide a thumbnail sketch of some of the influences affecting family units.

Black families and the state

All families are affected by societal change. They are also influenced by family patterns,

attitudes and expectations which have been transmitted across generations (Carter and

McGolderick ;1980) As outlined in chapter one the immigration of Black people to Britain was

met with a laissez faire government response. No attempts were made to provide housing or

support for their welfare needs. Fears that Black immigrants would scrounge off the welfare

state was common both amongst the indigenous white population and government politicians.

It was reflected in the welfare legislation of the 1920s, 30s and 1940's, which was structured to

exclude 'aliens' and newly arrived Commonwealth immigrants.

Many of the social policies before and after the war encouraged benefit agencies to identify the

nationality of claimants so as to exclude immigrants from education, unemployment and health

service support. The welfare state already operated restrictions towards Jewish and Irish

communities and married women. Even before the Windrush of the 1940's, nationalism, racism,

immigration and internal controls were already intrinsic to the Welfare state (Williams; 1989).

These social policies had a profound affect on Black immigrants and their families. The exclusion of Black people from council housing due to strict residency and allocation procedures forced many families to live in poor and declining working class areas. These offered virtually un-inhabitable accommodation. Some theorists argue that the low socio- economic position of Black immigrants and their difficult social circumstances constituted them as an underclass. Unlike their white working class counterparts Black people were not incorporated into the state or granted any rights within the work place. (Rex; 1983) Dspite being a critical source of labour for the NHS and other public sectors they received no government support or assistance. They were forced to cope with difficult social and economic conditions as well hostility from the host country.

Black feminists have critiqued the role of the state on the lives of Black women and their families. They have highlighted how the state idolized motherhood and housework, evident in the reforms aiming to improve the welfare of children and promote domesticity, and the positive values attributed to white women in relation to this. They have argued that this idolisation has not been extended to Black women:
' Sometimes racism reconstitutes the situation to such an extent that to be a Black mother is not simply negative (Black) plus positive (mother) but it is doubly negative (the reproduction of more Blacks)." (Williams 1989:69)

The state's efforts to uphold the ideology of the family and the role of women as mothers, was compromised by the recognition that some industrial sectors required women as cheap labour. Although part time work enabled some women to balance the demands of the family and their financial needs, Carby (1982) has argued that this was at the expense of Black female migrants. Black women filled the role of cheap surplus labour helping to lower the cost of welfare provision, and enabling white women to fulfill their role as mothers. Their recruitment into the NHS was a cheap government option, because as British subjects, the government was not obliged to make specific provisions for them or their children.

Several legislative acts had an impact on Black immigrants and their families. These placed additional strain on family life. They included the Child Benefit Act, which withdrew financial support for children based abroad but whose parents worked in Britain. The incorporation within the 1971 Commonwealth immigration act of a sole responsibility clause, also restricted Black immigrant workers from bringing their children to Britain.

Thus Black female immigrants and their families were not perceived by the state in the same way as White women and their families. No attempts were made to preserve or protect Black families in Britain. Black women were recruited to work un-social hours in low paid, low status jobs regardless of the impact that this would have on the family unit. (Carby; 1982) This has led to Black families being pathologised by the state (Lawrence; 1982) exemplified in the practices of welfare agencies such as social services, teaching and health. This pathology based on the notion that Black families were primitive with oppressive kinship networks, perceived white nuclear families as more civilized and progressive (Carby; 1982) The cultural characteristics of Black families were thus blamed for their problems of poverty, poor housing, education and inadequate provision to health care.

The critiques of Black feminists highlighted that Black women and their families, had different experiences of the welfare state than white women. This difference was structured through patriarchy, imperialism and capitalism and reinforced by state institutions, structures and ideologies. It highlighted how the state reinforced both racial and gender oppression. On the one hand the welfare state, as employers, placed Black women in a subordinate role based on the racial division of labour. Yet on the other hand as a provider of welfare, it reproduced the ideology of Black women as inferior mothers due to the structures of Black families and the position of Black women as workers. (Williams 1989)

Black families were thus subject to constraints and exclusions by the state as well as the every day stresses of family life. Many Black families lost their extended family and support networks when they migrated to Britain. This had a devastating affect on Black family life. It led to work and educational contexts replacing the family as the main place for socializing and friendship. (Moodod et al 1994).This is reflected in the high numbers of Black families (40%) who operate as single parent units or lone adult households, compared to the national average of 16%.

The role of the family

The changing nature of the family, and the different influences on the family unit are useful in understanding the family and its dynamics. The family unit is where individuals first develop a sense of self and others based on their primary relationships with family members. As a transmitter of culture, it influences the attitudes of family members about their ethnicity and relationships with others outside their ethnic group. Black feminist theorists have argued that for Black people, the family often acts as a site of resistance against racist oppression and other contemporary struggles. (Carby; 1982; Moraga and Anzadua; 1981)

Most families evolve in line with the family life cycle, which is characterized by marriage, the birth of children, retirement and old age (Dallos 1995). Other stresses such as economic hardship, coping with a disabled family member, marital conflict, separation, and the experience of racism and racial discrimination also assert an influence. These have an effect on all family members. Thus it is appropriate for Lutherman (1987) to state that " *When a deaf child is diagnosed in the family, to some extent everyone is 'deaf'*

The family is where deaf children have their first experiences of love, rejection, fear and oppression. (Corker 1996) It is within the context of the family that the informants would be expected to developed a sense of their 'racial' and cultural identity. This chapter seeks to explore how true this was by examining the informants' perspectives of the family, and their

relationships with family members. It will also seek to identify the different types of family attitudes towards deafness and the impact this had on the informants' feelings about being Deaf.

Family profiles

The informants involved in the study had diverse family backgrounds. These included the traditional nuclear two parent household, single parent families, foster care families and families where relatives such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents, acted as surrogate mothers and fathers. All but one of the informants, who had been placed in foster care, were raised in Black families. Seventeen informants had older or younger siblings, and the remaining four informants were the only children in their families.

The main form of communication used within the family was spoken English. Some of the parents who could sign only had a limited knowledge of sign language[16]. In several families a combination of different communication methods were used. This was primarily based around lip-reading, writing notes, body language and gestures. Table 4.1 outlines the informants childhood family unit. Minor details have been changed to preserve the informants' anonymity but these do not affect the categorization.

Table 4.0 Key for table 4.1

Communication methods	Family status	Level of hearing Loss	Gender	Siblings
BSL- British Sign Language	HA- Hearing Parents	Profound- Profoundly Deaf	M- Male	HS- Hearing Siblings
SSE- Sign Supported English[17]	SHA-Single Hearing Parent	Partial- Partially Deaf	F- Female	DS- Deaf Siblings
SE- Spoken English	FC- Foster Care	Severe- Severe Deafness		OC-Only Child
SA- Spoken African				
WE- Written English				
MMC-Mixed methods of communication				

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[16] A visual gestural language with its own grammar and lexicon.

[17] Signed Supported English uses the English language and British Sign Language

Table 4.1 The informants' family profile

Informants Name	Age	Gender	Level of hearing loss	Communication methods	Nature of family unit	Siblings
1. Janet	34	F	Profound	MMC=BSL/SE	HA	2HS
2. Kathy	23	F	Profound	BSL	HA	2HS
3. Amy	32	F	Partial	MMC=SSE/SE	HA	2HS
4. Sarah	19	F	Profound	BSL	HA	6HS
5.Shamique	35	F	Profound	MMC=SSE/SE	HA	2HS
6 Natalie	35	F	Profound	BSL	SHA	2HS
7 Derek	31	M	Profound	BSL	HA	2HS
8 Sandra	33	F	Partial	MMC=SE/BSL	HA	1HS
9 Judy	21	F	Profound	BSL	SHA	OC
10 Shola	21	F	Profound	MMC=SA/BSL	SHA	OC
11 Anne	27	F	Profound	BSL	HA	1HS
12 Marie	29	F	Profound	BSL	SHA	1HS
13 Francis	27	F	Profound	SE	HA	1DS
14 Samuel	32	M	Profound	SE	HA	2HS
15 Joshua	20	M	Profound	MMC=SA/BSL	HA	2HS
16 Jason	32	M	Profound	MMC=SE/BSL	FC	OC
17Sharon	35	F	Profound	BSL	SHA	OC
18 Matthew	37	M	Profound	BSL	HA	3HS
19 Nicky	32	F	Profound	BSL	HA	1DS
20 Roy	35	M	Profound	SSE	SHA	2HS
21 Junior	30	M	Profound	BSL	HA	2HS

4.2 Family circumstances

In addition to coping with a deaf child, the families in this study had additional stresses in their lives common to Black families. These were outlined at the beginning of the chapter. They included difficult socio- economic conditions, poor housing, exclusions from government support, and hostility from the indigenous white population. These influences all affected the informants' experience of family life, and the type of relationship that they formed. The absence of their parents due to these circumstances, made some informants feel that they had grown up alone.

Other informants who had limited contact with one or both parents, atributed this to a breakdown in their parents relationships before they were born or during the early part of their childhoods.

4.3 Family attitudes to deafness

Families who are diagnosed with a disabled child experience a number of mixed emotions. These include feelings of devastation and confusion as they try to come to terms with their child's disability. Most parents go through a 'grieving process'. Its self-absorbing nature has the effect of disturbing the bonding process between parents and child. For some parents this leads to an acceptance of their disabled child, and for others rejection. (Harris 1982; Calderon & Greenberg in Marschmarck; 1997)

Because coming to terms with having a deaf child has no time frame or set path, parents often fluctuate between different emotions at different times. These feelings often led to alterations in their expectations and levels of attachment. To achieve healthy parental relationships, parents must resolve any feelings of uncertainty and develop a nurturing environment sensitive to their child's needs. (Lutherman 1987; Shlesinger, H, & Meadow K, 1972) Several informants' felt that this was difficult for their parents. The next section will describe how they felt their parents coped with having a deaf child.

Coping with deafness

The informants reported varying approaches by their parents to coping with the diagnosis of a deaf child. The parents who had difficulties accepting deafness were described as having feelings of anger, resentment, denial and guilt. The informants' felt that their parents failed to recognise their differences and encouraged them to mix with hearing children. They viewed this negatively because they felt unable to live up to their parent's expectations. Some believed that their parents were trying to impose oralism[18] and thus didn't fully accept their use of sign communication. This is suggested by Amy's experience:

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[18] The use of speech to communicate

Amy was often asked by her mother to remove her hearing aids. Her mother was embarrassed about the visible signs of her deafness. Amy felt angry about her mother's attitude. She felt that this did not instill her with any confidence in being Deaf. It led Amy to defy her mother's wishes and affirm her Deaf identity:

" I remember she said take them off (Hearing aids) but I ignored her and carried on wearing it and showing people that I was Deaf. She didn't like that at all" (Amy, partially deaf)

Searching for a cure

Some informants felt that their families adopted a religious and spiritual approach to deafness.

In these cases deafness was perceived to be curable. The following two case studies will

illustrate this:

Samuel became deaf through meningitis at the age of 12. His parents sent him to Britain from Africa. They believed that England had the best doctors in the world and could cure him of deafness. Although the top consultants in the field of audiology treated Samuel, he still remained profoundly deaf. His failure to become hearing resulted in his father sending him back to Africa to be seen by native doctors who also could not cure him.

These failed attempts to cure Samuel influenced his parent's decision to leave him in Britain. For Samuel this separation from family and friends was a painful experience.

However, as Samuel became older, he realised that his parents believed that they had made the right decision for him. His family believed that as a deaf boy he stood a better chance of achieving a good education in England than in Africa.

For other informants, their parent's attempt to find a cure for their deafness took a more

spiritual and religious approach. The informants described being strongly encouraged by their

parents to go to church. Journeys would also be arranged for them to visit renowned spiritual

healers:

Junior encouraged by his mother to seek spiritual healing for his deafness went to the Royal Albert Hall to visit a renowned spiritualist healer and preacher. Junior believed that he was given the power to hear, if somewhat temporarily. His skepticism and feelings of inadequacy about the experience are clear in his narrative:

" My mum stood up. I was so embarrassed. I was saying to my mum 'don't mum' the preacher was saying 'come down, come down to the front". My heart was beating. I can't believe this. I explained to him that I was Deaf and everyone was looking at me. I closed my eyes and for two or three minutes he touched me and I just fell over. Then there was all this noise and I said to myself, what is that noise? I walked down stairs and there was this man standing behind me and he was calling out my name. He would say 'one' and I would repeat that, and then '12' and I repeated that. The audience just cheered. I heard something, but now I am not sure what happened. I believe in God but there is no proof that Deaf people can become hearing."(Junior, profoundly deaf)

Several informants described feeling skeptical of spiritual healing. They perceived their parents'

actions as a manifestation of their sense of failure and guilt for having a deaf child.

Protection and restriction

From the perspective of a few informants, their families were over anxious and over protective

towards them. They believed their parents made decisions to satisfy their own anxieties with

little consideration of their wishes. A few informants felt that this blocked their ability to

develop confidence in being Deaf. This is suggested in Janet's experience:

> Janet was sent to a mainstream school near her home. She believed her parent's decision to send her to a local school was based on their fears and anxieties for her, and a lack of understanding of special schools. According to Janet, special schools were described by her parents as being 'too expensive'.
>
> Janet felt angry that her parents did not send her to a Deaf school where she believed she would have achieved more. In retrospect she felt that her parents' protectiveness and lack of knowledge of deaf education had been detrimental to her educational development. She felt that their inability to 'let go' inhibited her from developing a healthy Deaf identity. Janet thus attributed her difficult childhood to the misguided actions of her parents.
>
> From Janet's perspective her parent's attitude towards her schooling suggested that they did not understand the British concept of special schooling and its role within the educational system. Janet's experience reveals the hidden stress on the family to become 'special parents' with the responsibility for a special needs child. (Lutherman 1987: 42) Janet believed that her parents were in denial. They were not able to face what was expected of them. Their attitude to her school placement suggests that they tried to maintain their previous model of family life by constructing a myth of normality. This meant ignoring Janet's special educational needs. (Poller, Wikler 1985)

Abandonment and Rejection

Other informants described experiencing a traumatic childhood. They felt rejected and

abandoned by one or both parents when they became deaf. Their later attempts to form

relationships with estranged parents proved difficult and unsuccessful, as Shola's account

indicates:

Shola, a 21-year-old profoundly deaf woman was raised in Africa by her aunt. She became deaf when forks were placed in her ears at a young age. She had limited contact with her birth mother until fairly recently when she immigrated to England. Shola's formative years were very difficult. She described experiencing a very oppressive educational environment, where she was subjected to physical and emotional trauma:

" *The food wasn't clean. We had the same food every day. It was very depressing. They would beat you if your hair wasn't tidy. You had to keep you hair short. It was cruel there it was a very emotional experience. You couldn't ask the teachers for anything they would pull your ears".*

Shola eventually came to England to be reunited with her mother. She later felt that this was a mistake, because of the ill treatment she received. Shola described being exploited, over worked and treated like a house servant. Her mother made no attempts to build a relationship with her. This led to violent conflicts, and Shola moving into a hostel:

" *My mother would just relax she wouldn't share the work. I had to do all the cleaning everyday. Every Saturday I would cook and clean, when I hurt my back it was my problem, I had to go to the hospital myself. She never really wanted me. She just wanted me to suffer"*

Shola was not the only informant who described facing difficulties at home. Sharon, another profoundly deaf woman also felt exploited. She was asked to work around the home whilst her cousin of the same age did nothing:

"When I reached 15 I still wasn't allowed to stay up like my cousin. I had to go to bed so they treating me differently. They also asked me to do things around the house but they never asked my cousin to do anything. I was Deaf so I had to do everything for them"(Sharon, profoundly deaf)

Poor communication at home simply reinforced some of the informant's feeling of rejection from one or both parents. They noticed that their parent's methods of discipline and the freedom granted to other siblings was often very different from the way that they were treated.

Research has shown that there are differences between discipline methods used by parents with hearing children and those with deaf children. Hearing youngsters are often verbally warned when they do something wrong. For Deaf children the immediate reaction of a parent is to physically apprehend them as a means of restriction. This may seem unacceptable and unfair to the deaf child but may simply be their parent's way of 'getting through' to them.(Galloway 1994) Regardless, it does little to raise their self-confidence or self esteem, particularly if they already feel different to other members of the family.

Acceptance and awareness

Some informants believed that their parents and family members fully accepted their deafness. They demonstrated a willingness to learn about Deaf people and Deaf culture. The informants' believed that Deaf television programmes, and their parents' interaction with external agencies such as social services and Deaf projects, had helped them to become more Deaf aware.

Other informants who described having positive relationships with families were unable to clearly define what made these relationships good. Positive relationships often referred to a sense of empathy with family members rather than definitive actions. They attributed this too the high regard in which their parents held them. This suggests the need to take into consideration atmosphere and feeling responses despite the lack of explicit language to describe what is conveyed. (Corker 1996: 80)

4.4 Sibling attitudes to deafness

The informants believed that their relationships with siblings were amongst the strongest in the family. Most informants described having strong and affectionate bonds with siblings. The sibling subsystem was very important for them. It was where they learnt to develop relationships with parents and peers, resolve conflicts, and be sensitive to the needs of others. (Marschark 1997; Lutherman, 1987). A group of informants' felt that their siblings were a source of strength. They would act as confidants and 'go betweens' for them and their parents during times of difficulty and communication breakdowns.

Most of the time the informants' felt that their siblings were sensitive to their needs and would adjust their behaviour to protect them. Such sensitivity to potential prejudice has been considered to be a positive aspect of sibling behaviour towards disabled family members (Grossman 1972).

However, a few informants felt that the positive attitudes of some siblings were situational. Their siblings would often display ambivalent feelings towards them in the presence of peers.

From the perspective of one informant, Natalie, sibling relationships were difficult. She

attributed this to the negative attitudes of her mother:

Natalie described having a difficult relationship with her sister. She felt rejected and humiliated by her. Natalie blamed her mother's negative attitude for her sister's bad behaviour. Natalie's sister would jeer and tease her behind her back in front of her friends.
 Natalie felt that her mother's rejection had an impact on her sister's attitude and acceptance of her:
 " They would see my sister shouting at me behind my back. Sometimes my sister and her friends would be talking and I would ask her what they are talking about, but they wouldn't try to communicate with me. They would just stare back' (Natalie, profoundly deaf)

4.5 Communication in the family

For hearing parents with deaf children their child's inability to hear may be equated with an

inability to understand what is happening around them. This sometimes leads in the initial

stages of their child's development to parents making little or no attempts at effective

communication, and relying on gestures and single words to convey messages. Whilst this mode

of communication may appear adequate to them, as their deaf child ages it becomes unsuitable,

because it hinders their language development. (Schlesinger et al; 1972, Greenberg & Calderon

1984)

Communication with parents

The use of oral methods of communication amongst the informants and families varied

depending on their families' attitudes towards deafness. Family members who had accepted the

informants' deafness sought to understand them and their needs. They tried to develop positive

communication by adapting their communication methods. They became more patient, used

clearer speech and maintained steady eye contact. These measures enabled some informants to

feel able to participate and enjoy family life.

However, almost all informants described having difficulties communicating with members of

their families. These informants felt that only a few would alter their methods of

communication. One-word answers were frequent, particularly amongst some fathers.

According to Gregory (1995c: 16) this behaviour is not unusual but a common experience amongst fathers and young deaf people.

In some cases a few informants felt that there was no communication at home. They were very reliant upon the visual clues of family members e.g. body language and facial expressions to understand their moods, feelings and attitudes.

Some of the informants were made to feel that they were responsible for the communication difficulties they experienced. They described how their parents went to great lengths for them to learn how to speak. This often involved them being tutored by private speech and language therapists. The narrative of one informant, Kathy, highlights the pressure she felt to succeed:

" I was fed up wearing those headphones. I hated it. They tried to teach me how to say 'S', 'E', it was all different. I had to be patient to satisfy my parents. My parents were praying that I would be able to speak and that my speech would improve but it can't. I wish they had left me alone and given me sign language first, maybe my speech would have improved, but they made me oral first" (Kathy, profoundly deaf)

Siblings and communication

The positive attitudes amongst some siblings described by the informants were reflected in their methods of communication. Nearly all siblings had basic signing skills or showed a willingness to learn. This helped them to develop a close relationship with the informants.

However, some informants felt that they had missed out on the fun of having a younger sibling, because they had no understanding of deafness and were difficult to lip-read:

" I missed my little sister talking, when I became deaf. It is very difficult to lip-read small children when they are talking so quickly and are so excited."(Samuel, profoundly deaf)

A commonly expressed view amongst some informants was that the immaturity and thoughtlessness of siblings were the main cause of communication difficulties between them. These siblings would sometimes call the informants 'nosy' or ignore them failing to understand their feelings of isolation. A few informants indicated that their parents' attitudes were the cause:

" My mother used to talk about me behind my back with my sister that wasn't fair. They never used to tell me anything. I wasn't happy about that. I wasn't happy within myself. I wanted my mum to tell me what was going on but she wouldn't tell me. She would tell my sister the story about how I became deaf."(Natalie, profoundly deaf)

Communication with the wider family circle

Several informants felt that communication was difficult at home because of the poor communication skills of family members. This problem was particularly acute amongst relatives who spoke with strong Caribbean accents and had little understanding of deafness. The informants described them as speaking too fast, having unclear lip patterns and little eye contact. Social gatherings such as Christmas, weddings or family journeys abroad were times when the informants felt particularly isolated:

" I went to visit Jamaica with my family. I was bored my parents just talked. It was just like a waste of time, a waste of a holiday. I was there for a month. I just sat there because I was Deaf and everyone was just talking around me"(Janet, profoundly deaf)

A few informants felt that practical barriers prevented effective communication in their homes. These informants came from large families, and at mealtimes and special gatherings, family members would often talk simultaneously making it difficult for them to follow. Other family members were too young to understand the informants' communication needs.

Sarah, the eldest child of a family of 6 children, had difficulties communicating with her younger brothers and sisters. Not only did they frequently talk at the same time, but conversations centered on TV programmes or what was for dinner. Sarah felt that she had limited opportunities to get to know them.

A group of informants believed that their families were uncommunicative. Communication breakdowns were common. In some of these situations the informants used interpreters and social workers to resolve these difficulties. Other informants chose not to improve their communication with their parents. They believed that their parents were already overburdened with work pressures. These informants chose not to bother them with their concerns. They felt that their friendships with other Deaf people gave them the support, and self assurance they needed.

Impact of poor communication

Several informants' believed that being deaf blocked their ability to communicate with family members to such an extent, that their socialization occurred mainly in the school environment, under the influence of peers and teachers. For other informants not being able to communicate with family members exacerbated existing difficulties at home. These were characterised by childhood abandonment, separation and open rejection.

4.6 Racial identity development in the family

The informants had very few opportunities of learning about their cultural heritage. Many of their parents worked long and un social hours and didn't have time to communicate with them. At family gatherings they often felt excluded from the sharing of family experiences and history. They were often told that this information would be shared with them later, but it never was:

" They would talk to each other. I had come all this way to see them and I would just sit there. I'd get so frustrated it was so boring there was no communication. I would ask what they were talking about and they would just say one word in reply when they had been talking for hours". (Sharon, profoundly deaf)

Other informants felt that their families' attitudes to deafness made it difficult for them to learn about their family's history or cultural background. Some informants felt immersed in a home culture that they could not understand but were eager to learn more about. Similar sentiments have been echoed in the narrative of Joseph in Corker's <u>Deaf Transitions (1996)</u>

" Joseph felt that he was prevented from forming a Black identity both by the lack of accessible information and the fact that Blackness is not something which is talked about it just is: ' I felt cut off from the kind of information that hearing children picked up about Black culture and other cultures and from' hearing' information generally...It was like living in a very primitive age. I felt denied of this information and it stopped me from understanding everything I needed to know about myself and my roots. It prevented me from forming a Black identity because I didn't have the information I could explore it with"(Corker (1996: 82)

Only some informants (particularly those who were partially deaf or post-lingually deaf) felt able to access information about their cultural heritage. They described participating in hearing activities and social events.

Thus the informants' families played an important role in shaping their feelings about being deaf. Those who had positive attitudes to deafness, and good communication tried to include them in every aspect of family life. Other families, who had difficulties coming to terms with having a deaf child, often excluded them from shared family experiences and made little attempts to communicate.

Both these experiences forced the informants to confront issues of identity early in their childhoods. An awareness of being deaf was the first identity that they all formed based on these interactions and attitudes. This was part of their socialization, which set the scene for their later experiences with other hearing people.

4.7 Conclusion

The impact of the family on identity formation

In <u>Childhood and Society</u> (Erikson 1968) Erikson developed a model of personal identity development based on 8 different stages in the life cycle. During the childhood years each child develops a sense of self by establishing a sense of security and trust through their attachment with the Mother. From this initial attachment the individual moves through successive stages of the identity development cycle.

Attachment behaviours between the child and their primary caregiver serve to indicate the type of bond formed. This is determined by the child's ability to express their needs and their primary giver's sensitivity to those needs. If these skills are absent from either caregiver or child, the bond will be weak or absent. If these skills are present an affective bond will occur. (Corker, 1996) Some of the informants who felt that they had strong bonds with family members described their parents as being sensitive to their needs. This was illustrated by the way in which they adapted their communication methods to include them in family conversations.

For trust to develop between the informants and their primary caregivers it was necessary for their parents to fully accept their deafness. Parents who were unable to achieve this often

displayed an array of conflicting emotions that were easily sensed by the informants. This led to feelings of detachment on both sides.

Some informants described having detached and distant relationships with their parents, which they felt stemmed from stresses in their parents' life such as, parents working conditions, and unstable marital relationships.

The informants who described their parents' as restrictive suggested that this was based on their fears for them. However, a few informants felt that this prevented them from broadening their experiences and having greater freedom Parental restriction and poor communication thus hindered the informants' ability to openly communicate. It led some informants to reject the family of origin for the family of choice. (Gunter 1992) This was the Deaf community where several informants felt able to relax and openly communicate.

The informants' relationship with their parents suggests that they did not completely trust or mistrust them but found an adaptive balance, which led to 'hope' (Kroger 1989). This 'hope' helped them to survive difficult circumstances. This was suggested in Shola's account. Shola left her aunt to be reunited with her mother 'hoping' to develop complete trust through the renewal of their broken relationship.

There are several accounts where doubt for being deaf are conveyed in the informants' family experiences. However, in spite of this, these informants managed to achieve a degree of self-confidence and autonomy outside the home. They developed their own 'laws of living' based within their family of choice- the Deaf community.

The diversity of the families' histories and beliefs systems make it difficult to generalize what influences shaped their feelings towards the informants' deafness. As discussed Black families experienced difficulties accessing external support for their welfare needs. The widespread pathology of Black families within British society, which blamed them for the difficulties they faced, were reproduced within the services and practices of welfare agencies. This may have affected their parents attitude towards deafness and the coping strategies adopted.

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Some of the characteristics found in the informants' families, were reflected in the discussion at the beginning of the chapter. Many of the informants were raised in single parent households with little or no contact with their extended families. The long and un-social hours worked by their parents gave them limited time together as a family unit.

Whilst Black feminists have indicated that Black families often serve as a source of strength against the oppressions they face outside the home, for Black deaf children accessing this support was difficult. The findings showed that the informants had difficulties communicating with their parents, which pushed some of them closer to the Deaf community. The actions of some parents, who attempted to cure their children of deafness and ignored that they were different from hearing children, contributed to this situation.

Many of the intervention programmes for deaf children such as peripatetic services are often home base and involve home visits to families during the day. As discussed, many Black female migrants worked within the public sector, where they occupied low paid menial jobs with long and unsocial hours. This created difficulties for them trying to utilise these services. The loss of the extended family network also reduced any opportunities for other family members to support them, thus contributing to the notion of the pathology of the Black family.

In addition to these failings within many welfare services for deaf children, the peripatetic services offered were not culturally sensitive. They could not accommodate non-standard English speaking families or working migrants. Hearing equipment such as hearing aids were not available in skin colours that matched the complexions of Black children. Theonly hearing aids available were a standardized pink, which was a source of embarrassment for the informants and their families.

The needs of Black deaf children were not, therefore adequately met by their families or welfare services for deaf children. Black deaf children were at a double disadvantage because of the external pressures their parents faced and inadequate support systems provided by the state.

The lack of support available to Black families affected their attitudes towards deafness. Their search for cures and their failure to recognise the special needs of their deaf child were the coping strategies they adopted. This had an impact on their relationship, which affected how the informants viewed themselves.

4.8 Summary

This chapter gave an account of the informants' experiences in the family. It showed that their parents had a wide range of different attitudes to deafness. Some parents sought to have them cured, whilst others overprotected them to the point that they felt disadvantaged. A few informants described having positive and well-balanced relationships with their parents. They attributed this to their patience and understanding of deafness.

Several informants experienced some form of separation from their parents. This added to the difficulties that they faced forming positive relationships with them. Reconciliation attempts often failed because the informants felt continuously rejected.

The informants' communication with family members often indicated the type of relationships they formed. Where the informants could communicate within the family this was often with siblings or family members with whom they had formed a positive bond. Communication was most difficult where there was limited understanding of sign language, poor Deaf awareness or where family members spoke with strong unfamiliar accents.

The chapter showed that little if any information was ever conveyed about their family's cultural heritage, which made the informants feel isolated. This sense of feeling different at an early age made them more aware that they were Deaf and had a Deaf identity.

The next chapter will explore the informants' experiences at school. It will examine the types of relationships they formed with teachers and peers, and the teaching and communication methods used in the classroom.

Chapter Five: Snakes and ladders- the experience of education.

5.0 Introduction

Chapter four provided an account of the informants' perspective of their early family

experiences. Most of the informants felt that their families did not provide an environment

where they could communicate freely. They described their parents having a mixed attitude

towards deafness and lacking effective communication skills. The informants' relationships with

siblings appeared to be much stronger. They were able to communicate and be understood by

them. This enabled some informants to learn about their family's culture and more generally the

Black community.

This chapter explores the informants' perception of their educational experiences. It examines

the role of communication at school and its impact on their ability to learn and develop

friendships. The findings revealed that communication issues especially the use of oral teaching

methods and the lack of bilingual staff were a problem. It also highlighted that there were

striking parallels between the experiences of Black hearing pupils and Black Deaf pupils. This

was particularly evident in their relationships with teaching staff and access to a multicultural

curriculum.

The educational environment (particularly further education) was where some of the informants

became aware of their racial identity. These informants wanted to access information about

Black cultural history, and make contact with Black role models. The desire for a Black presence

was often in response to negative experiences with white teachers, and the need for greater

equality and respect in these relationships. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the

findings set in the context of the relevant literature.

5.1 The educational context

The education of Black children

Over half of the informants had entered secondary school by the mid 1970s. Their teachers had been influenced by mono-cultural educational policies of the 1950s and 1960s. This suppressed and depreciated linguistic and cultural diversity. (Troyna, 1990) At that time Black children in British schools were defined by many as an 'immigrant problem' (Bhat et al, 1988). This precipitated policies of dispersal, such as the bussing of Black pupils, and pupils with English as a second language to centres away from school sites.

The failure of Britain's national educational policy to reflect the increasing cultural diversity of society had an adverse effect on Black pupils both academically and socially. (Tomlinson, 1981; Mabey, 1981; Swann 1985; CRE, 1984). The over representation of Black children in 'sin bins'[19] and facing school suspension was viewed by the Black community as evidence of their underachievement and bias. A number of influential reports such as Lord Bullock's *A Language for life* (DES 1985) encouraged language and cultural diversity within the school curriculum and teaching practice. However, despite this, Black parents' concern and protests persisted. These were organized around pressure groups, boycott threats and Black supplementary schools.

