



Being Black, being British, being Ghanaian – A Discussion on Belonging

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ABSTRACT: Identity and belonging in Britain has been highlighted in recent times by the ‘Windrush Scandal’ and the result of the referendum on leaving the European Union (Brexit). The idea of who belongs, how they belong and where they fit in society was a key theme which ran through the empirical data gathered in my study which addresses the construction of identity amongst second-generation Ghanaians. This paper is based on my unpublished PhD and focuses on being Black, being British, being Ghanaian and belonging in different spaces. I draw on the narratives from my qualitative research and propose that negative discussions of immigrants can affect the second generation, leading to disassociation with their natal country. For my participants, the experience of degrees of belonging had been enacted across many spheres. They had to negotiate their sense of belonging in Britain, in Ghana and within Black communities in London. The argument here is that being Black, middle-class, second-generation Ghanaian and being raised in the UK creates a hybrid identity where finding space to belong is negotiated through the development of a ‘third space’ – a space where they can be themselves.

In May 2018 the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex (formally Prince Harry and Megan Markle, an actress of African-American and White American heritage) was held in Windsor, England – complete with a gospel choir and African-American Episcopalian minister. Their marriage and her racial background were often discussed in the media as denoting a changing Britain (Hirsch, 2017). In April 2018



the 'Windrush scandal' opened the topic of who belongs in the UK, with children of some Windrush migrants being faced with trying to prove their British citizenship despite having lived in Britain for, in some cases, almost 70 years. This led to British citizens experiencing detention at immigration centres and wrongful deportations. The 'scandal' was partly a direct result of immigration policies implemented by then Home Secretary, Theresa May (Gentleman, 2018). In 2016 following the referendum vote to leave the European Union (Brexit), an environment of open racism and hostility was created (reference?). Black identity, belonging and race has never been more topical.

The idea of who belongs, how they belong and where they fit in society was a key theme which ran through the empirical data gathered in my study. The role of the nation-state, and its view on integration and assimilation about ethnic minorities, also has a bearing on how people feel about belonging (Hamaz & Vasta, 2009). This paper is based on my unpublished PhD and focuses on issues of identity. It addresses the construction of identity amongst middle-class second-generation Ghanaians. It focuses on being Black, being British, being Ghanaian and belonging in different spaces.

The creation of a real or imagined space which enables the second-generation participants to belong, is discussed in the paper. The notion of the 'third space' (Reynolds, 2008), is also explored here. The necessity of creating this space is made apparent through the exploration of Black identity and the creation of identity as the children of migrants living in a space where they are seen as the 'other'. The argument here is that being a Black, second-generation Ghanaian and being raised in the UK creates a hybrid identity where finding a space to belong is negotiated through the development of a 'third space' – a space where they can be themselves. I propose that negative discussions about immigrants can affect the second generation, leading to disassociation with their natal country.

Overall, my thesis focuses on the intersection between middle class and ethnic identity among second-generation Ghanaians. I explore how second-generation Ghanaians construct their ethnic identity and the role of class in its construction. The study engages with the literature on diaspora, race and racism and the intersection between ethnicity and class. My research explores the work of Gans (2007) who hypothesised that a person's ethnic identity is lessened in importance the more middle class they became.

Background

My participants are the children of migrants arriving from Ghana between the 1960s-1980s (with most parents arriving in the 1960s). They came to a country with open racial hostility epitomised by Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of blood' speech. In 1968 Powell, a Conservative party MP, called for a halt to immigration, advocated for repatriation and highlighted what he believed were the dangers posed by the immigrants to the White English population (Powell, 2007). Four years earlier saw the controversial parliamentary campaign by Conservative MP Peter Griffiths, where he won in Smethwick with the slogan "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour" (Jeffries, 2014). Presently, this would have been termed 'old racism' – the openly hostile and direct racism which was prevalent and affected my participants' parents. While legislation had outlawed this behaviour, following the referendum on leaving the European Union held in 2016 (known as Brexit), there has been a reported resurgence of open hostility towards migrants and people of colour and a rise in race hate crimes (EHRC, 2016). In today's Britain, the children and grandchildren of these Ghanaian migrants are still subjected to racism both open and covert. A survey conducted in May 2016 by research company Opinium Research found that 47% of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people surveyed had been directly insulted, 38% treated differently in public places, e.g. shops and restaurants and others reported being on the receiving end of racist jokes or insults (Crouch & Stonehouse, 2016, p.4).

