Travelling to the Ancestral Homelands: The Aspirations and Experiences of a UK Caribbean Community

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This paper is based on an ethnographic study of the Caribbean community of Moss Side, Manchester (UK). Its aim is to reveal, interpret and analyse the personal meanings which members of the community attach to visiting the ancestral homeland in the Caribbean. This form of travel is defined in terms of 'ethnic reunion', which involves travelling for the purpose of visiting friends and relatives and/or searching for one's cultural roots. The study, which is based on an interpretive analysis of a range of ethnographic material, initially examines the reasons why first- and second-generation Caribbeans wish to participate in the 'homeland experience', and then illustrates ways in which they reconstruct an identity of themselves through their travel perceptions and experiences. The latter part of the paper discusses how people's travel encounters serve to illustrate how ethnic differences and boundaries between groups are constructed and/or reconstructed. It is argued that established perspectives of tourism motivation and behaviour do not fully account for the role of ethnicity as a significant variable in influencing specific forms of travel. The conclusion asserts that ethnic reunion should be conceptually viewed as a distinct form of 'travel', socioculturally dissimilar to conventional forms of 'tourism'.

Introduction

'Ethnicity' is a commonly discussed component of tourism motivation, usually associated with an individual's desire to be acquainted with other ethnic communities and attain cultural knowledge of their customs and way of life (Harron & Weiler, 1992; Smith, 1989; Van den Berghe & Keyes, 1984). Thus, the ethnicity variable predominantly applies to those forms of tourism wherever ethnic resources feature as major 'pull factors' of motivation (e.g. ethnic cuisine, arts and folklore). These motivational resources have encouraged the growth of 'ethnic tourism' (Smith: 1989: 4), i.e. a form of tourism manufactured from the desire to seek out the cultural exoticism of other ethnic groups and societies (Harron & Weiler, 1992). Although ethnic tourism has historically been examined within the context of non-Western societies (Harron & Weiler, 1992; Smith, 1989; Van den Berghe & Keyes, 1984), ethnic groups and cultures within Western urban communities have also become increasingly exoticised and commoditised under the influence of the 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990: 144).

However, the view of ethnicity as a significant 'pull factor' of motivation tends to underplay the role of ethnicity as the initial or primary motivation. There is a need to consider how people's aspirations and preferences are directly influenced by their value systems, beliefs, opinions and cultural backgrounds. While some enquiries have drawn attention to the religious characteristics and cultural

traits of 'national communities' as prime indicators in explaining travel and tourism behaviour (Din, 1989; Pizam & Sussmann, 1995; Ritter, 1987), the behavioural characteristics of those ethnic minority groups who reside in such communities have not been significantly addressed in the study of tourism and ethnicity. Given that Western (tourist-generating) societies are increasingly cosmopolitan in nature and form (Dann, 1993), it is important to consider the motivational choices and travel experiences of particular minority groups. Moreover, there is a need to recognise that 'ethnic tourism' manifests other conceptual meanings. As King notes: 'The other and less frequent use of the term ethnic tourism is where it applies to travel movements whose primary motivation is ethnic reunion' (1994: 173–4).

In this context, ethnic reunion involves visiting friends and relatives[1] and/or searching or re-searching for one's cultural roots (King, 1994). This form of travel has been identified as a popular activity for a number of ethnic communities living overseas: Barbadian (Western, 1992), Greek Cypriot (Thanopoulos & Walle, 1988), Pakistani (Khan, 1977) and Turkish communities (Liu *et al.*, 1984). Some of these studies directly focused on the economic dimensions of the VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market, highlighting how high disposable incomes are important in determining the frequency of visits to the ancestral homeland (Thanopoulos & Walle, 1988) and how such forms of travel have a significant impact on the homeland economy (Liu *et al.*, 1984). Importantly, recent technological developments and advancements in transport and communication networks have created more opportunities for (diasporic) minority groups to travel to places of ethnic significance, thereby encouraging such groups to strengthen their 'border relations with the old country'[2] (Clifford, 1994: 304).

Nevertheless, enquiries concerning ethnic reunion issues in tourism have not generally examined the sociocultural factors which influence individuals to travel to their ancestral homelands. Furthermore, they have not significantly addressed the complex nature of subsequent encounters and experiences. A fuller understanding of the interrelationships between ethnicity, tourism and ethnic reunion requires a deeper theoretical and empirical analysis. The process of establishing and implementing a detailed methodological approach to the study of ethnic reunion is advanced in the next section of this paper.

If ethnicity is interpreted simplistically as a process by which individuals allude to a sense of belonging to groups with similar sociocultural traits and normative behaviour (Drury, 1994), then such dimensions may have a bearing on how travel aspirations and experiences are constructed. This paper identifies and examines sociocultural meanings associated with travelling to the ancestral homelands in the Caribbean. Thus the work is based on ethnographic research conducted in the Caribbean community of Moss Side, Manchester (UK), a district located one mile south-west of the city centre. The study group is composed of a research confederate, key informants and a range of people living or working in the Moss Side district.

The study initially identifies the personal quests and social obligations associated with ethnic reunion. By considering two specific 'primary reference groups'[3] (Moutinho, 1987: 8), peers and matriarchal relatives, it then highlights the social factors which encourage individuals to attach themselves to the ances-

tral homeland. The analysis directs attention to how mothers and grandmothers have a productive role in encouraging their children and grandchildren to establish a close relationship with their place of origin. It is asserted that cultural knowledge, reproduced through matriarchal and peer group networks, potentially enables individuals to formulate a personal connection with, and create a place image of, the homeland. The latter section of the study examines the contrasting ways in which individuals perceive and classify their roles as 'non-tourists', 'locals'/'hosts' and 'foreigners'. Finally, it incorporates an analysis of the cultural codes of behaviour and customary practices associated with ethnic reunion, in particular, the giving of presents to relatives on arrival at the ancestral destination. Importantly, this practice illustrates the cultural significance of the reciprocal relationships that coexist between visitors and family members.

In order to identify the fundamental behavioural components of ethnic reunion, it is necessary to consider those commonly discussed social attributes of tourism motivation and behaviour. Accordingly, the work discusses whether the desire to visit the ancestral homeland manifests a collective and religious quest (MacCannell, 1976; Graburn, 1983, 1989) and incorporates a need to transcend the 'social dislocations' of everyday life (Cohen & Taylor, 1992; Krippendorf, 1987; MacCannell, 1976). It also addresses the extent to which homeland experiences promote 'self-actualisation' (Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983), contribute to an 'enhanced ego' (Dann, 1977) or an elevated 'social status' (Crompton, 1979; Smith, 1993), and involve 'anti-structural' types of behaviour that are distinct from the norms and structures of everyday life (Gottlieb, 1982; Graburn, 1983, 1989; Jafari, 1987).