Such action influenced British educational policy, which shifted from assimilation[20] to integration[21] to cultural pluralism (Mullard, 1982; Troyan, 1992)

Multiculturalism [22]was not universally adopted in all schools because some educators felt that the absence of Black or minority ethnic pupils in their classes made this unnecessary. (Mason

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[19] Sin bins was a term commonly used to denote substandard education establishments.

[20] Assimilation is a policy used by educators to teach children from Black and ethnic minority communities as if they share the same religious and cultural background as the host country.

[21] Integration referred to attempts within the educational system to encourage immigrant children to adapt to a culturally homogenous society

[22] There is generally a lack of clarification of the concept of multi-culturalism within educational discourses. (Tomlinson; 1983) However it is often regarded to mean using the educational system to maintain cultural pluralism and cultural identities.(See Gillborn 1990; Troyna and Carrington 1990)

1995) However where multiculturalism was introduced, it remained marginalised. Its failure was marked by a further educational shift to anti racism. Anti racist policies aimed to eradicate all forms of racism not only within the educational context but also wider society. (Gillbourn, 1990; Troyna and Carrington, 1990)

The increasing changes in education made school an unlikely place where the informants would be formally taught about aspects of 'minority cultures' including Deaf culture. In the next section the informants' perceptions of their educational experiences are explored.

5.2 The school years

Chapter four explored the informants' perspective of their family experiences. It suggested that the family was often a place where they felt like outsiders. Family members had poor communication skills and could not sign. The informants felt under pressure to communicate orally. Whilst some of the informants felt clearly part of their families others did not. They were immersed in a home culture that they could not understand or appreciate. School therefore represented an important place for them. It was where they could communicate with peers. School had the greatest impact on the informants' socialization because they could communicate and make informed decisions about their lives.

Adjusting to the school environment

The formative school years were for all informants a time of cultural change. Several informants attended a rapid succession of different schools. A movement from a hearing school to a deaf school, from a day school to a boarding school and a complete separation from close family and early childhood friends was common. For some informants this separation involved moving from Africa to England, due to their parents' beliefs that England offered the best opportunity of achieving a good education.

However, some of these informants had difficulties adjusting to cultural differences in England. This was manifested both inside and outside the classroom. For example a few informants had difficulties adjusting to English food and there was no alternatives. Other informants were shocked by the behaviour of some pupils towards the teachers. They had been taught to show teachers respect and felt vulnerable because these pupils were out of control.

The ad hoc communication that some of the informants described having with family members was now replaced by a more structured and consistent form of communication in the form of oralist educational policies and total communication methods. This introduction of formal teaching of speech reading contrasted with the learning of sign language from Deaf peers in the playground.

Several informants thus found themselves moving from a home environment where they had developed their own methods of communicating and understanding family members, to an environment where a communication policy was imposed. The use of sign language, which had been learnt from peers, enabled them to liberate themselves in limited contexts, from this imposition.

Friendships

Friendships had a strong influence on the informants. School had brought them into contact with other Deaf children with whom they could communicate. It had perhaps for the first time, brought them into contact with people whom they felt equal to.

The informants' friendships were thus very important because they encouraged a sense of personal identity. They began to learn what it meant to be Deaf through exposure to sign language and Deaf culture. Some of the informants felt a sense of belonging. This was absent in their family relationships. As discussed in chapter four, communication within the home, especially amongst informants who had been educated at residential school was difficult. They described feeling on the outside of their families, and felt closer to their school friends.

When the informants left school, many maintained their childhood friendships. These school

friends were predominately Black or came from a variety of different racial backgrounds. A few

informants had formed friendships with hearing people due to being taught in the mainstream.

However, these friendships were broken once they had left school. Other hearing friendships

tended to be with neighbours and siblings of family friends.

School bullying

Whilst several informants were able to develop friendships with other children, this did not

prevent school bullying from occurring. The informants, just like other children were susceptible

to school bullies. This was a recurrent theme in their narratives. Bullying occurred both in

special and mainstream schools. .The informants described being bullied for being deaf, Black or

perceived as 'different'.

In the mainstream, most informants felt that they were bullied for being deaf. They experienced

both verbal abuse and physical attacks from a racially mixed group of pupils. However, within

the deaf schools some informants felt that bullying related to issues of communication :

Jason attended a deaf school. He believed that the pupils who bullied him were jealous of his
speaking abilities. In retrospect, Jason felt that being the only Black child in an all white school
may have added to this harassment.

*" At the school that I went to everyone there was white. We weren't allowed to sign we had to speak. I was
bullied because they were jealous of me because I could communicate I had speech and I could lip read
people. They got jealous. They were thinking that it was not fair how could this person speak and make
friends with hearing people." (Jason, profoundly deaf)*

Barriers to developing friendships

A group of informants who were not bullied still experienced difficulties developing

friendships. These informants were shy. Other informants were only able to develop superficial

friendships, which they described as affecting their self-confidence and self esteem. A few

informants felt so uncomfortable in their educational environment that they could not relax and

make friends. This can be illustrated in Shamique's case:

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Shamique found making friends at school difficult because she was conscious of being the only Black child in an all white environment. Her unexpected separation from her parents made her feel insecure, confused and unable to relate to other children. The change from home to boarding school was traumatic, because her parents had not explained to her why she had been sent away.

" I went to a school near the seaside. My mother and father had put me there. It was like a boarding school. I was really surprised. They were all white children. I was the only Black person there. I was thinking what the hell is this? What have my mum and dad done? What have they put me here for? When I looked back they had already gone. It was too late so I just kept quiet. I couldn't get used to the children. There were too many white people I was the only Black person there. I didn't know what I was doing" (Shamique, partially deaf)

Shamique's anxiety about being the only Black child at her boarding school only decreased when she felt secure that other Deaf children had accepted her. Despite this, she felt much happier when her parents moved her to a racially mixed day school where she didn't feel different and could return home every day. Being sent away to boarding school, and being in an all white environment initially prevented Shamique from being able to socialize and develop friendships. Her experience highlights the extent of poor communication within some of the informants' families, and the impact this can have on their ability to relate with others.

Teacher -pupil relations

Teachers play a significant role in the life of all young people. A teacher's attitude and expectations can influence a child's self esteem, and feelings about school. They can help the informants or otherwise to reach their full academic potential. Some of the informants held their teachers in high regard because they had made a positive impact on their lives. These teachers were responsible for detecting their deafness, whilst others acted as role models, inspiring them to be strong and ambitious and aware of the 'hearing world.'

" I was lucky to have gone to that school and to have a brilliant teacher there who really let us know what to expect when we leave school and go out into the big wide world. She made us work hard because she didn't want us to settle for just easy jobs like cleaning or working in a factory. She felt that we could do more" (Amy partially deaf)

Some of the informants stated that they had difficulties forming relationships with adults. They described many of the adults with whom they came into contact with as unable or unwilling to communicate with them. The most influential adults in their lives were parents and teachers. Whilst some of the informants were able to build relationships with their parents, a few were unable to do so, due to being separated or rejected by them. For these informants, the relationships they formed with teachers were of particular importance because they represented the absent role model in their lives.

A few informants who had been partly educated in the Caribbean described how the disciplinarian culture in the classrooms and the teachers' attitudes had encouraged them to achieve. In retrospect, they felt that being taught by teachers who shared a similar cultural background made a positive impact on their education. They felt more aware of their cultural heritage and racial identity.

Teaching methods

Several informants had difficult relationships with teachers. They believed that this negatively affected their attitude towards school. Poor teaching methods often exacerbated this situation. The informants described how their teachers would write instructions on the board and then disappear, leaving them to work independently for the remainder of the lesson. They felt that these teachers failed to teach them anything. A few informants felt that they practiced favouratism. They described how some teachers would share their knowledge and give their support to a select group of pupils.

Poor teaching practices also occurred in the mainstream. The informants described this as being the result of poor deaf awareness skills amongst teachers. Some teachers would simultaneously walk around the room and talk. They would also continue to teach on the Black board with their backs to the class, making it difficult for the informants to understand the content of their lessons.

Teachers' expectations

Some informants' felt that the difficulties they experienced at school was the result of the low expectations some teachers had of them. These informants described being discouraged from having aspirations and encouraged to accept low paid jobs, such as bar work or cleaning. They were led to believe that Deaf people could not go to University, and as a result lowered their expectations:

" Architecture was my first dream when I was 16. I wanted to do that course. I asked my career teacher for information about architectural courses and they said that I can't do that because I'm Deaf. My confidence just dropped"(Sharon, profoundly deaf)

A few informants described having fair and supportive teachers. These teachers would encourage them to do their best. They would make the informants aware of the competitiveness in the job market and the need for qualifications. These teachers would make themselves available when they were experiencing difficulties. They would also change their teaching methods by speaking slowly and clearly, and providing the informants with additional information to help them. The informants felt motivated by these positive and helpful attitudes, which had a lasting impact:

" She [teacher] didn't want us to be stupid or naive or to think that everything comes on a plate. I think that when I am working with young people and teaching children, I tend to put that in to them as well. I say be realistic this is not going to be handed to you. You have to work for it" (Amy, partially deaf)

The informants therefore had experiences of different types of teachers. Some of their teachers were fair and supportive towards them whilst others were discriminatory, and perceived by the informants as incompetent and oppressive.

Careers advice

All of the informants regarded specialist career teachers as un-supportive. They were described as failing to help them make informed choices on their careers and further education:

"The teachers weren't bothered about what happened after you left school. They would just teach every day. After the exam it was bye if you passed or failed that was it... We didn't have a specialist teacher at that time to give information about jobs. We had a career teacher but they would only come now and again. She was always out at meetings collecting information but what for? She had no time to give it to the pupils; she just put it on the shelf. She had no time to tell us what was on the shelf, that is why lots of my friends who were at school at the same time as me have no jobs" (Samuel, profoundly deaf)

Several informants felt that most of the support and encouragement in finding employment came from their families. Unlike their career advisors and teachers, they would push them to get office jobs rather than factory or bar work. Whilst some parents felt that the informants' deafness placed them at a disadvantage, they still had hopes for them, although these tended to be less ambitious and more 'realistic.'

Communication in the classroom

Chapter four highlighted that the informants' ability to communicate at home was influenced by the attitudes of family members. Their level of acceptance of the informants' deafness was reflected in their levels of communication. In several cases communication was only achieved with one parent. Since language and communication is central to the social and linguistic development of Deaf people, the communication methods used in their education greatly determined their experiences in the class room.

Some of the communication difficulties that the informants experienced were attributed to their schools' oralist teaching methods and the ban placed on Sign Language, which for some made learning difficult. Amplification equipment such as large bulky headphones, which the informants were forced to used were uncomfortable and painful, and made worse their inability to concentrate during lessons.

The informants were better able to access the lesson content in schools that had a total communication[23] policy. In these schools, lessons and extra curriculum activities were accessible. The informants could follow and understand what was being taught and communicate with others. Using sign language gave them the skills and confidence to communicate without feeling inadequate about themselves. The informants who were taught using these methods believed that this was responsible for their positive relationships with teachers and peers. It had a positive impact on all areas of their school experience, which they considered to be happy and enjoyable.

The importance of creating an environment where Deaf people can openly communicate can be illustrated in Sarah's experience:

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[23] This communication policy uses a combination of spoken language and signs simultaneously.

Sarah, a profoundly deaf student was referred to a student counsellor having experienced difficulties at home and school. Her counsellor's could not support her because she could not sign. As a result Sarah had to work thorough her difficulties alone. Her counsellor's lack communication skills left Sarah feeling isolated and disillusioned with external support services run by hearing people.

For other informants' communication difficulties within the classroom, was often misjudged by their teachers as disruptive behaviour. In these cases, a few informants described experiencing physical punishment, which often came as a shock to them.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the types of schools attended by the informants and the different communication methods used

Table 5.0 Key for Table 5.1

Type of school attended	Communication methods used at school	Work status	Work type
Residential Deaf School = RSD	Oral = A/O	Employed = EM	Professional =PR
Day School for the Deaf= DSD	British Sign Language = BSL	Unemployed jobseeker= UN/ JS	Skilled= SK
Mainstream with Partially hearing unit = PHU	Total Communication = TC	Student= ST	Semi skilled = SSK
			White collar worker =WCW
			Manual= MA
			Not applicable= N/A

Table 5.1 The informants' educational profile

Name of Informant	Gender	Age	Type of Secondary School attended	School language methods	Further Education College /University	Work Status	Work Type
1.Janet	F	34	PHU	A/O	Yes	EM	WCW
2Kathy	F	23	RSD	TC	Yes	EM	MAN
3.Amy	F	32	PHU	A/O	No	EM	WCW
4.Sarah	F	19	DSD	TC	Yes	UN/JS	N/A
5.Shamique	F	35	DSD	A/O	No	EM	MA
6.Natalie	F	35	DSD	TC/A/O	Yes	EM	WCW
7.Derek	M	31	PHU	A/O	Yes	EM	SSK
8. Sandra	F	33	PHU	A/O	Yes	EM	WCW
9. Judy	F	21	PHU	A/O	Yes	ST	N/A
10. Shola	F	21	SD	A/O	Yes	ST	N/A
11. Anne	F	27	PHU	TC	Yes	UN/JS	N/A
12. Maria	F	29	PHU	A/O	Yes	UN/JS	N/A
13. Francis	F	27	PHU	A/O	No	UN/JS	N/A
14. Samuel	M	32	PHU	A/O	Yes	EM	N/A
15. Joshua	M	20	DSD	TC	Yes	ST	N/A
16. Jason	M	32	DSD	TC/A/O	No	EM	PR
17. Sharon	F	35	DSD	TC	Yes	ST	N/A
18. Matthew	M	37	DSD	TC	No	EM	MAN
19. Nicky	F	32	DSD	TC	Yes	UN/JS	N/A
20. Roy	M	35	DSD	TC	No	UN/JS	N/A
21. Junior	M	30	PHU	A/O TC	Yes	EM	MAN

5.3 Entering Higher Education

Despite the informants having mixed experiences at school three quarters went on to further education where they were taught at predominately hearing colleges. For some, this was to repeat courses that they should have covered at school. For others it was part of a 'Back to work' scheme for the unemployed. Only a minority of the informants considered it as a natural progression in their career path.

Much of the difficulties the informants experienced in the school environment such as poor communication and Deaf awareness skills amongst teachers persisted in their college experiences. They had to adjust to new buildings, timetables, teachers and a new hearing culture, which compounded these problems. The poor communication skills within the college

environment and the informants' lack of friends meant that they had little support in coping with these changes. This made adjusting to their new environment difficult.

Further frustrations and feelings of isolation emerged in the classroom. Some informants found that they had been enrolled onto courses, which were below their abilities or too limiting in scope.

The stress of being in a hearing environment forced some informants to leave. I n Sharon's case she moved to a Deaf college which although provided a better communication environment still left her feeling isolated:

Sharon a profoundly deaf informant dropped out of a hearing college and enrolled at a Deaf college. Although she felt more comfortable at the Deaf College friendships were still problematic. Race now came into focus, which resulted in her feeling rejected by her Deaf peers.

" I have been there for a year, they just say oh hello how are you that's it. I feel that their attitude is a little bit funny. They talk to the other students but they don't talk to me. They think my brain is okay they just don't want to talk to me maybe they look at me as a challenge. I 'm Black they expect everything to be all white people and suddenly they have this Black person and they are shocked." (Sharon, profoundly deaf)

Trying to make sense of it all: communication support

All of the informants who went onto further education initially experienced difficulties accessing communication support. This was due to delays in the recruitment of notetakers and interpreters.

Note takers and BSL Interpreters were the main forms of communication support available. They were employed on a part time basis and worked restricted times. Their availability was sometimes patchy. Some informants described how they had to miss lessons because communication support workers were unreliable or cancelled at short notice. Their own attempts to lip-read tutors and fellow students proved an exhausting and difficult process.

Another difficulty facing the informants related to tutorials and class discussions. Most informants received their lecture notes after lectures, which left them with little opportunity to get involved in classroom discussions. Some found these notes difficult to understand due to their limited literacy skills.

Making the connection: accessing Black cultural history

A recurrent theme in the informants' educational experiences was the lack of access to information about Black culture and history and no contact with Black teachers. This was not surprising given the limited access to Black culture at home. Within the family unit the informants understanding and access to their cultural heritage was assumed, never explained. Multicultural educational polices within schools for the deaf and the mainstream failed to fill this need as Kathy's account suggests:

Kathy tried to encourage her teachers to introduce Black history in her lessons. Her teachers' perceived Kathy as challenging their authority,and excluded her from the classroom like a disruptive child:

" *We were taught about Henry VIII. I was bored I'd be asleep and they would try and get my attention. I would tell them that I wanted to learn about Black history. They would send me out of the classroom and I would have to sit outside. They were embarrassed because I wanted to know about Black history. I wanted to know about my past.*" *(Kathy,profoundly deaf)*

Some informants like Janet felt very angry about the lack of access to Black history at school. She described feeling dislocated. This was compounded by her inability to communicate with her parents at home. Janet described how her parents relied on the educational system to teach her all she needed to know. Her siblings and peers thus became her main source of information on the Black community.

The impact of teacher insensitivity

Some of the informants believed that their dis-empowering experiences with white teachers and difficulties accessing information about the multi cultural aspects of society would have been more positive if they had been taught by a racially mixed group of teachers. Their teachers' lack of sensitivity to their feelings and experiences of racism often highlighted the need for a Black presence in their education. For example, despite the objections of some informants about the use of specific signs denoting Black people and Black issues their teachers would continue to use them (in racially mixed classes) which made them feel uncomfortable:

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" A tutor of mine was talking about the Caribbean and about their ways. She was using old-fashioned signs like the old sign for Black. We don't like that sign we use the new sign for Black. Then she used the word coloured I had to stop her and say no that is wrong. We don't use that anymore we use the word Black but she carried on using the word coloured so I didn't really say anything more. Those words were a problem. She didn't include me she didn't have that eye contact so I didn't feel important and that affected me. Before, I had a hearing teacher, there were little things that were a problem, if I did not have any support I would have given up" (Sharon, profoundly deaf)

Lessons and achievements

Despite the difficulties experienced by several informants during their time in education some went on to achieve far greater than what was expected of them. Samuel graduated from University. He believed that this experience helped him to develop greater self-confidence. University had taught him to confront his fears of working with hearing strangers, and had helped him to secure a graduate career in the corporate sector.

Whilst Samuel's achievements were exceptional other informants believed that their educational experiences had been beneficial in other ways. Some informants felt that they had been given the confidence and ability to communicate with others, particularly hearing people.

5.4 Conclusions

Many of the difficulties that the informants experienced in the classroom were the result of communication problems and the attitudes of some of their teachers. Communication was problematic for several informants, even in environments created to accommodate their communication needs. Difficulties were most acute where purely oralist methods of teaching predominated, and when they were taught by teachers with little or no Deaf awareness. Conrad's study (1979) found that the majority of deaf school leavers left with poor levels of literacy and academic attainment. The informants faced a similar experience. They only achieved an adequate level of literacy and numeracy when they continued their education at college

The suppression of sign language in the classroom undermined the informants' self-confidence because for most of them it was their preferred method of communicating. It was not until 1984 that BATOD[24] formally accepted its use as part of a total communication policy in schools.

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[24] British Association of Teachers of the Deaf

(Montgomery; 1986). However, a commitment to total communication varied amongst schools, allowing the difficulties associated with the oralist teaching methods to persist.

The role of teachers in the informants' lives

Several informants described having a mixture of good and bad teachers. However, the difficult relationships that some informants experienced with their teachers typified much that has been written about Black student white teacher relationships. (Wright, 1987; 1992; Troyna, 1990) The informants suffered from negative teacher expectations and felt more likely to be treated in a more restricted way than other pupils. Teacher insensitivity to the experience of racism was also evident. The informants felt rejected and disillusioned by these attitudes and their inability to progress in the way that they had hoped.

According to Wright (1992) teachers typify the types of children they teach as a means of reducing the complexities involved in teaching. Typification is based on how close their pupils meet their ideal pupil criteria, which is influenced by their own life style and culture, and factors such as social class and ethnicity. (Sharp Green; 1975). Educational policy advisers and committees have recognized racial stereotyping and unconscious and unintentionally racist attitudes among teachers as a problem affecting the teaching profession (Rampton,1981; Swann, 1985). Many of the informants believed that their teachers held them back and did not support them. At least half of them were taught in mainstream schools where some of these attitudes towards Black hearing pupils were widespread.

Recommendations had been made in 1973 for teachers to develop a greater awareness of the multi-cultural nature of British society. However, as late as the 1980s the special needs of Black children were still viewed in relation to teaching English as a second language rather than acknowledging the cultural diversity of their heritage. (Bhat et al, 1988). Multiculturalism has come under much criticism in recent years for being reduced to 'steelbands, samoas and saris' ensuring that a real appreciation of the diversity of Black heritage remains unexplored.

The educational context outlined at the beginning of this chapter highlighted that the bussing of Black children to learning centres away from school sites was a controversial practice. Whilst this educational practice was condemned and outlawed in the late 60s and 70s, it still effectively persisted for deaf children.

Deaf children including the informants were still bussed to educational sites. Mainstreaming did not necessarily mean a neighborhood education. The PHU's, were predominately located outside the inner cities (where the informants lived) and in suburban areas. The informants' experience of being bussed to areas outside their neighbourhoods added to their feeling of difference and sense of disorientation about who they were and where they belonged. Being transported to a different cultural environment served to undermined their relationships with members of their own community and their families. It perhaps added to their feelings of not belonging in those contexts.

Educational standards

The poor standard of teaching experienced by some informants clearly influenced their feelings about school. Earlier research (Rampton, 1981) highlighted that poor teaching standards were a contributing factor in the underachievement of Black pupils. Whilst this was also the case for the informants, it has been suggested that other factors such as teachers being unqualified and too overworked to cope with the needs of a deaf child, could also be responsible (Ward and Centre, 1987). Although Deaf people are not learning disabled their communication needs have the similar impact for teachers with learning disabled pupils in their classes. This may be responsible for negative teacher attitudes towards integrating special needs children in the mainstream (Thomas; 1985). It could also be reflected in their teaching standards towards these pupils.

In the early part of the 19th century deaf education was based around oralist philosophies. (Densham, 1995) All communication was via spoken language with the educational emphasis on learning lip-reading and intelligible speech. A movement away from strictly oral teaching in the 1970s led to the introduction of signed English, total communication, and more recently

bilingualism[25] in some schools. These new teaching methods and philosophies was the result of increasing numbers of deaf pupils entering mainstream schools and being taught in partially hearing units. (Kumsang and Moore, 1998:241)

Many of these policy changes in deaf education occurred after the informants had left school. They had been educated using oral or total communication methods which emphasized mastering the English language and learning to speak. The adoption of bilingual philosophies and practices in the late 1980's and early 1990's in some schools was introduced too late to influence the teaching practices experienced by them. This new education philosophy would have helped to eliminate some of the difficulties the informants faced at school. Table 5.2 provides a comparison between the informants' educational experiences and a model sign bilingual philosophy and practice adapted from Pickersgill (1998).

Whilst some of the informants were able to recognize that they had difficult school experiences, many were not able to explain some of the factors which affected their differential treatment at school compared to some of their white counterparts. Many informants did not know what discrimination or racism was. (See Chapter VIII which explores more closely issues of discrimination and racism).

It is quite common for many young people going through adolescence to feel 'different' from peers and family members and feel at odds with society itself.(Kroger, 1989) This perhaps explains why some of the informants looked inwards at themselves rather than outwards at the behaviour of those around them to understand some of their experiences. Adolescence is a period when individuals undergo an 'identity crisis'. During this crisis, they often have to deal with periods of confusion and uncertainty. They are faced with physiological and psychological changes, questioning who they are and where they belong. For the informants deafness forced them to decide where they felt more comfortable and accepted - in the hearing world or the Deaf

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[25] Bilingualism refers to the regular use of two languages or more in different modalities a signed and a spoken language.(Pickersgill, 1998)

world. Only when they had found the answer to that question for themselves and resolved their

crisis, were they able to move forward in their chosen direction.

Table 5.2 A comparison between the informants' experiences and a model Bilingual programme

Model sign bi- lingual programme	The informant's educational experiences
Language and communication • *Recognition* of sign language as a language of education • Young children & families to have access to support from Deaf adults who are native signers. The child's developmental response to early language exposure is the basis of decisions about linguistic support and educational placement • Children with sign language as their preferred language. This should be the primary language of instruction & basis of the development of the second language	• Most informants had educational policies imposed rather than based on an individual assessment of their linguistic needs • Oralism dominated in the education policies and practices during the informants' education. • Lack of recognition of sign language as a language of education because sign language was not allowed to be used in classrooms
Curriculum and assessment • The use of sign language & English as a language of instruction and subjects of study • Curriculum should respond to the linguistic and cultural pluralism of society • The development of curriculum based signs in consultation with Deaf people • Both sign language and English should be used according to the child's preference when conducting curriculum assessments	• No choice of language as a medium of instruction • A limited curriculum which failed to consider the cultural and linguistic pluralism of society • Insensitivity of teachers to the appropriate use of signs to denote Black people and Black culture
Staffing • All staff should be bi-lingual • Deaf staff with native sign language skills to be employed • Hearing staff with native English skills to be employed • In service training should be provided to enable staff to work collaboratively within a sign bilingual setting	• A lack of bilingual staff • Limited number of Deaf tutors (all white) • Hearing teachers with no Deaf awareness skills or signing ability • No Black hearing tutors/support assistants
Links with the Deaf community • The promotion of links with the Deaf and ethnic minority community • The child should have access to a community of Deaf sign language users	• No promotion of the Deaf community or forging of links with the Black community • No access to a community of Deaf sign language users

Education and racial identity awareness

For some informants an awareness of themselves as racially different came from their experiences of educational inequality, particularly in further education. There were often no positive influences in their educational environments to counteract these experiences. There were no Black role models and no access to information about Black history or Black issues. The multicultural educational policies of the late 70s and 80s had yet to make an impact on their lives.

According to Bhat et al (1988: 155)

" Racism in our school curricula is most obvious when Black children are taught about the history and cultural of their ' host' society whilst their own is ignored and implicitly devalued"

As discussed in chapter four, there was very little effective communication at home for these informants. Their feelings of rejection and discrimination were seldom expressed to anyone except a sibling. Poor communication at home made it difficult for some informants to learn about their cultural heritage. Siblings and Deaf peers thus acted as educators, 'guardians' and friends all rolled into one. This partly explains why, in retrospect, some informants felt that they would have benefited from Black teachers or role models within the school. They believed that it would have enabled them to form the type of relationship that was absent in their family lives.

The informants who had been partly educated abroad appeared to be more aware than the British born informants about discrimination. The experience of living in two different countries could possibly explain this greater level of awareness. However, compared to their British born counterparts, these informants differed markedly in their resolution in coping with these inequalities. They were more determined in their efforts to achieve, but conceded that if it was not for their strict and disciplined upbringing, the educational system would have defeated them.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has provided an account of the informants' educational experiences. It has looked at some features of education policy and other influences on the informants' experiences at school. Some informants underwent several 'cultural changes' unduly adjusting to British life, being taught in a new educational environment, and being away from home. The informants' education also marked a formal introduction to oralist methods of communication and total communication. How well the informants adapted influenced their ability to learn in class.

Teacher -pupil relationships also had an impact on achievement levels. Some teachers helped them achieve their full potential by being supportive and good at teaching; and others were felt to discriminate between pupils and lacked the qualities expected of a teacher.

Whilst many of the informants had made lasting friendships with other young Deaf people bullying was a frequent feature of their peer relationships. This made developing friendships with other students difficult.

Most of the informants who went on to further education found themselves in hearing colleges with limited support mechanisms and few opportunities for academic and social development owing to restricted communication support. The informants who studied at Deaf colleges also encountered difficulties. They found themselves facing subtle forms of rejection from their white Deaf peers, which they attributed to racial bias.

During their time in further education, some informants began to feel aware of their racial identity. This emerged in their interactions with some of their teachers, who made them feel unequal. Some teachers demonstrated insensitivity to their experiences of racism and failed to appreciate their need to learn formally about their cultural heritage. This insensitivity meant that they made no attempts to introduce multiculturalism into the educational process.

The next chapter examines the informants' experiences in the labour market, and considers how their educational experiences shaped these.

Chapter Six: Facing reality- employment and unemployment

6.0 Introduction

In chapter five the informants educational experiences were explored. It illustrated how their experience of classroom learning and teaching affected their levels of achievement and confidence. Many informants felt discouraged from aspiring to achieve qualifications. Some of their teachers led them to believe that low paid unskilled jobs would be the only employment opportunities available to them. Whilst other teachers encouraged them to pursue their employment aspirations.

This chapter explores the informants' work experiences. Some informants were able to utilize their skills and abilities. Others were made to feel useless because of negative employer attitudes and expectations, which left them feeling isolated. They were not able to develop good relationships with co- workers or feel a part of a working team. A lack of Deaf awareness, amongst employers and other employees made communication difficult.

Multidimensional discrimination was a feature of the informants' employment experiences. How this was manifested depended upon the informants' status as an employee or job seeker. Those who were unemployed, faced barriers accessing job opportunities and employed informants, described bullying and discrimination in the workplace.

Many informants' believed that the difficulties they encountered was the result of being Deaf. Very few informants believed that being Black affected their experiences.

This chapter seeks to explore the informants' experiences in the job market and whether their deafness and racial identity placed them at a double disadvantage. The chapter ends with a discussion of the findings, contextualised within the relevant literature.

6.1 The employment context

Black people in the labour market

There has been little change in the economic position or areas of settlement of Britain's Black population since the 1950s. (Brown, 1984;Smith;1976; Owen and Green, 1992; Jones, 1996) Black people remained disadvantaged and over represented in low paid, low status jobs compared to their white counterparts. Black men tend to be concentrated in semi skilled and skilled jobs, and Black women in the medical and health care professions. (Jones;1996).

Whilst some of the disadvantages experienced by Black workers have been attributed to them having poor skills and qualifications (Jewson et al 1991; Brown, 1984) research has shown that they faced discrimination at different stages in the employment cycle. Lee and Wrench (1981) identified discriminatory practices at the training stage. Here Black people were denied access to the more desirable training programmes. This is supported by Cross et al's study (1990) which highlighted that careers services channelled Black people into specific areas of employment, thus sustaining areas of work traditionally perceived as 'Black employment'.

At the recruitment and interview stage, Black employees often face direct and intentional discrimination from employers. (Daniel, 1968; Brown and Gay;1985). Studies have shown that employers select candidates for jobs based on whether they feel they would fit into their work environment not on the basis of qualifications or skills. (Jenkins;1986) Even when Black employees find employment they often face an 'ethnic penalty'. This means that the types of occupation levels they eventually achieve are often unequal to their qualifications (Jones; 1996: 86.)

Deaf people in the labour market

Deaf people also face discrimination in the labour market. However the true picture of Deaf employment and their experiences remains unclear due to the Deaf community being geographically spread across the country. (Montgomery 1993; Kyle and Allsop; 1982)

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Deaf people like Black people are often stereotyped into particular jobs. These are often lower than their capabilities. The community study (chapter two) revealed that over half the respondents felt that Deaf people could do any type of job but were often channeled into specific roles. In contrast, Bunting's study (1981) revealed that a sample of the general public believed that a deaf person could not work in professional or skilled jobs to the same extent as a hearing person.

Research has shown that Deaf people continued to face discrimination regardless of whether employers had experience of working with them. Bannerman's study (1989) suggested that both employers with experience and those who were inexperienced with Deaf workers felt that a hearing person would be a better employee. These studies showed that some employers stereotyped deaf people as less able to perform tasks, having difficult personalities, and a bad attitude to work.