The impact of racism and racialisation affected my participants' feelings of belonging to their natal space. I argue that being perceived as 'other', experiencing racism, prejudice and microaggressions had led the majority to dis-identify with being 'English', but, for some, being seen as an outsider in Ghana meant they felt they did not belong there either. In response, many constructed an identity based on their *view* of a Ghanaian identity and their experiences as part of the second generation in the UK. My study also finds that the role of education and family is important to the development of the participants and both are sources of capital which support social mobility.

I begin by briefly reviewing the literature on the construction of Black identities and how it is enacted in the UK. I discuss race and racism in the UK and the impact of Brexit before an examination of 'the third space'. Then, I provide a summary of

my methodology before moving on to a discussion of my findings, where I explore the relationship my participants have with different identities and conclude with a discussion on how my participants construct their 'third space'.¹ (Crouch & Stonehouse, 2016; EHRC, 2016)

Literature review

The creation of Black identities

The role of duality – the idea of being in two spaces at the same time and negotiating identities within these spaces – has been addressed by writers such as W.E.B DuBois and Frantz Fanon. Their work is important to understanding my analysis, as my participants reside in the West and while born and raised in the UK experience feelings of being outsiders and of not belonging. These are not new themes and speak to how much race and place impact identity. DuBois' work focuses on African-Americans, and he believes that they always saw themselves through their own eyes as well as through the eyes of others, hence, the state of double consciousness. He believes this happens because the 'negro' is in a space where they are always the outsider and alien, facing the dual nature of both being a Negro and an American but not given the recognition as both. As he notes: 'One ever feels his twoness-an American, a negro; two souls, two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder' (DuBois & Kenan, 1995). This feeling of duality is always there when they (the Black subject) are in the space they call home.

Duality is a key concept in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) but a range of ideas are surveyed in his work including the role of language, gender and racial interaction and the methods adopted to enable the individual to create a space in two cultures. His theories on duality are based on the work of DuBois. However, Fanon was a product of French colonialism, and he firmly links his views with that experience.

The feeling of being an outsider and not belonging was very much based on race; writers such as Miles (1989) have discussed racialisation and a perceived hierarchy of racial supremacy with those from Africa been placed at the bottom. As Miles highlights:

The representation of the African as Other signified phenotypical and cultural characteristics as evidence of his inferiority and the attributed condition of Africans, therefore, constituted a measure of European civilisation. (Miles, 1989, p. 30)

Black identity was not positioned in the West as positive or of high value. To counteract these views writers such as Césaire (2000), who constructed the theory of Negritude², used Africa as a way to create a more positive Black identity. Negritude was politically situated on the left but promoted an idealised and romanticised notion of Africa which had little bearing on the realities of the continent (Marable, 1987, p. 46). Negritude is not influenced by the ideas of double consciousness and positions itself as a political stance and in direct opposition to the denigration felt by Black people at the time. Negritude was the beginning of putting Africa at the centre.

Later movements such as Pan Africanism, which came from Africa rather than outside of Africa, also sought to unify Black people and create an alternative, more positive identity. As will be noted later in this discussion, the need to create a positive Black identity which is centred around Africa is important to my participants.

Race, class and social mobility

While my work focuses on the Ghanaian middle class, much of the literature on race and class discusses working-class identities, and indeed 'Black' is commonly seen as being synonymous with being working-class (Lacy, 2007; Lutrell, 2009; Moore, 2008). There are a few studies on the Black middle-class, most notably Lacy (2007) working in the US and Rollock et al. (2015) who focused on the UK Black Caribbean middle-class. Many of the first-generation migrants in my study experienced downward mobility, which is also found to be the case for many other migrants (see Li, 2017). In my study particularly, those that had migrated in the early 60s were 'positively selected', Li notes those that are positively selected 'come from relatively well-to-do families and possess high levels of aspiration for themselves and their children' (Li, 2017).

Occupying lower positions in the British labour market led to many migrants experiencing downward mobility, and their children starting from a lower position

in society in comparison to Whites. Despite this, the second-generation examined still manage to succeed in education, outperforming Whites (Li, 2017). However, in the labour market, Cheng and Heath (1993) have noted that the second generation can experience an 'ethnic penalty' on entering the workplace – disadvantage linked to their ethnicity. Li and Heath find in a later study a 'migration penalty', which they believe accounts for the high rates of downward mobility among the first generation (Li & Heath, 2016). The act of migrating is designed to increase social mobility for the family, and what is highlighted by my participants is the degree to which they are expected to succeed and the high level of aspirations their parents have for them. As my participants are raised in the UK, I will now explore Black identity in that context.