In an attempt to draw reference to more recently identified forms of tourism experiences and aspirations, the work compares ethnic reunion with 'post-tourist' (Feifer, 1985: 259) forms of behaviour. It is noted that post-tourists are increasingly aware of the range of choices and the diversity of experiences available to them in a (postmodern) society of intense consumption (Rojek, 1993; Urry, 1990). They are also apparently conscious that they cannot fully disengage from being perceived as tourists and cannot successfully challenge the social distances that prevail within host communities (Feifer, 1985; Rojek, 1993; Urry, 1990). Such analysts generally maintain that these tourists remain as social outsiders during their visits to other communities and destinations, often moving from one destination to the next in the hope of experiencing a diversity of situations and encounters. It is also asserted that post-tourists are able to imagine themselves as tourists or travellers in the context of their home environment. Hence, there is no real need to travel to fully appreciate other destinations and engage in tourism experiences, especially as technological advertising and media forms of communication actively create opportunities for individuals to perceive themselves as tourists, thereby enabling them to develop their own personal identities (Feifer, 1985; Rojek, 1993; Urry, 1990). Consequently, this paper considers the extent to which ethnic reunion involves elements of choice, encompasses induced aspirations and experiences, and embodies a series of transient encounters characterised by role awareness and role distance.

Despite the recent emphasis concerning the decentred nature of the tourism experience, it has been popularly asserted that tourists actually aspire for more

grounded and unfamiliar experiences; those which reflect a contrast to the contrived and meaningless experiences of everyday life (MacCannell, 1976). Holistic experiences, which involve socially interactive forms of behaviour, collective practices, transformative lifestyles and emancipatory-based encounters, potentially enable individuals to formulate and adopt a tourist identity (Cohen & Taylor, 1992; Jafari, 1987). In an attempt to provide a detailed examination of people's perceptions of the ancestral homeland, the work addresses whether ethnic reunion manifests similar patterns of behaviour and whether destination experiences actually encourage individuals to perceive themselves as tourists.

Yet ethnic reunion may encourage individuals to reconstruct an identity of themselves based on ethnic-type attributes and forms of behaviour considered to be non-touristic in both character and form. Subsequently, the study draws upon anthropological issues concerned with identifying the social and cultural content of ethnicity, i.e. boundary maintenance, ethnic ascription and individual/group identity (Barth, 1969; Eriksen, 1991). Accordingly, Barth (1969) stresses the importance of considering the social contexts and situations which serve to communicate cultural differences between groups. He emphasises that social actors have a crucial role in maintaining ethnic boundaries and in determining their own ethnicities. The interactive relationships that individuals have with particular social organisations (e.g. kinship and community networks) enable them to express the 'cultural features' of their ethnic unit (Barth, 1969: 14). This perspective, commonly known as the situational approach[4] to the study of ethnic groups, emphasises that ethnicity should be perceived more as a socially interactive process than as a bounded phenomenon, where cultural differences between groups are socially communicated through interpersonal encounters. This approach pays special attention to how people's ethnic identities are articulated within a range of contexts and situations, and how such identities serve to represent cultural differences and similarities with other individuals, groups and societies.

Concern over the sociocultural consequences of the globalisation of travel and mobility, and the growth of migrant networks and communities, has encouraged recent enquiries to consider the range of emergent ethnicities, transnational identities and ethnic relationships developing in cosmopolitan-based societies (Clifford, 1994, 1997; Cohen, 1997; Kaplan, 1996). Other related enquiries have started to address the changing nature of Caribbean identities and cultures, drawing special attention to how ethnicity and identity are becoming more hybridised in character and form (Gilroy, 1993a, 1993b; Hall, 1990, 1991, 1996). Hall (1990) provides an explanation of what is meant by a hybrid identity:

> The diaspora experience . . . is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. (1990: 235)

Thus, it is asserted that conceptualisations of (diasporic) ethnic identities are by no means absolute or definitive; if anything they are diverse and flexible. Importantly, some analysts have emphasised that ethnic forms of identity (e.g. language and music) are not essentially or mimetically products of the ancestral

homeland, but are constituted by a mixture of cultural influences and forms (Gilroy, 1993a,[5] 1993b; Hebdige, 1987). Discussions concerning the degree to which individuals and groups mediate their identities and negotiate their experiences within different socio-spatial contexts could help to provide important insights into how identities are more dynamic, interchangeable and negotiable.

Other analysts have argued for the need to consider the political dimensions of ethnicity, particularly issues concerning how ethnic boundaries can be renegotiated or repositioned and how identities can be reinscribed or rethought through power-type relationships coexisting between individuals and groups (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1990, 1991, 1996; Jenkins, 1997). Bhabha (1994), for instance, maintains that ethnicity and identity should be considered within a postcolonial framework of analysis, whereby identities and affiliations should be understood through their (con)temporary association with the dynamic and changing nature of power relations rather than by any affirmative connection to their historical origins. Jenkins (1997) argues that relationships of power relate to the way in which social categorisations and ascriptions are articulated by and imposed on particular ethnic groups. Therefore, ethnic identities and boundaries are augmented through a process of perceiving, categorising and labelling others:

> Ethnicity may . . . be strengthened or generated as a response to categorization; similarly, an aspect of one group's ethnicity may be, indeed is likely to be, the categories with which it labels other groups or collectivities. (Jenkins, 1997: 23)

Given that the forthcoming analysis directs attention to how members of the UK Caribbean community perceive and categorise themselves and others (hosts and tourists) during their sojourn in the ancestral islands, it is considered important to explore how political relationships may have a direct influence on the way in which ethnic identity is constructed and/or reconstructed.

In an attempt to present a clear exposition of how this empirically based enquiry was developed and to justify the subsequent analytical procedures involved, it is now necessary to discuss the methodological applications and the epistemological components of this study.

The Ethnographic Approach: Methods and Strategies

Research environment and study group

This paper is the product of ethnographic research conducted from 1993–1996 in the vicinity of Moss Side, Manchester, England. This district contains Manchester's largest number of Caribbean residents, approaching 3000 (Manchester City Council, 1993). The UK Caribbean Community is culturally diverse, including migrants and their descendants originating from various Caribbean islands of the former British colonies (e.g. Barbados, Jamaica and St Lucia). The 'Caribbean'/'black' minority is the second-largest non-European minority group in the UK, totalling over 600,000 (Ballard & Kalra, 1994) and living predominantly in urban areas (Skellington, 1992). This group emigrated to Britain from the 1940s and sought employment in both manufacturing and service sector industries, especially tourism, catering and transport (Fryer, 1984). Residence was largely differentiated by place of origin: Dominicans resided in Preston, Nevisians

migrated to Leicester and Jamaicans settled in a variety of urban areas such as Birmingham, Derby, London and Manchester (Byron, 1994; Peach, 1984). Settlement was encouraged and developed through social and kinship ties, i.e. 'migrant networks' (Byron, 1994). Migrants moved to inner-city areas, such as Moss Side, where accommodation was affordable. These districts were close to the manufacturing and transport industries where demand for labour was relatively high (Reid, 1956).

Moss Side is the main residential and cultural centre of Manchester's Caribbean community. Therefore, it was considered appropriate for the researcher to live in the area in order to conduct a longitudinal study. This approach has obvious advantages in comparison to those short-term methods of qualitative investigation (e.g. 'rapid ethnographic assessment'[6]). For instance, it is asserted that regular research contact with community members enables local systems of thought to be developed and clarified over a significant period (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Yet the effectiveness of the longitudinal approach depends upon the quality of relationships that researchers have with members of the study group, the extent to which they are prepared to cross-examine the effectiveness of their own methods and strategies, and also on the way in which they are able to learn from the environments in which they are working (Walsh, 1998). Nonetheless, if there is an intent to establish in-depth interactions with those studied, develop relationships based on trust and represent the 'multivocal concerns' of the community (Bianchi, 1999), then long-term immersion in the field setting should be considered as an important prerequisite of ethnographic research.