This brief snapshot of the employment experiences of Black and Deaf workers highlights some of the difficulties they face getting jobs. Both groups were concentrated in particular employment sectors. Deaf people were mainly employed in low paid manual jobs with few opportunities for training, (Jones and Pullen, 1990). Whilst Black workers continued to maintain the employment patterns of the first and second generation of Black migrants of the 1940s and 1950s. The employment experiences of both Black people and Deaf people should thus be regarded as one of disadvantage due to the prevalence of racism and discrimination in society.

This chapter will explore the informants' experiences in the labour market. It will consider how the informants' experiences in the work environment affected their identity development. The chapter will also explore whether Black Deaf people are at a double disadvantage in the labour market

6.2 Unemployment

" I was thinking about work. I was looking forward to it, but I couldn't find anything for seven years"
(Shamique, partially deaf)

Although many informants had continued their studies after school half were unemployed (see

table 6.2). A few informants had been made redundant whilst the others were seeking work. All

had difficulties accessing job opportunities. Some informants lacked appropriate qualifications

and skills, and others felt discriminated in the job market.

Several informants believed that negative employer attitudes towards deafness blocked their

ability to gain employment. They perceived the blocks and barriers that they faced in getting a

job as stemming from employers who had no experience or understanding of Deaf people. They

felt undermined without being given a chance. In some cases, a few informants felt that they

faced blatant disability discrimination. This is illustrated in Samuel's experience:

> Samuel's application for a job as an Account Assistant was rejected because he was deaf.
> *" I was invited to do a test. During the test I said excuse me I am Deaf, so they said Oh you're deaf? I said yes I am. They said no problems and wrote all the test questions down. A week later I got a reply back from the company. They said they were sorry, we think you are the best person for the job but the problem is you are deaf. You cannot use the telephone so we have to give the job to someone else'*
> Not only did this reply shatter Samuel's confidence, but also left him feeling very depressed. The lack of information, or avenues for legal redress prevented him from pursuing a legal case for disability discrimination.
> *" I was really disappointed because it took me a long time to apply for the job and fill in the form. I went to the job interview and did a test, I tried my best. To be rejected because of my deafness was awful. I was depressed for a while. I destroyed the letter and threw it away I realized that was a mistake. I should have kept the letter to fight for compensation because of being discriminated for being Deaf" (Samuel, profoundly deaf)*

Whilst most of the informants felt discriminated against on the basis of deafness, others believed

that racism also affected their opportunities to find work. These informants identified situations

when they experienced racial discrimination. This was described as evident in the negative

attitudes of potential employers, which they attributed to their race, and not their disability,

since in some cases the interviewer was also deaf.

Table 6.0 Key for Table 6.1

Work status	Gender	Work Type
Employed = EM	Male = M	Professional=PR
Unemployed job seeker= UN/JS	Female = F	Skilled = SK
Student = ST		Semi skilled = SSK
		White collar worker = WCW
		Manual = MA

Table 6.1 The informants' employment profile

Name	Age	Gender	Work	Job title	Work type
1. Janet	34	F	EM	Secretary	WCW
2 Kathy	23	F	EM	Shop Assistant	MAN
3 Amy	32	F	EM	Admin Assistant	WCW
4 Sarah	19	F	UN/JS	Unemployed	NA
5 Shamique	35	F	EM	Print Operator	MAN
6 Natalie	35	F	EM	Admin Assistant	WCW
7 Derek	31	M	EM	Printer	SSK
8 Sandra	33	F	EM	Admin Assistant	WCW
9 Judy	21	F	ST	Student	NA
10 Shola	21	F	ST	Student	NA
11 Anne	27	F	UN/JS	Unemployed	NA
12 Maria	29	F	UN/JS	Unemployed	NA
13 Francis	27	F	UN/JS	Unemployed	NA
14 Samuel	32	M	EM	Project Officer	PR
15 Joshua	20	M	ST	Student	NA
16 Jason	32	M	EM	Hospital Porter	MAN
17 Sharon	35	F	ST	Student	NA
18 Matthew	37	M	UN/JS	Unemployed	NA
19 Nicky	32	F	UN/JS	Unemployed	NA
20 Roy	35	M	EM	Catering Assistant	SSK
21 Junior	30	M	EM	Factory worker	MAN

The informants' outlook and abilities

The attitude of a few informants' affected their ability to find work. Some informants lacked

confidence and had low expectations of themselves due to their previous employment and

educational experiences. In chapter five it was noted that they received little if any support from

their teachers and careers advisors in finding a good job. They were made to believe that they

could not aspire to more than cleaning or 'waiting' at tables.

Other difficulties emerged from the lack of work experience and practice of interviewing. Several informants felt that how they presented themselves in these situations, was not as effective as it could have been. Those who communicated orally often attended job interviews alone. An interpreter did not accompany them, because they believed that this would create a better impression. None of these informants were successful in securing any of the positions they had sought despite believing they had performed well during the interview.

Coping strategies

To cope with long-term unemployment several informants enrolled on part time courses. They also regularly attended a Deaf job club where they had the opportunity to meet other Deaf people and receive specialist job search support. This support comprised of access to computers, newspapers, minicoms and a Deaf job counsellor. Other unemployed informants spent their time volunteering at local youth centres, or caring for the mentally ill.

A few informants had difficulties coping with unemployment. They suffered from low self-esteem and confidence. This low self-esteem turned to feelings of anger when they believed that their joblessness was possibly the result of racial and disability discrimination. Their difficult experiences at home and school made them feel pessimistic about their employment prospects.

Future prospects

The length of unemployment varied amongst the informants. Some feared that they would never find work. They described how some of their friends had suffered mental health problems, and drug addiction. The informants were determined that this would not happen to them.

Several informants were pessimistic about their futures. They perceived the younger generations of Black Deaf people as no more successful than they had been in accessing job opportunities and attaining good qualifications. To them, any improvements in the employment prospects for Black or disabled groups had failed to make a positive impact on the Black Deaf community.

6.3 Employment

Despite some informants experiencing difficulties gaining employment, others were more successful. This success was attributed to their persistent efforts. These informants were employed in a mixture of manual, semiskilled, and professional positions. (See Table 6.2). For some informants having a job increased their self-confidence. It gave them a sense of independence and optimism. However, for others the experience of work had a negative effect on their self-esteem. Both of these experiences will now be explored.

Deaf awareness in the work place

Despite some of the informants enjoying their jobs they described working in poor Deaf awareness environments. Their employers made little effort to improve access to information for Deaf workers. Some informants took on this responsibility themselves by organizing Deaf awareness training and basic sign language classes, which they described as a success. They noticed improved communication in their interactions with their colleagues, many of whom continued to learn to sign privately. However, the lack of commitment by their employers to improve Deaf access meant that the continual improvements at work depended on the commitment of individual workers.

Not all of the informants were able to organize Deaf awareness training. They worked in large organizations where staff members constantly changed and interactions with others were too brief to make improvements. This situation was frustrating for them and the negative attitudes of some members of staff simply intensified these feelings.

A group of informants' felt that despite their employers being aware of disability issues they often had no knowledge of deafness. The informants' described them as making assumptions about the homogeneity of Deaf and disabled people experiencing the same difficulties and having the same needs:

" I just felt that I was banging my head against the brick wall because even though the manager seemed to be aware about disabled groups, she was not about Deaf groups. As far as she was concerned we could all

get together and live happily ever after. I thought that was wrong it takes a lot longer and a lot more hard work"(Amy, partially deaf)

Equality in the workplace

A commonly expressed feeling amongst some informants was that employers were not

committed to equal opportunities. Several informants described their employers as being

inconsistent in their efforts to improve access. They would forget to book interpreters for

meetings and access to technological aids and training courses were limited. Many informants

found themselves learning of work changes from casual interactions with co-workers. This made

them feel devalued and dependent upon them for help in an emergency.

Where informants had access to technological aids at work their usage appeared to be

circumscribed. The lack of Deaf awareness amongst employers meant that they had little

understanding of how technological aids operated. Some informants felt under suspicion from

their managers for using the minicom for purposes unrelated to work:

" I sometimes feel that the manager is picking on me I don't know why. I am thinking about applying for a new job in a different department because the manager complains that my telephone bill is too high so I have to explain to him that I use a minicom and it takes a bit longer. He doesn't appear to be supportive or understanding which is a problem sometimes. Other times he is smiling but I can't tell he has two faces, so I have to be careful" (Samuel, profoundly deaf)

Inequalities in status and pay

Other difficulties facing the informants related to the status and rights that they were accorded.

Their work status and pay levels were often lower than their hearing co-workers. This is

illustrated in Janet's and Shamique's experiences. In Janet's case sexism also influenced how she

was treated:

Janet had worked in the public sector as a Junior secretary for several years. She found herself down graded from her job as a junior secretary to a messenger when she returned from maternity leave. Her employers had not negotiated or discussed her job change with her but it was a fait accompli when she returned. This demotion left her feeling undermined, undervalued and powerless.

"They changed my job I never asked to be a messenger. I only wanted to do typing but they changed my job. I was shocked. I didn't expect that, but it was too late. They had already done that to me when I went back to work, so I had to accept it." (Janet, profoundly deaf)

Another informant, Shamique was also faced with inequality in the workplace:

Shamique worked as a Print operator in the same company for nine years. She was paid at a lower rate of pay compared to her co-workers Shamique should have been automatically granted all her incremental pay rises after five years service. However, her employers withheld this from her for a further four years:

"I had worked there for nine years an old lady tried to help me because I had not reached grade one yet. Everyone else had grade one after five years and I had been working for nine years. This old lady went to a union meeting, the manager said I had to work harder. I thought what do you mean? I have been working here for nine years. Later on they gave me grade one, but I had to fight for them to give it to me." (Shamique, partially deaf)

Accessing internal opportunities

A small group of informants found that gaining access to internal opportunities within the workplace was hampered by negative employer attitudes. For example, Samuel was frequently denied project opportunities because his manager didn't think he could cope with the responsibility. His employers prevented him from undertaking a diversity of roles, which he felt affected his ability to develop his skills and expand his knowledge. Where some informants had access to training, these were for courses that they considered to be of limited value, because they would not enhance their salaries or benefit their future career development.

Some of the problems the informants encountered at work influenced how other members of staff regarded them. Parallel to some of their school experiences work place bullying was common. The following section will demonstrate how this was manifested.

Work place bullying

Several informants were bullied at work by their co-workers. This bullying would often take the form of verbal abuse and the use of offensive signs behind their backs. In one case, an informant was physically attacked with a trolley. Workplace bullying often involved hearing staff forcing the informants to undertake tasks, which were menial and degrading, as Jason's account suggests:

" There was no time to relax everything had to be done in haste. It was so boring. It was the same thing again and again. They would say you go to the fridge, clean out the fridge, clean out the shelves, clean all

the stuff out clean out the food. They had a rubber around the fridge I had to clean all that really detailed work. I had to clean all the shelves and put all the food back and you had to remember where everything was to put it back in the same place" (Jason profoundly deaf)

Attempts by the informants to stop the bullying was often frustrating because their perpetrators were able to talk their way out of any claims made against them. Employers often appeared to believe that the informants were lazy and complaining about their volume of work, rather than the difficulties they were experiencing.

Not all co-workers were bullies but others were unfriendly and unhelpful. This also undermined the informants' self-confidence and intensified their feelings of isolation. For these reasons, several informants' working lives were highly stressful which made them desperate to find alternative employment.

Communication difficulties in the workplace

The stress faced by some informants at work was exacerbated by communication difficulties with co-workers. Co-workers who communicated with them would often shout. They were very impatient when conveying information or when the informants could not understand what they were saying. They would often talk behind their backs. Several informants' believed that the attitudes of their employers exacerbated this situation. They would send messages through other workers rather than talk to them directly.

In some cases the informants preferred method of communication was banned from being used at work which added to their frustration. This is clearly demonstrated in Janet's account:

Janet was banned from using BSL at work. As a secretary her employers believed that signing stopped her from working. Janet viewed their actions as discriminatory because her hearing co-workers could communicate but she could not. She felt that her employers devalued her communication, which she felt sent negative messages to other members of staff.

Janet found this frustrating because she was forced to communicate orally or in writing which she found difficult:

" I don't like passing notes. I have to think about how I am going to say something and try to explain myself. I use BSL that's my language. Its difficult I get frustrated. How do I write things down? It affects me and makes me angry sometimes I just give up. No I am not giving up I want BSL I can't lip-read its not equal opportunities there" (Janet, profoundly deaf)

Regardless of whether the informants communicated orally or through BSL they often felt socially and professionally excluded at work. Although a few informants enjoyed the type of work they performed, they were not happy in their work environments. Their experiences of prejudice and discrimination and a lack of support from employers made them feel uncomfortable in the workplace. Some informants felt that being a Black person intensified their experiences and the level of discrimination that they faced.

6.4 Conclusion

Discrimination was a frequent occurrence for both unemployed and employed informants. The unemployed faced negative attitudes from some employers, whilst the employed informants were denied promotion in the workplace. The informants faced discrimination like their Black hearing counterparts at the preparation and training stages of seeking work. As discussed in chapter five, some of the informants' educational experiences had conditioned them to have low expectations of themselves.

It highlighted how their career teachers directed them towards specific occupations (e.g. bar work and cleaning). These were menial and low paid and readily open to them. They were not the types of jobs that the informants' aspired to. This echoes some of the findings on deaf school leavers achievement, where teachers' low expectations of pupils became self-fulfilling prophecies. (Rodda 1987)

The employed informants often felt hired to fail. Their employers often did not provide any communication aids to assist them with their jobs. Those who did scrutinized them. These employers declared themselves as working towards equality of opportunity but the lack of provision for informants' to participate in staff meetings suggested the opposite. The informants attempts to raise awareness of deafness and the needs of Deaf people demonstrated that working conditions were not conducive to positive Deaf- hearing interaction. This was also evident by the persistent work place bullying experienced by some informants.

The informants' experiences of unemployment and employment reinforced their Deaf identity in a negative way because deafness was attributed to the difficulties they faced. A few informants felt that their disability would have been more readily accepted had they been white. They believed that their employers were uncomfortable in the presence of a Black and disabled person. In the Community study (chapter 2) 61% of Black hearing people felt that Black Deaf people faced a doubled disadvantage, but only a few informants' in this study agreed with this. Most informants felt that deafness not their race, was the main disadvantage in the job market. This was evident in the comments of some, that Black-hearing people did not have any difficulties making progress at work.

Most informants were aware that they were not their employers' 'ideal' employees. Chapter five highlighted that their educational experiences had prepared them to expect disability discrimination. Many of their teachers had told them that because they were deaf they would not be able to achieve their employment aspirations. Their shared experiences of deafness with other Deaf people reinforced this.

At all stages in their lives the informants were encouraged to believe that deafness rather than their racial identity placed them at a disadvantage. They had been socialized in environments where deafness was emphasized as their most important characteristic by which they would be judged. Some of the informants' explainations of the difficulties they experienced at work suggested that they firmly believed this.

6.5 Summary

This chapter looked at the informants' experiences in the labour market. It highlighted that they faced difficulties in accessing jobs and working within a hearing work environment. This was their experience of poor Deaf awareness skills on the part of employers and employees. It was also due to blatant racism and disability discrimination a fact supported in the findings of this study. The overview of the employment context highlighted that some employers who had experience of working with Deaf people still perceived them as being deficient. Much of the difficulties the unemployed and employed informants' experienced, was the result of negative employer attitudes. These enabled discrimination to persist both within and outside of the working environment.

Many of the informants lacked confidence in their abilities. These individuals had internalized the negative attitudes that some of their teachers held towards their employment prospects. This led to a lowering of expectations and ambitions followed by an acceptance of a low employment status. Where some informants sought equality in the work place this was with the support of family and friends.

In the next chapter, the informants' experiences both in education and the employment environment will be placed in context by exploring the social identity of Deaf people. It will examine the informants' perception of deafness, and highlight the Deaf community's diversity and divisions.

Chapter 7: Personal identities and social modelling

7.0 Introduction

In chapter six the informants' experiences within the job market were explored. It was found that they faced difficulties accessing work opportunities both as employees and job seekers. This chapter examines the informants' feelings about being Deaf. It explores the informants' language choices and its impact on their identity and affiliation to the Deaf community.

Many accounts of deaf education discuss the suppression and banning of sign language in schools and the effect on Deaf people. This chapter highlights that for some informants, oralist methods in schools had been beneficial. The informants saw speech as enabling them to access their families' culture and the hearing world. Some informants drew parallels with oralist methods and sign. Sign language was viewed as a prerequisite for accessing the Deaf community, in the same way that speech offered them greater opportunities in the hearing world. This chapter examines how the informants learnt sign language. The findings confirmed previous research on sign language learning, occurring predominately at deaf schools, amongst Deaf pupils.

The remainder of the chapter discusses the social identity of Deaf people. It looks at the informants' perception of Deafness in relation to the disability model. The informants' involvement in a Deaf community and understanding of Deaf culture is also explored. The chapter ends with a discussion of the findings contextualised within the relevant literature.

7.1 Personal Deaf identities

In Chapter one the various models of disability and the new ways in which disabled people were beginning to define themselves were examined. It was evident that the Deaf community perceived themselves as different from those who classified themselves as disabled. This was

often on the basis that disabled people were part of the hearing world and perceived as hearing regardless of their impairments. Deaf people thus believed that Deaf issues were different from disability issues. Their desire for recognition to exist as a linguistic minority aimed to enable Deaf people to have the same rights as other minority groups in society.

Most of the informants displayed mixed feelings about being deaf. These were in response to how deaf people were represented in society, their early childhood experiences at home and school, as well as their relationships with others. Some informants seemed to be in denial and could not accept that they were deaf. Others had a sense of Deaf pride and viewed their deafness as natural. These informants rejected the external audiologically based construct of deafness. They were 'culturally Deaf' having a Deaf identity and membership to a Deaf community.

Recently, Deaf culture has become more accessible. It is transmitted through Deaf television programmes, Deaf media, and Deaf clubs. It encourages Deaf people to develop a positive identification with Deafness and offers them a community where they can feel a sense of belonging. Deaf culture has had a strong impact on the lives of many deaf people. In the following section the informants feelings and attitudes towards Deafness and the Deaf community will be explored.

Deaf pride and acceptance

A number of the informants displayed positive attitudes about being deaf. These individuals were born deaf or became Deaf early in their life. Their acceptance of deafness was demonstrated in their awareness of their own personal limitations and capabilities.

" I'm only deaf that's all. There are no other problems with me- everything is all the same. When hearing people see deaf people they think that brains come out their ears but we are not stupid" (Kathy, profoundly deaf 23yrs)

These informants reacted unfavourably to 'hearing' sympathy. They felt it was patronizing and frequently misplaced. Their positive feelings about being Deaf were demonstrated in their

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attitudes towards personal relationships with other Deaf people. Many expressed a preference

for Deaf partners because these relationships were considered more equal than with hearing

people. Some informants, who had experiences of mixed relationships, stated that hearing

partners and their families were often inconsiderate towards their communication needs.

To many informants being Deaf was an integral part of their identity. It was perceived as natural

and something they rarely thought about. Most informants spent their free time in the company

of other Deaf people, participating in social activities or simply just communicating. The

experience of Deafness bonded the informants with other Deaf people but it was not the main

focus of their lives.

Deafness denied

Some of the informants, particularly those who had become deaf late in their childhood had

difficulties accepting being deaf. They had memories of being able to hear and talk and missed

these experiences. Their communication difficulties made them feel inadequate and lowered

their self- confidence. These informants blamed deafness for the problems they faced. They did

not like the way that deafness was portrayed in society, and did not feel part of the Deaf

community. They had limited contact with other Deaf people.

A few of these informants came from very religious backgrounds. They placed their faith in God

hoping that one day they would be able to hear again:

'I was hearing but I came to realize that the bible said there would be a new system. There would be no war, no suffering, my eyes and ears will be open and deaf people's speech would be normal. It says that in the bible. That is God's promise, that is his way" (Francis Partially Hearing)

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7.2 Language choice and identity

Chapter four showed that the informants' families had strong feelings about communication. Several parents had sent them to speech therapists to be taught how to speak, whilst others strongly encouraged them to form friendships with hearing people, to facilitate oral methods of communication.

As discussed in chapter five the communication methods used by teachers of the deaf affected the informants' experience of classroom learning. Several informants felt that oral methods made it difficult for them to learn. These informants felt that they had not benefited from an oral education. Whilst other informants who were taught using total communication methods, felt able to access the contents of their lessons.

Sign language learning

Many informants who used sign language had acquired signing skills from their Deaf peers. For some informants, (particularly those who preferred to communicate orally) this was the only way that they were able to make friends with other Deaf people. These informants often experienced difficulties using a combination of aural communication and sign language because their Deaf friendships strongly discouraged this.

The informants who mainly signed were confident with their communication. Sign language enabled them to understand their lessons at school and develop relationships with other Deaf people. Table 7.1 shows some of the factors that influenced the informants' choice of communication.

Table 7.1 Factors influencing the informants' communication choices

Oral communication	Sign language
• Brought up in a hearing environment – considered themselves hearing • Wanted to improve speech • Preference to mix with hearing people • Signing physically exhausting • Need to access family's culture • Difficulties understanding BSL (word order confusing)	• Pressurised to speak orally as a child but more comfortable using sign language • Oral communication and lip reading difficult- feelings of inadequacy experienced • Wanted to develop friendships with other Deaf people • Sign language raised self esteem and confidence in communicating • Sign language accessible enables communication anywhere • More able to understand and be understood from using sign language

Oral communication

Other informants were more comfortable communicating orally and in the context of the interview for this study coped very well. These informants had been brought up within hearing families and felt close to hearing people. To improve their speech they chose to interact with their hearing friends.

A few informants' considered signing a nerve racking and a physically exhausting method of communication. They felt particularly nervous around Deaf people who used BSL because they could not understand the word order. Sign supported English 'light signing' was preferred because it was similar to the structure of the English language.

Other informants described feeling under great pressure to sign. The case study of Samuel will illustrate this :

Samuel was brought up using oral methods of communication. He was reluctant to use sign language but often pressurized to do so by his peers. A lack of signing skills made him unpopular with other Deaf people. He was often chased out of Deaf clubs because other Deaf members believed that he was hearing. Samuel felt that learning to sign was his only way of gaining acceptance from them.

" I used to fight with a lot of Deaf people. I used to go to a Deaf club where I lived and they used to hound me out saying he's not deaf because I couldn't sign. That was a big problem in the past. I remember I went to the Deaf world games. I saw some Black Deaf people there from school and the Deaf clubs. I haven't seen them for a long time. They were shocked to see me signing. They would say Oh that's better my friend. I thought friend? We used to fight all the time, so signing made a big difference" (Samuel, profoundly deaf)

Although the informants felt encouraged by their families to communicate orally, they eventually made their own communication choices. Many informants chose to communicate using sign language. This was partly due to difficulties using oral methods and their need to develop friendships with other Deaf people.

7.3 Social identity of Deaf people

In this section the social identity of Deaf people and the informants' perception of deafness and disability is explored.

Deaf disabled or situational disability?

Some informants perceived being deaf as a disability.They were influenced by the attitudes of teachers, doctors and family members. To these informants' deafness was only a disability in specific situations. For example, the informants' classified a Deaf person in need of institutional care due to mental health or other physical difficulties, as disabled. They attributed this to the lack of available communication support within these settings. Similarly, if Deaf people needed to claim state benefits such as disability living allowance, then it was also appropriate for them to be classified as disabled because of the disadvantages they faced in the hearing world.

Several informants' viewed deafness as a disability because this is how they felt society perceived them, it was not how they perceived themselves. They classified deafness as a disability in specific situations especially those that enabled Deaf people to capitalize on state support.

The rejection of the disability label

A group of informants felt that their deafness was not intrinsically a disability. To them disability referred to people in wheelchairs and those who were unable to do things for themselves. These informants described themselves as 'able', having the ability to do anything except hear. New technology such as minicoms and faxes were seen by them as aids which removed any access barriers for working in the hearing world.

Some informants stated that their 'normalness' compared to physically and mentally disabled people removed them from the experience of disability. They considered Deaf people's integration into mainstream education, unlike the experiences of other disabled people, as evidence.

Several informants believed that they belonged to a linguistic minority having their own culture and community. This will now be examined.

7.4 Deaf community and culture

The Deaf community

The Deaf community enabled several informants to widen their network of Deaf friends and gain information on activities for Deaf people. Deaf clubs, pubs, and churches as an expression of Deaf culture acted as a magnet for Deaf people. For some informants their involvement in the Deaf community made them feel a sense of Deaf pride.

Other informants did not mix widely within the Deaf community. They believed that privacy and issues of confidentiality were rarely respected. They described situations where they went to unfamiliar Deaf clubs and gatherings to find that the people they met knew everything about them. This affected their level of involvement in Deaf cultural venues. These informants chose to socialise with a small group of friends with whom they had known for a long period of time. Their friendships outside this circle remained limited.

The informants who did not socialize within the Deaf community often played an active role in other areas. This included working voluntarily in Deaf youth clubs or befriending Deaf mental health sufferers. These informants felt that it was important to help other Deaf people. They perceived their voluntary work as self satisfying and their contribution to uplift the Deaf community.

In contrast, a small number of informants were more involved in the wider Deaf community. These informants believed that the Deaf community gave them confidence and self-esteem in their culturally Deaf identity. They felt a sense of equality in their relationships with other Deaf people because they could communicate without difficulty, a feature which was missing in their relationships with hearing people.

These informants socialised in Deaf pubs, and participated in sporting activities such as athletics, and football. They also travelled extensively, meeting up with Deaf friends for events and rallies. They had strong bonds in the Deaf community. Deaf friends were referred to as brothers and sisters, and considered as part of their families.

Deaf clubs

Deaf clubs were the main place outside of school where the informants socialized with other Deaf people. Several informants had mixed feelings about Deaf clubs, despite them being perceived within the Deaf community as an important aspect of Deaf culture. Some of the clubs previously attended by the informants had now closed down. The clubs, which were still operational, held little interest for them. Evidence of growing divisions within the Deaf community could be seen in the Deaf clubs. These now specifically catered for different racial groups. The effect of this change can be illustrated in Junior's experience:

Junior who was frequently mistaken as Asian was often invited to join the Asian clubs. He felt particularly frustrated by the separation of Deaf people into specific racial groups because he had a racially mixed group of friends. His experiences of attending Asian clubs left him feeling very torn, because they did not include Black people. Junior felt uncomfortable with these attitudes because he considered himself as Black. The strong religious and cultural influences in these groups influenced his decision to withdraw from any further involvement.

At 'white' Deaf clubs some informants felt intimidated by other Deaf people. They would question them about where they were from and why they were attending their centres. This made them feel uncomfortable and unwelcome.

A group of informants wanted to become more involved in Deaf clubs but felt rejected by other Deaf people. Other informants perceived Deaf clubs as trouble spots. They had been victims of 'backstabbing' (people gossiping behind their backs), and unwanted sexual advances from men. For one female informant, the sight of accidental pregnancies amongst friends convinced her that the Deaf club was not the place for her.

The informants' experience of socialising in Deaf clubs was also influenced by the lack of changes occurring within these venues. Deaf clubs were perceived as old fashioned, due to their limited information and services. Their instability and poor management failed to attract new members making them unattractive social venues. Across the UK the role of Deaf clubs were declining in line with changes within the Deaf community.

Deaf pubs

Several informants saw Deaf pubs as equally unattractive social places. The trend amongst young Deaf people to abandon Deaf clubs in favour of pubs was considered as a backward step for the community:

" Most Black Deaf people go to the pub. They go to the Waterloo pub that is their culture. They always go to the pubs, Why? I get angry we should think with Deaf youth clubs. What happens to Deaf children when they grow up? They will follow the older ones to the pub! The Deaf community should have good role models- Deaf adults going to Deaf clubs" (Janet, profoundly deaf)

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A few informants felt that the pub culture within the Deaf community encouraged rowdiness and bad behaviour:

" Sometimes I go to.... Pub there are lots of Deaf people there, I felt a bit embarrassed because of the misbehaviour of some of the Deaf people there. The other day a group of Deaf people smashed a glass in the air in the train station. I thought they are Deaf but there is no need to be stupid, because of that I walked out and went to mix with my hearing friends who were with me at the time." (Samuel profoundly deaf)

Deaf churches

Alongside Deaf clubs and pubs, some informants also regularly attended Deaf churches. Deaf churches were also considered an important aspect of Deaf culture. They provided communication support in the form of sign language interpreters and had separate sections for Deaf people to participate in Bible studies and other church activities. The informants who did not attend Deaf churches usually went to their family church within the Black hearing community. However, these churches lacked communication support or aids for deaf people.

Deaf culture

" Last year in Blackpool there was a pub landlord who didn't understand deaf ways. There was a poster it said that the management of the pub would like to welcome the greatest Deaf and Dumb Society to this Pub! We just all went ballistic and ripped it down. That was a problem, deaf and dumb isn't acceptable in the Deaf world because dumb means stupid, not having the ability to communicate. That is how Deaf people interpreted it, so signing, hearing aids and Deaf ways means Deaf culture" (Samuel, profoundly deaf)

Most of the informants felt that Deaf people have a culture although many didn't refer to it as Deaf culture. Several informants could not explain what Deaf culture was. It was loosely referred to as Deaf clubs, socializing with other Deaf people, and understanding Deaf ways. British Sign Language was considered to be at the heart of this culture. It was the language of the Deaf. A few informants felt that communicating through sign language was the only way in which the experience of Deafness and Deaf culture could be understood.

Not all of the informants believed that Deaf people had a distinguishable Deaf culture. Some informants believed that they had a sub culture, which was closely linked to sign language and shared experiences amongst Deaf people. These informants did not consider Deaf culture as

comparable to the cultures of other ethnic minority groups because Deaf culture was not the inheritance of all Deaf people but a select few. They described how some Deaf people were not accepted within the Deaf community despite being audiologically deaf.

The culture of technology

Technological aids such as flashing lights, hearing aids, and subtitles, were considered by a group of informants to be an important part of Deaf culture. These aids had helped many of them overcome barriers in accessing information and living independently. Deaf television programmes transmitted Deaf culture around the country. This was seen as an important medium for raising awareness of Deaf peoples' achievements and the difficulties they still face.

A few informants were less supportive of Deaf TV programmes due to the poor representation of Black Deaf people. Others were critical of the programme's emphasis on the medical aspects of deafness and issues of communication. These informants felt that this was not representative of the concerns of Deaf people, some of which were rarely discussed.

7.5 Conclusions

The findings demonstrate that several traits amongst the informants determined the strength of their affiliation with Deaf people and the Deaf community. The informants in this study can be categorized as those with a strong affiliation to the Deaf community (strong/positive Deaf identity) and those with a weak affiliation (weak/negative Deaf identity).

Attitudinal Deafness

' Attitudinal deafness', is a term commonly used to denote self-identification as a member of the Deaf community and identification by others as a member. (Lawson 1981: 169). A person does not have to be very audiologically deaf to have a strong affiliation to the Deaf community. This was evident among several informants. These informants had strong Deaf identities, which emerged from their positive feelings about being Deaf, not their level of deafness. For example some of the partially deaf informants felt more Deaf pride than the profoundly deaf informants. They were more involved in the Deaf community and had stronger BSL skills.

Strong Deaf identities

The informants who had developed a strong Deaf identity were faced with cultural conflicts within their families. This was incompatible with a Black family framework evident from table 7.2 which highlights the individual traits associated with specific attitudes towards the Deaf community. The informants with strong Deaf identities could be considered as being 'out' in their communities. They had a strong sense of Deaf rights and participated in the social activities and politics of their community. They were proud to be Deaf.

Table 7.2 Traits identifying the informants strength of affiliation with the Deaf community.