Black identity in the UK

In 1948 the *HMS Windrush* brought the first wave of Caribbean migrants to the UK. There were subsequent groups that came from across the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and later the Indian subcontinent, who settled and made their lives in the UK. As noted in the introduction they did not receive a warm welcome, and the negative experiences faced by these post-war migrants and their descendants are related directly to their visible difference (Miles, 1989; Skellington & Morris, 1992). This environment was where the first generation, who are the parents of my participants, found themselves creating a new home. These migrants were part of the educational migration wave that came to the UK in the 1960s. For many, the goal had been to obtain qualifications and then return to jobs in the newly independent Ghana (see Goody & Grouthes, 1977). However, they became 'the students that stayed' as Daley termed them in her analysis of the 1991 census (Daley, 1996). Some of the factors that led to the longer-than-planned sojourn included – having a family, not completing/delaying studies and financial responsibilities to extended family in Ghana. Education was a tool used to support the success of the next generation. However, although born and raised in the UK, their children were still seen as outsiders. Brah notes the racialised views of Britishness and states:

According to racialised imagination, the former colonial Natives and their descendants settled in Britain are not British precisely because they are not seen

as being native to Britain: they can be 'in' Britain but not 'of' Britain. (Brah, 1996, p. 191).

However, these migrants and their children were not without agency. Black activists in the 1970s and 1980s fought for inclusion and equality and created a shift across institutions, for example, academia and the arts. The result of this activism was the creation of a new label – Black British – to recognise the children of settled migrants. Being 'Black British' was a political identity and part of a quest for recognition (Owusu, 1999). More recently writers such as Warmington (2014) and Olusoga (2017) have produced volumes on Black British intellectuals and historic experiences, respectively, to acknowledge their presence and ensure recognition. Policy changes also had an impact on the Black population in the UK, as will now be examined, the nation-state has a role in creating an inclusive society.

British Identity – politics and belonging

Belonging is linked to our own identity – how we see ourselves and where we feel at home. Yuval-Davis argues that how we construct ideas of belonging is emotional and not just cognitive – 'they reflect emotional investments and desire for attachments' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 202). Emotional attachment is a key component of belonging– it is necessary to feel safe and at home. But there is a distinction between belonging and the politics of belonging which is succinctly argued by Yuval-Davis (2006). The politics of belonging focus on the construction of boundaries stating who belongs within those boundaries – 'the boundaries that separate the world population into 'us' and 'them' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 204).

In Britain in 2018, the climate is one where the politics of belonging are quite complex. Britain today exists in the wake of the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist bombings (which took place in the US and London), Brexit and a vastly different international political landscape.

At this point, I will briefly discuss Brexit and the impact it will have and has had on people of colour. After over 50 years of race relations legislation, the UK has moved from some of the more blatant open displays of racism and has in some ways, created a more nuanced form of racism which is subtle and hidden. In their 2016 study, Crouch and Stonehouse found that '71% of ethnic minorities think

that racist beliefs are still widely held in the UK but are not openly talked about, and 60% believe that racial discrimination is common in the UK' (Crouch & Stonehouse, 2016, p. 3).

Following the result of the referendum on the UK remaining a member of the European Union (EU) on 24 June 2016 (known as 'Brexit') what was unleashed was a wave of what could be described as old racism – verbal and physical attacks on the streets. Belonging was yet again brought to the fore – for example, graffiti being sprayed outside of Polish centres telling them to go home (reference). By utilising the slogan of 'take back our country', the Leave campaign's theme has been interpreted by many anti-immigrant groups as support for their cause, leading to their open displays of racism as they have been emboldened and feel legitimised in their actions. The EHRC 2016 report on race '*Healing a Divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy*' noted:

If you are from an ethnic minority community in modern Britain, it can often still feel like you're living in a different world, let alone being part of a one-nation society. – David Isaac, CBE (EHRC, 2016)

The politics of belonging in Britain is very much a racialised discourse – but it is couched in the realm of cultural difference and class difference. The 1980s and 1990s saw multiculturalism become part of state policy; there was a duty to acknowledge cultural diversity and create fairness (Warmington, 2014, p. 73). The acknowledgement of cultural diversity was often superficial and came to be 'lambasted as multiculturalism of the three "S's:" saris, samosas, and steelbands' (Modood & May 2001, p. 306). On an educational and political level, there has been a criticism of multicultural policies with the move towards integration and social cohesion, the latter linked in England to the teaching of British values in schools. For the cohort in my study, growing up through the years of multiculturalism and being of age in this post 9/11 and 7/7 and now this Brexit climate, belonging and politics of belonging impact their lives. Conversations about difference highlight the 'other' – for visible minorities like my participants – concentrate on who does or does not belong in Britain.