Longitudinal ethnographies have been employed in the study of race and ethnicity in UK urban communities. Examples include Cottle's (1978) qualitative investigation of a selection of West Indian families in London, Pryce's (1986) fieldwork investigation of the West Indian Community in St Paul's (Bristol) and Alexander's (1996) in-depth study of a small group of young black Britons living in London. These studies contributed to a critical understanding of the diverse nature and social character of black communities, focusing specifically on issues relating to family life (Cottle, 1978), black youth culture and identity (Alexander, 1996), and the racial and social problems affecting members of the Caribbean diaspora (Pryce, 1986).

The following study is based on a collection of narratives and accounts concerned with travel and tourism aspirations, events and experiences. Although this paper presents an analytical summary of people's perceptions of travelling to the ancestral islands, it should be noted that the wider research programme also sought views regarding the nature and significance of travelling to UK urban and rural destinations, and to other European countries. Given that 'homeland travel' often featured as a more important priority for members of the study group, the author has decided to discuss at length the sociocultural relevance of this form of travel.

In an attempt to retrieve a range of information concerning people's perceptions of travel and tourism, the ethnographic study employed multiple methods of investigation: informal/unstructured interviews with community functionaries from private and public organisations, serial interviews with 15 key informants[7] and friendly conversations[8] with members of the local population.

The fieldwork programme also employed participatory and observational techniques, developed through an active involvement in the affairs of the community of Moss Side.[9] The fieldwork programme was aided by a 'research confederate', Junior, who was a senior youth worker in Moss Side.

Contact with Junior occurred as a consequence of an appointment arranged by his cousin, the researcher's former colleague at the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), the institution which sponsored the research programme. Junior was initially suspicious of the nature of the research programme, questioning why 'white people' always want to research 'black people's business'. Yet after several weeks of negotiating with Junior the importance of understanding other people's perspectives and experiences through a natural involvement in community life, Junior was prepared to adopt a more pro-active role in the study. He often presented his opinions on unfolding topics, facilitated the researcher in accessing particular places and venues, and also introduced him to various members of the community. The researcher worked with Junior on a voluntary basis at his Youth Centre and often accompanied him on evenings out, day trips and weekend breaks. Junior also invited the researcher to participate in various community events (e.g. cricket and dance festivals) and celebrations (e.g. birthdays, weddings and wakes).

Given that the researcher was of a different ethnic background to the study group and was not initially familiar with the geographical area or culture studied, Junior's involvement in the study was considered to be crucial. His knowledge of the Moss Side district and his various contacts with individuals and community-based organisations were invaluable to the research programme. Those who have studied ethnic minorities within urban settings have recognised the necessary role that research confederates ('gate keepers') have in determining access and in helping the researcher become more acquainted with the culture and group being studied (Liebow, 1967; Whyte, 1981). In his ethnographic study of an Italian American street-corner gang in south Boston, Whyte (1981) acknowledged how his confederate, Doc, the gang leader, enabled him to gain direct access to particular social networks that would have been difficult to achieve through independent means. Likewise, Liebow (1967), who studied the lifestyles of a group of black males living in a low-income district of Washington DC, found that his close relationship with a dominant member of the group, Tally, encouraged him to become more familiar with, and accepted by, other members.

Junior recommended several of his friends to be interviewed, some of whom became key informants. Contact with other key informants was established through various intermediaries: a student at MMU, a development worker at the Moss Side and Hulme Community Development Trust and a friend who worked for a community film organisation in Moss Side. Thus the selection of informants was not significantly based on a formal or conventional process, but transpired through personal contact and informal introductions.

In the context of this study, the key informants were those with whom the researcher maintained regular contact throughout the research programme. They were always willing to present their opinions, describe their experiences and generally help the researcher understand the concerns of the wider Caribbean community. These individuals were simply classified as informants once it was realised that they had made a significant contribution to the research

programme, especially in terms of providing detailed viewpoints, advice and personal support. While it is noted that there are various types of informants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983: 116–17), the conceptual application of 'key informants' in this research programme should be viewed in contrast to other members of study group: those who were simply observed; those who were involved in 'friendly conversations' with the researcher; and those formal members of the community (community functionaries) who were usually interviewed on just one occasion during the research programme (e.g. local politicians and various members of community organisations).

The key informants appearing in this paper were born either in the Caribbean (Antonio, Caroline, Elaine, Marvin and Paulette) or in the UK (Cheryl, Dawn, Delphene, Errol, Joyce, Lloyd and Valerie). They originated from one or two of the following countries in the Caribbean: Barbados (Antonio, Delphene and Elaine), Grenada (Joyce), Guyana (Dawn, Delphene), Jamaica (Caroline, Cheryl, Errol, Joyce, Lloyd, Paulette and Valerie), St Vincent (Marvin) and Trinidad (Dawn). Although Moss Side is largely occupied by those of Jamaican origin, the range of island backgrounds reflected in this study suggests that the community is by no means ethnically homogeneous.

Ethnographic procedure and practice: A qualitative approach

The process of developing an insight into people's feelings, attitudes and experiences is considered to be a necessary prerequisite for understanding what individuals actually do (or do not do): to account, that is, for the intrinsic and extrinsic factors which influence the choices and range of decisions that individuals make (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). This study developed a qualitative approach by focusing on people's opinions, insights and experiences, and by situating the social phenomena studied (i.e. tourism and travel) within its own context and setting. Importantly, it is argued that qualitative studies can provide 'contextual information' and a 'rich insight into human behaviour' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 106), especially if there is an attempt to account for people's interpretations and meanings from the standpoint of their own socially informed environments and situational contexts.

Those individuals who were met through brief encounters in the field were unaware of the nature of the research programme. These encounters were based on friendly conversations, casual discussions and reflexive observations. Local shops, public houses, community centres and the sauna were all prime sources of information. The researcher was generally searching for utterances and opinions relating to people's perceptions of tourism and travel, i.e. motivations and aspirations to travel, particular places visited or not visited, choices made and experiences encountered. One obvious mechanism to encourage people to talk about their ancestral homeland was to ask if they had visited, or had any intention to visit, the Caribbean. The researcher would then seek explanations in an attempt clarify issues raised, but this obviously depended on the nature of the dialogue and the level of intensity of the conversation. It was easier to openly communicate and establish continuous conversations once the researcher had become familiar with the cultural norms of the community and the situational context of the ancestral homeland in people's lives. Therefore, it was necessary to develop an awareness of particular events and places in the Caribbean, interpret

language systems (creole and black/Manchester dialect) and understand the
cultural idiosyncrasies of the Caribbean community (gestures, local humour and
leisure pursuits). Importantly, Gilroy states: 'People who want to write analyti-
cally about black cultures will have to learn to cope with them. This is a difficult
process' (1993a: 3).