Traits identified in individuals with a Strong/positive Deaf identity	Traits identified in individuals with mixed feelings towards their Deaf identity	Traits identified in individuals with a Weak/ negative Deaf identity
Exhibit pride about being Deaf	Mixed feelings about Deafness at different times in their lives. A mixture of good and bad	Poor perception of the Deaf community. Not able to feel apart of the Deaf community
Recognition of the limitations and capabilities of Deaf people	Aware of the negative stereotypes of Deaf people and their capabilities	Influenced by negative family attitudes to deafness
Able to recognise positive attributes about being Deaf	Able to recognise the positive and negative attributes about deafness and the social constructs in which Deaf people have to operate	Difficulties coming to terms with deafness due to negative experiences and feelings.
Social preference to mix with other Deaf people	Mixes socially and professionally with both Deaf and hearing people	Enculturated in the hearing world of the family and close family friends
Likely to marry or have intimate relationships with other Deaf people	Likely to marry or have intimate relationships with Deaf or hearing people	Strong religious faith and family background influences relationship choices
Communicates predominately through BSL but not always	Communicates using a mixture of communication methods BSL and oral approaches	Communicates predominately orally but not always

Weak Deaf identities

In contrast the informants who had a 'weak Deaf identity' were those who often felt hearing or wanted to be hearing. They remained in the hearing world, and mixed predominately with hearing people. Some of these informants had lost their hearing late in childhood and could not accept that they were deaf.

Others were deeply religious or came from religious backgrounds where deafness was perceived as a form of retribution. These informants placed their trust and faith in God to heal and make them hearing again. They had limited contact with the Deaf community.

Ambivalent Deaf identities

Some informants had mixed feelings towards their Deaf identity. They seem to parallel the position of homosexual men who are straight acting. Like them, they would often control their feelings about their identity due to their social conditioning and mixed feelings about Deafness and the Deaf community.

Deaf people are not disabled

The informants' feelings about deafness not being a disability echoed the feelings of the wider Deaf community (Padden 1988; Ladd 1988; Lane 1992). Some of the informants' perceived disability only in terms of physical or intellectual impairment, they felt that their 'normalness' compared to physically impaired persons detached them from the concept of disability. They argued that Deaf people had been integrated in the hearing world unlike disabled people whom had always been segregated. Deafness was thus only considered as a disability for Deaf people wishing to access state support.

Language and identity

Language was not the only factor that influenced the informants' Deaf identity development. Table 7.2 showed that the influences bearing on the informants were multifaceted. A Deaf persons' affiliation to the Deaf or hearing community could not be determined solely on the communication methods they used. Some informants with strong Deaf identities communicated using BSL and oral methods. Whilst others who had a weak Deaf identity communicated mainly through BSL.

According to Lawson (1981) Deaf people who are late sign language learners often have high disapproval patterns towards Sign language. They have difficulties learning BSL as a second language having already mastered English. This pattern was evident amongst some of the

informants who communicated orally. These informants felt particularly nervous around Deaf people who were fluent in BSL. They preferred to communicate orally because they wanted to gain access to hearing culture and in particular the home culture of their families.

The informants who chose to communicate using BSL did so to develop Deaf friendships and gain acceptance to the Deaf community.

Acceptance in the Deaf community

The informants identified a number of contradictions in relation to their membership to the Deaf community. Whilst a few felt a sense of equality in their relationships with other Deaf people, as a group they experienced racial inequality. The experiences of some informants in Deaf clubs highlighted that they were often excluded and made to feel unwelcomed by other Deaf people.

As discussed Deaf clubs were changing which left few social venues available for Black Deaf people. Despite Deaf pubs attracting large numbers, as social venues some informants felt that they failed to provide a direction for the Black Deaf community. These informants felt that Black Deaf culture could not be cultivated or explored in these contexts.

This chapter highlighted that the Deaf community was very diverse. The increasing division of Deaf people into specific racial or ethnic groups was evidence of this. This pluralistic aspect of the Deaf community will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter. It will highlight its' fragmentation with divisions existing on racial, ethnic and social class lines.

7.7 Summary

This chapter explored some of the informants' feelings about being Deaf. Some had feelings of Deaf pride and acceptance whilst others had difficulties coming to terms with being deaf. The informants' level of acceptance of being deaf was reflected in their affiliation to the Deaf community. Those who had a strong Deaf identity had fully accepted being Deaf whilst those

with a weak Deaf identity were often in denial of their deafness. The remaining informants tended to display mixed feelings and experiences towards the Deaf and hearing communities based on their interactions with these groups.

This chapter has confirmed previous research on sign language learning. Most informants learnt to sign informally from other Deaf children. This was an important way of developing friendships. The informants who communicated orally found forming relationships with other Deaf people difficult. This was because they were often perceived by them, as hearing. Communicating through sign language was thus seen as an important passport into the Deaf community.

The chapter also explored the social identity of Deaf people by examining whether the informants considered Deaf people as disabled. Most informants did not consider themselves as disabled. They did however believe that in specific situations where external support was needed deafness was a disability and should be treated as such. The informants perceived deafness as a marker of cultural difference not a disability. This led to an exploration of Deaf culture, the focus of the Deaf community.

Deaf culture was commonly expressed in the context of Deaf clubs, churches and pubs, and social events. Some of the informants' participation within the Deaf community was limited due to their interactions and experiences with other Deaf people in these social contexts.

The next chapter will explore the social identity of Black Deaf people focusing on their experiences within the Black hearing community, and the wider Deaf community.

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Chapter 8: The Black Deaf Community

8.0 Introduction

This chapter explores more closely the informants' experiences within the wider Deaf community. It examines their relationship with other Deaf ethnic minorities and provides an analysis of their perceived social status.

The informants' perception of the Black Deaf community was judged by their level of resources and ability to mobilize and support each other as a group. From the informants' accounts the Black Deaf community had very few resources, and community cohesion was highly fragmented. A lack of acknowledgement by service providers of their cultural distinctiveness, and identity confusion amongst Black Deaf people was identified as possible reasons.

Three distinct groups were identified in the Black Deaf community. These were labeled the Aspirers, Inbetweeners and Drifters. These labels reflected the roles they assumed in Black Deaf community activities and events. The Aspirers and Inbetweeners often worked in harmony towards the development and growth of the Black Deaf community, whilst the Drifters took no part. This chapter examines the characteristics of these groups.

The informants' relationships with members of the Black hearing community are also explored. Drawing on the community study, issues of access, communication and deaf awareness are revisited and examined in relation to identity development. The impact of racism on the informants' personal identity choices, and their interactions with other Deaf and hearing people are also explored. The final section of the chapter discusses these findings in the context of the relevant literature.

8.1 Racial identity awareness among the informants

Whilst several studies (see Maxine 1987) have shown that racial identity awareness among children can occur as young as 3 years old, none of the informants identified events in their early childhood which made them aware of their racial identity.

Table 8.1 shows how the informants became aware of being Black. For most informants' racial identity awareness emerged much later in their lives and in particular from their contact with other Black people. This contact usually occurred in social situations such as parties where they were able to identify aspects of themselves that they associated with being Black.

For many of the informants, being deaf made it impossible to access information on Black people. The lack of a multicultural curriculum at school, and difficulties communicating at home, made it difficult for some of them to relate to other Black people. For some informants their school experiences made them feel a 'race' apart.

" I did not understand what it was to be Black. I heard about Black people but what was it like to be Black? " (Janet, profoundly deaf)

Table 8.1 How racial identity awareness developed amongst the informants'

• Interactions with Black hearing people in social situations
• Identifying similarities in the experiences of Black hearing and Black Deaf people
• Developing information needs in relation to Black culture and Black issues
• Experiencing racism and discrimination from hearing & other Deaf people
• Learning and sharing knowledge with other Black Deaf people about Black culture.

Impact of racial awareness

For some informants being aware of their racial identity reinforced the negative feelings that they already held towards the Black hearing community. These informants felt different from Black hearing people and had little understanding of what it meant to be Black. Their awareness and understanding of the experience of Blackness remained elusive.

Some female informants felt that this hindered their ability to develop both personally and professionally. They felt unaware of how to care for their skin and hair, or how illnesses such as sickle cell anemia, or glaucoma (and other conditions prevalent to the Black community) could affect them. Many of these informants wanted greater participation within the Black hearing community, but felt that the lack of collaboration between Deaf and Black people made this difficult.

For other informants, an awareness of their racial identity came from experiences of racism and discrimination. These experiences reinforced feelings of difference and inequality, which they could not attribute to deafness alone. Some of their experiences of marginalisation within the Deaf community, in particular Deaf services and organisations[26] increased their sense of being racially different.

Definitions of Black culture

Some of the informants definitions of Black culture were similar to those provided by the Black hearing sample in the community study. (See Chapter 2) Whilst the definitions amongst the informants differed in details these were not distinctive. They are shown in Table 8. 2

Table 8.2 The informants' definition of Black culture

• History: *Connection with Africa , Slavery, oppression and cruelty*
• Family life: *Disciplined upbringing*
• Religion: *Belief in God, and attending church*
• Black politics: *Freedom and equal rights*
• Language: *African languages, Creole, patois*
• Food: *Different types of food eaten and how it is eaten.*
• Black community: *Gossiping and sharing information*
• Social activities: *Carnival, events, dances parties*
• Physical appearance: *Hair care, clothes,* make up

Some informants could not provide a definition of Black culture. They attributed this to limited knowledge of the social and cultural lives of Black people. They stated that if they had been

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[26] A recent overview of services for Deaf and Black Ethnic Minorities showed that there are approximately 3 African- Caribbean clubs based around the UK although these tend to operate as racially mixed groups. (See Darr et al 1997)

taught Black history at school they would be more knowledgeable. Their 'cultural deficiency' was reflected in their belief that Black history was not relevant to their lives.

Managing a Black identity

Although all of the informants acknowledged that they were Black, some felt uncomfortable with their racial identity. They wanted to escape their Blackness because they saw it as a marker used by others to negatively prejudge them. Some informants felt that this overshadowed their ability to have a personal identity.

A few informants did not feel proud to be Black. They felt that the limited opportunities to become involved in the Black hearing community and their inability to understand the patois spoken by some Black hearing people placed them apart.

Black pride

Several informants were positive and conscious about being Black. They desired to have more knowledge of Black people, Black issues and Black culture. These informants sense of Black pride was strongest when they were participating and enjoying different aspects of Black cultural life. One informant, who often went clubbing with a group of white friends, felt particularly proud of her Black identity when she was on the dance floor. Her sense of Black pride came from feeling superior at dancing compared to her white associates around her:

" We go to a club and all these people are dancing and they try dancing to reggae but they can't dance and I'm just swinging in time and they are looking around and I say hey I am a Black person" (Amy, partially deaf)

Racial indifference

However, other informants displayed feelings of indifference about their Black identity. They believed that Blackness was not important and were not bothered about issues of race. These informants were often unaware of racism and the covert way in which it operated. The only context that they were aware of racism was in their discussions in the Deaf community. As a result, many of the difficulties these informants experienced were only ever attributed to being deaf. Table 8.3 provides a summary of the informants' feelings towards their racial identity.

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Table 8.3 The informants' feelings about their racial identity

Positive	Ambivalent	Negative
Black pride- Blackness is an important aspect of identity	Acknowledge racial identity but display a detachment from it. A colour blind attitude	A need to escape Blackness because of its stigmatised status
Feel able to access and enjoy Black cultural life	Limited understanding and knowledge of Black peoples experiences	Unable to access the Black hearing community
The development of a Black consciousness. A desire to learn more about Black people and Black issues	Life difficulties attributed to experiences of deafness. Few if any life experiences attributed to racial identity.	Poor family relationship influence relationships with other Black hearing people
Desire to be involved in Black activities and Black events	Acknowledge the existence of Black hearing community but have no real desire for involvement.	Feelings of marginalisation within the Black hearing community. No opportunities to develop Black pride
A positive and strong identification with the Black community and Black people	Weak identification with Black hearing people	Difficulties relating to Black people.

8.2 Black Deaf people and the Black hearing community

The informants faced frustrations and difficulties trying to access the Black hearing community.

Most believed that Black service providers had little awareness of Deafness or the needs of Deaf

people. Their experience of attending Black events was frustrating. There were often no

communication aids or support in the form of loops or sign language interpreters. Some event

organisers would make assumptions about their lip-reading abilities and perceived their request

for communication support as unnecessary and troublesome.

For these reasons, many events such as Black hair and beauty shows, poetry readings, Black

history events and womens' courses remained inaccessible to Black Deaf people.

Access and participation

At the time of interviewing access to the Black hearing community for the informants was

difficult. There was little if any consistent effort on the part of the Deaf or the Black communities

to improve this. The Black hearing community was considered as being unaware of Black Deaf

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people or the need to develop Deaf awareness skills. Access to Black events depended on the work of a few researchers who would highlight the difficulties Black Deaf people faced accessing services and encouraging service providers to improve their practice.

Where access for Deaf people existed, these were limited to open events such as the Notting Hill Carnival, where only visual images of Black culture could be enjoyed. Most other areas of Black cultural life remained inaccessible including some of the Black-led churches. It is here that several informants were sent as children to be cured:

" I go there to pray. When I go there I see all these young Black people and they are clapping and banging on the tambourines and I just sit back and say wow and start laughing and all the hearing people say to me come on don't laugh you have to clap, but I don't understand why they are clapping. What are they clapping for? I try to read the bible and everyone is talking and I miss what is going on. It is really impossible and boring just trying to read it all and having to sit down, stand up, sit down, stand up. Then suddenly people would fall over. Have they fainted? No they've got the spirit. Oh okay." (Junior, profoundly deaf)

One informant felt that no part of the Black hearing community was open to him - including the Black 'underworld'. Jobless and homeless he was befriended by the wrong crowd which led him to consider a life of crime. Even in these social circles his poor speech and deafness placed him at a disadvantage by preventing him from being able to sell drugs. As a result, he felt that he could only ever occupy a marginal position in his life.

Many informants did not have any Black hearing friends or experience of interacting with Black hearing people. They did not know how to get involved in Black hearing events or whether they would be accepted. Those who did mix with Black hearing people often felt intimidated by them. They felt pressurised to keep up with the materialistic aspects of Black culture such as expensive fashion clothing, and jewellery, which they could not afford or emulate. This led them to withdraw from Black social scenes completely.

Other informants felt a sense of not belonging amongst Black hearing people. They often had no one to communicate with, and rarely met anyone who could sign. Cultural clashes were quiet common. For example one informant found that unlike the Deaf community where staring is

acceptable within the Black hearing community, such eye contact is considered as rude and challenging behaviour.

The informants' level of involvement in the Black hearing community thus remained limited. Those who were partially deaf could 'pass' as hearing in social situations, particularly when accompanied by family members. Other informants felt unable to get involved. They relied on information from the media, friends, parents and relatives.

Attitudes of Black hearing people towards Black Deaf people

Several informants felt that the Black hearing people were friendly. They believed that their similar experiences of oppression and marginalisation made them understanding of Deaf people. These informants' were particularly surprised by those who knew how to fingerspell and were 'Deaf aware'. Table 8.4 provides a summary of the types of attitudes that the informants' encountered.

A group of informants believed that Black people had negative attitudes towards Deafness. They felt that once they knew that they were Deaf and communicated differently, they would not bother to talk to them. Black people were described by these informants as patronising and often felt that they were treated as 'deaf and dumb'

Table 8.4 The range of attitudes the informants' encountered with the Black hearing public

Positive attitudes	Negative attitudes
- Friendly - Helpful - Displaying an understanding of deafness - Willingness to communicate and learn sign language - Level of deaf awareness	- Ignore the informants - Poor perceptions of deaf people believing they are deaf and dumb - Antagonistic attitudes - Displaying feelings of embarrassment and inadequacy in the presence of deaf people - Patronising

A few informants described having difficult interactions with Black hearing people, which sometimes led to conflict. These informants felt that such behaviour, which was usually channeled at other Black people was unfounded and a reflection of their own experiences of

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racism and oppression. In these situations some members of the Black community were

considered as visibly antagonistic. This is suggested by Janet's comments:

" When I go to a Black area we're both Black and yet we still clash. Why do we do that? I get angry with
that. I don't like to see fighting amongst Black people. I'm Black and their Black yet were still fighting. I
don't like that it is a double problem. Deaf Black its a double problem because Black hearing people show
you bad face. I'm Black and they're Black and they're bumping into me so I say Oh I see. I understand that
they don't like me. I am Black there's a clash there. I don't know what's wrong. We are the same Black
people so what's wrong? Its' a double problem that I 've got." (Janet , profoundly deaf)

Communication and understanding

Several informants described having positive communication exchanges with Black hearing people. They

would use a number of different methods to communicate such as writing notes, speaking slowly and

using gestures. Black hearing people were described as having clear facial expressions and lip patterns. At

home it was quite common for some informants to speak like family members using a combination of

African languages or Jamaican patois to communicate. Table 8.5 provides a summary of the barriers and

facilitators to communication between the informants' and Black hearing people.

Table 8.5 Facilitators and barriers to communication between the informants and Black hearing people

Facilitators to communication	Barriers to communication
Good Deaf awareness skills- clear facial expressions, lip movements, speech	Poor Deaf awareness skills- fast speech, poor eye contact
Supportive and understanding attitude towards Deaf peoples' communication needs	The use of strong accents creating difficulties for the informants trying to lip read
Willingness to use a variety of methods to communicate i.e. writing, gesture, speech, signing	Use of slang 'street talk' unfamiliar to the informants creating barriers to understanding
	Fear of Black hearing people based on stereotypes about them being tough, aggressive and unapproachable.

Communication difficulties and the Black hearing community

Some of the informants' described Black hearing people as having no Deaf awareness skills.

This was attributed to their fast speech, poor eye contact and use of colloquial language. Further

confusion was created by unfamiliar accents. The informants' could only recognise the accents of

close family and friends whom they were accustomed to lip-reading. They often had to explain

to others that they were deaf which usually limited any meaningful communication.

Some informants found it difficult to communicate with Black hearing people because they were

afraid of them. These informants perceived Black people as having 'hard' facial expressions and

being 'tough looking' which made them nervous. They felt more comfortable approaching white

people whom they described as 'weak looking' and easier to understand.

" I used to get frightened of talking to Black people because Black people always look so tough it's true! They would make me nervous the way that they talked. They would tell me what to do, like come here! Go away! I understand more when I talk to white people. Black people are more tough, white people look weak so it is easier to talk to them; because I know their ways I would always talk to white people." (Francis, partially deaf)

The informants described having mixed experiences with members of the Black hearing

community. Whilst some informants' felt that they could communicate easily with Black people

others felt unable to do so. They attributed these difficulties to a lack of Deaf awareness in the

Black hearing community.

8.3 The Black Deaf Community: Is there one?

The informants had mixed feelings about the existence of a Black Deaf community. Whilst some

believed that the absence of Black Deaf groups and role models was evidence that a community

did not exist, others stated that the development of Black Deaf clubs was indicative of a growing

community.

Black Deaf clubs

The attempt by Black Deaf people to set up Deaf clubs which initially had a large Black

membership but had subsequently closed down, was often cited as evidence of a Black Deaf

community in some areas. Many of these clubs were multi- racial, but unstable, moving

frequently from one site to another due to temporary premises and limited funding. The

geographical spread of Black Deaf people across the country and the closure of some clubs affected the possibility of collective organisation.

Some of the informants' attributed the instability of Black Deaf clubs to those who managed them. The co-ordinators of these clubs were perceived as having no management experience, training or support to cope with the clubs' demands. The informants felt that club co-ordinators wasted their energies on trivialities, which failed to attract new members or increase attendance levels at activities and events. Apathy amongst Black Deaf people was also considered to be partly responsible.

Black Deaf community membership

Table 8.6 provides a summary of the different groups, which make up the Black Deaf community. Three types of Black Deaf people were identified on the basis of their responses in relation to their attitudes to the Black Deaf community. The Aspirers: those who were aspiring to develop resources in the Deaf community; The Inbetweeners: those who supported them; and finally the Drifters a group of individuals who took no interest in developing the Black Deaf community.

Although based on attitudes to the Black Deaf community, there were also socioeconomic characteristics which differentiated them. The informants who were categorised as Aspirers and Inbetweeners had higher occupational levels than the Drifters. They were all employed in professional to semi skilled jobs or were continuing their studies in higher education. All Aspirers were ambitious but the four Aspirers who had been partly raised abroad showed more determination. They had very clear ideas about what they wanted in life and appeared undeterred by the difficulties they encountered.

These informants felt that it was important to complete their education and obtain good jobs. Their experience of living in an all Black environment and travelling abroad to countries where racial issues were not important had helped them to develop a strong sense of their own ethnicity. This increased their level of self-confidence and inspired them to achieve.

There is only a slight difference between an Aspirer and Inbetweener. An Aspirer would take the lead in setting up organisations and social activities within the Black Deaf community, whereas an Inbetweener would play a more supportive and background role. There were no real differences between the socioeconomic status of the Aspirers and Drifters differences were mainly in relation to attitudes to the Black Deaf community.

In contrast, the informants who were categorised as Drifters were all unemployed. They stood on the opposite spectrum to the Aspirers and Inbetweeners because they were less clear about what they wanted in life, and had little regard for the development of the Black Deaf community. Unlike the Aspirers and Inbetweeners who had been partly raised abroad, none had the experience of living or interacting exclusively within an all Black environment. This, in addition to poor communication processes at home and difficult interactions with Black hearing people, made it difficult for them to accept being Black. It placed them, at least on a psychological level, in a weaker position to the Aspirers and Inbetweeners whose socialisation had helped them to deal with Black identity issues.

The difficulties faced by the Drifters are an example of some of the problems Black and Deaf children face being educated and raised in British society without access to Black Deaf role models or culturally sensitive environments. In many ways, their experiences suggest that Black Deaf people growing up in Britain are more disadvantaged than those living abroad, particularly in relation to racial identity acceptance and awareness, and future expectations.

The categories of Aspirers, Inbetweeners, and Drifters were also based on the types of relationships they formed with their families. The findings showed that as a group the Drifters had more limited contact with their parents than the other two groups. Some had been separated from them at an early age and raised by other family members. Others described having difficult relationships with their parents, due to poor communication and a non acceptance of deafness. In contrast, the Aspirers and Inbetweeners described having relatively closer ties to their families. They had regular contact and good communication with family members.

The categories of Aspirer, Inbetweener and Drifter were also based on how the informants identified themselves in relation to the Deaf community. The Aspirers and Inbetweeners described themselves as belonging to the Black Deaf community, whereas the Drifters did not. Their inclusion within the Black Deaf community occurred by default due to racial divisions within the Deaf community which perpetuated hostility and prejudice towards different racial groups.

Thus the informants' self identification as a member of the Black Deaf community, the occupational levels they achieved or aspired to, the level of contact with Black people, and the nature of their family relationships were the main features used to assign them to the categories of Aspirers, Inbetweeners and Drifters. Equally important were the attitudes they held towards the development of the Black Deaf community. Whilst the Aspirers and Inbetweeners sought to develop activities and information for Black Deaf people the Drifters took no part. They were apathetic to the notion of a Black Deaf community and chose to socialise predominately in white social venues such as Deaf pubs.

To summarise, an Aspirer or Inbetweener are people who identifies themselves as belonging to the Black Deaf community, and takes an active role in the communitys' activities. They have a close relationship with their family, and experience of living in Africa or the Caribbean. They are usually employed or studying for higher educational qualifications. These individuals were also mostly likely to be married or in long term relationships.

In contrast to the Aspirer and Inbetweener, the Drifter was likely to be someone born and raised in Britain. These individuals would usually have limited social experiences with progressive Black Deaf people, and would not feel inspired by those who were successful. They would not usually participate in activities within the Black Deaf community, but prefer to socialise in Deaf pubs and clubs. The Drifters were most likely to be unemployed, single, and have difficult or estranged relationships with their families.

Table 8.6 Social groups within the Black Deaf community

- **Aspirers:** These are potential Black Deaf Leaders. They have a clear grasp of the politics of the Deaf community and have an active role and interest in setting up Black Deaf based projects. They are pro active and have aspirations to reach a professional level within the wider Deaf community. They often have a strong racial awareness

- **Inbetweeners:** These tend to be supporters of the Aspirers. They attend Black Deaf events/clubs and support the development of Black Deaf projects and resources. They have latent aspirations but are often less confident or appear to be over committed in their life to implement them. They tend to involve themselves in the activities of the Aspirers but also occasionally those of the followers. They have a well develop sense of their racial identity.

- **Drifters/Followers:** This group comprises of those whose lives are immersed in white Deaf culture i.e. pub gatherings and mainstream Deaf social activities. They are rarely involved in Black Deaf led initiatives and often attach no importance or significance to their racial identity. They are the drifters of the Black Deaf community usually following their Deaf friends (both Black and white) and relying on them for direction. They often have no real opinion of their own about the Black Deaf community, and have weak awareness of their racial identity.

Terminology and its impact on the social identity of Black Deaf people

A commonly held view amongst some informants was that some Black Deaf people did not get involved within the Black Deaf community because they were not aware of being Black. These informants described how some Black Deaf people objected to the use of the word 'Black' in preference for 'Caribbean' because they believed it had ' bad' and 'dangerous' connotations. They felt that some Black Deaf people did not know that the term 'Ethnic' referred to both Black and Asian people, and as a result, did not get involved in the clubs and activities organised for them in mind.

Black Deaf role models

Several informants blamed the absence of Black Deaf role models on the Black Deaf community's lack of cohesion, and direction. Black Deaf people were poorly represented in education, Deaf events and as Deaf professionals. A commonly held view amongst some

informants was that some Deaf organisations maintained this exclusion, because the short term projects set up by them to improve their practices[27] to Black and ethnic groups, failed to do so.

The informants identified several Black hearing role models that they admired, most were celebrities such as Linford Christie, Eddie Murphy and Michael Jackson. Only one Black Deaf person who worked as an entertainer was considered as a possible role model. However, his ethnicity (African- American) made this contentious amongst members of the Black Deaf community.

The existence of some Black Deaf clubs, and the emergence of identity issues amongst Black Deaf people highlight that a Black Deaf community does exist. Further evidence can be seen in the Black variation of British Sign Language used by Black Deaf people.

Black sign language

All of the informants were bilingual to a greater or lesser extent. They used sign language, and spoken English to communicate. Several informants who used BSL stated that their signing differed from their white Deaf counterparts. The most salient difference between Black and white signers were body movements and facial expressions. Black Deaf signers adopted the body language and facial expressions of Black hearing people especially those associated with Black youth culture.

Some informants described their facial expressions as more animated. They felt that the body movements of some Black Deaf signers were 'distinctly Black' casual and relaxed. For example Black Deaf people would make a sound with their mouth (commonly known as 'tutting' to white hearing people) in a manner which could be understood by other Black people to convey some form of vexation or annoyance. They would also touch fists and greet each other in the same way that young Black hearing males frequently do.

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[27] During the 1990s several major Deaf organisations established development projects to increase the uptake of their services from the Black and Ethnic minority communities. These were short term projects lasting between 2-3yrs.

The influence of Black hearing culture affected the way that Black Deaf people expressed themselves through sign language. Black cultural diversity was often reflected in the emergence of new signs, which denoted different aspects of Black cultural life. For example some of the new signs related to Caribbean food such as Ackee, and Yam or to events like the Notting Hill Carnival. Regional variants of these signs were common in predominately Black areas like Peckham, Hackney, or Lewisham.

Black Deaf signers drew heavily on Jamaican Creole to express themselves in sign. Many Black hearing gestures were adapted and used when signing with other Black Deaf people, but not with their white counterparts. The informants believed that white Deaf people would not understand the meaning of their 'Black' body language.

This Black variant of British Sign Language created positive feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood amongst some Black Deaf people. They felt able to discuss cultural issues without having to alter their signing. When the informants' wished to exclude outsiders from private conversations they would create signs known only to those in their 'in group'.

The new 'Black' sign

All of the informants used the new sign for Black. This was signed on the back of the hand rather than on the face. With this new sign for 'Black' emerged a new sign for 'White' which was denoted by the same hand movement but on the palm of the hand.

Some of the informants objected to the White Deaf sign commonly used for Black. This was denoted by a hand movement on the face. They felt that this sign was harsh and often tried to correct signers who used it. Some informants' expressed annoyance about the continual use of this sign amongst White Deaf people. They felt that its use persisted because *they* did not like the new signs for 'Black', which in turn angered them.

The informants felt that it was important for Black Deaf signs and culture to be accepted. The lack of recognition of Black sign language was considered to be evident in education, especially in sign language courses. Several informants believed that Deaf tutors (most of whom are

predominately white) failed to research appropriate signs denoting Black culture. Instead they

would create their own signs, which perpetuated the use of signs rejected by Black Deaf people.

8.4 Black Sign language interpreters

All of the informants felt that there was a need for Black interpreters but only a small number

worked in the profession.[28] Many informants stated that the racial background of the interpreter

was irrelevant, but felt that Black people should have a choice. The few informants, who had

used Black sign language interpreters, described feeling a sense of empathy with them because

of their relaxed and friendly approach. This contrasted with some of their experiences with

white interpreters who made them feel inadequate. These informants described them as rigid

and unfriendly and affecting their ability to understand the information being conveyed:

" Once I was in a situation where they had a white interpreter. I didn't really understand her signing. She was using her white culture and everything else was inside of her. She was very stiff when she was signing, even after they had finished. I didn't know what she was talking about. Her signing just went right over my head." (Sarah, profoundly deaf)

A group of informants felt that sign language interpreters were inflexible because of the

difficulties they experienced trying to use their services. These informants were frequently told

that they were busy, and were not able to book any interpreters at the weekends, even in

emergencies. This is illustrated in Janet's case:

Janet tried to book an Interpreter for a friend who had prematurely gone into labour to have her baby. Janet's attempt to find an interpreter proved futile as they were all too busy or did not work weekends. All the interpreters told Janet that she should have booked a month in advance.

Janet felt that the sign language interpreters' were discriminatory. She felt that they were deliberately strict about their interpreting services because she was Black. Janet believed that more Black interpreters are needed in the sign language profession to make the service more flexible and to reduce discrimination.

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[28] According to Darr et al (1997) there are approximately 7 known Black and ethnic minority Sign Language Interpreters in the UK

Some informants strongly felt that the continuous absence of Black interpreters within the Deaf community represented a symbol of their alienation. These informants perceived Black interpreters as a support mechanism for Black Deaf people because of their knowledge and understanding of both the Black and Deaf communities.

A group of informants' felt that the presence of Black interpreters would place Black Deaf people on an equal level to their white Deaf counterparts. The benefits they identified for increasing the numbers of Black Sign Language Interpreters are illustrated in Table 8. 7.

Table 8.7 The benefits of Black interpreters

Benefits of using Black interpreters
• Reduced feelings of inequality between Black Deaf person and BSL Interpreter i.e. on the basis of hearingness, race, gender, signing ability
• Greater equality in the interpreting profession, by providing an opportunity for Deaf people to have a choice of Sign Language interpreter.
• Black interpreters would increase the flexibility of the interpreting service, as they might be more willing to work at weekends and respond to emergency calls.
• Black interpreters could act as support mechanism for the Black Deaf community by sharing knowledge of Black issues and culture.
• Black Deaf people could benefit from being able to access Black sign language interpreters during times of personal difficulties i.e. in counselling settings
• Black interpreters could facilitate greater understanding of communication processes across cultures, and understanding of the Black variants of sign language.

The informants perceived Black interpreters as more than just communicators. They were seen as individuals who could strengthen the Black Deaf community and raise their status. Specific situations were identified where Black sign language Interpreters were most needed. These were during times of personal difficulties in the family or when counselling was required.

One of the problems facing Black Deaf people trying to access and support the growth of Black Sign Language Interpreters within the Deaf community, were the negative attitudes they encountered from Deaf organisations and services. These organisations were dismissive of requests for Black interpreters. They made the informants feel that they had no right to stipulate their needs and that there was no specific need for them.

The following table 8.8 provides an overview of other barriers affecting the establishment of a Black Deaf community.