The second generation needs to find ways of belonging and engaging with their natal country. Looking at the British Asian population, Gabriel, Gomez, and

Rocha (2012) see the second-generation finding new ways of being British and also creating new identities. According to the paper, they believe that the principal failing of multiculturalism is the creation of fixed, separate identities which made those who are part of the second generation feel that they did not belong. Gabriel et al., examine government policy and rhetoric in the light of the 2001 Bradford riots and the 2005 London bombings and note how 'this generation disrupts simple and linear—as well as hegemonic—definitions of what it means to be "British"' (Gabriel et al., 2012, p. 274).

The Third Space

As my participants find ways to express their identity and labels that allow them to define themselves they are also creating another space in which they can feel at home and belong. Unlike their first-generation parents who try to recreate and enact a cultural identity in their new host country, the second generation must create or find a new way to be which combines the different cultures.

Not being able to feel truly at home in their natal country or their parents' country leads them to create an alternative space. I theorise that for the most part, many of the participants exist within a 'third space' as proposed in the work of Reynolds (2008). Reynolds' work focused on a second-generation return to the Caribbean and how it was "produced and sustained by transnational family networks" (Reynolds, 2008, p. 4). Using a transnational lens Reynolds concludes, engaging in transnational activities and sustaining links, help to sustain cross-generation relationships, this also provides a third space to which the second generation could belong; and supports return migration (Reynolds, 2008:11). Reynolds also states that the act of return is a form of 'survival strategy' for the second generation who experience discrimination, feelings of not belonging in the UK and not having access to social mobility (Reynolds, 2008, p. 14). Writers such as Stuart Hall (S Hall, 1998; 1996) and Homi Bhabha (1996) have discussed theories of a divided self and living in-between cultures, but Reynolds' (2008:11) work developed a more detailed idea of a 'third space' which focuses on the lived experience. The 'third space' for Gabriel et al. (2012) is a way of redefining Britishness, and they see the creation of this space as the way in which the second generation claims this identity.

In short, while the cultural trope for the previous generation was either assimilation or segregation, as Ranasinha suggests, the second generation has mobilised a “third” space of identification and belonging, a crucial step in the process of re-defining Britishness. This formative space is the site for the creation of what Tariq Modood calls complex forms of Britishness (Modood 2007) which articulate new and other ways of being British. (Gabriel et al., 2012, p. 277)

Hoque (2015), in his analysis of third generation Bangladeshis, found that his participants occupied a ‘third space’ which enabled them to assert their specific identities and not feel excluded (Hoque, 2015).

Later, I discuss how my participants explore British identity and the third space. In the next section, I provide details on the methods used in my study, how the participants were chosen, who they are, how the research was analysed and finally my role as a researcher.

Methodology

The aim of the research was to explore the relationship between class and ethnic identity among second-generation Ghanaians. As my focus is the middle class, I wanted to know whether having a middle-class identity impacted on the ethnic identity of the participants.

The participants were aged between 27 and 41 years old, were mostly female and the interviews lasted between 45 minutes and four hours. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, but a small number were conducted using Skype or on mobile phones. Eighteen out of the twenty-one interviewees held a bachelor’s degree and were mostly managers, senior managers, or professionals. All the interviews took place between 2010 and 2011.³

Across the literature which focuses on the second generation, qualitative interview methods have been used. Therefore, I chose a method which positioned my study where it could be compared to others. I selected a semi-structured interview approach using a loose topic framework to speak to 21 second-generation Ghanaians who had grown up in London. Using a qualitative interview method in research can provide the researcher with a flexible framework which can be used to focus on the main research questions, as Gillham notes they can provide “a degree

of precision” whilst also encouraging “openness” from the interviewee (Gillham 2005, p.71), which was true for my research.