The learning process, which focused on coming to terms the norms and ideol-
ogies of the Caribbean community, occasionally proved to be socially problem-
atic. Nonetheless, the researcher persisted with a systematic approach involving
a slow and gradual engagement in the field. The initial observations and casual
conversations, occurring in the first six months of the research programme,
produced a range of basic themes which helped to inform subsequent discus-
sions and encounters. This preliminary knowledge also provided a framework
for discussion within the ethnographic interviews with key informants. During
the fieldwork programme much time was spent simply observing and listening
to discussions. Issues were raised only when it seemed socially appropriate to do
so. Increased familiarity between the researcher and particular community
members gradually encouraged an open rapport.

The covert nature of the fieldwork programme influenced the way in which
observational material was collected. Hence, conversations and observations
were usually noted on bar mats, newspapers and cigarette packets. Unconven-
tional places such as public conveniences were useful to record the information
obtained. As the researcher mainly relied on memory to record information, it
was not always possible to note the exact sequence and the correct grammatical
expressions and subtleties of every appropriate conversation, particularly those
which were quite detailed. Yet the problems of recalling all that is heard and
observed in its correct form has left ethnographic research open to criticism,
especially if researchers do not employ recording devices such as dictaphones. It
is argued that reliance on memory can inevitably result in misinterpretation and
therefore can produce inaccurate accounts of the lives of those concerned
(Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Werner & Schoepfle, 1987). However, the employment
of recording devises during informal field encounters may be 'cumbersome' and
'intrusive' (Cottle, 1978: 9), and also may not be ethically appropriate in situa-
tions where researchers have not explained the nature of their enquiries to those
being observed. It is still possible to recall limited amounts of succinct informa-
tion in its raw form without the use of a tape recorder as long as information is
comprehensively noted immediately after the event. Nonetheless, the process of
'reframing' (rather than rephrasing) anecdotal material and restructuring obser-
vations, impressions and 'symbolic representations' of particular cultures is
generally believed to be appropriate in the production of an ethnographic text
(Thomas, 1993: 43), especially if there is an intent to produce an informative
portrayal of the values and experiences of the community (via a mixture of
ethnographic applications).

The researcher regularly used a fieldwork diary to register the data and tran-
scribe the fieldwork notes. The researcher would often attach 'analytic memos'
(Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983: 164) to sections of this material in an attempt to
critically reflect on personal observations, conversations and key events. These
memos included ongoing assessments of progress made, thoughts concerning
the researcher's personal encounters and experiences in the field, and personal

reflections on the researcher's relationships with members of the study group. They also consisted of conceptual ideas for creating thematic links between the data and suggestions for connecting the data to emerging theoretical paradigms. Importantly, the diary is considered to be the 'brick and mortar of an ethnographic structure' (Fetterman, 1989: 107), particularly if it is used for the purpose of assembling data in a clear and consistent manner.

Ethnographic interviewing with the first of the key informants began after seven months of fieldwork involvement. However, the majority of the interviews occurred after 12 months of being in the field. Informants were met on at least one occasion before the interview was arranged. This slow process of introduction allowed for discussions to be less restrained and for the researcher to be seen as less obtrusive in his enquiries. The rather frank and personal nature of the anecdotal material presented in the forthcoming text indicates that informants seemed comfortable with the nature of the discussion and this method of investigation.

The amount of time spent interviewing key informants usually depended on the time for which they were available and whether or not issues required further explication. Informants were generally interviewed on at least three occasions. This strategy allowed for issues to be gradually clarified and also encouraged new points of reference to be established. On other occasions discussions had taken place through telephone conversations and as a consequence of chance encounters in the field. Information was usually tape recorded during the arranged meetings, thus producing a significant amount of detailed information.

Ethnographic analysis: The search for multiple meanings and explanations

The overriding objective of the following analysis is to present the diverse opinions of members of the study group through a range of ethnographically based explanations. It should be noted that there is no direct attempt to search for absolute or definitive conclusions from the views of those concerned. As Gilroy states: 'Heterodox opinions justify themselves not because they are correct or conclusive, but because we need to be able to ask questions without knowing where answering them will lead' (1993a: 15). This claim represents a similar point, highlighted by Clifford, who maintained that 'we can no longer know the whole truth, or even ever claim to approach it' (1986: 25). Ethnographers concerned with providing a humanistic understanding of a particular way of life should not necessarily be obsessed with searching for fixed representations of truth, but should constructively present an analysis which represents a 'polyphony of voices' (Duncan & Ley, 1993: 8).

Studies which seek to expose multiple perspectives and personal opinions have often been accused of being insufficiently rigorous and overly subjective (Walle, 1997). Moreover, it could be claimed that ethnographic texts are the product of the idiosyncratic impressions of researchers rather than objective assessments of the phenomena studied. Nevertheless, researchers can attempt to decentre their own subjective perceptions by centralising the concerns of the study group, developed through the presentation of detailed anecdotal and observational material, to a wider audience. It is possible for this process to be managed by what has been termed the 'reflexive rationalization of conduct'

(May, 1993:116), where researchers directly acknowledge and explain their roles with respect to the process of collecting the information, analysing the data and presenting the ethnographic text. The reflexive approach clarifies the steps taken in bringing the opinions of others to the forefront of ethnographic representation and analysis. Yet as Duncan and Ley (1993: 8) maintain, the production of a completely decentred analysis is difficult to achieve as researchers have usually 'defined the project in the first place'. Thus, researchers are faced with the almost impossible task of challenging their 'political authority' and 'representational control' over the production of the ethnographic text (Duncan & Ley, 1993: 8). Nevertheless, any genuine attempt to openly express, articulate and sensitively portray people's viewpoints and opinions may help to counterbalance the hierarchical nature of ethnographic writings and representations.

The in-depth approach to this study and the range of methods employed have imposed restrictions on the quality and quantity of material presented. The following ethnographic data is therefore selective as not all of the views of the original 15 key informants are represented and not all observations are detailed. Also, anecdotal references for each particular issue are not equally highlighted. Yet in an endeavour to establish a web of knowledge and produce a network of multiple meanings, the following text does seek to engage a variety of opinions; those which 'establish relations of similarity and difference with the social world it reports' (Atkinson, 1990: 15). In an attempt to represent the diverse attitudes and experiences of the study group, the textual analysis thematically experiments with a variety of narratives and personal interpretations. However, there is no attempt to check the validity of information via rigid comparisons of data. The ethnographic material is thus analysed in a similar manner to the 'crystallization approach' in social strategies of inquiry. Richardson explains this approach:

> Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of 'validity' (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves); and crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. (1994: 522)

The crystallization process adopted in this research programme attempts to produce a detailed and diverse analysis of the subject-matter, one which highlights and evaluates multiple meanings and truths through the contextualisation of personal narratives and interactive discussions. This process is encouraged through the employment of several methods of ethnographic investigation, with the intention of producing various strips of data (e.g. observations, anecdotal material and interactive conversations). The thematic analysis and use of diverse ethnographic material help to structure and to shape (i.e. 'crystallize') subsequent ideas and arguments.