Table 8.8 Barriers to the establishment of a cohesive Black Deaf community.

1. Scarcity of Black Deaf clubs -no focal place for Black Deaf people to meet.
2. Instability of Black Deaf clubs- temporary premises/ limited funding, poor management and a lack of support.
3. Black Deaf People geographically spread across the country. A rough estimate of the Black Deaf population is approximately 1,200[29].
4. Poorly attended Black events by Black Deaf people perceived as a reflection of poor management and apathy within the Black Deaf community.
5. Lack of awareness of a distinguishable variant of sign language
6. Emerging class divide within the Black Deaf Community between those who were aspiring to professional status and those who felt powerless to change their low social economic status.
7. Poor confidence and self esteem amongst Black Deaf people
8. Black Deaf people failed to recognise the term 'ethnic' as referring to them, did not capitalise on opportunities within the Deaf community
9. Limited role models within the Black Deaf Community: poor representation of Black Deaf people at events, organisations and at a professional level.

8.5 Status and discrimination in the Deaf community

Discrimination in the Deaf community

A number of the informants felt that equality in the Deaf community did not exist. They had experienced discrimination both on racial and linguistic grounds. When discussing differences in status between groups in the Deaf community, all of the informants' perceived Black Deaf people as having the lowest status. White Deaf people were viewed as having the highest status, whilst Jewish and Asian Deaf people were identified as holding a middle position.

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[29] This estimate is based on the Royal National Institute for the Deaf figures on childhood deafness for the year 1995. According to their figures 13 children in every 10,000 are born deaf or become deaf in early childhood. Figures from the National Office of statistics of the UK population and the size of the Black Afro Caribbean and African communities were used in this calculation.

The informants perceived Asian and Jewish groups as being more successful in developing and acquiring resources due to their cultural distinctiveness. They felt that their requests were often marginalised in relation to these groups because service providers believed that the cultural needs of Black Deaf people could be catered for within mainstream white led services.

Differences in status were most marked by the employment positions occupied by Black Deaf people and other members of the Deaf community. Some of the informants felt that white Deaf people had more opportunities because Black people faced racial discrimination. They felt that some employers had difficulties dealing with issues of race and disability, and as a result preferred to employ a white Deaf person.

The lack of employment opportunities available to Black Deaf people meant that they had limited work experiences compared to their white Deaf counterparts. This affected their progress both within the Deaf and hearing worlds as many of the job vacancies within the Deaf community (even those at the lower end) were filled by white Deaf people.

Racism in the Deaf community

Several informants believed that racism existed in the Deaf community, especially in Deaf clubs, outside of London. In these clubs, Black Deaf people often found themselves to be unwelcome. Racism and discrimination were particularly strong amongst the older Deaf generation who seemed resistant to any form of change. These older Deaf people were stuck in a time warp, wanting and expecting things to be the way they had remembered. This often meant a rejection and objection to the presence of Black, Gay or Lesbian Deaf people, and in some circumstances, women, in their clubs. Table 8.10 provides an overview of the characteristics of racism in the Deaf community.

Some informants felt that some of the signs used by white Deaf people were offensive, and evidence of racism in the Deaf community. Some white Deaf people would use derogatory signs

to refer to aspects of Black womens' bodies and Black culture. In many ways, racism amongst Deaf people mirrored the same forms of expression used by white hearing racists. Racist jokes were commonplace, and Black Deaf people were frequently insulted by questions about their presence in Britain and calls for them to return to Africa.

The informants described experiencing racial discrimination both from white Deaf people and other minority ethnic Deaf groups. For example, Asian Deaf people were developing their own clubs and pulling away from the wider Deaf and Black Deaf community. The strong religious element in their groups and the attitudes of some Asian Deaf people made it clear to the informants that they did not wish to mix with them which created further segregation.

The informants were faced with similar attitudes from members of the Deaf Jewish community, who also slighted Black Deaf people. In most cases the informants' were made aware of the racially prejudiced feelings of these groups by their body language, facial expressions, and attitudes of members when they entered their clubs or social arenas.

Most of the informants believed that Black Deaf people were willing to mix with other racial and ethnic groups, but were often rejected by them. To cope with this situation, several Black Deaf people chose to mix only with Deaf people of the same racial background.

Table 8.9 Characteristics of racism in the Deaf community.

• British Sign Language: Some signs used by white Deaf people denoting Black people and their culture were considered as racist by the informants'
• Deaf institutions and organisations: No resources for Black Deaf people and the absence of Black Deaf people at service user and provider levels
• Deaf apartheid: growing segregation of white and other ethnic groups from Black Deaf people
• Inter ethnic group racism: antagonism between different ethnic and Black groups and a struggle for sparse resources.

8.6 Feeling the difference: racism in the hearing world

Racism in the hearing world

Learning about racism and discrimination was for some informants a distressing and emotional experience. These informants had grown up in insular and predominately white educational and social environments where the notion of racial discrimination appeared to be an anomaly:

" I understood about the outside, like on the street that white people didn't like Black people so I was a bit frightened. Why didn't they like Black people? I didn't understand that when I was small in 1971. Why white people didn't like Black people? I didn't know why. I was told that it was the colour. I was shocked that white people didn't like a Black person I was wondering why I had to try and check is something wrong with me? Why didn't they like me? I asked my sister why White people didn't like Black people and she said because of our colour. They think we are like chocolate chimps and monkeys. But God created everyone. He made us all different Asian, Black White there are different people in the world. I was really shocked and felt really emotional." (Janet, profoundly deaf)

Some informants' negative experiences were not attributed to racial discrimination because they did not know about racism or the covert ways that it could be expressed. Other informants who were aware of racial discrimination from their own personal experiences and interactions viewed it as having a devastating effect on the Black Deaf community.

Racism in schools

School was often the first arena where the informants' experienced racism. Here, they were exposed to racist verbal abuse from other children. In mainstream schools they would unwittingly get caught up in racial conflicts between Black and white pupils, even when they were not personally involved in these situations. Chapter five highlighted some of the difficulties between the informants' and their teachers. These were often the result of prejudicial attitudes, which influenced teaching practice and behaviour.

Incidental racism

The informants experienced racism in their every day interactions which appeared in many forms. A persons' behaviour, manner of speech or attitude can reveal its' subtly and nuances. Racism is not always easy to detect, it can be non-confrontational, non-litigious. It can appear in a subtle form and thus not always noticed by the person discriminated against or by others in

their environment. For example one informant, Sharon, described an incident where she went into a shop and the cashier threw the change in her hand. Sharon described this incident as being racist because of the differential treatment she received from the cashier compared to the white customers who had been served before her. They had been handed their change.

Racism and discrimination in the labour market

As discussed in chapter six employment remained the most common settings for discrimination. The informants' believed that this was because they were Deaf. They described experiencing poor employment practices such as inadequate communication support, limited information sharing and negative employer attitudes. They also felt that they were often overlooked when it came to promotional opportunities at work.

However, a minority of informants felt that racial discrimination was their main barrier in accessing jobs and getting promoted at work. The invisible nature of their deafness, owing to their lack of hearing aids and the use of clear oral methods of communication, made some informants feel that their race negatively affected their employment opportunities. In some cases where the informants' had experienced racial discrimination, knowledge of their deafness was not known.

Survival strategies

The life experiences of Black Deaf people were greatly affected by different experiences of discrimination. Not only did discrimination exist in the sphere of education and employment but also their social lives. To cope with the experience of racism, many informants' ignored the people who were racist, and others felt powerless to change the situation.

Some however, got into arguments and physical fights with people they once regarded as friends, which was particularly difficult for them to deal with. These experiences often left them disillusioned.

8.7 Two of a kind? Differences between Black Deaf men and women

The informants' considered the status of Black Deaf men and women as comparable. They were both considered as facing high levels of underemployment, unemployment and discrimination although the forms of discrimination experienced differed. The female informants' perceived Black Deaf men as being over zealously labelled as mentally ill resulting in large numbers facing hospitalisation[30]. Their level of suffering was considered to be greater due to widespread societal perceptions about Black men and their involvement in drugs and crime.

Several female informants felt that the criminalisation of Black men in British society is equally applicable to Black Deaf men. They felt that Black Deaf men were just as likely was Black hearing men to be physically attacked and abused by those who suspected them of criminal activities or involvement. Black Deaf men who could not communicate orally were considered as most vulnerable, because this was often mistakenly interpreted as uncooperative behaviour.

Since Black Deaf people have very few avenues where they can openly discuss their experiences and express their feelings; some female informants felt this had a negative impact on Black Deaf people, particularly Black Deaf men. They were considered as emotionally weaker than Black Deaf women. Black Deaf women were perceived as psychologically stronger and more able to cope with life's difficulties.

Interestingly, a number of female informants had completed counselling and self-help courses, which they considered a form of therapy in itself.

For Black Deaf women their experience of discrimination was more complex. Most female informants recognised that they had multiple identities, but none were able to describe

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[30] According to Dr Perkins the ethnicity of longterm deaf clients(over 16's) who have had contact with psychiatric services previoursly from the 1st April 1999 are as follows: UK deaf including Irish 67.6%, African 2.9%, Caribbean18.1%, Asian 5.7%, and other European 1.8%. These figures have been taken from the 10th longterm care case register report from South West Londong and St. George's Mental Health Trust.

experiences in their lives where they felt that they had been disadvantaged specifically for their gender, above their status of being Black or Deaf. Some felt that they faced simultaneous oppression where their racial identity, disabled identity and their gender were all concurrently perceived as negative. The problems they described experiencing were associated with motherhood, and access to appropriate health information and support. Most informants did not know if this stemmed from their experience as a Black person, being Deaf or a woman.

All of the informants acknowledged facing some form of discrimination. For some this was attributed to their racial identity and for others their Deaf identity. The informants who experienced racial discrimination believed that deafness compounded their problems, whilst other informants felt that their main form of discrimination came from being Deaf.

Many of the female informants were unable to describe situations where they experienced gender discrimination. They did however, feel that their gender affected how they were treated.

8.8 Conclusions

Understanding Blackness

The findings outlined in this chapter suggest that racial awareness amongst most of the informants occurred late in childhood. This contrasts with racial studies highlighting that children as young as three years old are racially aware (Horowitz 1939; Clark 1947) and show signs of racial preferences (Carter 1968; Goodman 1941). Out of all the informants, those who had lived abroad developed an awareness of their racial identity much earlier than those who grew up in Britain. The visible cultural differences gained from living in two different countries could perhaps explain their heightened level of awareness.

The apparent delay in growth of racial awareness amongst most other informants could be attributed to the nature of their family relationships. Here the informants' involvement and sense of identification with family members was weak. As described in chapter five the school played an important role within the informants' lives. As children the informants were bussed

out of their neighbourhoods to schools situated in predominately white suburbs. This was not only a dislocating experience but it undermined their relationships with members of their home community.

The 'doll studies' of the 60s and 70s examining racial awareness and preference in children significantly showed that Black children identified with and preferred white dolls. This widespread mis- identification amongst Black children only diminished, as they grew older. By the 1970s Black children no longer mis-identified with white dolls (Hraba and Grant 1970; Fox & Jordan, 1973). This was explained by the growth in Black consciousness both politically and socially (Milner; 1983) and Black childrens' greater familiarity with Black dolls.

Whilst these doll tests have been critiqued elsewhere (See Katz 1996) the findings from these studies demonstrate that mis- identification amongst Black children was widespread. The informants' inability to relate to or understand any of their experiences in relation to racial identity suggests that they faced similar forms of mis- identification. White teachers had played a central role in their socialisation though the medium of education. They had little if any contact with other Black people. Some of the informants only became aware of their racial identity when they approached late adolescence. When this occurred they were able to identify experiences attributable to their race. This acted as a catalyst for the development of 'racial' needs.

An increased racial awareness was not always matched by positive feelings about having a Black identity. Table 8.3 highlighted that the informants' were positive, negative or indifferent about being Black. The informants who had positive feelings felt accepted and able to access the Black hearing community. This led to the development of a Black consciousness and a sense of Black pride.

The informants who displayed negative feelings could not access the Black community and thus did not feel part of it. They felt marginalised amongst Black people and believed that being Black negatively affected their life opportunities.

The informants who had mixed and indifferent feelings towards being Black tended to feel that they had an identity, which was different from Black hearing, people. They were more concerned with their Deaf identity and thus formed a weak identification with the Black community. Other informants who fell into this category had mixed experiences with Black hearing people. This was reflected in their negative and positive feelings.

The informants' diversity of feelings about racial identity reflects the way in which individual identities are constructed and negotiated. The informants based their racial identity choices and feelings on their own experiences and how they felt about themselves. Blackness is not a closed construct and as the informants interacted more widely, they began constructing their own ideas of what it meant to be Black.

Some informants feared all Black people. Their limited interactions with members of the Black community sustained this fear. These informants' chose to communicate and socialise predominately with white people.

Black culture and identity

The construction of a distinct identity, which other Black Deaf people could relate to, and one with positive connotations emerged as an important issue. The objection of some Black Deaf people to the use of the word Black to define themselves was often on the premise that it was negative. This indicates how the language and culture of British society is permeated with cultural racism, so that everything bad is associated with Blackness and everything good with whiteness. A rejection of the term Black indicated that some Black Deaf people had internalised the negative connotations attached to the term, and thus could not see it as having any positive meaning. The word 'ethnic' was also considered inappropriate, because Black Deaf people did not perceive this as referring to them, or their culture.

This is hardly surprising, given the mainstreaming of Black culture. Black culture is evident in every aspect of British life. Black music dominates not only the music scene but also the world of TV advertising. Black street fashion has become 'high fashion', and the Notting Hill Carnival, a

West Indian immigrant community event has become a national event attracting millions. This mainstreaming of some aspects of Black culture has led to the belief that Black people do not have any specific cultural needs. Many service providers seem to have assumed that the needs of Black Deaf people in contrast to their Asian counterparts do not require specific consideration. The lack of acknowledgement of the cultural features of the Black community in British society has affected the responses of both statutory and voluntary organisations to members of the Black Deaf community.

Black Deaf community matters

As discussed in chapter one, theorists have identified that membership in the Deaf community is dependent upon self- identification, sign languages, endogamous marital patterns and membership of national, regional and local organisations and social structures. (Padden, Humphries 1988; Woll, Lawson; 1981) The Deaf community comprises native and non- native signers who are hard of hearing as well as deaf, individuals having a common language, experiences and values, and a common way of communicating with hearing people and each other. These characteristics were evident amongst the informants in this study, clearly making them members of the Deaf community.

However, the informants' experiences showed that they were not just members of a Deaf community, but a Black Deaf community. This was highlighted by a common recognition and use amongst them of a Black variant of BSL, one, which was saturated with influences of Black hearing culture, and was distinctive from the white Deaf community. The Black variant of BSL reflected the informants' interactions with Black hearing people. It mirrored the distinctive ways in which some Black hearing people used gestures and body language to express themselves. There were many new signs denoting Caribbean food and events.

The utilisation of Black BSL by the informants, particularly amongst those who had limited contact with Black hearing people, highlighted that Black culture also existed outside predominately Black communities. This has been supported by research which has shown that

white youths particularly those who live in multi racial communities often adopt elements of Black culture within their own group interactions. (Beck 1996, Hewitt 1986)

Further evidence of a Black Deaf community was visible in the marital patterns and community activities of this group. All of the informants who were involved in long term relationships had Black and Deaf partners. They also participated in Black Deaf community activities and events. Many of these informants contributed to the setting up of Black Deaf groups and clubs, and activities designed to promote the needs and interests of Black Deaf people. These informants identified themselves as members of the Black Deaf community.

Thus despite the diversity of opinion amongst Black Deaf people about the existence of a Black Deaf community, the findings have suggested that Black Deaf people do form a distinct group, also sharing a similar social class, evident in the occupational levels achieved, and the types of employment their parents had when they migrated to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s.

These shared features amongst the informants clearly make it possible to speak of a Black Deaf community, one which is both local and national. Despite being geographically dispersed throughout the country Black Deaf people come together for special activities and events regardless of where they are geographically based. Travelling across the UK they meet up with Black Deaf friends to exchange information or to participate in Deaf activities. This is very much a feature of Black Deaf communities in the same way that it is of the wider Deaf community. Black Deaf social events and activities are both advertised and attended nationally. There is not notion of separate sub-communities only different organisational structures and locations.

The use of a single Black variant of BSL by Black Deaf people all over the country is also evidence of a national community. There is some minor variations but this parallels the regional variations within standard BSL used by many Deaf people across the UK.

Despite the absence of figures on the numbers of Black Deaf people in the UK and the lack of historical references, Black Deaf people constitute more of an emerging community rather than an established one. They have no traceable links with the Deaf communities in the Caribbean or

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Africa because Deaf people were not amongst wave of immigrants entering Britain during the 1950's and 1960's.

Britain's Black Deaf community constitute a very small and developing group who have not, until fairly recently sought to make contacts with other Black Deaf people living abroad. These contacts have been forged by individuals seeking to learn from the experiences of others in establishing resources and networks for Black Deaf people.

The recent changes in British society has led to increased opportunities for both minority and disability groups to create their own histories. It has encouraged Deaf and disability groups to participate in the politics of identity. This has led, in the words of one Drifter, to Black Deaf people ' asserting themselves' and seeking to have their presence as a community 'heard' and acknowledged by the wider Deaf community. It has encouraged greater self organisation and intervention in Deaf politics, in an attempt to gain greater resources for the younger generations of Black Deaf people.

 Thus it is possible to talk of a national Black Deaf community, evident in the formation of clubs and events aiming to support and empower Black Deaf people; the existence of Black signs denoting aspects of Black Deaf life, social activities and events organised on a national level and the identification by Black Deaf people as members of a Black Deaf community.

Whilst this chapter has clearly shown that a Black Deaf community does exist it is weakened by a number of different influences. These are inter-group conflict, identity issues, invisible cultural differences compared to mainstream white society, and the effects of racism and discrimination both within the Deaf community and wider society. Whilst the Black hearing community exists as a potential support mechanism, limited deaf awareness and education in supporting the needs of Deaf people have to be addressed.

The community study highlighted that deafness was perceived as mild to moderate disability within the African- Caribbean communities. This perhaps reflects the community's failure to

address issues effecting Black Deaf people, which have weakened the social position of Black Deaf people.

Further weaknesses within the Black Deaf community were reflected in the instability of Black Deaf clubs, which clearly affected the recruitment of new members. This, however, must be contextualised within the developments of the wider Deaf community.

The Deaf community has in recent years undergone dramatic changes. This has been characterised by Deaf people moving away from traditional Deaf ways of socialising i.e. Deaf clubs and voluntary organisations, to utilising 'hearing' pursuits and social domains. These changes, have had an impact on all members of the Deaf community and has affected the development of Black Deaf clubs as a medium to support Black Deaf people (See Padden 1996)

The development of a distinguishable Deaf professional class, notably in the voluntary sector and in Universities across the UK has led to new social activities of a professional nature for Deaf people. This has created a gulf between different Deaf groups, including the Black Deaf people, who perceive themselves as having the lowest status in the Deaf community.

These developments within the wider Deaf community have thus had a negative impact on the efforts of particular members of the Black Deaf community e.g. the 'Aspirers'. The diversification of interests amongst Deaf people has led to the development of specific interest groups replacing Deaf clubs as the focal point for the community. The old style Deaf clubs have thus become less attractive leisure places ensuring that their development within the Black Deaf community remains rudimentary.

The Black Deaf community also faced internal problems. The growing number of Black Deaf people (Aspirers) who were not only aspiring to a professional status within the Deaf community but actively working towards it were often resented by other Black Deaf people, notably the Drifters. They were perceived as deserting their community because of their determination to succeed. In the words of one Drifter by "asserting themselves" the aspirers were causing greater discrimination to occur against other Black Deaf people.

The Aspirers thus faced a battle on two fronts. Not only were they held back by institutions that worked against them, through the processes of racism and disablism, but also members of their own community failed to understand what they were striving for.

Impact of racism and discrimination

The existence of racism in society contributed to the slow progress made by Black Deaf people. Black Deaf people were held back by their marginalised position in Deaf organisations and services. The construction of Black people as a problem in British society has affected them. As discussed in chapter one Black people have always been treated within a 'crisis management' framework. Quick fix solutions to their long-term difficulties have thus always been the norm.

The ability of Asian Deaf people compared to Black Deaf people to mobilize and progress within the Deaf community mirrors some of the changes amongst Ethnic Minority communities in Britain more generally. The Latest PSI Survey (Modood et al 1997) identified that diversity amongst minority groups is as important as the Black and white divide. Racism operates differently amongst Black and other ethnic minorities. (See Modood 1997) Ethnic minority communities should no longer be considered as a single entity. For example, recent research on the Ethnic Deaf community (see Ahmad et al 1998) highlighted that Asian Deaf people compared to Black Deaf people had more support mechanisms. This was due to services already existing in local authorities for hearing Asians. The five ethnic minority social workers for Deaf people in the UK were thus all identified as Asian.

The replication of hearing racism in the Deaf community dispelled any notion that Deaf people were united by the shared experience of deafness. Discrimination existed in the hierarchy of communication methods adopted by the Deaf. A similar hierarchy existed on racial grounds. For example, Deaf people who communicated differently (not using BSL) were often perceived as not authentically Deaf or in some cases not part of the Deaf community. Similar discrimination also existed on racial grounds where white Deaf people were seen as representative of the Deaf community, 'authentic' Deaf people.

The history of Deaf people in Britain serves to reinforce this. Its' focus on the achievements and experiences of the white Deaf community, to the exclusion of others recreate the notion that the authentic Deaf community is white. (See Jackson 1990, Grant 1990) Similar parallels can be made about the position of Black people in British society because despite half of Britains' Black population being born in Britain their Britishness has always been contested.

In the next chapter the study will explore whether Black Deaf people should be regarded as Black Deaf or Deaf Black. It examines their identity choices and the main factors that have influenced these.

8.9 Summary

This chapter showed that racial identity awareness varied amongst the informants. Whilst some informants were aware of being Black others felt a race apart. An exploration of their feelings showed that they had a mixture of positive, ambivalent and negative feelings towards Blackness. These different feelings were reflected in their knowledge and experience of interacting with Black hearing people. Whilst some of the informants were not interested in mixing with Black hearing people, those who were had difficulties gaining access to events and services. They were often only able to access activities such as the Carnival because this was open to everyone.

However, some of the informants felt reluctant to get involved with Black hearing people. This was the result of communication barriers and feelings of inadequacy having experienced negative attitudes from Black people.

The chapter then examined the social identity of the Black Deaf community by exploring the diversity of its' social groups. These groups were identified as Aspirers, Inbetweeners and Drifters each of whom displayed different characteristics towards the development of the Black Deaf community. Some of the difficulties identified as facing Black Deaf people included apathy amongst its members, the instability of Black Deaf clubs, and a lack of Black Deaf role models.

The chapter also demonstrated some of the strengths of the Black Deaf community. This included the development of a Black variant of sign language denoting aspects of their culture, and the role and potential support network of Black sign language interpreters.

The weakness of the Black Deaf community was evident from some of the informants' own perceptions of their group as having the lowest social status within the Deaf community. This was often seen by informants' as the result of discrimination and racism which operated both within the hearing and Deaf worlds.

Chapter 9: Black Deaf or Deaf Black?

9.0 Introduction

This chapter returns to the original question Black Deaf or Deaf Black? Drawing on the preceding chapters, it examines the overall impact of the family, education, and the experiences of employment and unemployment on the identity development process. The chapter demonstrates how some of the informants' identities constantly changed and were often negotiated in different situations.

How the informants defined themselves was not a predictor of their status within the Black Deaf community. The informants' self-identification as Black Deaf or Deaf Black related to personal experiences and choices. These were influenced by their experiences as Deaf and as Black people, and the external constructions that were respectively placed on these two identities.

The categories of Aspirer, Inbetweener and Drifter introduced in Chapter 8 referred to the informants' role in the Black Deaf community. These 3 groups comprised individuals who defined themselves as both Deaf Black and Black Deaf or had alternative identities.

9.1 Black Deaf identities

Chapter 8 explored how Black Deaf people can and do operate as a separate group both within the Deaf and Black communities. It highlighted the barriers to the cohesion of the Black Deaf community and the diversity of its community membership. This chapter explores how the informants became aware of being Black and Deaf. It looks at the different influences affecting their choice of identity and how they negotiated their identities in different situations.

Black Deaf identity formation and awareness

The informants' Black Deaf identity formation emerged from a composite of external influences and personal experiences. Many appeared to be aware of having a Deaf identity but not a Black identity. Chapter four highlighted that some informants became aware of being Deaf from their

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feelings of difference within the family circle and their social exclusion from hearing children. However, an awareness of having both a Black identity and Deaf identity largely occurred in their educational and social environments. This was often precipitated by the stigmatising reaction of others, and positive interactions with other Black Deaf people:

' *I was 16. A man.... came to the school. He was a former student at the school. When he came in he was talking, really I didn't know about Black deafness. I knew that I was deaf but that was it. I was equal I knew about Deaf rights and how I needed to get more support as a Deaf person and all that sort of thing, but he came along and was talking about Black people then I really became interested in myself. I became interested in equal opportunities* ' *(Joshua, profoundly deaf)*

Access to further education also influenced some of the informants' outlook and attitudes towards life, particularly when they felt isolated both from the Deaf and Black Deaf communities. This was often accompanied by an awareness of being Black and Deaf, and yet still different as Sharon's account suggests:

Sharon's educational experiences forced her to deal with many challenges both from within the Black Deaf community and Deaf community. Her aspirations to become a Deaf professional and develop resources for Black Deaf people were misunderstood by some of her Black Deaf friends, leaving her lonely and isolated:

'*I have been isolated in the Deaf Black community because I am not the same person I was before. I am learning and I have been through the education system. I am improving myself so now when I mix with my friends I realise it is not the same. Some of my friends feel I am too high, it is too much for them. They expected me to be the same to just lay back and enjoy myself so sometimes I feel lonely. I want more Black Deaf people to become professional. I expect that in future Black Deaf people will become grassroots professionals.*' *(Sharon, profoundly deaf)*

For other informants particularly those who had been educated in Africa an awareness of being Black and Deaf emerged when they came to Britain. Although these informants were aware that they were deaf, and that they were born in Africa or the Caribbean, they were not aware of having a racial identity. This awareness only occurred from interacting with white people who referred to them as 'Black'.

For other informants an awareness and acceptance of being Black and Deaf was a process of self-exploration:

Junior's awareness of his Black Deaf identity emerged when he began to question who he was. Junior's physical appearance, his straight hair and olive skin initially led him and others to believe that he was Asian. However his non-Asian name and inability to connect with Asian Deaf people made him realise that he was not Asian.

His Black family members and strong friendships with members of the Black hearing community led him to identify himself as Black and Deaf.

Several informants were more aware of their Deaf identity rather than racial identity. They did not associate any negative experiences in their lives to being Black until late adolescence and beyond, and some did not at all. Other informants became aware of their Black Deaf identity from their experiences of further education and employment. In these contexts the attitudes of some teachers, peers and employers often made them feel different to other deaf, white or Black hearing people.

The following section will examine the informants' self identification and the influences bearing on this process will be examined.

9.2 Black Deaf?

Racial identity as a 'master status'

Several informants identified themselves as Black Deaf. They considered their Blackness as the 'master status' (Goffman 1965). It was the main feature that they felt others noticed about them. Many partially deaf informants described themselves as Black Deaf. They identified more closely with Black hearing people, due to their oral methods of communication and access to the Black hearing community.

Some of the profoundly deaf informants also identified themselves as Black Deaf. They felt closer to the Black hearing community, rather than the Deaf community. They considered Black hearing people as supportive and understanding, and believed that they shared similar experiences. These informants felt a strong sense of Blackness when they were among Black

Deaf friends or in situations where they were considered as representative of the Black community:

' I went training and they were talking about disability and identity and maybe there are 10 people and only 1 Black person, and a white person says things like oh Black people need this and that and they automatically look at me. They look at me as to say am I right? Am what I am saying right? I hope you are not offended by what I am saying...' (Amy, partially deaf)

Black culture as a primary culture

Some of the informants who described themselves as Black Deaf felt that Black culture was their main culture. It was the culture they had inherited from their families. In contrast Deaf culture was perceived as an adopted culture, one which they could abandon at anytime. Some informants, particularly those who had experienced racism and discrimination within the Deaf community felt that the lack of recognition by Deaf people of Black cultures made it difficult for them to identify primarily with the Deaf community.

Interactions with the Black community

A few informants who identified primarily with the Black community felt excluded from the cultural experiences of being Black. These informants believed that being Black gave them every right to access the resources available to Black people. To achieve this, they chose to identify themselves as part of the Black community.

Experience of racism

Other informants' developed a strong identification with Black people because of their negative experiences with white people. These informants chose to identify more closely with the Black hearing community rather than the Deaf community. They believed that the difficulties they faced stemmed from being Black rather than being Deaf.

The influence of language

Finally, a group of informants adopted a very academic view of describing their identity. Their identities were defined on the basis of whether it sounded grammatically correct in English. Since Sign language has a different word order to English, the English word order of Black Deaf

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rather than Deaf Black was chosen as a means of self-identification. These informants felt that the term 'Black Deaf' rather than 'Deaf Black' was grammatically correct in sign language.

9.3 Deaf Black?

Deafness as a 'master status'

The informants who identified themselves as Deaf Black felt that it was important for others to realise that they were deaf. They considered deafness a central part of their identity. These informants believed that it was important for others to know that their needs as a deaf person was far greater than their needs as a Black person. This was considered as particularly important in specific situations such as job interviews:

'If you go for a job interview you have to let them know your needs as a deaf person. It doesn't matter if you're Black or White you're deaf and you have problems with your hearing. If you were a blind man what would be more important? Your blind you have to let people know to guide you to sit down. I feel that is the same with deafness. (Derek, profoundly deaf)

Participation in Deaf culture

Some of the informants' involvement in Deaf culture made them feel closer to the Deaf community. They felt a strong sense of equality and Deaf pride from their relationships with other members. The Deaf community offered them access to a range of information and activities, which they could not access in the hearing world.

These informants believed that sign language linked them to the Deaf community irrespective of their skin colour or racial origin. Their positive feelings and limited interactions with Black hearing people meant that they attached little importance to their racial identities.

Interactions with the Black hearing community

Other informants identified themselves as Deaf first because of their negative experiences within the Black hearing community. These informants' often felt excluded from Black hearing events and activities. They felt unable to relate to other Black people due to their limited understanding of Black issues and Black culture.

The burden of deafness

A small number of informants who primarily identified more closely with Deaf people attributed this to negative experiences in their lives. They viewed deafness as a symbol of failure particularly in areas where they had underachieved. These informants felt that describing themselves as Deaf Black reflected this.

Potential changes in affiliation

Despite some informants feeling a close affiliation with other Deaf people they also wanted to achieve greater acceptance from the Black hearing community. Some talked about redefining their identities once they were able to gain access and opportunities for involvement in Black hearing activities and events.

9.4 Resisting categorisation

A group of informants felt that both aspects of their identity- Blackness and Deafness- were equally important. They believed that Black Deaf and Deaf Black described the same identity. They held no preference for Deaf or Black people.