Table 1⁴

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation-level
Kwame	Male	37	Post Graduate or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Sally	Female	38	Degree or equivalent	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional
Kofi	Male	31	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Ama	Female	27	Degree or equivalent	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional
Kojo	Male	37	A Levels or equivalent	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional
Abena	Female	34	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Tracey	Female	36	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Adjoa	Female	28	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Kofi A	Male	29	Post Graduate or equivalent	Higher managerial, administrative and professional
Tony	Male	31	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Kwadwo	Male	31	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Ama A	Female	29	Post Graduate or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Ekow	Male	39	Post Graduate or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Ashantewaa	Female	27	Degree or equivalent	Higher managerial, administrative and professional
Akua	Female	37	A Levels or equivalent	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual worker
Yaw	Male	35	GCSEs	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional

Maya	Female	27	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Sarah	Female	29	Degree or equivalent	Higher managerial, administrative and professional
Ama B	Female	37	Degree or equivalent	Higher managerial, administrative and professional

Sampling

The participants were primarily drawn from their membership of Ghanaian associations or networks with the following being the prime spaces for selection:

- Ghana Black Stars Network (GBSN)
- Star 100
- Ghanaian Londoners

These networks or groups were chosen mainly because they had members who were London based and fit my age parameters of 21 to 50. London was the focus of my search as it has the largest Ghanaian community in the UK (BBC, 2005). There was also some snowballing used to gather participants. The other criteria for my participants was that both parents must have come from Ghana and migrated to the UK, and participants must have had most of their education in England. The education system is a major institution, therefore would impact their socialisation and development as adults. The parameters for the age set reflected the age range of parents who had migrated between the late 1950s to mid-1980s which covers the postcolonial and post-coup cohorts of migrants who would have come to the UK.

I also used a sample questionnaire to establish occupational status, education levels, parents' education levels and when the first parent migrated. This information also enabled me to see the class position of the participants based on occupation and education.

Based on the occupation and education levels held by many of my participants they would fit into the category of middle class. All except three of my participants held degree level qualifications, with the majority holding professional or managerial roles (NS-SEC categories 1 and 2). While on paper they appeared to be middle class, they did not all identify readily with that label. Middle-class

identity was seen as a White identity and as noted in Lacy's work there were differences in being Black and middle class in comparison to being White middle-class (Lacy, 2007). Discussing the formation of class, Moore states "racism shapes both the structure and meaning of class in the Black community" (2008) – Black becomes synonymous with working class. My participants also occupied a dual-class location as they negotiated class in Britain *and* Ghanaian class status, which was inherited through their parents.

The results were analysed using the constant comparative method which is an inductive method to code data. It can be used to categorise and compare qualitative data for analysis purposes (Mathison, 2005), I had some key themes in a loose framework, so I compared the data from each interview to the previous interview to see what other themes emerged. For example, there was no specific theme on racism yet nearly every participant discussed the impact that it had on them.

Researcher status

At this point, I would like to note my status as being a member of the community that I interviewed. I am a second-generation Ghanaian, and I also had to receive ethics committee approval – the committee needed to be satisfied that my membership in this group would not cause an issue with the anonymity of the participants. My membership in the community did not immediately ensure that I was given insider status. Work has been conducted on the role of insider status and Black researchers (see Twine and Warren (2000) and Phoenix (1994), but there are still gaps within the literature on intra-cultural interviewing particularly in relation to solo research projects. My membership of the previously mentioned groups/networks and personal networks provided me with the ability to access the community. While conducting the interviews, assumptions were made by participants about my own identity – this was in terms of my Ghanaian identity and my class identity. I was conscious of making sure I clarified and queried elements of the discussion especially when it was assumed I would know exactly what they meant because I shared the same background. An example would be using words in Twi⁵ but not asking whether I understood Twi.

I was also conscious of my preconceived notions of Ghanaian identity and how my own upbringing could impact my data. In conducting the work, I needed

to spend time reflecting on how my presence affected the information I received from my participants. I was careful of how much my own narratives were shared in the dialogue with participants, but I was not surprised that they wanted to hear my views on certain topics.

In the following section, I discuss my findings and present data from the participants.

Findings

Being Black in the UK

At the time when many of the participants were growing up, being Black was defined as a Caribbean identity as there was a more significant presence of people of Caribbean origin in the UK. Even the term 'Black British' was created to acknowledge the children of Caribbean migrants (Thompson, 2015a, 2015b). For my participants, not only were they seen as Black but also, they had an African identity. Their African identity was predominantly presented as negative, sometimes by themselves but also by others. There was a lack of knowledge about Africa from wider society. Stereotypes of Africa were perpetrated by the media; participants particularly noted that during the 1980s images focused on famine and war and the pervading view of Africa was of an impoverished, war-torn continent. The dominant discourse of Africa as a dark and savage continent and the 'Other', is still seen in the media and across the West. While there are still negative images, perceptions about African identity seem to have shifted since the initial images on television screens in the 1980s. My participants discussed the impact on their identities as illustrated here by Adjoa.