The ethnographic representations contained in this paper present a challenge to those social scientific enquiries of tourism behaviour concerned with developing a range of conceptual classifications of tourists, examples being the 'authentic tourists' (MacCannell, 1976), the 'existential tourists' (Cohen, 1979, 1988) and the 'post-tourists' (Feifer, 1985; Urry, 1990). While these concepts are thought provoking, they are not systematically drawn from personal accounts and criti-

cal incidents in the lives of those concerned. Although MacCannell's (1976) perspective concerning the social attributes of the 'modern day tourist' was informed by various data sources (e.g. oral and written commentaries by and on tourists, excerpts from newspapers, brochures and travel guides), his work has been criticised for not being rigorous or systematic in terms of data collection methods and strategies[10] (Moore, 1985). MacCannell's myriad of arbitrary inferences of why and how people travel and experience tourism perhaps led to a more generalised perspective concerning a universal type of tourist with one particular motive: the search for authentic experiences. The identification of specific types of travellers with unique aspirations, experiences and encounters was not fully approached in MacCannell's analysis.

A range of recent enquiries presented in the edited texts *Touring Cultures* (Rojek & Urry, 1997) and *The Tourist Experience* (Ryan, 1997a) have attempted to deconstruct contemporary forms of tourism behaviour. They have contributed to an understanding of particular tourist attributes and perceptions: motivational traits and dispositions (Ryan, 1997b), urban experiences (Page, 1997), beach experiences (Ryan, 1997c), meanings and interpretations of events (Craik, 1997), and tourist sights (Rojek, 1997) and identifications (Jokinen & Veijola, 1997). Yet these contributions do not significantly deal with the values systems and opinions of tourists, particularly as their perceptions are not highlighted or presented in any empirical depth. It may not be the intention of such enquiries to present or directly represent the 'tourist voice', but continual speculation within tourism studies concerning tourist roles, identities, cultures and behaviour patterns implies that the 'tourist' remains as an academic construct, imagined and mythologised by 'armchair analysts'.

Ethnographic enquiries should generally be more active and seek to inform or formulate theoretical frameworks through detailed ethnographic representations of tourist perceptions. Discussions of individuals outside of their own conceptually informed frameworks and sociocultural environments can potentially lead to their disempowerment from the representational process of analysis. If tourism enquiries do not fully address the perspectives of the subjects themselves it could be asserted that 'our social scientific work risks being descriptively poor and ethnocentric' (Crick, 1989: 338). Enquiries should be more humanistic in their intent, approach and task, even if it is to be acknowledged that 'one cannot completely escape from ethnocentrism, for by definition all representations are inextricably intertwined with the theory-laden categories of the research' (Duncan & Ley, 1993: 8).

It is considered necessary to directly witness and sensitively observe others in their localised contexts and settings by paying special attention to aspects of 'vocality': intersubjective meanings, plurivocal expressions and grammatical vocalisations (Hollinshead, 1998: 75). The development of a humanistic insight into the lived experiences of members of a community, culture or social group, would present an important challenge to those perspectives derived from rather relativistic interpretations of tourism behaviour. Thus 'it is the explanations which interviewed or observed individuals ascribe to cultural forms that matter' (Hollinshead, 1991: 657). These explanations could enable researchers to present more empirically informed perspectives concerning the possible reasons why certain behaviour patterns occur and how particular percepts emerge.

Finally, it should be noted that within the following text the names of all participants and some of the research places visited are accorded typical Caribbean and provincial names as pseudonyms. Some views are of a personal nature and the intent is to avoid direct implication. The grammatical utterances and expressions are presented in their original form and dialect. Some of the vernacular material may appear to be offensive to the reader. Yet the narration of 'folk terminologies' and 'cultural vocabularies' is believed to be an essential practice in the presentation of an ethnographic text (Atkinson, 1990: 168). The building of 'participant thinking' into the text permits meanings and messages to flow from the participants and therefore displays the level of importance they ascribe to particular aspirations and experiences. Consequently, it is important for researchers to 'hear the kind of messages that the others in the culture hear' (Benney & Hughes, 1984: 223).

Travelling to the Ancestral Homeland: Aspirations and Connections

Cultural needs, personal quests and social obligations

At the Wellington, a popular public house for first- and second-generation members of the Caribbean community, the first meeting was held with Junior, a second-generation Jamaican born in Moss Side in the mid-1950s. The researcher naively asked Junior to outline his destination preferences. He immediately proclaimed, 'Watch me now'. He then shouted over to his friend Ed and questioned him, 'If you had money Ed, where would you go?' Ed responded in an equanimous manner, 'Jamaica man!' Junior persistently questioned him, 'What about the next time . . . where y'go?' Ed reaffirmed his travel preference:

> I'd wait and save up again and go again to Jamaica. Yes mi go back-a-Yard [Jamaica]. All de time mi waan go Yard.

Junior then turned to the researcher and laughingly declared:

> There is your answer, write it down in your little book and don't ask any more nonsense questions . . . You white people are full of shit!

Ed's response expressed an instantaneous desire to visit the ancestral homeland and was the first of many similar responses to emerge from various interviews and observed conversations. Such desires were often communicated through narratives which highlighted the importance of travel in terms of an expressed necessity. Valerie, for instance, who had travelled to Jamaica for the first time in her mid-20s, explained her aspirations:

> When I went to Jamaica for a holiday last year [1994], I went because it is something I really wanted and needed to do, to see what it was like and where I was from. I want to go again, once isn't enough really . . . Jamaica is in me now more than ever.

Elaine, who lived in Barbados until her early teens and had since visited the island in 1983 and 1995, stated:

> You don't see your family that often, so the obvious choice is to go somewhere where you have not been very often . . . that is the reason why a lot of

> West Indian families go back to the West Indies on holidays . . . They have
> not seen their family for x amount of years, so it's important and natural for
> them to go . . .

The fundamental need to visit the ancestral homeland was expressed as a
priority by those who never had the opportunity to travel. For instance, Cheryl,
who was in her mid-20s, emphasised:

> As long as I can remember I have always wanted to visit where my parents
> lived [Jamaica], 'cause my roots aren't here [England], even though I was
> born here.

Dawn, who was of a similar age to Cheryl, indicated why she had not visited her
mother's birthplace, Guyana:

> The next holiday I have will be in Guyana . . . It has to be. I have lived in
> Manchester all my life, but I know I'm from somewhere else . . . It's very
> important for me to go there . . . Personal circumstances are stopping me
> from going, but I need to know my background.

Caroline, who was in her early thirties, explained that the initial reason for travel-
ling to Jamaica for the first time in the late 1980s was to familiarise herself with
her heritage and learn more about her culture. Thus, expressions of uninterest in
travelling to the ancestral homeland were not common. Councillor Jones's opin-
ion was atypical of the preferences of those studied. He stated:

> I know people who see the West Indies as paramount importance, but you
> see I live here [Moss Side], but not only that, I have made the most of it
> because I consider this as my home place . . . Many people of my age, you
> know the older people, don't have the same opinion as me and I accept
> that . . . As I said to you, being in politics you learn to accept that people with
> similar backgrounds have different opinions . . . I have not been back to
> Jamaica since arriving here many years ago . . . I probably would go at some
> point but it's not an ultimate priority.