Some of these informants felt that they had more than one culture. They considered themselves as cosmopolitan, having the ability to mix with people of different racial and cultural backgrounds. As Amy's account suggest, several informants strongly asserted that their racial and deaf identities were just one of many aspects of themselves:

Amy felt that defining herself as Deaf Black or Black Deaf was impossible. She did not feel that these categories were the most important characteristics of her identity. She considered her gender as being more important but realised that her race and deafness could overshadow this:

' I try to see myself as just a woman. If I put myself in the category of being Black Deaf I am making my colour be the most important thing about me. I am making my colour say everything about me. But if I put myself as being a Woman you know I am a woman you don't know anything else, my colour should not matter to you, my disability should not matter to you.as long as you know that I am a woman. I am female the opposite of a male. Then maybe when people meet me they may think that she is Black Deaf woman or she's a Deaf Black woman. It will still fall into that but I would prefer to be seen as a woman first and then let them decide whether they think my colour is an important part of me' (Amy, partially deaf)

Identity confusion

A few informants felt confused about their identities. Some felt that the categories of Black Deaf or Deaf Black were inappropriate terms to describe themselves. Similar sentiments were expressed about the categories used on ethnic monitoring forms, which asked the informants to describe their ethnicity. These informants felt that categories like Black British or Black Caribbean were also confusing. They often ticked the Black other category, and described themselves as Black and Deaf. Table 9.1 provides a summary of the different reasons why Black Deaf people defined themselves as Deaf Black, Black Deaf or resisted any categorisation.

Table 9.1 Influences affecting the informants' identity choices

Black Deaf	Deaf Black	Resisting categorisation
Appearance. A Black skin colour would be the first feature seen by others. Assumptions and stereotypes would be made on physical characteristics	Deafness is a central part of their identity.	Black Deaf or Deaf Black describes the same identity. It is unimportant which aspect comes first.
The Black community provides a sense of strength, and confidence in their identities	Important for others to know that their needs as a Deaf person are more important than their needs as a Black person	Cosmopolitan identity. Don't have one main culture Black or Deaf
Black Deaf people share common bonds with other Black people. A common racial identity and cultural heritage. They also have similar experiences of racial discrimination	Deafness their main culture. Their lives are immersed in the Deaf community	Uncertainty and confusion about identity issues
Deaf culture perceived as artificial. Black culture perceived as real	Sign language links them to the Deaf community regardless of skin colour	Categories Black Deaf and Deaf Black do not take into account gender which is more important
Deaf community fails to acknowledge and embrace cultural pluralism and diversity	Positive feelings about deafness. Equality and acceptance from other Deaf people	
The term Black Deaf is perceived to be more grammatically correct than Deaf Black	Negative feelings about deafness. Deafness perceived as symbol of failure and underachievement	
	BSL word order is different from the English language. The word order of BSL influenced choice of self identification	

How the informants defined themselves was a complex process. The informants could not be described as simply Black Deaf or Deaf Black because these were categories of ascription, which were continually evolving. For example some informants rejected the term Black because they felt it had negative connotations; whilst others had negative feelings about Deafness viewing it as a symbol of failure.

9.5 Understanding the identity process

The informants' self-identification was influenced by their feelings towards Deafness and Blackness. These feelings were based on their personal experiences of interacting within two different cultural contexts. Table 9.2 represents the diversity of feelings displayed by the informants towards both the Deaf and Black aspects of their identity. These are divisible in four ways: positive / strong Black, positive /strong Deaf negative/ weak Black, and negative/ weak Deaf.

Table 9.2 The informants' feelings towards their Black and Deaf Identities.

Positive/strong	Intermediate		Negative/weak
Positive Black +ve • Access to Black culture and feelings of inclusion • Knowledge and understanding of Black culture & experiences • Positive interactions with Black people • Black pride- positive Black consciousness leading to a desire to learn more about the Black community	*Intermediate feelings about Black groups and this aspects of their identity based on mixed experiences or having an alternative Master identity* ↓ *Mixed feelings*	*Intermediate feelings about Black groups based on strong Deaf feelings and sense of having a distinctive Deaf identity* ↓ *Strong Deaf group feelings*	Negative Black -ve • Feelings of exclusion from the Black community • Stigmatised feelings about being Black • Poor family relationships affecting perceptions of Black people • Difficulties relating to Black people • Negative interactions with Black people
Positive Deaf +ve • Acceptance of deafness • Preference to be with other Deaf people • Deaf pride- recognised positive attributes about being Deaf • Recognise limitations and personal capabilities	*Intermediary feelings about Deaf groups and this aspects of their identity based on mixed experiences* ↓ *Mixed feelings*	*Intermediary feelings about Deaf groups based on strong Black feelings and strong sense of having a Black identity* ↓ *Strong Black group feelings*	Negative Deaf -ve • Difficulties coming to terms with being deaf • Limited contact with the Deaf community – experiencing a sense of isolation from other Deaf people • Negative hearing attitudes towards deafness • Strong religious beliefs in the family influencing perceptions of deafness

Positive and weak identity feelings

Table 9.2 showed that the informants had positive or negative feelings towards Blackness and

Deafness. A pattern emerged from looking at these two opposite categories. The informants who

had positive Black identity feelings often had negative or intermediate Deaf feelings. The

informants who had positive Deaf feeling often had intermediate or weak Black feelings. The

informants' strong identification with one aspect of their identity often meant they had negative or weak feelings about the other half. These weak feelings came from life experiences, which were illustrated in table 9.1. They included family experiences, interactions with Black and white hearing people, and experiences in the wider Deaf community.

Mixed feelings- the intermediate position

Not all of the informants held fixed ideas about Blackness and Deafness. The intermediate position represents the informants who had mixed experiences within both Deaf and Black groups. These informants had ambivalent feelings and in some cases had an alternative master status. For example, Amy had intermediate feelings about both her Black and Deaf aspects of her identity. She felt that her gender was her most important characteristic.

Another example can be illustrated in Francis's choice of self-identification. Francis had mixed feelings towards the Black and the Deaf communities. Her main identity emerged from her experiences in the church as a Jehovah witness. This was largely outside the mainstream of Black social and cultural life and that of the Deaf community. For other informants, their intermediate feelings towards Deafness and Blackness emerged from mixed experiences within the Black and the Deaf communities.

A group of informants who had limited contact with both the Black and Deaf communities due to having either strong Deaf only or Black only feelings, also occupied the intermediary position. They distanced themselves from these respective communities because they perceived themselves as different and constituting a separate and distinctive group. These informants had strong opinions about being Black and Deaf, which influenced their attitudes and interactions with both Black people and Deaf people.

Identity positioning

The informants rarely achieved an equal balance in their feelings towards their bi-cultural identity. Most of these informants' continually negotiated and renegotiated their identities in different situations.

Impact of racism and discrimination on identity positioning

This study has shown that racism and discrimination had an impact on the informants' lives. It has not been considered in any of the categories in Table 9.1 or 9.2 because racism and discrimination acted as an external influence to the informants' identity positioning. The informants' experience of racism and discrimination depended upon their ability to recognise racism occurring. Racism reinforced feelings and ideas that the informants' already held towards their respective Black and Deaf identities. It did not play a role in their creation. The influence of racism and discrimination was most noticeable when the informants' positioned their identity in different contexts.

For example, some informants' who experienced racism and discrimination in the Deaf community often identified themselves as Black Deaf. This is because they felt discriminated against on the basis of skin colour. Their level of racial awareness and ability to recognise racism occurring within the Deaf community influenced their identity positioning in the presence of white Deaf people. Within the Black hearing community some of the informants' positioned themselves as Deaf Black because they felt discriminated and marginalised for being Deaf. Here the informants' identity positioning was dependent upon the level of inclusion, acceptance and equality that they felt amongst Black people.

Knowledge of racism and discrimination did not influence the identity positioning of all informants. These informants had either strong feelings towards Deafness or Blackness, or would chose to alter their self-identification for other reasons. Some of their experiences in these two groups simply reinforced their feelings of being part of a separate Black Deaf group, different from both the Black and Deaf communities.

9.6 Black Deaf identities and community roles

The first half of this chapter explored the informants' personal identities and some of the influences that affected their identity choices. It showed that these influences were multifaceted. They included the informants' experiences within the Black hearing community, and Deaf community, experiences of racism and discrimination, language choice, education and culture.

The categories of Black Deaf and Deaf Black related to the informants' personal life experiences and identity choices. These were closely linked to the evolution of the Black Deaf community, where Black Deaf people were trying to establish resources and gain recognition for their distinctive culture.

In Chapter eight the membership of the Black Deaf community was identified as comprising Aspirers, Inbetweeners, and Drifters. These categories emerged from the data on the different groups, they were not classifications made by the informants. The labelling of these groups emerged from specific characteristics, and their roles and attitudes towards the Black Deaf community. Since this largely depended upon their identity development experiences and choices, these roles were open to negotiation and re-negotiation.

The Drifters who represented the least pro-active group of Black Deaf people had the opportunity of moving up to an Inbetweener or even Aspirer status. An Inbetweener could also move between the Aspirer and Drifter status. Given the characteristics of the Aspirers they were likely to maintain their status or move to an Inbetweener rather than Drifter position.

The informants' personal identity choices and experiences had a strong link to their social status in the Black Deaf community. It reflected the roles they assumed and their personal attitudes towards its development. In this final part of the chapter, how and why the informants' were assigned a particular status within the Black Deaf community will be examined. Examples have been provided for all three social categories: Aspirers, Inbetweeners and Drifters.

The Aspirer

Sharon a profoundly deaf woman was an Aspirer. She was training to be a teacher and in her spare time worked voluntarily with young Deaf people. Sharon hoped to set up an organisation for Black Deaf people. She frequently travelled to Jamaica and America to observe and develop links with other Deaf organisations.

Sharon played an active role in the Black Deaf Community. She organised and participated in Black Deaf events and meetings. She felt that her involvement had been beneficial both personally and professionally. This led her to reject her friends 'Drifter' environment which was no longer compatible with her new outlook.

Sharon defined herself as Deaf Black. She felt proud to be Deaf and recognised that her experiences were different to both Black hearing and Deaf people. Her poor access to the Black hearing community and difficult experiences in the Deaf community made her believe that Black Deaf people have a distinctive identity and constitute a distinctive group. This encouraged her to develop resources and support mechanism for other Black Deaf people.

The Inbetweener

Samuel, a profoundly deaf man has been identified as an Inbetweener. Samuel was employed as a Project Officer for a large company. His work commitments prevented him from playing a greater role in the development of Black Deaf activities. He did however support Black Deaf projects, by attending events organised for and by them. Samuel also occasionally participated in the wider Deaf community's social activities. These include Deaf rallies, Deaf world games and socialising at Deaf pubs. He defined himself as Black Deaf because he perceived Black culture and identity as his primary identity.

The Drifter

Until recently Nicky was a Drifter but at the time of the fieldwork, she was undergoing a reassessment in her life. Nicky was chosen to represent the Drifter category because her life demonstrated how Drifters (Like Aspirers and Inbetweeners) could and do change their status within the Black Deaf community.

Nicky left school at 16 without any qualifications. Her poor relationships with her parents, the result of communication difficulties, meant that school had been her haven. It was where she could express herself and develop friendships with other Deaf people. Nicky's immersion in Deaf culture at an early age meant that she naturally drifted into the social activities of the Deaf community when she left school. This was a predominately white cultural environment.
 " When I was about 16 I left school I didn't know anything if anybody asked me to go anywhere I would just go I would just go to the pub and sign and then I realised... that I was wasting my time."

Once Nicky had left school, she found it difficult to get a job. To date she has been unemployed for approximately 10 years. During that time she became involved in several voluntary projects, working with other Deaf people. At the time of the fieldwork Nicky had just enrolled on a part time foundation course, having realised that she would not be able to get a job without qualifications.

Nicky in her Drifter identity had no awareness of her racial identity. This only emerged recently from her interaction with her nephew who talked about Black history and culture. Realising how little she knew Nicky tried to get more involved in Black Deaf activities in an attempt to learn about Black culture and Black people. This led her to withdraw from her Drifter social environment, which no longer suited her new consciousness.

In this study Nicky defined herself as Deaf Black. She had never sought to access the Black hearing community, but realised that she shared with them a common racial identity and thus perhaps a common history and cultural heritage.

9.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that how the informants' chose to define their identities using the terms Black Deaf or Deaf Black did not predicate the type of role they assumed within the Black Deaf community. The profiles of the informants' representing the Aspirer, Inbetweener, and Drifter suggested this. For example Sharon the Aspirer defined herself as Deaf Black. This was based on her inability to access the Black hearing community and her mixed experiences with Black hearing people. Sharon believed that Deaf Black people have a unique identity, different from both the Black and Deaf communities. She chose to reflect this in her choice of identity.

Nicky also identified herself as Deaf Black. This was based on her immersion into the white Deaf community and culture and lack of knowledge of her racial identity. Nicky represented the

Dirfter category because she knew nothing about the Black hearing community and never sought to be part of it. However at the time of interviewing her status in the Black Deaf community was moving between the Drifter to Inbetweener category. Nicky was becoming more aware of her racial identity and seeking to get involved in the activities organised by other Black Deaf people.

Thus the personal identity choices of the informants' cannot predict their status in the Black Deaf community. This was illustrated by the informants' who both described themselves as Deaf Black but occupied different roles within the Black Deaf community. The profiles highlighted that the categories of Aspirer, Inbetweener and Drifter are permeable and individuals have the ability to move between them. However, the Aspirer position suggests that it is unlikely that they would revert to a Drifter category. The Aspirers had particular standards of behaviour and attitudes towards the development of the Black Deaf community and a strong desire for achievement.

9.8 Summary

This chapter suggests that identity development for Black Deaf people is a process subject to many influences. It is open to manipulation and change and dependent upon the informants' self-perception and individual experiences. The terms Black Deaf or Deaf Black did not clearly indicate the attitudes or roles the informants' assumed within the Black Deaf community. They were terms that also failed to reflect the identities of some informants who resisted any form of categorisation.

In the final chapter we turn to the question of whether Black Deaf people should be perceived as belonging primarily within the Deaf or the Black community. The attitudes and aspirations of some of the Aspirers suggest that we also need to consider whether Black Deaf people constitute a separate group in their own right.

Chapter Ten: Locating the Black Deaf community

10.0 Introduction

This final chapter revisits some of the theoretical debates discussed in chapter one. It discusses their relevance for understanding identity development amongst Black Deaf people and considers which models most closely reflect their experiences as a whole.

An analysis of the informants' experiences showed that there were several influences affecting their identity development (See table 10.1), no single factor played a greater role than others. The complexity of the informants' identity development thus raised several social policy concerns specifically, relating to the adoption and fostering of Black Deaf children and access to social service support for Black families. The study highlighted that for some informants their 'places of location'- the communities in which they felt most accepted, were very diverse. This study identified these as the Deaf community, the Black hearing community, the fringes of both, or within a community comprising of only Black Deaf people. Later on in this chapter these places of location are discussed in relation to the social categories ascribed to the community (Aspirers, Inbetweeners and Drifters). The final part of the chapter explores some of the study's limitations and suggests possible questions, which could benefit from further research.

10.1 Identity theories and the Black Deaf community

In chapter one the literature review examined individual and sociological identity models and the role of cultural politics in understanding new forms of identity. It revealed that whilst the identity development models of Erikson, Piaget and Winnicott were useful in understanding the psychosocial challenges that Black Deaf people face, they failed to deal with external influences upon the individual such as the social environment or political processes. This was also evident in the sociological models of Goffman, Cross and Higgins.

The study of cultural theories of identity raised issues relating to the representation of Black people in different cultural forms and how they exist outside the discourse. It highlighted how the category 'Black' was not fixed or static, but one, which comprised a diversity of cultural identities with different social and historical experiences, with the need to understand the Black subject in relation to class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity.

An analysis of the informants' experiences illustrated that none of these identity models or theories in isolation adequately reflected the process of their identity development. The process of identity development amongst Black Deaf people showed that Higgins's outsider theory, the multiple oppressionists argument espoused by Black feminists, and the emergence of cultural identity theories all encapsulated different aspects of their experiences.

Higgins's theory of outsiders indicated that Deaf people could pass for hearing or form groups and communities with other Deaf people. He indicated that minority group such as Deaf or Black people had a negative 'master status'. For Black people this was their racial identity,and for Deaf people their Deafness. These were the major characteristic for which these individuals would be discredited, with additional failings being perceived as further weaknesses.

The informants' experiences particularly within the Deaf community and wider society confirmed that they had a negative master status. Being Black differentiated them from other Deaf people in a negative way, and their experiences within the hearing world exposed them to the every day experiences of racism. Even in the Black hearing community some of the informants indicated that despite initially feeling accepted once it became known that they were deaf they soon experienced feelings of isolation. Thus within the Black hearing community Black Deaf people were accepted because of their Black ' master status' but became discredited (unless they could pass as hearing) once their deafness became visible.

It is quite appropriate then that when discussing the identity development process and experiences of Black Deaf people, that Higgins's outsider theory is applied to our understanding of their external group identity. Higgins's theory indicated that individuals are often

stigmatized for one major failing above any others. For Black Deaf people this was their racial identity because it was their most visible feature when interacting outside the Black community. Within the Black hearing community the shared characteristic of Blackness, a social and political category representing individuals with diverse cultural, political and social identities, did not enable all informants to feel a part of this community. The informants sometimes felt a race apart or chose not to interact with other Black people. It was not enough to be Black to feel and gain acceptance within the Black community, because the informants clearly showed that their culture placed them apart.

The diversity within the groups subsumed under the category 'Black' reminds us of the cultural identity theories explored in chapter one. These emphasized how 'Black,' a politically and culturally constructed category, is not fixed and static and has no guarantees. The examination of the periodisation of Black cultural politics highlighted that within the second phase, which was marked by the end of the innocent notion of the essential Black subject, that there emerged recognition of a plural Blackness. This challenged what it meant to be Black by focusing on the diaspora experience of Blackness, which facilitated the development of cultural constructions of new ethnic identities. Thus for Black Deaf people it was their experiences within the Black hearing community that indicated to them that they constituted a new ethnic identity, and consequently a distinct and separate community. A brief analysis of their experiences within the Black hearing community supports this argument.

The informants' experiences in the Black hearing community

The informants' interaction with the Black hearing community was a mixed experience. Most of the difficulties they encountered were a result of having interactions with people with poor communication skills, and negative attitudes to deafness. It was also the result of having limited contact and access to Black role models.

Some of the difficulties Black Deaf people faced within the Black community were connected to overcoming some of the assumptions made about deafness. The community study showed that

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Black hearing people perceived deafness as a mild to moderate disability. They believed that deaf people could be cured or had the ability to overcome the limitations of deafness. Some of their perceptions conflicted with the views of culturally Deaf people, particularly as many felt in no need of a cure.

However, the community study showed that Black people's attitudes to deafness should not be regarded as negative, but a reflection of their beliefs on overcoming adversity and limitations in life. The idea that deafness is curable reflects the spiritual position of the Black hearing community. Sixteen percent of Black people believed that religion or one's own faith could overcome deafness. They felt that the power of God would make this possible. " If you believe it you can achieve it" and 'God moves in mysterious ways' were the phrases they used to explain their perceptions of God's power and his ability to work through individuals and manifest miracles.

The community study compared the experiences of Black hearing people to those of Deaf people. The findings suggested that similarities existed. These included similar experiences of discrimination, intimidation, and unemployment. (See table 2.17). The perceived similarities identified by some of the respondents perhaps strengthened their beliefs that deafness could be overcome through the power of faith, because this was how they dealt with the difficulties in their lives.

Whilst it is evident that many culturally Deaf people view themselves as constituting a linguistic minority, some informants did not share this view. They had different perspectives on being deaf. Some viewed deafness in terms of physical impairment and not as a marker of cultural difference.

The findings from the community study showed that Black hearing people were aware of cultural aspects of the Deaf community and of societal limitations placed on Deaf people. It highlighted that they were more likely than other members of the general public to use a variety

of communication with Deaf people. Overall they demonstrated positive attitudes to Deafness and an awareness of the difficulties some Deaf people face.

However, the existence of a Deaf culture appeared to weaken some of the similarities between Black hearing people and Black Deaf people. In addition, by the informants' own accounts they knew very little about Black history and culture. Communication barriers at home and difficult relationships with family members made this hard to access. The school environment also failed to provide them with any opportunities to develop an awareness of their racial identity through formal learning or interactions with Black role models. Many of the informants were thus left to find their own 'home' - a place where they felt a sense of belonging. For some informants, the Deaf community fulfilled this need. It provided them with an alternative culture, which celebrated Deafness and operated within norms and values that were important to Deaf people.

These norms and values were very different from those within the Black hearing community. Chapter 8 identified how some informants faced a cultural conflict during their interactions with Black hearing people. These cultural differences placed Black Deaf people and Black hearing people apart. Black hearing people perceived Black Deaf people as different from them because they had a different culture; whilst some of the informants' lack of knowledge of Black people and Black culture reinforced their sense of being different. This was reflected in the identity descriptions that some informants chose for themselves. They used terms such as 'Black Other' on ethnic monitoring forms to signify their sense of detachment from Black hearing people and to denote their new ethnicity. The informants' culture thus had an important impact on their sense of belonging within the Deaf and the Black communities. It was also responsible for the formation of a new ethnic identity, which combined the features of both the Black and the Deaf communities.

Their experiences within the Black community showed that not only did they perceive themselves as different but were treated differently.

An analysis of the informants' experiences particularly within the Deaf community, showed that regardless of individual identity preferences as a group Black Deaf people were perceived as belonging within the Black community. This was on the basis of their racial identity. Here and within wider society their external Black identity acted as a 'Master status'. However, within the Black community the informants particularly those who could not easily pass as hearing, were assigned a Deaf ' Master status' because their external Black identity had limited value. Their Deaf culture, the involvement in Deaf activities, the use of sign language and endogamous marital patterns set them apart from Black hearing people.

Within the Black hearing community how the informants felt towards Blackness or Deafness or the nature of their experiences did not determine how they were perceived. As discussed attitudes to deafness within the Black hearing community revolved around attempts to heal through prayer and sympathetic understanding towards disability in general. Deaf people were not deliberately segregated but often felt so because the community was ill equipped and ill informed about the experience and reality of being a Black Deaf person. Their assessment of deafness being a mild to moderate disability was compared to life threatening illnesses such as Aids and cancer, which pose a greater threat both physically, mentally and socially to the individual and society.

As discussed by cultural studies theorists there is a plural Blackness, which emphasizes the importance of recognizing the diversity of individuals, subsumed within the category Black. Cultural theorists have strengthened our understanding of the position of Black Deaf people within the Black community. Their theories indicate that Black Deaf people have an opportunity to live in their new ethnicity rather than try and 'pass' for hearing in the Black community or continue to be marginalised and excluded within the predominately white Deaf community. An analysis of the informants' experiences within the Deaf community illustrates this.

The informants' experiences in the Deaf community

The informants' interactions within the wider Deaf community confirmed the distinctive and separate identity of Black Deaf people. Divisions existed amongst Deaf people in relation to their methods of communication, racial difference and social class. The informants shared the same Deaf culture as other Deaf people, but as a social group they were perceived as different still. The impact of racism and discrimination created segregation so that even in academic discourses they were assigned to the 'other' Deaf community (OU 1991). Deaf people their organizations, and service providers, were perceived by some Black Deaf people as perpetuating this situation.

The informants thus shared Deaf culture with other Deaf people but they were not really considered as part of the wider Deaf community. The attempts of a group of Black Deaf people for recognition of a distinctive Black Deaf group and its potential, was one of struggle. This led to divisions within the Black Deaf community amongst those who were trying to gain recognition for their distinctiveness and the contribution made by Black Deaf people within the Deaf community and those who were apathetic and felt powerless to change things.

The informants' experiences within the Deaf community highlighted their status as a group of outsiders, as Higgins's theory suggested. However for some informants inclusion within the Black Deaf community did not always occur through choice but default. These informants, particularly the group labelled the Drifters, did not involve themselves in Black Deaf activities. They chose to isolate themselves from other Black Deaf people, and remain involved predominately in the wider white Deaf community.

As discussed in chapter 8 the categories of Aspirers, Inbetweeners and Drifter were based on the informants' experiences and attitudes towards the Black Deaf community. The Aspirers and Inbetweeners were very similar. Both groups comprised individuals who were either employed or continuing their studies in higher education. They were very ambitious and had the experience of living or travelling abroad in predominately Black countries. Both Aspirers and Inbetweeners often reported positive relationships with their families, where attempts were made on both sides to facilitate good communication.

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Another feature of the Aspirers and Inbetweeners were that they both had positive attitudes towards the development of the Black Deaf community. Both groups were involved in the organisation of Black Deaf social events and activities. The Aspirers took a lead in initiating projects and promoting the concerns of Black Deaf people, whilst the Inbetweeners often played a supportive background role.

The Drifters were very different from the Aspirers and Inbetweeners. They were usually unemployed and were unclear of their future ambitions. They tended to have a poor sense of their racial identity, poor family relationships, no opportunity to travel or live abroad, and limited access to positive Black role models.

The Drifters did not identify themselves as members of the Black Deaf community. They did not participate in Black Deaf activities or events. They preferred to socialise in predominately white social venues such as Deaf pubs and clubs.

Not only did these diverse individuals reinforce the notion that a Black Deaf community existed but indicated that like the cultural theories discussed there was a plural Blackness, which even existed within these new ethnic identities. This reminds us of Hall's (1992) statement on identity being constructed across difference and living within the politics of difference.

Thus the informants demonstrated that their new ethnicity and differences within the Black Deaf community emerged as a result of their social class, gendered position, and the nature of their disability i.e. whether they consider themselves as deaf or Deaf. This played an important role in determining their personal identity choices and experiences, and how they were perceived as a group.

The influences affecting Black Deaf people

Throughout this study the informants' experiences revealed that many influences impacted upon their identity development. Table 10.1 represents some of the influences explored, which varied amongst each individual due to different life experiences. The study also revealed that

other factors also affected this process. They include the gendered position of the informants, social class and the level of educational attainment.

In chapter 8 and 9 the female informants indicated that their gendered position affected their identity choice and experiences. Although they felt discriminated on the basis of being female they could not differentiate this from their other experiences of racial and disability discrimination. They described the impact of being Black Deaf and female as occurring simultaneously. Their experience supports the multiple oppressionists theories that individuals are not discriminated on the basis of gender but that all facets of themselves are simultaneously discriminated against.

The findings in chapter four which explored the informants' experiences in the family suggested that issues of social class also had an impact on their experiences of being Black and Deaf. As part of an immigrant family there was little government support available to them in the form of housing or social and welfare benefits at that time. Their parents had to work in poorly paid jobs, which only offered long and un-social hours. This added to the burdens and social pressures they faced, and clearly had an effect on the informants' experiences at home.

The informants described their families as adopting different attitudes towards deafness and communication. Some of these were positive due to their ability to communicate effectively with family members, whilst others were negative because family members made no efforts to communicate. From the informants' own accounts the home was where they became aware that they were deaf, and the school environment was where they developed confidence in deafness and the Deaf identity.

Even those who described having positive relationships with family members indicated that school was the main place where socialization occurred. However even in this environment, Deaf culture was not completely accessible. School was a hearing environment and Standard English as a medium of communication and learning was the main communication method used. Whilst this affected some informants' ability to learn in the classroom, outside the

classroom BSL was widely used. Their interactions with Deaf peers introduced them to Deaf culture, which helped them to develop friendships with other Deaf people and stimulated feelings of inclusion and confidence in deafness. It helped them to survive within a school environment, which was marked by school bullying and a white hearing teachers' culture.

However, within the school environment the informants' experiences showed that those who achieved or aspired to greater levels of academic attainment had to overcome the effects of racism. The further they progressed within the educational system the more racialised their position became.

An examination of the influences affecting Black Deaf people have shown that some are specifically related to Black culture and others to Deaf culture. These are illustrated in table 10.1.

Table 10.1 The influences affecting the identity development of Black Deaf people.

Influences relating to Black culture	Influences relating to Deaf culture
Black culture	Deaf culture
Family	Friends
Black community	Deaf community
Black languages	British sign language
Racism	Disablism
Unemployment	Underemployment
Underachievement	Low expectations in education

Personal identity choices

In addition to their experiences within both the Deaf and Black communities, some informants had to deal with external constructions of race and deafness. These were seen as negative and constraining both within the two communities to which they belonged and wider society. In their view society often looked at them as being either Deaf or Black but infrequently both. This led to constant identity negotiation within the Black and Deaf communities. These informants would drift in and out of the Black and the Deaf communities as a means of gaining knowledge and greater understanding of these aspects of their lives.

Thus, as indicated by the arguments espoused by multiple oppressionists, the informants' experiences cannot be understood without references to social class, gender, or race, because these have a profound effect on their personal development and social lives.

In summary then, the cultural theorist's arguments, the multiple oppressionists' models and Higgins's outsider theory are all relevant to the identity development process amongst Black Deaf people. In different ways they have aided our understanding of both the social development of the Black Deaf community and the individual personal identity choices of its members.

10.2 Locating the Black Deaf community

This study has highlighted the informants' mixed experiences and feelings towards both the Deaf community and the Black community. Most did not feel fully accepted in either of these groups because they were not fully acknowledged as belonging to these communities. The informants' experiences of both racial and disability discrimination, the lack of support available, and absence of academic discourses in relation to race or the Deaf community that made reference to them, suggested this.

There are several ways of looking at the position of the Black Deaf community. These will now be explored through a number of models.

Model 1: The position of Black Deaf people within the Black hearing community.

Figure 10. 1 The position of Black Deaf people in the Black hearing community
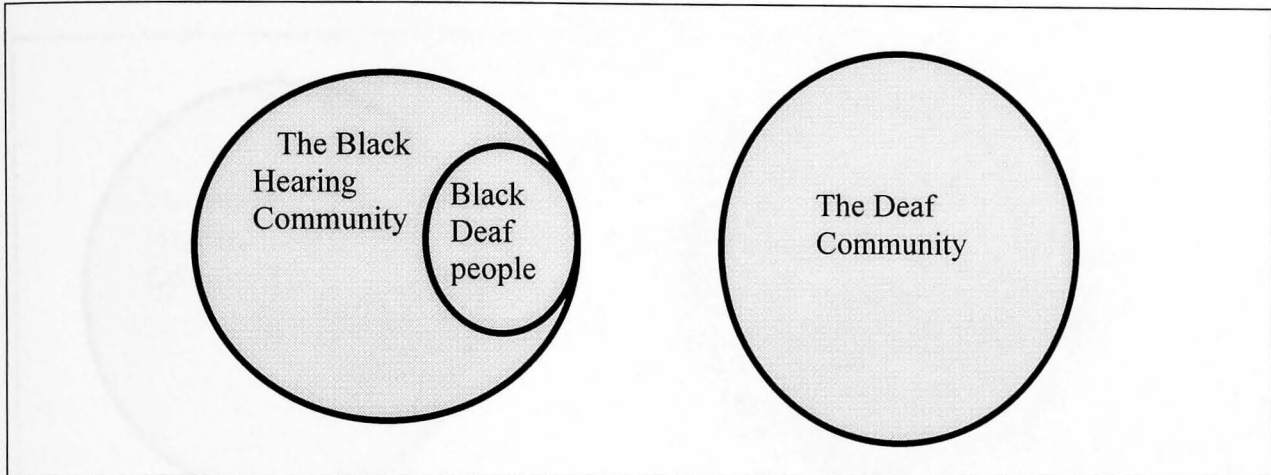
This model locates Black Deaf people within the Black hearing community. This is solely on the basis of their racial identity rather than deafness. Here, Blackness is considered the 'master status' because of its visibility. In this model, deafness is regarded as an individual impairment. Some informants considered themselves as belonging primarily within the Black hearing community. This was due to their experiences of racism and exclusion by other members of the Deaf community. These informants tended to be Aspirers or Inbetweeners.