Adjoa, 28, was born in the UK but at several points in her childhood, she had lived in Ghana for short periods of time. She settled back in the UK at the age of nine. Here, she discusses her experiences foregrounding an African identity at secondary school:

When we were in high school it wasn't cool to be African; everybody wanted to be West Indian, so everybody put on like a West Indian accent and, I don't know, like a lot of the West Indians used to make comments about Africans and dark skin

and stuff like that. But because I came from Ghana and I had a strong connection with Ghana, I love Ghana; I just decided that I don't want to be West Indian, so anything to do with West Indian-ism, so any of the slang, I refuse to use. Because my mum was like 'you can't speak Cockney' [switched to a Ghanaian accent], 'you can't do, you have to talk properly' it made the way I speak quite correct, grammatical and maybe posh, but a lot of that is because I do not want to use the slang that may be seen as trying to be Jamaican or whatever. (Adjoa, 28)

Some of these ideas relating to intra-ethnic tension between African and Caribbean groups have been explored in Owusu-Kwarteng's work. She found that while the second and third generations have better relationships than the first-generation migrants, some of the issues have not entirely died away. (Owusu-Kwarteng, 2017). Adjoa's comments also speak of class issues as she highlights 'speaking correctly' and not sounding 'cockney', which was seen as a working-class accent.

Arguably, through the exchange of cultural knowledge via mediums such as food, film, literature, sport and music, the understanding of the continent in the West has slightly shifted. Being African is now 'cool' and so is asserting an African identity, it is no longer a surprise to hear Ghanaian rhythms on commercial radio stations, as new artists like Fuse ODG have made Ghanaian music mainstream⁶. There has been some movement forward, however, being 'Black' still means there are many obstacles to overcome for example in education, employment, health, and the judicial system.

My participants used a range of different methods to manage and negotiate overt and subtle racism and institutions that placed barriers in their path. Excelling in education was one of the key methods used to support my participants alongside using their ethnic background to support their sense of self. Family relationships are very important to my participants but so were friendships. Friendships were discussed more by my participants than other relationships as it was here that they often felt a sense of belonging.

What I found through my analysis was that there was a tendency to form friendships with people from similar racial and class backgrounds to themselves, and it was within these groups that they establish that sense of belonging and felt more comfortable. For example, Kwadwo, 31, who experienced racism and bullying at grammar school, found friendships with other Black Africans on entering

university. He told me that he had met people who had had similar experiences when growing up or in other ways were like-minded. He formed strong bonds at university and still retains those friendships years after graduation. Adjoa was another participant who found herself forging friendships amongst other Black people, again in her case they were predominantly African:

... I went to school in predominantly White areas, but the funny thing is I don't have any white friends. So even in those schools I always ended up with the Black people who happen to be Ghanaian or Nigerian or something. They were always African. (Adjoa, 28)

Rollock et al. (2015) found similar findings in their study on the Black middle class, which focused on African Caribbean second and third-generation participants. Being with other Black people was a way to feel safe:

Black people are viewed through a narrow, restrictive lens which refuses to make multiple versions of Blackness possible. Being with other Black people, therefore, represents a certain safety from such limitations (Rollock 2012b), thus serving to reinforce an invisible cohesion among them. (Rollock et al., 2015, p. 26)

My participants must negotiate belonging as the children of migrants, as people racialised as Black, living in the Western space but also having another space to which they are connected. I now explore some of these ideas about British identity, politics and Brexit and what it also means to negotiate Ghanaian identity.