Various members of the study often expressed their desire to visit the ances-
tral homeland in terms of a 'fantasy' or a 'dream', particularly as trips were not
frequent events. Interestingly, the advent of the UK National Lottery in 1994 had
created a sense of unfounded optimism in Moss Side. Numerous conversations
that were observed often included discussions of how a lottery windfall would
create the opportunity to travel to the homeland. One Saturday afternoon at a
house party organised by one of Junior's relatives, Clem, a group of elderly men
had joined together to complete a lottery ticket. This event created a sense of
excitement and intense speculation regarding the possibility of winning and
being able to travel to Jamaica. One discussion focused on the quality of the travel
experience and the possible outcomes: being able to afford first-class plane tick-
ets, securing the passage of other friends and family members, purchasing land
and houses in Jamaica as family homes and/or holiday residences for other 'pri-
mary group members', and offering the researcher an invitation that would
enable him to understand how 'Jamaican people party'. Clem declared:

> Mi buy one of dem big white man's houses in Clarendon, mi get a whole heap of de lan' an' everybody can cum an' stay wid me, 'ave a big, big party man . . . Yes man, 'ave a drink, smoke de 'erb an' ave a good, good time . . . You can bring de women and de picknie [children], one big family reunion . . . Mi show yu [the researcher] what we do!

On another occasion at the launderette when one woman asked her friend if he was planning to go to Jamaica in the near future, the man amusingly replied:

> Mi financial reservoir dry out, de drought na [not] passed by yet, but mi live an' hope . . . Mi wait fe [for] dose five numbers . . . Mi pay no attention to de six, or even de bonus number, five take mi whe' mi waan fi [to] go . . . Mi na go Yard if mi 'ave naw [no] money!

Lenny, landlord of the Wellington, while discussing with other clientele his need to revisit Jamaica in the near future began to speculate on how the lottery would enable him to travel to his homeland on a regular basis:

> Mi need to win de lottery man . . . If any money come by me, every six months and mi gwine home . . . but at dis moment in time, mi 'ave to wait for a discount cos mi brok'!

Travelling to one's homeland does not have to be conceived merely as a corporeal activity[11], a tangible or physical experience, but can also be seen as a state of mind, something which can be imagined and dreamed about in day-to-day life. Importantly, the desire to travel was often expressed as a need to go 'home'. This was particularly the case for those who had lived in the Caribbean. Yet this endeavour may depend on personal perceptions of what actually constitutes a 'homeland'. For instance, an elderly volunteer worker for The Moss Side Afro-Caribbean Care Group had informed the researcher of his view on travelling 'home':

> I have been home [Barbados] several times in the past 30 years . . . But going home is a subconscious thing, it is something inside me . . . I can't explain what it is, but there is something in me tellin' me to go . . . It's not just a family thing because a lot of West Indian people have family in Canada and America . . . I think it is also the knowledge you have, something you feel secure about.

Desmond, Junior's former work colleague, was asked at the Wellington how he perceived his visits to Trinidad. He replied:

> I go home [Trinidad] to find peace with myself. I call it my natural home. It is somewhere I can go to and no one questions what you are doing there, like people do when you are over here.

Newspaper articles in the black press, fictitious tales, novels, reggae and Caribbean island poetry (Gordon, 1979; Riley, 1985; Selvon, 1985) often express compassionate thoughts of Caribbean island life and articulate sympathetic notions of travelling or returning to the homeland. Cohen (1997: 150) emphasises that the range of media representations targeted at UK Caribbean and black audiences are indicative of the 'strength of a transnational Caribbean identity'.

He comments on how the ancestral homeland is portrayed in the *Weekly Gleaner*, the popular Caribbean newspaper published in the UK:

> When one examines the advertisements, the link with 'our country' becomes much more concrete. The pages are stuffed with advertisements for shipping lines, airlines, freight handlers, money transfer services ('Send your cash in a flash', says one), plots for sale in Jamaica, architects, removal companies, vacation accommodation and export houses selling tropicalized refrigerators . . . (Cohen, 1997: 150)

The ethnographic material indicates that the propensity to travel is ostensibly influenced by subliminal aspirations: a need to connect and/or reconnect to one's ancestral homeland and to search or re-search for one's cultural roots. The vision or reality of travel exposes a need to become accustomed to the various sociocultural networks that exist in the homeland society (e.g. kinship and community structures). It could be the case that the need to 'reconnect' with the homeland generates the possibility of challenging, or coming to terms with, the problems of living in a metropolitan society, i.e. sociocultural dislocation and spatial displacement. Visions of travel represent ways in which members of diasporic communities

> mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering there/desiring another place. (Clifford, 1994: 331)

Popular accounts of tourism behaviour emphasise that the need to travel is largely influenced by dislocations of a socio-psychological nature, i.e. alienated feelings produced by the mechanistic nature of the working environment and the monotony of home life (Cohen & Taylor, 1992; Krippendorf, 1987; MacCannell, 1976). Cohen and Taylor (1992: 130–31), for instance, maintain that holiday experiences offer individuals the opportunity to 'escape' from the 'paramount reality' of home life: 'familiarity', 'self-discipline' and 'constraint'. Also, MacCannell (1976: 10) believes that because individuals are socially alienated within their home environments there will be an unavoidable need for them to reconstruct their lifestyles through a 'deeper involvement with another society and culture'.

However, the desire or need to reconstruct elements of a displaced heritage within a place of cultural and historical significance is arguably one of the primary reasons for choosing to visit the ancestral homeland. Yet if social alienation is to be considered as a contributory factor of the need for members of the Caribbean community to travel away from their everyday environments, it would be necessary to consider other possible determinants, such as the social exclusion of racialised minorities in metropolitan societies (Stephenson & Hughes, 1995). Although this paper does not address this issue, it is argued that popular perspectives concerning tourism motivation and behaviour do not significantly help in identifying the unique reasons as to why ethnic minority groups need to travel. For the moment, however, it is argued that the desire to travel to the ancestral homeland is by no means based on an unplanned or impulsive quest, but rather a quest bound to kinship ties, cultural codes of behaviour and ethnic histories.

Another common perspective concerning tourism behaviour asserts that people's motivations to participate in tourism fundamentally centre on collective quests for spiritual, sacred and authentic experiences (Graburn, 1983, 1989; MacCannell, 1976). Graburn indicates how the tourism experiences manifest sacred characteristics:

> Because the touristic journey lies in the nonordinary sphere of existence, the goal is symbolically sacred and morally on a higher plane than the regards of the ordinary workaday world. (1989: 28)

Nevertheless, this perspective arguably contains monocultural suppositions based on parochial ways of perceiving and explaining tourism behaviour. This criticism would also apply to the conceptualisation of particular types of tourist behaviour. For instance, Cohen's (1979, 1988) categories, the 'experimental tourist' who searches for a spiritual/authentic experience and the 'existential tourist' who seeks to attain a new spiritual/religious centre as a result of an enlightened experience, whilst informative in explaining specific tourist endeavours, are arguably developed from relativistic interpretations of motivational behaviour. As Handler (1990) emphasises, the belief that there is a general need to engage in a spiritual quest outside of the familiar environment is founded on an ethnocentric interpretation of what is deemed 'sacred' and what constitutes 'religion'. Bruner (1991) also questions the use of concepts such as 'authenticity' to explain the motivational objectives and experiences of tourists, maintaining that they have a tendency to convey the status of Western academic constructs. It is suggested, therefore, that categorisations of tourism behaviour are far removed from the perceptions and interpretations of those individuals who are actually being conceptualised.