Model 2: The position of Black Deaf people in the Deaf community

Figure 10. 2 The position of Black Deaf people within the Deaf community
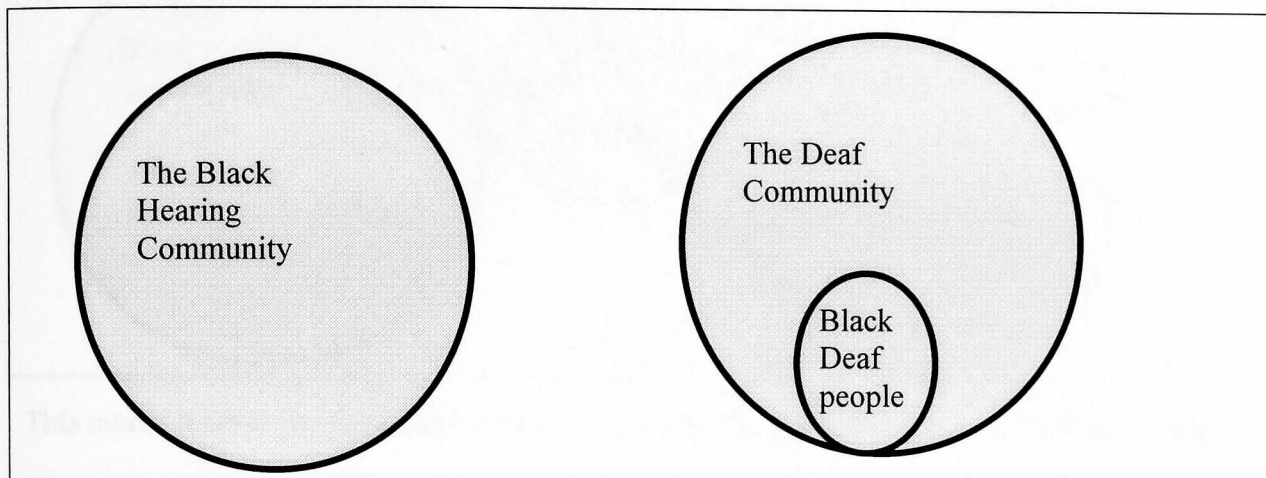
This model locates Black Deaf people in the Deaf community. This is on the basis of their

education and socialization in deaf schools and strong bonds with other Deaf people. Deafness

rather than Blackness are considered to be of prime importance. In this model Black Deaf people

are not understood in relation to Blackness but Deafness. Their racial identity acts as an external

marker outside the Deaf community but has no relevance within the Deaf community. Most of

the Drifters identified in this study were most likely to locate themselves as belonging within

this model.

Model 3: The Black Deaf community as an autonomous group

Figure10. 3 The Black Deaf community as an autonomous group
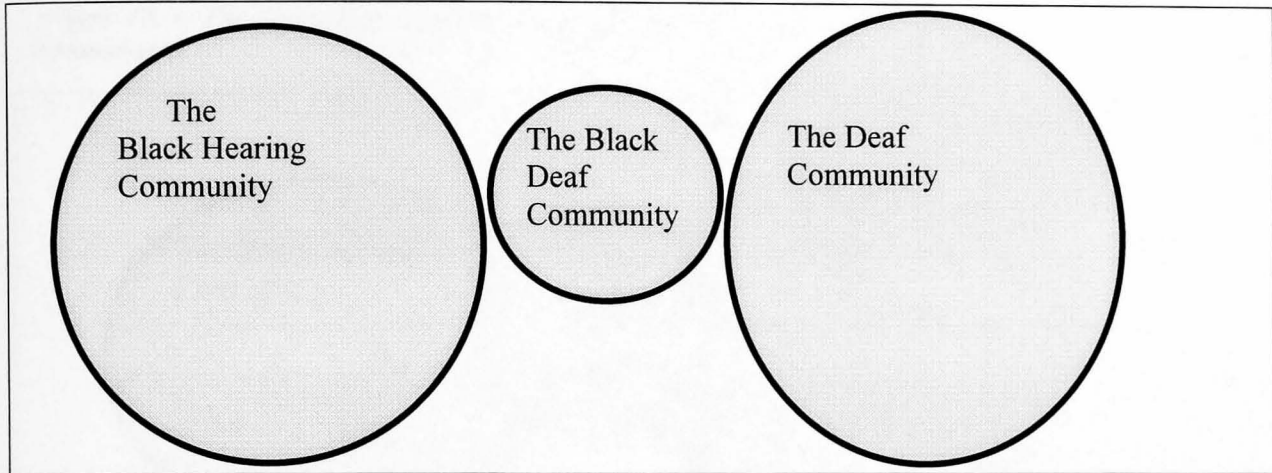
This model locates the Black Deaf community outside the Black hearing and Deaf communities.

In this model Black Deaf people constitute an autonomous group because they operate

independently from both the Black hearing community and the Deaf community. The autonomy

of the Black Deaf community is illustrated by their marriage/ partner patterns, educational

patterns i.e. all attended deaf schools, and attempts by Black Deaf people to develop resources

for themselves.

Some members of the Black Deaf community move between all three groups: the Black hearing

community, the Black Deaf community and the Deaf community. These individuals will

experience tension from the Black hearing community and the Deaf community due to their

experiences of exclusion.

The informants mostly likely to identify with this model are the Aspirers.

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Model 4: The Black Deaf community on the fringes of the Black hearing and Deaf community.

Figure 10. 4: The Black Deaf community located on the fringe of the Deaf and Black hearing communities.
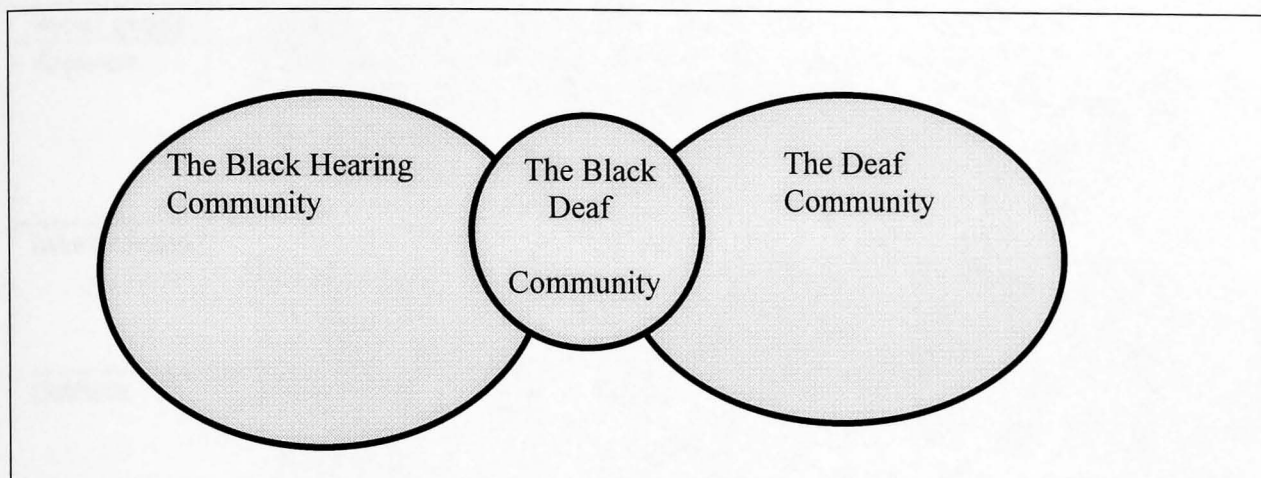
This model locates Black Deaf people as caught in-between both the Black and the Deaf communities. These communities were responsible for shaping their external and personal identities, exerting an important influence on their lives. This model suggests that Black Deaf people are not fully accepted as part of the Deaf or Black communities. It is one of the challenges they face one that perhaps faces most individuals with a culturally mixed heritage.

Some of the informants in this study identified as Aspirers recognized this. They were aware of their unique identity and conscious of the difficulties Black Deaf people faced both from the Deaf and the Black communities. These aspirers were trying to forge a community of their own where they could co exist as independent but equal to these groups. At present, they remain on the fringes of both the Black and Deaf communities where progress towards this aim remains slow.

Model 4 seems to most accurately reflect the social position of the informants in this study. In this model, all members of the Black Deaf community: the aspirers, inbetweeners and Drifters could move between the Deaf, Black and Black Deaf communities. However the characteristics

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of the Black Deaf community suggests that some members would restrict their movements to

particular communities. Table 10.2 shows some of the possible locations and areas of

interactions for Black Deaf people.

Table10.2 Places of location for Black Deaf people based on model 4

Social group	Areas of community involvement
Aspirers	The aims of the Aspirers to develop the Black Deaf community suggest that this would be their main place of location. However in order to gain support for their aims and to remain up to date with developments in other communities the Aspirers would move between the Black community, the Deaf community and wider society.
Inbetweeners	The Inbetweeners have the ability to move freely between all three communities: the Black hearing community, the Black Deaf community and the Deaf community. These people are more likely than any other member of the Black Deaf community to negotiate and renegotiate their identities.
Drifters	Drifters would probably remain fully immersed in the Deaf community. Like the Inbetweeners they can move between the Black Deaf community and the Black hearing community. However, their characteristics suggest that they would not feel comfortable in these locations.

Developments in the Black Deaf community

If a positive development occurs in the Black Deaf community it could become completely

autonomous of the Black hearing and Deaf communities. If the development of the community

is slow it could continue to co- exist as it does presently on the fringes of both. Alternatively, in

the event that there is no positive growth in the Black Deaf community, it could disappear

completely with its members finding a place of location in either the Black or Deaf communities

or by continually moving between the two.

Whilst model 4 seems to most closely reflect the experiences of the informants in this study the

applicability of the other models may be relevant in different environments.

10.3 The study's limitations

Whilst much has been revealed from this study, this research does have its limitations. The

limitations relate to the sampling methods, and data collection, which will now be examined.

The sample

The dispersal of Black Deaf people across the country and the lack of organized activity by and for them, created difficulties recruiting informants. As a social group Black Deaf people were virtually invisible. There were no identifiable Black Deaf groups or services across the UK. Many of the Black Deaf participants came from London. This reflected the high concentration of Black people in inner cities, and the researcher's geographical base. For this reason, the researcher was unable to explore the experiences of other Black Deaf people living in rural and out of town areas or those who had multiple disabilities. The study thus reflected the experiences of Black people who were deaf only.

The sample also had a slightly female bias. This was due to the difficulties the researcher experienced recruiting Black Deaf men. Black Deaf men were less visible than their female counterparts. They were also less responsive to participating in research. Some of the difficulties recruiting and interviewing the male informants have been described in chapter three.

The findings of this study suggest that it would have benefited from a wider sample comprising of families and partners of the informants. This would have enabled the researcher to gain an insight into the informants' family's perspectives on deafness. It would also perhaps extended our understanding of Black Deaf culture.

Interviews as a method of data collection

Interviewing was a useful method for studying the informants' life experiences but the researcher only had a limited time with them. Most of the interviews lasted between 1to 2 hours. This was a short time to collect a large amount of data, and made it difficult for the researcher to seek further clarification or information once the interviews were completed. Conducting in-depth interviews requires skill and training and the researcher was working with limited support.

Sign language interpreters

Some of the strengthens and weaknesses of using Sign language interpreters were discussed in chapter three. However in relation to the limitations of this study, the use of sign language interpreters resulted in a loss of immediacy between the researcher and the informants. This made it difficult for the researcher to build a strong rapport with them. It also limited the time available to explore a wide range of issues because of the 'time delay' involved in interpreting.

Access to research participation for Deaf people

There are very few opportunities available for Deaf people to get involved in research; communication remains a barrier to participation. This contributed to the researcher's difficulties in recruiting Deaf informants. Deaf people have limited access to information from the research community. They seem to have a limited understanding of what is involved in the research process and how it can benefit them. This affected the response to the research from potential Deaf participants.

10.4 Community implications

In light of the informants' experiences within the Black hearing community and their own feelings about Black people and Blackness, Black Deaf people can be considered as forming a distinctive group separate from the Deaf and Black communities. The emergence of the Black Deaf community reflects their feelings of exclusion and difference from the Black hearing community and the reality of their social identity. Black Deaf people had different experiences and challenges from members of the Black hearing and Deaf communities.

As Goffman (1968) states, racial differences are a marker of stigma and the informants' racial identity remained their master status. In wider society Blackness distinguished them within the Deaf community and in a predominately white society. The informants' race impinged on all areas of their life. It acted as an externally imposed 'master status'. Their Deaf identity remained an internal state of being. It was an internally generated identity and not clearly detectable. The invisibility of the informants' deafness meant that it was often considered as a form of 'spread'.

This term has been used to describe a further discredit to an already stigmatised person. (Higgins;1980). Deafness was thus seen as a further discrediting feature to Black people.

The study showed that despite the informants possessing a range of different master statuses, the distinctiveness of their race remained their primary identifying characteristic. Their experiences within the Deaf community and wider society suggested this. However, the informants' experiences showed that a person's skin colour, just like deafness, did not give them automatic access or feelings of inclusion in the Black hearing or Black Deaf communities. Access could only be gained through the adoption of their respective cultures, which were marked by norms and codes of practice. The feelings of marginalisation, which some informants felt when they tried to access Black hearing culture, suggested this.

The Drifters' attitudes towards the Aspirers hopes for the Black Deaf community showed how external labels have limited value. The Drifters are Black and Deaf but their external identity was not important to them. Their immersion in Deaf culture was the most distinctive feature of this group, which overshadowed the development of a racial identity and racial needs.

Thus the informants' physical presence (their external makeup) was not as powerful as their personal experiences of deafness. This experience influenced how they perceived themselves and was reflected in their methods of self-identification. It was also influenced by their gendered position, social class and ethnicity.

A model seeking to reflect the identity development process for Black Deaf people must take into account all these factors, as they all in different ways impacted upon the informants' identity choice and status.

This study thus contests the possibility of there being a uniform identity for Black Deaf people. It has demonstrated that there are several influences that shape the identity, some having a greater impact than others. The informants' identity formation showed that being 'Black' was more than just a state of being it was a lifestyle. It was a culture, which some informants felt separate from. This separateness represented the emergence of a distinctive cultural identity amongst some

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Black Deaf people, the aspects of which require further study. It was what cultural theorists have described as the new ethnicities.

10.5 Social policy implications

Several issues emerged from this study, which require consideration by social policy makers. This includes the need for more widespread Deaf awareness campaigns targeted at the Black hearing community, training and development in social services and within the private and public sectors, and improvements in deaf education. As discussed in the literature review and chapter four, social policies have often served as a system of exclusion against Black and other new commonwealth immigrants. This must be taken into consideration on discussions of social policy relating to Black communities and how it could be negatively used by social policy makers and perceived by Black people.

Social Services

The findings have shown that language and communication has a powerful role in the identity development of Black Deaf people. It can and frequently does override the physical identity markers of race and ethnicity. Prospective families wishing to foster or adopt a Black Deaf child should satisfy both the child's communication and racial identity needs, as it will help them develop a positive communication and identification with their cultural heritage. The benefits of racial matching are meaningless, if the family cannot communicate with their deaf children. In an ideal world a Black Deaf child should be placed within a Black Deaf family. It is important that equal consideration is given to the child's language and cultural needs.

Social workers working with Deaf clients should be trained to understand the importance of communication for young Deaf people. They should also gain exposure to Deaf culture and the diversity of difference within the Deaf community. Black Deaf professionals could be employed to facilitate this process. They would be able to share their knowledge of the Black Deaf community in assisting social services in the development of more culturally sensitive support.

Family support

The findings showed that some of the informants felt that their families received limited support and advice from the medical profession, social workers, and teachers. As discussed in chapter four, the responses of the informants' families to deafness ranged from attempts to find a cure, over- protectiveness and rejection. The negative feelings that some parents held had an impact on their relationships and self esteem. This negativity could have been contained if the parents were consistently supported and opportunities made available to develop positive attitudes and images of deafness.

Historically Black families have been pathologised by the welfare state, so it is important that any support offered is sensitively provided. Supporting Black parents of deaf children could influence a change of attitudes within the Black community to deafness. It could perhaps lead to a greater level of awareness and understanding of the need for Black professionals in the field of deafness and disability. Whilst it is important that greater parental involvement in all areas of Black deaf children's social and emotional development is encouraged, it should be recognised that some Black families still occupy the social and economic positions of the first wave of immigrants of the 1950s. .This means that they may not always been in a position to take up social service support or participate in special schemes designed for them in mind.

In order to facilitate these changes more information and advice could perhaps be made available for parents and carers on the medical, social and cultural aspects of the deafness at the developmental phases of the child's life. Some of the informants' difficult family relationships could have been overcome had they had contact with Deaf professionals and members of the Deaf community. This exposure would have helped them to empower their own Deaf children.

The findings showed that communication was also difficult in the family due to limited Deaf awareness skills, and of other forms of non verbal communication. This suggests a need for more information and support for families on deaf education and communication. It also indicates a need for more training opportunities to be available for families in the methods of

communication used by their deaf children at school, preferably in collaboration with a local community group.

Sign language and sign language interpreters

The study highlighted that some informants preferred using Black interpreters during times of distress or personal difficulties. Black interpreters were perceived as having an important role to play within the Black Deaf community. This included facilitating greater cross cultural communication between Black and white signers, developing an understanding of the varieties of sign language, and acting as a channel of information between Deaf and the Black communities. The informants suggested that the presence of Black sign language interpreters would encourage linguists to record signs denoting aspects of Black Deaf culture. This would be useful for educational purposes and help to strengthen the distinctive identity of the Black Deaf community.

Education

Some informants had difficult educational experiences. The problems they encountered included inadequate teaching methods and teacher insensitivity to their personal experiences and cultural needs. Most informants believed that the emphasis on developing communication skills blocked any opportunities to learn about their racial identity or develop a positive identification with other Black people. To overcome some of these difficulties, some informants described several measures, which could have been introduced to enhance their social and emotional development. These include encouraging the recruitment of Black teachers in Deaf education.

The informants indicated that they had limited contact with Black teachers during their time at school. Several informants felt that the recruitment of Black teachers both deaf and hearing would have encouraged them to develop an interest in their racial identity. Having Black role models and mentors in the schools could have combated the experience of racism and disadvantage that some informants experience. This could facilitate access to a multi-cultural curriculum, and encourage Deaf children to value the multi-cultural nature of society.

The Black hearing community

Despite the constraints within the system of official social policy and planning the Black hearing community has its own role to play in improving access for Deaf people. The social exclusions, which several informants experienced within the Black hearing community, operate outside the mechanism of social policy. This means that Black people themselves must be at the forefront of activating positive cross-cultural exchanges between the Black hearing and the Black Deaf community.

Several informants had only limited contact with the Black hearing community. Some felt that they had no access to information about Black cultural events or history. Establishing an information forum for Black Deaf people possibly located within Black community centres, could overcome some of the poor access Black Deaf people face. This could offer information, support, and guidance on a range of different topics. It could also be used to disseminate information on the medical and cultural aspects of deafness to families of deaf children within the Black community.

The findings suggested that there were limited opportunities for Black Deaf people to get involved in the Black hearing community. They were not represented in the Black media, newspapers or television programmes, and had no participation in Black art activities. The Black hearing community must increase the visibility of Black Deaf people by making their presence real. This means providing them with opportunities for participation. For example, Black churches could develop Deaf sections to encourage Black Deaf members to become part of the congregation. This would help to facilitate greater numbers of Black people entering the sign language profession, and raise awareness generally of Deaf people within the Black hearing community.

Raising Deaf awareness within the Black hearing community, particularly amongst service providers, may be the first step in achieving improved access to activities and events for Black Deaf people. This requires developing opportunities for training in the use of Deaf technology and other communication support services. By encouraging better service delivery practices for

Deaf people, some of the disadvantages they experienced within the Black hearing community could be eliminated.

10.6 Areas for further research

The research has provided an insight into the lives of a group of Black Deaf people and some of the influences that have shaped their identity development. However due to the limited scope of this study and other constraints the researcher could not explore other areas that would have been beneficial to our understanding of this group. These include the incorporation of the thoughts, feelings and experiences of other family members such as parents and siblings and the experiences of Black sign language interpreters. The following section represents areas where further research should be undertaken.

Children of Black Deaf parents

Research, which explores the experiences of the children of Black Deaf parents, would illuminate our understanding of the Black Deaf community. It would provide an insight into Black Deaf culture by exploring the lives of those who live on the junction of these two communities.

The Black Deaf community

Further research could also explore the difficulties experienced by Black Deaf people trying to establish resources within the Deaf community. This would reveal more about the politics of deafness and the approaches needed by Black Deaf people to achieve their aims. How Black Deaf people perceive their social identity within the Black Deaf community could also be explored in relation to the categories of Aspirer, Inbetweener, and Drifter identified in this study.

Black sign language interpreters

The informants considered Black sign language interpreters as having the potential to play a much greater role in the Deaf community. Further research could be undertaken exploring the perspectives of interpreters and their experiences. This could include the training process and

employment opportunities, and issues relating to differences between Black Deaf and white Deaf signers.

10.7 Summary

This study should not be taken as representative of the experiences of all Black Deaf people and their identity construction. It does, however represent how a group of Black Deaf individuals arrived at their identity choices at a specific moment in time. At the time of writing these, once again may have undergone change, owing to the continual process of identity development.

This study should thus be viewed as providing an initial exploration of the complexity of identity construction of a group bounded by external identity constructs of Blackness and deafness. It should be seen as revealing the complexities involved in the process of identity building, and the way that this process constantly evolves. This continual evolution and sense of incompleteness often meant that the informants were frequently in transition and continually reinventing themselves. The identities of Black Deaf people should not be placed within a framework simply based upon assumptions about 'race' and 'deafness', but one that seeks to understand people as individuals who have many different experiences, and attitudes.

This study has contributed to our understanding of the Black hearing community's attitudes to deafness both as a disability and cultural identity. It has filled a gap in the literature on Deaf and disability discourses by highlighting the roles and experiences of Black Deaf people within the Deaf community. By exploring cultural studies discourses and Deaf, disability and race models, the findings have shown that in isolation none of these can adequately reflect the experiences of individuals who are disabled, Deaf or Black. Identity construction amongst Black Deaf people is a complex and unpredictable process.

The informants' experiences in both the Deaf and the Black hearing community showed that double oppression was a reality for all Black Deaf people irrespective of those who were conscious or unconscious of their racial identity. The informants 'master status' was often

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chosen for them, both when they interacted in the Deaf and the Black communities and in wider society.

The informants' personal choice of their master status was based not on external identity markers but on personal experiences and their own self-perceptions. To be Black and Deaf or even Deaf and Black meant something different to each informant. However, the experiences of Black Deaf people demonstrated that they were 'outsiders'. Some felt like outsiders in the Deaf or Black communities and frequently both.

This study showed that the Black Deaf community is at a delicate stage in its' development. It has provided a snapshot of how a new community and ethnicity has emerged from two culturally distinctive groups, one which will possibly change. Future studies may show a different picture of Black Deaf people to the one revealed in Britain today.

Appendix 1: The Quantitative study

Attitudes to deafness in the Black hearing community survey

1. In what ways can you tell a person has poor hearing or is deaf when you talk to them?

What things do you think you would notice?

---

2. Are there things about the appearance of deaf people or people with poor hearing which could distinguish them from people who can hear properly?

Yes.. .... 1 > ask a
Some/depends on degree/ type of deafness (Specify)..... 2 > ask a
No .... 3 > go to 4
Don't Know.. 4 > go to 4

(a) What things about their appearance distinguish them?
         (Probe fully)

3. Would you say that a deaf person's voice or speech differs from of someone who can hear properly?
Yes, differs...1 ask a
Some/depends on degree/type of deafness (Specify)....................2   ask a
No, does not differ ....3 go to 5
Spontaneous only Don't Know...4 go to 5

(A) In what ways does the voice or speech differ?
Louder	1	
Slurred/thick	2	
Softer	3	
Dull/ Toneless/Flat		4
Slower	5	
Other (Specify)	6	

Code all that Apply.

4. Some people think that deaf people use their hands when talking more than people who can hear properly. Would you say that was true or not?

Yes, true...1 ask a
Some/ depends on degree/ type of deafness (Specify)................ 2 ask a
No, not true..3 go to 5
Spontaneous only Don't know .... 4 go to 5

(A) In what ways do they use their hands more?

    Sign Language..1
    To help express themselves/to explain better/point.................. 2
    Gesture...3
    Other (specify)..4

Code all that Apply

5. If someone told you they were deaf or had poor hearing, what kinds of things would you do when talking to them?

Verbal : Shout/ Talk loudly/ raise voice......................................1
          Speak or say words with greater clarity/ care.......... 2
          Talk more slowly 3

Visual : Face them/ Look at them 4
         Emphasize lip movements and shape mouth more 5
         Point/use hands to express/ make signs......................6
         Other (Specify) 7

6. Do you think all deaf people can be helped by a hearing aid?
   Yes, all can be helped..1
   Some/depends on degree/type of deafness(Specify).............2
   No, not all can be helped...3
   Spontaneous only Don't Know...4

7. Do you think that deaf people try to hide the fact that they are deaf?
Yes...1 ask a
Some /depends on degree/ type of deafness(Specify)...........2 ask a
No..3   go to 8
Spontaneous only Don't know...................................4 go to 8

(A)What do you think are the reasons people try to hide their deafness?
         PROBE FULLY

8. I have a list of statements that different people have used to de scribe the way they feel about deaf people in general. As I read out each statement I would like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with it. The answers I would like you to choose from are printed on this card.
(CARD A)

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Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither Nor	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6

I feel sympathetic towards deaf people and help them when I can
1   2   3   4   5   6

I don't mind talking to deaf people but I find them hard going
1   2   3   4   5   6

I find it embarrassing to talk to deaf people in public
1   2   3   4   5   6

I am more considerate in dealing with   deaf people than with hearing people
1   2   3   4   5   6

I try to avoid talking to deaf people as it makes me self conscious
1   2   3   4   5   6

I would treat deaf people in the same way as I would treat anyone else
1   2   3   4   5   6

I get impatient in dealing with deaf people because it takes so long to get through to them
1   2   3   4   5   6

I feel inadequate in dealing with deaf people.
1   2   3   4   5   6

I find deaf people generally more friendly   and easier to talk to than hearing people
1   2   3   4   5   6

I find it easier to talk to deaf people, if I know in advance they're deaf.
1   2   3   4   5   6

I don't know enough about deafness to know how to talk to deaf people.
1   2   3   4   5   6

The term deaf and dumb appropriately describes deaf people
1   2   3   4   5   6

Deaf people benefit a lot from the help of hearing people
1   2   3   4   5   6

Deaf people understand what hearing people say by watching their lips
1   2   3   4   5   6

9. Would you say that deaf people go out to clubs pubs and parties :
To the same extent..1 go to QA3
More...2 go to QA2
Or less than Hearing people ?............................3 ask 9A

(A) Why do you think that they go out less often? Probe fully.

(A2) Why do you think they go out more often ?   Probe Fully

(A3) Do you think that there are any specific groups or clubs for deaf people? Probe fully

A4 Do you think you could socialise with Deaf people?
    Yes..1 go to 10
    No...2 go to a5

A5. Why don't you think that you could socialise with deaf people? Probe fully

10. Do you think that deaf people have their own culture?
    Yes...1 go 11
    No...2 go to 12

11. What do you think deaf culture is? PROBE FULLY

12. What do you consider to be the main elements of Black British culture?

13. Do you think that Black deaf people are able to gain access to these?
    Yes.....................1
    No......................2
    Spontanoues only Don't Know......3

14. What do you think are the most common experiences shared by Black people ?

15. What do you think are the most common experiences deaf people share?

16. Do Black deaf people face a double disadvantage ?
    Yes..1 go to 17
    No..................... ....2 go to 18
    Spontaneous only Don't know...3 go to 19

17. Why do you think that Black deaf people face a double disadvantage? PROBE FULLY

18. Why don't you think they face a double disadvantage ? Probe fully

19. Would you say that on the whole deaf people have different types of jobs from people who can hear properly?
Yes.................................1 ask 20
No ....2 ask 20
Some/Depends on degree/type of deafness (Specify).....3 ask 20
Spontaneous only...Don't Know ....4 go to 20

20. Do you think a deaf person would be able to do any of these jobs? Code all that apply.   If not why not?

Plumber..............................1

Doctor.(Medicine).................2

Fireman..............................3

Postman..............................4

Telephonist...........................5

Pilot....................................6

Secretary..............................7

Shop Assitant.........................8

Driver..................................9

Receptionist...........................10

21.. Are there any jobs that would be particularly suitable for deaf people?
    PROBE FULLY

22. Are more Black Deaf people unemployed than hearing Black people ?
Yes..1 go to 23
No...2 go to 24
Don't Know...3 go to 25

23. Why do you think Black deaf people are more unemployed than hearing Black people ?

24. Why don't you think that Black deaf people are more unemployed than hearing Black people?

25. I have a list of statements that describe the problems or difficulties that deaf people may have. As I read out each statement I would like you to tell me whether you think it is true or not. The answers I would like you to choose from are on this card.

Certainly Ture	Probably Ture	Neither Nor	Probably False	Certainly False	DK
1	2	3	4	5	6

1. Deaf people feel very isolated because of the problems they have with communicating
    1   2   3 4 5   6

2. Deaf people seem to have fewer interests than hearing people.
    1 2   3   4   5   6

3. Deaf people have more difficulty in coping with everyday activities around the home that n hearing people.
    1   2   3   4   5   6

4. Deaf people are less likely to take part in sports and games as hearing people.
   1   2   3   4   5   6

5. Deaf people seem generally less intelligent than hearing people.
   1   2   3   4   5   6

6. Deaf people face more hazards in travelling and getting around that n hearing people
    1   2   3 4   5   6

7. Deaf people are unable to keep up with what's going on in the world through the   news media than hearing people.
   1 2   3   4   5   6

8. Deaf people seem to have more than the usual number of other physical complaints.
  1   2   3   4   5   6

9. Deaf people have more problems in banks, post offices shops than hearing people.
  1   2   3   4   5   6

10. Deaf people have more difficulty getting on with work than hearing people do.
  1   2   3   4   5   6

11. Deaf people frequently seem to behave oddly.
  1   2   3   4   5   6.

12. Deaf people are not able to drive
   1   2 3   4 5   6

13. Deaf people want to have hearing children
   1   2   3   4   5 6

14. Deaf people usually have deaf children
  1   2   3   4   5   6

15. Educated deaf people can speak quiet clearly
  1   2   3   4 5   6

16. Most Deaf people like to be amongst hearing people
    1   2   3   4   5   6

17. Deaf people are more aggressive than hearing people.
    1   2   3   4   5 6

18. Deaf people are lazy and expect everything should be done for them
    1   2   3   4   5   6

19. Deaf people only feel happy and relaxed amongst themselves.
    1   2   3   4   5   6

20. Deaf people are isolated in our society
    1   2   3   4   5   6

26.. What about bringing up children, compared with hearing parents, would you say that parents who are deaf have:
The same....................................1 go to 27
More.......................................2 ask 26a
Or less problems the bringing up children ?.....go to 26b

(26A) What particular problems do you think deaf parents have? PROBE FULLY.

(26B) Why do you think they have less problems bringing up children ?

27. Would you say that hearing parents who have Deaf children have:
Running prompt The same.......................................1 go to q28
More..2 go to 27a
Or less problems than parents with hearing children........3 go to q27b

27A. What particular problems do you think parents of deaf children have ?
     PROBE FULLY.

27B. Why do you think they have less problems?

28. How would you rate deafness as a handicap? Would you rate deafness as a :
Severe...1
Very severe...................................2
Moderate....................................3
or mild Handicap..............................4

29. How you would compare deafness with other handicaps or disabilities. Place these disabilities in order starting with the most severe handicap or disability down to the least severe?