British Identity

With my participants, their nationality was not in question as they were all holders of British passports; however, the degree to which they asserted a British identity varied amongst the cohort. Identities are fluid, and I found in my research that the choice of whether or not to assert British identity was contextual and depended on the location and why it was being asserted. In the case of one interviewee, Kofi, his affinity to Britain and a British identity was felt solely through the passport and education he held:

I have a British passport, which is handy! I've got a British education, I suppose when it comes to identity it sort of falls into the same arena as culture and what you're about, and my culture predominantly isn't British, it's Ghanaian. I suppose that's probably why if you asked me where I'm from I say Ghanaian as opposed to British. If I didn't have any of those things then maybe I would associate myself as an English boy. (Kofi, 31)

Another participant, Kwame, 38, sees being British in terms of 'cultural benefits' which he linked at the time of the interview to democracy, citizenship, freedom of movement and access to Europe. In the quote that follows he discusses the culture of Britain which he sees as a celebration of diversity as there is no uniformity of culture across the country which contrasts with Ghana:

British culture is a very interesting one because Britain as a society is a wave of migration, Britain is probably the most ethnically – [sighs] for want of a better word, most ethnically mixed society on the planet. There are very few people who can claim truly to be indigenously British. Whether Roman or Saxon or Viking or German or Dutch, Polish, there's a lot of stuff going on in Britain. So, our culture in here, our culture in Britain tends to be a hybrid of just about anything, and we celebrate, the culture's pretty much a celebration of diversity, there is very little that, you could look around the UK and say 'yes we all celebrate this in the same way'. Whereas, for instance, with somewhere like Ghana, throughout you could say that you don't shake someone's hand with your left hand, because culturally – you don't have those same kind of things in the UK. (Kwame, 38)

British identity holds some clear benefits for these participants. While they are not migrants the discourse around immigration, belonging and identity does impact on this visible group. Gans has stated, that a negative dialogue about immigrants in the host nation can have an impact on the second generation who may even internalise the negativity, including using terms such as 'fresh off the boat' to describe new arrivals (Gans, 2007:104). Negative public discourse on migration and who belongs in a country can also make those that are visibly different feel less at home. The rise in race-related incidents will also impact feelings of safety. As

noted, feelings of being safe are part of feeling at home and belonging.

In the next section I discuss the role of Ghanaian identity as my participants not only negotiate British identity and politics but also what it means to be Ghanaian and if that is a space that they can call home.

Ghanaian identity

The Ghanaian government has courted the wider African diaspora, particularly African-Americans, to engage these groups specifically with the idea of investing in the country. The government has also created policies and programmes aimed at engaging second and subsequent generations. On one level, we see the acknowledgement of the generations born abroad as Ghanaians, but in other circumstances, particularly when there has been negative publicity (for example during the London riots in 2011 where it had been reported in the Ghana press that three young men with Ghanaian names had been arrested – the article author states that having a Ghanaian name does not make you a Ghanaian (Agbodza, 2011)) there has been a reluctance to acknowledge those born abroad as being Ghanaian. There were also some participants in my research who focused on the idea of an authentic Ghanaian identity. I noted that amongst my participants a vocabulary had been created to make it easy to differentiate between the second generation, born and raised in the UK and those who had migrated.

The term ‘Ghanaian Ghanaians’ was used by Kwame, 38, to denote those born in Ghana. Another participant, Kofi, used the term ‘Ghanaian’ in a multi-layered way in different parts of our conversation. He uses it to denote different generations, as well as those born in the UK or Ghana, so constant clarification was needed regarding who he was referring to at a given moment.

My participants found that being able to use the label ‘Ghanaian’ and to have that label accepted by others was also problematic. Some participants recounted similar experiences of visiting Ghana which highlight the dual perspective of belonging. The term ‘obruni’ means White or foreign, and this term was used to refer to participants by family, as well as strangers, on their visits to Ghana. Some took it in their stride, but others felt uneasy being couched in these terms – they disliked being seen as foreign. Even within their own families, they were made to feel that they were outsiders.

Here, Ama recounts her experience of going to Ghana and of discussing her identity in the UK:

Because the experience that I've had prior to, well even when I was 18 as well, when I've been in Ghana the local people always make this distinction that you're not a Ghanaian you're English. They keep doing that, and I'm like, well when I'm in England when I'm in London at home if someone was to come up to me and say 'oh where are you from?' and I'd just say 'I'm from England, I'm English' – I don't understand why people would come out with that answer as I just see it as, 'yeah I was born here but as you can see from my features, don't originate', but people would say 'no you're from Ghana' so you're kind of like in the middle where the people who are from Ghana say you're not really. (Ama, 27)

What Ama's case highlights is the struggle to find a space that enables the second generation to have agency over their identity. They may *choose* a definition, but then they are told by others that they cannot *use* the definition. Their identity is being labelled for them depending on location, positionality and who is doing the placing.