Despite the above concerns, various members of the study group often described their aspirations and experiences of visiting their ancestral homeland through narratives replete with religious-type metaphors and expressions of spiritual value. Errol, a key informant in his early 40s, described his first experience in Jamaica in the late 1980s:

> Although there were was big time differences between what I'm used to here and what was there, it's still a spiritual thing goin' to Jamaica. You're hyped up all the time, even months before you go . . . So when you get there you see things you have heard but not seen, or you have feelings that you haven't experienced . . . I had never seen my brother, my mum's son, and things like that . . . So even though it was four years ago now since I went, it's an experience I won't forget . . . I would go tomorrow if I could.

PK, a regular client at the Wellington, impulsively described his experience of travelling to Jamaica in the mid-1980s, his first and only visit since arriving in Britain in the mid-1950s. In two separate but interrelated conversations, PK expressed:

> (1) As soon mi got down dere in Portland mi got out de car an' me did a Pope, got down an' kissed de ground, yes mi hug up de ground . . . Mi enjoy it, seeing old friends and grand kiddies mi never know mi had. Mi had a whole heap of kids mi never seen. Mi was sexed up when mi was young, as

young as you, mi tellin' yuh . . .
(2) De only difficulty in Yard was de heat, mi sweat fuckries man, like a
pagan, mi got me weak as rat poison . . . De family ting keep mi goin', an'
dose rum houses dem, ahh mi tellin' yuh, it was like being in heaven . . .

During the summer months Junior and the researcher would occasionally
visit 'Speakers' Corner', a place where a Jamaican man sold drinks and ices from
a van in the front garden of his house. Here, first- and second-generation Jamai-
cans would sit for many hours discussing a range of topics concerning their
homeland. On one occasion an elderly man discussed the degree to which
Jamaica played an important role in his everyday life:

> Jamaica is a goddess to me, mi live for, mi worship, mi dream of from de
> mornin' time to wen mi go to bed . . . It is de last ting dat goes tru my head
> before mi hit dat pillow, even after mi woman . . . It is not a sin to seh mi love
> Jamaica more dan anyting, mi look forward to dose visits, mi really do.

Several of the key informants further conveyed their perceptions of the ances-
tral homeland using similar terms of expression: Cheryl emphasised that
Jamaica was a 'very special place' to her and that the chance to visit the island
would fulfil a 'life long dream'; Joyce, who had visited Grenada on just one occa-
sion, described the island as the 'ultimate destination'; Elaine perceived her two
visits to Barbados as 'spiritual journeys'; and Marvin, an elderly informant who
emigrated from St Vincent in the late 1960s, explained that he preferred to visit
his homeland 'religiously every five years' around the time of his birthday. He
further maintained, 'I like to celebrate life in de place where mi was born, in de
land of de Blest Saint, de Island of Paradise'.

The above percepts indicate that there is an element of 'sacredness' attached to
the desire to visit the homeland, where perceptions of travel signify something
'spiritual', 'heavenly' and/or 'paradisiacal'. These perceptions generally high-
light how destinations of social and cultural significance personify specialness of
place,[12] and also how travel aspirations embody emotional and deep-seated
commitments. Such meaningful quests and individual perceptions of the home-
land manifest traits of a self-governing nature.

Allcock (1988) believes that in identifying the subjective meanings of tourism
behaviour it is necessary to consider privatised forms of travel (e.g. family-
centred holidays). He presents a critique of the view that tourism aspirations and
experiences relate to the public veneration of shared values, as suggested by
those insights concerning the social significance of visiting tourist attractions
(MacCannell, 1976) and museums (Horne, 1984). Given that these enquiries
generally view tourism as an embodiment of ritualistic, formal and collective
experiences, they assume that tourism represents 'a species of civil religion, cele-
brating institutionalised public values' (Allcock, 1988: 44). This perspective,
which stresses that public values are influenced by the common and dominant
ideologies of society (MacCannell, 1976; Horne, 1984[13]), does not seriously
acknowledge how tourism experiences can be individualistically interpreted
through a range of personalised meanings (Allcock, 1988). Allcock (1988: 44)
indicates that the lack of attention to these components stems from the fact that
tourism experiences have not been perceived as forms of 'implicit religion'

(Allcock, 1988: 44). Hence, 'implicit religion' refers to 'those aspects of experience which one might wish to call religious, but which fall outside of the particular institutional forms which have become dominant in any given society' (Allcock, 1988: 40).

The ethnographic material indicates how expressions regarding the desire to travel are instinctive and informal, and how perceptions of the ancestral homeland are subjectively interpreted through personalised ideologies. As the paper later details, experiences and encounters in the ancestral homelands can also be viewed as having a non-institutionalised and less unified character, illustrated in cases where UK Caribbean visitors seek to dissociate themselves from the tourist public and from tourist areas.

It would be mistaken to assert that ethnic reunion does not involve collective dimensions and socially interactive attributes. Paulette, in her late 30s, revealed how travel can encompass mandatory elements:

> I feel committed to the cause of going home (Jamaica) because my parents are there and they are old. I am thinking why should I spend money to have fun when I could be spending time with them . . . My mother still relies on me so much, it breaks my heart . . . I would consider visiting my brother in America but it's more of a priority to visit Jamaica.

Other key informants acknowledged similar reasons for travelling to the ancestral homeland. Elaine expressed:

> Although my mum, my dad and my stepmum don't live in Barbados, I have a gran there and I need to keep in touch and try to go when I can . . . Yes, to see how she is . . . She is a very old lady and is not that well these days . . . I was very close to her when I lived there, so I go and stay with her when I can . . . You see, Marcus, she was very good to me when I was young, never made any judgements of me. I couldn't do anything wrong in her eyes.

Individuals can sometimes feel obliged or compelled to visit the homeland, whether for reasons of attending to family responsibilities or engaging in critically important events. Junior, for instance, travelled to Jamaica six times and on two of those occasions attended a funeral and on another attended a wedding. Also, PK travelled to Jamaica after one of his parents had died and Valerie travelled to Jamaica to coincide with her niece's christening. Consequently, travel to the ancestral homeland can extend to include more institutionalised elements of travel, where the purpose of travel relates to the celebration of more formal and conventional events. It is these dimensions which celebrate the social and cultural values of diasporic communities.

Consequently, decisions to travel are not always based on freedom of choice. Individuals may welcome the opportunity to travel to the ancestral homeland but the purpose of their trip, the timing of the event, the duration of their visit and particular activities in which they participate are partly influenced by collective responsibilities and obligations. Travel aspirations and experiences may certainly contain a self-oriented component, encouraging individuals to develop a deeper awareness of their ancestral homeland and inspiring them to proudly recount their experiences to others (as this paper later illustrates). Yet individualised

objectives, such as those characterised by quests for self-actualisation, personal gain or social status (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983), are only one set of possible motives for travelling to the homeland. Consequently, primary motivations relate to the need to fulfil family obligations and to satisfy cultural expectations.