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Most severe 1   Least Severe 6

Deafness...Rank
Blindness..Rank
Sickle cell Anaemia.......   ....Rank
Wheel chair bound................................Rank
Mentally Handicapped.........................Rank
Multiple Sclerosis................................Rank

30. Which sort of deafness would be worst? Shuffle . Worst 1 Least bad 4
Born Deaf..Rank
Sudden deafness as an adult...........................Rank
PartialDeafness...Rank
To become progressively more deaf with time...............Rank

31. Do you think that there is a cure for deafness?
        Yes...........................1 go to 31b
        No..........................2 go to 32
Spontaneous only Don't know...................3 go to 32

31B. What do you think is the cure for deafness? PROBE FULLY

32. Two aids to totally deaf people are lip-reading and sign language.
    Do you know any Sign Language?
    Yes............................1 go to 33
    No........................... 2 go to 33

(c) Do you know anything about Sign Language? What do you think of it? PROBE FULLY

33 Finally I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.
Do you ever have difficulties with your hearing?
Yes...........................1 go to 34
No................................2 go to 35

34.Have you ever had any difficulties with your hearing even when you're wearing an aid?

Yes....................1 go to 35
No........................2 go to 35

35. Was there any particular person or people you had in mind when answering questions about deafness and deaf people?
Yes..............................1 go 36
No..............................2 ask 36

36. Do you have or have you had any contact with deaf people?
Yes..1 go to 37
No ....2 go to 41

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37. How often would you say you have or have had contact with deaf people:
Running prompt

Nearly all the time.........................1.
fairly Often...2
Sometimes but not often...........................3
Rarely...4

38. Is or was your main contact with deaf people
Running Prompt
At home...1
At work.....................................2
Socially...3
Other 4

39. Are deaf people you have or have had contact with mainly:
Running Prompt

Elderly................1
Middle Aged.........2
Young People........3
Or Children..............4
Other..(Specify)..........5

40. In which country did you have contact with these deaf people? PROBE FULLY

_____

41. **Age at last Birthday**_____. **Gender** : Male........1   Female............2

42. **Marital Status:**
Married...1
Single..................2
Widowed......3
Separated............................4
Divorced......5

43. **Ethnic Origin:**
    Black Caribbean................1
    BlackAfrican....................2
    Black British......................3
    BlackOther.................. .4
    Other (Specify).................5

Where were you born_____How long have you been in this country _____

44. Age informant finished full time education:
14 years or less....................................1   go to 39
15 years or less....................................2   "
16 years or less....................................3   "
17 years 4   "
18 years or more..................................5   "
 Still in full time education.........................6

45. May I please check are you doing any kind of paid work at the moment?
Working...........................go to 46
Not working......................2 ask 45a

(a) Are you : a Housewife.................1
                    Unemployed/seeking work.......2..
Retired...3
Permanently sick/disabled..............................4
Other (specify)...5

46 What is (was) your present (Last) Main job?
NEVER WORKED

That's all I want to ask you, but is there anything else you would like to add about your views on deafness and deaf people.

Letters to community organisations

<div align="right">

City University
Department of Clinical Communications
` Northampton Square
London ECIV OHB

</div>

Centre Manager
African- Caribbean Community Centre

<div align="right">

3rd May 1996

</div>

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a research student exploring attitudes to deafness in the African and Afro- Caribbean community at City University. I am writing for your permission to approach centre users and staff to complete a questionnaire on this subject. The questionnaire takes approximately 15-30 minutes. As part of the study I would like to interview 60 people. 30 men and 30 women aged between 18- 78.
 The findings of the research will be used to improve the Black hearing community's understanding and knowledge of deafness and Deaf people.

I hope you are able to help. I will call in the next few days to discuss this with you.

Yours sincerely,

Melissa James

Appendix 2: The Qualitative Research study

AP2.1 The principles of sampling

One of the main principles of sampling is to ensure that the sample is *representative* of the community being researched. This means that the sample should yield the same information had the whole community been studied. To achieve a representative sample *homogeneity* is important. Potential informants should be selected on the basis of being homogenous to the community under study. (Henry, 1990)

Randomisation a process of sample selection allows members of a community to have an equal chance in being selected. It allows the researcher to randomly select informants and reduces the possibility of bias in selection procedures. Randomisation does not eliminate the possibility of *sampling error*, the difference between the sample's results and that of the whole community. However, it can employ several statistical techniques to achieve representativeness. (Hessler, 1992) Probability theory and the principle of the *law of large numbers* are examples.

In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative sampling is concerned with theoretical development. Qualitative researchers work with a small sample to study typical units or case studies. The informants are not randomly selected but theoretically selected. In qualitative sampling data collection is largely determined by the emerging theory (Burgess, 1984). Whilst generalisation is important to qualitative sampling this is based on the typical cases studied which are seen as representative of a particular community.

Some examples of qualitative research sampling are purposive sampling, quota sampling, and snowballing.These methods are generally useful when researching a particular social phenomenon or when there are difficulties accessing a particular community.

AP2.2 In-depth profiles of the informants

This section provides a more in-depth profile of the informants based on the earlier snapshot shown in Table 3.1 in chapter three. Pseudonyms have been used for people and places.

1. **Janet 34yrs old** of Jamaican parentage. Janet was born in England and grew up in London with both parents and two other siblings. Janet attended a mainstream school with a Partially Hearing Unit and was taught using oral methods of communication. She is profoundly deaf and her main method of communicating is through British Sign Language. She is presently married to a Deaf Black man and has three children. She works part time for the civil service but eventually hopes to become a Social Worker for the Deaf. She spends her spare time working with other Black Deaf women setting up self-help courses and meetings.

2. **Kathy 23yrs old** of Jamaican parentage. Kathy was born in England and grew up in London with her Mother. Kathy's parents separated when she was born and therefore does not have any contact with her birth father. Kathy was educated in a residential Deaf school and was taught using oral methods of communication and then British Sign Language. Her main form of communication is through British Sign Language. She is presently single and employed as a shop assistant for a large high street supermarket. Her ambition is to work as a City Stockbroker or to train as a Teacher. She spends most her spare time with her Deaf friends in the Deaf community and participates regularly in Deaf sporting activities.

3. **Amy 32 years old** of Jamaican parentage. Amy was born in England and brought up in London with both parents and three siblings. Amy is partially deaf and attended a mainstream school where she was taught using oral methods of communication. She uses both oral methods of communication and BSL to communicate. She is presently single and employed as a Housing Officer. She hopes to go to university to study Social Sciences. In her spare time she socializes with her Deaf and hearing friends.

4. **Sarah 19yrs old** of Jamaican parentage. Sarah was born in England and grew up in London with her parents and 7 other siblings. Sarah is profoundly deaf and attended a school for the deaf where she was taught using a mixture of oral and signed language. Her main form of communication is through British Sign Language. Sarah is single and has just recently left college after completing a prevocational course. She is now presently unemployed and hoping to find work in childcare, although her real aspiration is to work as an actress. In her spare time she attends her local youth centre.

5. **Natalie 35yrs old** of Jamaican parentage. Natalie was born in England and grew up with her father and stepmother until the age of three when she went to live with her birth mother and two other siblings. Natalie is profoundly deaf. She lost her hearing due to meningitis. She was educated at a residential deaf school where she was taught using a mixture of oral and signed language. Natalie's main form of communication is BSL. She is presently married to a Black Deaf man and has one child. She works as an administrative assistant at a further education college.

6. **Shamique 35yrs old** of Jamaican parentage. Shamique was born in England and grew in London with both parents and two other siblings. Shamique is partially deaf and attended a residential school for the deaf and then a mainstream school with a PHU. She was taught using oral methods. Her main method of communication is orally. She is single and employed as a machine operator for a printing company. Her ambition is to work with deaf children in a teaching support role.

7. **Derek 31years old** of Jamaican parentage. Derek was born in England and grew up with his parents and one other sibling. He is profoundly deaf and attended a mainstream school with a PHU. Derek was taught using oral methods but his main form of communication is through BSL. He is presently engaged to a Black Deaf woman. Derek works in the civil services as a restorer. He spends his spare time participating in Deaf sporting activities.

8. **Sandra 33years old** of Jamaican parentage. Sandra was born in England but spent part of her childhood in Jamaica. At the age of 8 she came to London where she grew up with her parents and other siblings. Sandra is partially deaf and attended a mainstream school with a PHU .She was taught using oral methods of communication. Her main form of communication is through oral methods. Sandra is presently employed as an Accounts Assistant for a local authority. However, her ambition is to work with deaf people in an educational or counselling setting. In her spare time, she studies privately and has completed several counselling courses.

9 **Judy 21years old** of Jamaican parentage. Judy was born in England and was raised by her mother and her grandparents in London. She is the only child. Judy is profoundly deaf and attended a mainstream school with a PHU where she was taught using a mixture of oral methods and sign language. Her main form of communication is oral but she frequently uses SSE. At the time of the research she had just completed her 'A' Levels and awaiting her results. Judy would like to read Law at University. In her spare time she works at a local supermarket and socialises in the Deaf community..

10. **Shola 21years old** is of African parentage. Shola was raised by her aunt in Africa. She came to England two years ago to live with her mother, stepfather and stepfamily. Shola is profoundly deaf. She lost her hearing after forks were placed in her ears. She attended a deaf school in Africa where she was taught orally. Her main form of communication is through broken' BSL'. Shola is single but has a long-term boyfriend back in Africa who is Black and Deaf. She is presently at college doing a prevocational course and eventually hopes to work in catering.

11. **Anne 27yrs Old** is of Jamaican parentage. Anne spent part of her childhood in Jamaica but mainly grew up in London with her parents and two siblings. Anne is profoundly deaf and attended a mainstream school with a PHU. She was taught using oral methods. Her main form of communication is through BSL. Anne is married to a Black Deaf man and has one child. She is presently unemployed after being made redundant from her job as a customer services assistant, which she held for 5 years. Anne's ambition is to work for a Deaf organization as a Projects Officer.

12. **Maria 29yrs old** of Caribbean Parentage. Maria grew up in London with her mother and one sibling. Maria is partially deaf. She was educated in a mainstream school with a PHU where she was taught using oral methods. Her main method of communicating is orally. She is single and has been unemployed for five years. In her spare time, she socializes with other Deaf people.

13. **Francis 27 years old** of Jamaican parentage. Francis grew up in London with her parents and one sibling. She is partially deaf and attended a mainstream school with a PHU where she was taught using oral methods. Her main form of communication is orally. Francis is single and has been unemployed for five years. At the start of the research, she had recently applied for a position as a Housekeeper and was successful in securing this job. Francis is a practicing Jehovah witness, and spends her spare time in the church.

14. **Samuel 32years** old of African parentage. Samuel was raised by his parents in Africa. He became deaf through meningitis at the age of 13 and moved to England to live with relatives. Samuel is profoundly deaf and attended a mainstream school with a PHU. He was taught using oral methods. His main method of communication is orally. Samuel went onto University achieving a BA in Business Studies and a Postgraduate management diploma. He is presently single and works as a Business Advisor for a large company. In his spare time he participates in Deaf sporting activities and socializes with friends both Deaf and hearing.

15. **Joshua 20yrs old** of African parentage. Joshua was partly raised in Africa up until the age of 9 but now lives in London with his parents and two siblings. He is profoundly deaf . Joshua attended a deaf school where he was taught using a mixture of oral methods and signed language. Joshua's main method of communication is through signed language. He is presently single and attends a Deaf college where he is training to become a chef. In his spare time he socialises with his Deaf friends.

16. **Jason 32 yrs old** of Caribbean parentage. Jason grew up in Exeter with his mother before being fostered into care. His foster parents were white English people. Jason is profoundly deaf. He attended a day school for the deaf where he was taught using oral methods. His main

method of communication is through British Sign Language. Jason is presently unemployed having worked for five years as a hospital porter. He is single and will be starting a computer technology course to update his skills. His ambition is to work in an office.

17. Sharon 35 years old Caribbean parentage. Sharon was born and raised in London with her mother. She is an only child. Sharon attended a school for deaf where she was taught using a mixture of oral and sign language. Her main form of communication is through British Sign Language. Sharon is presently single and is studying to be a teacher of sign language. She has completed numerous college courses both in counselling and art. In her spare time she socializes with other Black Deaf women, who are supportive of her plans to set up a self-help group for Black Deaf people.

18. Matthew 31years old of Caribbean parentage. Matthew was raised in London by his mother. He has two other siblings. Matthew attended a residential school for the deaf where he was taught using a mixture of oral and signed communication methods. Matthew main method of communication is through British Sign Language. Matthew is single and has been unemployed for six years having been made redundant from his job as an administrative assistant. In September 1997 he will enroll part time at college to update his skills.

19. Nicky 32 y ears old of Caribbean parentage. Nicky grew up in London with her parents and two siblings. She attended a special school for the deaf where she was taught using a mixture of oral and signed language. Her main form of communication is through British Sign Language. Nicky is presently single and unemployed but she has been studying part time for over a year. Her ambition is to be a post 16 + teacher of the deaf. In her spare time she works voluntarily for her local youth centre.

20 Roy 35 years old of Caribbean Parentage. Roy grew up in London with his mother and two siblings. He attended a residential school for the deaf where he was taught using a mixture of oral methods and signed language. Roy's main method of communication is through sign. He is

married to a Black Deaf woman and has two children. He works in a catering company. In his spare time he socialises with deaf friends.

21 Junior 30 years of Jamaican parentage. Junior grew up in London with his parents and two siblings. Unlike some of the other informants Junior could 'pass' as Asian because of his physical features. He attended a deaf school where he was taught using a mixture of oral methods and signed language. He communicates mainly through BSL. Junior is single and presently employed as a factory worker. He eventually hopes to work in computing. In his spare time, he socialises with friends who are both deaf and hearing.

AP2.3 Qualitative data analysis

According to Ritchie and Spencer (1991) when a 'framework'[31] is used as a method of qualitative data analysis there are five key stages. These are familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation. These are the terms that will be used to explain how the study on the Black Deaf community was conducted.

Familiarization

Before the process of sorting the data began, the researcher re-familiarised herself with the interviews. This involved reading through each transcript and gaining a general overview of the issues, themes and diversity of the data. During this process of familiarisation notes were made.

Identifying a thematic framework

The notes made during the familarisation stage were then used to develop a thematic framework. Additional themes were drawn from the topic guide, the informants' responses, patterns of experiences and views. This thematic framework was then referenced on a few transcripts. This allowed the researcher to make adjustments to the framework to ensure that it was representative of the informants experiences and views.

Table AP2 1.1 illustrates how the researcher developed a thematic framework. This is based on Chapter five : Snakes and ladders - the experience of education.

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[31] The framework approach involves using a systematic process of sorting and charting materials according to specific themes and issues.

Table AP2 11.1 An extract from the topic guide

Topic Guide (Extract)
School experiences Types of school attended Feelings about school Involvement in school activities Favorite lessons
Experiences with teachers Teaching methods used, teachers attitudes Examples of good/bad teachers
Friendships at school Involvement in extra curriculum activities Types of friendships formed hearing/deaf Communication with other children
Leaving school Work aspirations Career choices/support/information School achievements Feelings about school experience

Table AP2 11.2 Familiarisation notes

Familarisation notes
Wide range of schools attended, different forms of communication methods, difficult school experiences, bullying, poor communication in the classrooms ,communication influence attitude to learning, introduced to sign language and Deaf culture, differences between Deaf and hearing teachers, no access to information on Black history, lack of career guidance, limited teacher expectations.

Table AP2 11.3 Thematic framework extract

Index Extract
1.0 Types of school attended 1.1 Details of school attended: residential, deaf school, boarding day school 1.2   Type of communication methods used 1.3   Impact of communication on learning Feelings about school: Good memories / Bad memories
2.0 Teacher relations 2.1 Teaching methods 2.2 Teacher attitudes and expectations 2.3 What teachers taught/what they didn't teach 2.4 Examples of good teachers 2.5 Examples of bad teachers
3.0 Friendships 3.1 Developing friendships 3.2 School bullying 3.3 The impact of language on friendships 3.4 Accessing Deaf culture

Table 11.3 highlights that there were several similarities between the topic guide and the index

extract. This can be illustrated under the heading of teachers' relations and experiences of

classroom learning. The index also highlighted areas where new themes and issues had emerged, school bullying and the impact of sign language on developing friendships is one example. Tables AP2 11.1 to 11.3 are extracts. The complete thematic framework had several main headings and many sub categories.

Indexing

Developing an index was the first stage in arranging and managing parts of the data. The index also acted as a form of categorisation. By categorising the data in thematic form it became more accessible to retrieve. A common index was kept for all groups which was used to identify common themes and differences. Once the index was created all transcripts were referenced with index numbers. This required the researcher to make judgments on the meaning of the data and cross code because some paragraphs contained more than one theme. The index was useful in providing contextual information about specific topics and highlighting any thematic patterns within the data.

Charting

A charting technique was used to build a complete picture of the data. This involved moving information from individual transcripts and arranging them according to different themes. The charts comprised thematic headings and sub headings based on the research topics, which were arranged across all informants. Data was entered for each informant on the different subjects. Each of these cases were kept in the same order to enable the researcher to review them at a glance. The data consisted of the informants' summaries of their experiences or direct quotations. They were all referenced with a transcript page for easy retrieval.

Once the charting process was completed the researcher was able to begin the process of interpretation. This involved studying the charts for patterns, comparisons and differences.

Melissa James
City University
Department of Clinical communication studies
London EC1V OHB

2nd May 1996

Dear Judy

Thank you for expressing an interest in my research. I would be delighted to meet with you. I am available at the following times:

Saturday May 16th 1.00pm

Wednesday May 20th 6.00pm

We could meet at City YMCA in London, which is not far from the offices of RNID. If this is not suitable I would be willing to meet you in your home.

Please let me know as soon as possible when and where you would like to meet. I can be contacted on 0181 477 000 (minicom). I have enclosed a stamped addressed envelope for your reply if this is easier for you.

Look forward to hearing from you soon,

Best wishes,

Melissa James

Black and Deaf project reply slip

Date and time.
Please tick one date and one time only.

Date	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Saturday 16th May	11-1 am	2-4pm	6-8pm
Sunday 17th May	Not available	2-4pm	4-6pm
Thursday 20th May	11-1am	2-4pm	6-8pm

<u>Meeting place:</u>
Please circle your choice

Home   City   YMCA   Other _____

If all of the dates and times are not suitable please suggest a suitable date here:

_____

Your name _____

Your address_____

_____

Contact number _____

Please return to Melissa James in the envelope provided.
Thank you for your help.

Melissa James
City University
Department of Clinical communication science
Northampton Square
EC1V OHB

Dear Janet,

Thank you for taking part in the Black and Deaf project. I enjoyed both meeting you and listening to some of your experiences. I am writing because I need your help in finding Black Deaf men to interview for the project.
I would be grateful if you could please put me in contact with any Black Deaf male friends you know or pass on my contact details to them.

It is very important for the research that an equal number of men and women are interviewed. This will help to develop a more representative picture of Black Deaf people's experiences.

I do hope you can help.

Best wishes and thanks,

Melissa James

Teletext advert

Are you Black and Deaf?

A Black-hearing researcher requires Black Deaf men and women for a research project. The research will explore identity issues in the Black Deaf community. It will examine the experiences of Black Deaf people in the following areas: home, school, work, the Deaf and hearing communities. A Black sign language interpreter will be available for all interviews. All interviews will be confidential.

Interested?

Contact Melissa on 0171 477 0000 (minicom)

Transcript extract

Name: Janet
Code: 001

Do you consider yourself as a Black Deaf person or a Deaf Black person?
First I am Black. I think that is very important. I'm deaf because when I was small I didn't know anything about myself as being Black. First I thought I was Deaf because my parents never explained anything to me about being Black, Black history they never told me anything so I knew nothing about it but as I grew up I really objected to going to a British school. They never taught us anything about Black history. We were only taught about white history- Kings and Queens. The children just accepted that. We knew everything about white history- what about our own history? Our own Identity? that's important for the children to know. It's important for the future of Black deaf children. They need to know their own history and their own identity.

Could you describe your parent's attitude towards you being Deaf?
Yes I remember my mum and father it was really difficult to communicate with them. They never tried to learn Sign language never got involved in it. I was deaf. It was like abuse not being able to communicate. It was the wrong thing to do there was a communication breakdown. It was difficult to communicate with them, my mum never tried to sign I had to lip-read all the time they were very oral. I missed a lot of information. When my parents told me off I never understood what they were saying.

How did you feel about that?
I was really angry when I was living with my family there was no communication everything was boring. I stayed at home I could not go out they never encouraged me to go out it was always boring. I remember in the school holiday being very bored there was nothing to do. I wanted to talk to my mum and father about things but we could not it was difficult to communicate. They were always tired because they had to go work so I'd just would walk around looking for things to do. I remember that when I was young. I became very angry and fed up. I told my mum and dad that I hated myself because I'm deaf. I don't like being deaf and wish I was hearing. Deaf people are suffering inside. I felt very frustrated when I was growing up.

It was the same at school there was no communication but I had to lip-read. If I was painting they would tell me to please use water so I overfilled the jar. I said sorry and told my teachers that I was sorry but they hit me. I was really shocked I couldn't believe it. There was a communication breakdown I didn't understand what was going on.

But now I have grown up and have children of my own. My first son was washing the dishes he had a problem with his head. I remember how frustrated I felt when I was pregnant. I was remembering when I was a child and how I felt. I remember feeling why am I suffering? Why am I crying? I remember all the problems that I had when I was a child. There was no communication with the children, which is so wrong. There was a communication breakdown with my sisters and brothers. I communicated but it was hard. I remember when I was small at school and home and how terrible it was. My life was terrible.

My friend's came they were partially hearing and could speak they challenged my father. Why don't you communicate with her? Why you speaking? You should learn to sign! We had a face to face argument about that. Why do you use the belt? there is a communication breakdown. Why don't you try and communicate? Now that my children are small I will not behave the same as you. I will try and communicate with them.

My parents suddenly realised, my mum was upset she started crying she thought that we were attacking her. I asked my parents why did you send me to an ordinary school? Why didn't you send me to a special school that would teach me what I need to know? My parents said they couldn't afford it. My brother said you don't have to pay to send me to a good school. They are all grown up they can lip-read their signing is good and their English has improved. But me my English is rubbish my English isn't good because my teachers didn't sign and I missed a lot of words. I use BSL .I missed some of the words and some of the information. I had to try and catch words. I was very slow and because at home there was no communication my English ever improved. My mum says she understands now how I feel and my father is very sad and he too realises. My father is proud of me and how I go out and travel. I'm in my community now. In the future we have to concentrate on the Black deaf children it is very important.

Topic Guide

Black Deaf or Deaf Black?

Present Situation
What are you doing at the moment? Probe: studying, looking for work, Self-employed? Unemployed?

Employment
Job description and training/ how did you get the job? What is your present job? How long have you worked there? Did you go straight from school into employment?
Undergo any specialist training?
Type of support received: Teacher of the Deaf, Lipspeaker, Interpreter, and Extra tuition, Note taker.

Working Environment
Happy/Unhappy? If had opportunity would you change your job? why?
How do you get on with your work colleagues? Do you find your job easy, hard, boring? Would you like a more interesting job? Access to specialist communication support/equipment?
Do you think that your employers are considerate towards you because you are deaf?

Feelings about work: Is there any time when you have been unhappy at work? Can you tell me about it? Could you explain why you feel you have experienced these difficulties.

Equality of opportunity: Do you feel you have the same career opportunities as your work colleagues/ white deaf and Black hearing people?

Employment ambitions. Where do you see yourself in 10 years time? What would be your ideal job?

Family Life
Could you tell me about your early childhood and what is was like for you growing up?
Anyone else in the family who is deaf (specify) Mother. Father, Brothers, Sisters, Cousins.

Communication at mealtimes: how do you communicate within the family circle? Does anyone interpret for you? Have you ever experienced a breakdown in communication within your family, where your parents or other members of your family didn't understand you and you could not understand them? Could you tell me about this?

Family details: where do your parents come from. Have you ever been there? Could you describe what it was like meeting other members of your family?

Parents and deafness: How would you describe your parent's attitude to your deafness?

Opinion of family relationship: How would you describe your relationship with your family [parents, brothers and sisters] Was there anyone who you were particularly close to?

Education: School Life
School
What about school tell me a bit about your school experiences? What type of school did you attend? Teaching staff Deaf teachers, Black Teachers or Hearing teachers. Specialist support?
Probe: Teacher of Deaf, Communicator

Feeling about schools: likes/dislikes? What was good/bad about your school?

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Teachers
Experience with teachers: understanding needs of deaf person, communication, and deaf awareness.

Friendships with Black deaf people.
Did you have contact with other Black deaf children at the school? Are you still in contact? What are they doing now? Black deaf friends outside of school? who? how did you meet them?

Black hearing friends? Could you understand them and they you? Did you feel that you were different to your Black hearing friends? Why don't you think you had any Black hearing friends?

Contact with Adult deaf people.
Did you have any contact with older deaf people, when you were growing up? Who were they: White/Black deaf ? who were they?

Leaving School.
How did you feel. Achieve? qualifications, strong friendships. Know what you wanted to do after school? Any guidance? Could you describe the attitude of parents / Teachers. D o you feel that they encouraged/ discouraged you from achieving your ambitions? Do you feel that you were you prepared for life after school? Could you explain. What could have been done to help you?

College/university life
Tell me about your College/University? What are you studying? Tell me about your college: special, mainstream, Are there any other deaf people there? Do you enjoy/dislike college? What was good/ bad about college? Could you tell me about some of the difficulties you faced at college.? How did this affect you? What will you do after your course?

Tutors: Black white hearing? Experience of difficult or supportive tutors. Could you give me an example of a good or bad tutor that you have had.

Communicating with Tutors and Students
How did you communicate with other students? Tutors?

Getting on with other students: Do you have any friends? Do you feel that you were able to enjoy college to the same as other students? deaf , hearing white/Black?

.
Social interaction at college: enjoy a social life at college? activities involved in any clubs, sports, pubs etc? Were these deaf specific clubs or Black clubs?

Reasons for non interaction: personality i.e shyness, difficulties in communicating, attitudes, hearingness racism etc.

Benefits of being at college: Do you feel you have gained from going to college? In what way? for example, interacting with people, relationships with others, motivation, discipline, confidence etc?

How would you improve your college life: Is there anything you would have liked to change during your time at college to improve your time there?

Unemployment
Feelings about Unemployment. How long unemployed, type of work looking for? Special training undertaken?

<u>Daytime hours</u>: What do you do in the day home, jobclub, study, deaf clubs, voluntary work

<u>Do you face any difficulties in getting a job?</u>
Attitudes deafness, colour prejudice, job opportunities, experience limited, wrong qualifications, access to interpreters, do you get any support when looking for a job?

<u>Comparison of experiences of Black Hearing/Deaf white People.</u>
Do you think Black hearing people face the same difficulties as you in getting a job? White deaf person? Explain. Do you think that deafness is a barrier to getting a job? Could you explain? Do you think that being Black and deaf is a barrier to getting a job? Could you explain?

<u>Progress in job hunting</u>. Interviews. How many. Experience of good and bad interviews. Have you had any interviews from the applications you have made? If so what was this like? How did you feel? Were you successful?

<u>Work history</u>. Types of jobs done? What have been the main difficulties in the jobs you have had?What have you enjoyed about your jobs? Were you happy in these jobs or were you looking for something better?

<u>Future prospects</u>.
How do you think things will develop for you in the future in terms of getting a job? Do you know any other Black deaf unemployed people? How do they feel about the situation?

<u>Communication</u>
Do Black deaf people sign differently from white deaf people? Are there distinct variations between the signs? Could you give me an example?

<u>Communication choices.</u> Were you encouraged to be oral/ sign at Home/ School? How do you prefer to communicate? Do you have difficulty in understanding some hearing Black people? Could you explain why? Do you have this difficulty with white hearing people?

<u>Communication methods</u> : Parents, friends, Partner, Brothers and Sisters, Black hearing People, White hearing Black Deaf people, White Deaf people.

<u>Communication Difficulties</u>
Are there any communication difficulties within you immediate family/work/? Are you able to understand them all the time and they you?
When you can't understand someone or someone can't understand you how do you feel? Does any one assist you when you go to the doctor, dentist, clinics, complaint etc?

<u>Interpreting</u>
Ever used a sign language interpreter?
Ever been in situation when you wanted a Black sign language interpreter? Situations where you felt that you would have benefited from having a Black interpreter?

<u>Black interpreters</u>
Do you think that there should be more Black sign language interpreters? If so why? Do you ever feel uncomfortable discussing specific issues because the interpreter is white/ male/woman?

<u>Afro Caribbean community and Deaf people</u>
Do you have contact with Black hearing people? Where, when and who?
Do you socialise with Black hearing people?

Black hearing attitudes towards deafness.
Do you think Black hearing people are aware of what it means to be deaf?
Are they considerate towards you because you are deaf?

Involvement in the Black hearing community.
Are there any aspects of Black culture that you like to be involved?
Do you feel that you are able to get involved in some of the activities within the Afro Caribbean community such as carnivals, raves/clubbing, Black churches, social life and community affairs in the Black community?

Black hearing friends and socialising
Do you have any Black hearing friends? How do you communicate with them? Do they understand you? Do you understand them? Do you ever attend any events organised by Black hearing people? Do you ever go to events organised by Black deaf people? Do you ever go to events organised by deaf people? Who has the better social life? White hearing white deaf, Black hearing Black deaf?

Closeness to the Black community.
Do you read any of the Black magazines/newspapers?
Do you think that you are in touch with what is going on in the Black community? Where do you get information? If not why? Any famous Black people you admire? If so who and why?
Do you know anything about Black history? Where did you learn about Black history?

Black Deaf community and identity

Black and Deaf Identity
Has there ever been a special time or event when you felt proud to be Black? Deaf?
Are there any times when you feel more deaf than Black? Particular times when your deafness/ Blackness is more important/ significant t to you.

Deaf Identification: Can you think of anytime when you were growing up that you were aware of being a Black deaf person and not a Black hearing person?

Black Deaf Or Deaf Black
I f a special category was added on the equal opportunity forms for job application forms describing Black people with a hearing loss which of the boxes would you tick. The 1st box that says deaf Black or the 2nd box says Black deaf which box would you tick? Why/

Could you tell me why you identify with your Blackness/deafness first?
Do you think that your personal experiences are closer to the experiences of Black people or deaf people? Could you explain why?

Impact of deafness. Has there ever been a time when you wished that you were hearing?

Do you feel that you have faced more difficulties because you are Black and deaf than you would have if you were Black and hearing? Could you give me an example Do you consider your deafness as a disability?

Black Deaf community is there one?
Is there a specific place or activities that are organised for Black deaf people? If so what and where? If not why not?

Representation of Black Deaf People.
Do you know any famous Black deaf people, or anyone in the Black deaf community who you admire? The deaf community has a number of programmes for deaf people; do you watch these and what do you think of them?

Deaf community and equality.
Discrimination. Have you ever experienced racism- been in a situation where a white deaf person was treated better than yourself. Do you think that equal opportunities exist for Black deaf people and white deaf people? Have you ever been to a deaf club felt uncomfortable and wanted to leave immediately? Do you think that all Deaf people are treated equally in the Deaf community? Could you explain why?

Deaf Culture? Could you tell me what it is?
How does Black culture and Black community differ from deaf culture and the Black deaf community?

Race, Gender and Deafness
Do you feel that you face separate discrimination for being Black deaf and a woman? Can you give me an example of why you feel that you were discriminated because of this?
Do you think that Black deaf women are more successful in employment and education than Black deaf men? If so why? Are the experiences of Black deaf women very different to the experiences of Black deaf men? In what ways are they different? Do you think there is an advantage being a Black deaf man/woman?

Friendships and Social Life

Do you keep in touch with friends from you school days? Who are your friends hearing deaf? How do you make friends? Work, Going to Deaf Club, through other friends, pen friends.
Are you a member of a deaf club? If not why? If yes what do you like about the Deaf club?

Reflections
Who is the most influential person in your life? In what ways have they influenced you? Do you think that attitudes to deafness have changed over the last 10 years? If so how? If no why not? Do you have any particular worries for the future? What do you hope for the future?

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