However, my second-generation participants are not without agency and although there is a struggle to find a space for their identity they do create the space. It is their hybridity which gives them the space where they can find alternative definitions of who they are and explore new notions of identity. Afua Hirsch, a journalist who is of Black Ghanaian and White British ancestry, went to live in Ghana, and while there in 2012 wrote an article which summarises this notion:

But being African is an increasingly complex identity. As someone who has been told she is too Black to be British, and too British to be African, I am strongly against the notion that identity can be policed by some external standard. And I am not alone. The term "Afropolitan" is beginning to enter the mainstream; one definition describes it as: "An African from the continent of dual nationality, an African born in the diaspora, or an African who identifies with their African and European heritage and mixed culture." (Hirsch, 2012)

'Afropolitan' is an apt term for many of the participants in this study. The concept provides a way to highlight not only their duality but also shows that they can

choose the various identities they inhabit rather than having them imposed externally.

Conclusion

This article reflected on the issues relating to Black identities, being Black in Britain and British and Ghanaian identities. I explored how Black identities have been discussed within the literature and how they are constructed in British society. I explored the role of politics and policy and some of the discourse on the politics of belonging. For my participants, the experience of degrees of belonging was enacted across many spheres. They had to negotiate their sense of belonging in Britain, in Ghana and within Black communities in London.

While this study was conducted before there was a referendum to leave the European Union, the impact of this change needed to be discussed. Prior to the vote on leaving the European Union, there was less open hostility in the UK towards people who were non-White and/or European, with particular hatred aimed at Eastern European communities. The referendum changed this landscape creating an emboldened anti-immigration movement and leading to an increase in race-related incidents. In this new Brexit climate, the thin veneer of belonging, home and feelings of safety has been wiped away. In the case of my participants, they are highly skilled, adaptable, highly educated and are currently afforded the privileges that British citizenship can currently offer. This positions them similarly to their parents who made the journey to the UK, in some cases over 50 years ago. It is yet to be seen whether the climate in the UK could lead the second generation to migrate elsewhere.

What was made evident through the narratives of my participants was that there were many discussions about feeling like an outsider and not fitting in anywhere. The second generation created a space where *their* version of Ghanaian identity exists. However, *within* this third space is a linear of thick and thin identities as proposed by Cornell and Hartmann (1998).

Imagined and created identities have evolved within the context of the outsider and the 'other'. The creation of the 'cultural chameleon' was something which emerged as a form of identity. While the majority choose to assert a 'third space Ghanaian identity', they could choose to portray several of the identities they have

access to depending on the situation, for example, using the privilege of a British passport or using a Ghanaian name or wearing attire to foreground their ethnicity. The middle-class participants possessed resources which enabled a cosmopolitan approach to life and what occurs is switching between spaces at will in order to fit in and find the space called home (Brah, 1996). Belonging is about feeling at home, and 'home' was created by the participants by drawing on a multitude of resources which are used in different spaces and contexts and by creating social spaces and situations.

Endnotes

- ¹ A brief note on terminology and concepts: I used terms as described by my participants but acknowledge here the problems associated with some of the terms. For example, 'West Indian' is used by some of my participants to denote people from the Caribbean. I use the term Caribbean or African Caribbean to distinguish this group of the diaspora from the Ghanaian migrants and their descendants that are part of this study. My work stems from a constructionist epistemology and acknowledges that concepts such as race and class are constructed. I discuss identity as a concept - identity is not fixed but is fluid and different aspects are displayed depending on the situation. I also note the use of the term 'Black', firstly I use it to signify those people who are of African descent and it is a term that my participants also used to describe themselves. Secondly, it is not an identity that the parents migrated with, the act of migration into a majority White society is where Blackness is created. Therefore, people become 'Black'; this is an identity linked to historical views of Blackness (which has mostly been negative - see (Miles, 1989)).
- ² The focus of the Negritude movement was on Black history pre-colonisation, highlighting the importance of African culture and seeking to reverse the negative trope of Africa.
- ³ Two participants data could not be used (one did not provide consent, another did not meet criteria but had not stated in the questionnaire) so their names are not listed.
- ⁴ The labels used in the questionnaires are from the National Readership Survey (NRS) which were mapped onto the NS-SEC categories. The NRS labels are commonly used in surveys and statistics. The NS-SEC categories were being changed at the time of the creation of the study
- ⁵ Twi is a main language spoken in Ghana.
- ⁶ The collaboration between Fuse ODG and Ed Sheeran also highlights the changes, a well-known British popstar singing in Twi and discussing his visits to Ghana in national interviews shows how things have moved forward.

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