It may also be argued that ethnic reunion encourages members of the Caribbean diaspora to break a symbolic link with their travel histories. These histories comprise travel experiences and events which were exploitative in nature, characterised by 'enslavement', 'enforced migration', 'immigration' and 'relocation' (Clifford, 1992, 1997; Curtis & Pajaczkowska, 1994; Hooks, 1992: 173). The ability to travel for pleasure or personal gain was arguably defined by the ethnic and material status of individuals and societies. This was illustrated by the educational and scientific explorations of the European gentry (Pimlott, 1947, Turner & Ash, 1975) and the political, religious and cultural ventures of colonial bureaucrats, missionaries and anthropologists[14] (Ellen, 1984; Pratt, 1992; Stauder, 1980).

While coercive travel experiences associated with slavery and migration represent a social antithesis to the contemporary movement of people for the 'intensification of sensory experience[s]' (Curtis & Pajaczkowska, 1994: 214), it would be mistaken to assume that these travel histories have had no bearing on the nature of contemporary forms of travel. Migration, for instance, led to the sociocultural displacement of the UK Caribbean community from its point of origin and consequently contributed to the current and prevailing need to reconnect with the ancestral destination. Yet unlike migration, which involves a linear or unidirectional movement for the purpose of economic subsistence, ethnic reunion entails a transversal-type movement for the intention of satisfying cultural needs, personal desires and social obligations. It is these aspects which symbolise another dimension of the diasporic experience, indicating how travel embodies a range of new meanings and interpretations relating to the importance of family life, cultural heritage and identity. In order to contextualise the significance of such meanings and attributes, it is now necessary to identify and examine particular social networks that encourage individuals to participate in the 'homeland experience'.

The sociocultural importance of matriarchal relationships

The prominent role of Caribbean women (mothers and grandmothers) in maintaining the traditional responsibilities associated with childcare practices and the educational welfare of children is well documented in studies of UK Caribbean families (Driver, 1982; Foner, 1976). It is noted that since migration, women have adopted a new role in maintaining family ties and nurturing kinship connections with relatives in the Caribbean (Foner, 1976). One obvious reason for the primary involvement of mothers in the welfare of the family relates to the significantly high rates of female-headed families. It is estimated, for example, that UK Caribbean families are three times more likely to be matrifocal than their white counterparts (Skellington, 1992). It is argued that the evolution of female-centred families within the Caribbean community relates in some way to the history of travel and mobility. Hence, the legacy of slavery and post-war male migration contributed to the social and economic marginalisation

of males within the family household, a process which elevated mothers as the overseers of family affairs (Barrow, 1982; Driver, 1982).

Although contributing to the discussion concerning the active role of females in retaining family connections with friends and relatives, the following anecdotal material directs further attention to how matriarchal kin can constructively instil upon family members a desire to travel to the ancestral homeland. For instance, Joyce, who was in her mid-20s, claimed:

> I went to Grenada because of the way I was brought up . . . It's my mum's country, Jamaica is my father's country . . . My father didn't say much about it . . . I think life was difficult for him . . . So that left my mother to talk to us kids about Grenada. She told us all about the carnival, the food they grow, like nutmeg, and the politics of the island, 'cause it's a very political island, isn't it? . . . I think about Jamaica 'cause I suppose I'm half Jamaican, but I don't always feel it . . .

Delphene, born in the UK in the late 1960s, explained why she identified more with her mother's country, Guyana, rather than her father's country, Barbados:

> When I was younger I remember when my grandmother came over to visit us. I remember a lot about the Guyanese people . . . what they ate and the way they spoke and the things like that . . . My mum was there all the time, her culture and country was with us all the time . . . my mum's childhood was the sort of childhood I would have liked to have had. But when occasionally we went to see my dad he never talked about his life in Barbados, probably because I didn't spend much time with him . . . But it's also to do with the fact that more of my mum's family is over here, they are all very close. My dad does not have much family here . . . But you see my mum brought us up, my dad didn't.

Perceptions of the ancestral destination are seemingly influenced by the social process of learning about one's culture and heritage. The process of creating an idea and/or a sense of belonging to a particular destination appears to occur through childhood experiences and parental instruction. Errol's narrative illustrates this point:

> I grew up knowing a lot about Jamaica. I remember when I was younger my mum had maps all over the place and books on Jamaica, especially cooking books . . . She talked about the place all the time, the family, the farm life and the markets she used to go to. So when I had the opportunity to go . . . a lot of things began to come together when I was there.

A local taxi driver impulsively discussed his desire to visit Jamaica during the researcher's journey home from the Wellington one Sunday afternoon. His narrative reveals how parental instruction had also influenced a lifelong quest to travel to his ancestral island:

> my woman is pregnant. It's come at the wrong time . . . I was planning to go Jamaica, never been, so I've just cancelled it . . . I always keep in touch with my mum's family, my dad's never around, but she always got us kids to write regularly . . . I know one day I get down there, big time!

Several of the informants had been raised by their grandparents (not an uncommon practice in Caribbean families) and suggested that their identification with the ancestral homeland was in some way influenced by their upbringing. As Dawn explained:

> I don't keep in touch with my father's side . . . from Trinidad. I have stronger connections with Guyana because I was brought up with my grandmother . . . I suppose there is a difference between me and someone who has parents born in England, or those who have parents who left the West Indies when they were kids, you know those who I call more modern women . . . I feel that I know a lot about the country through her . . . the land, the people, the culture and the music, an' all that.

Some of Dawn's concerns were conveyed to Cheryl, who had also lived with her grandparents for most of her formative years. Cheryl's response was:

> I can see what she is on about. My grandparents didn't talk much about Jamaica, but you knew it was there in their hearts . . . When I lived with them, there was some kind of culture there . . . how they decorated the house, the colours and all the pictures on the wall and the old furniture . . . They used to give you chores to do and say that is what they had to do in Jamaica . . . So yes, I have Jamaica in me too and that's why I need to go.

Another informant, Lloyd, who was in his late 30s and had lived most of his childhood life with his grandmother, expressed:

> I had this Jamaica thing in me, right, ever since I grew up with mi gran. She used to chat chat 'bout St Ann [Jamaica] all the time, yes all the time . . . She made me feel homesick, and I wasn't born there! But being in her house all the time, you just pick up on it, right . . .

It could be argued that matriarchal instruction has a significant role to play in the evolution and advancement of destination identities and desires. These desires are influenced by the extent to which family and island knowledge is socially transmitted from one generation to another with the outcome of producing an affinity or an identity with a given island of ethnic significance. They are not, therefore, directly provoked within the immediate pre-trip period but are actually assembled through a long-term process of enculturation. This informal and educational process, which is evident in childhood experiences and continues into adult life, involves the social reproduction of culturally coded signs and symbols of the ancestral island (e.g. food, carnival, family activities and island politics).

Peer group networks and the process of self and collective identification

Images of the homeland can also be contextualised and reproduced within the wider community through the establishment of peer group networks. The memories of those who had lived in the Caribbean, and the feelings, fantasies and visions of those who had been raised in the UK, were often interactively conveyed through passionate debates and storytelling narratives, usually vocalised between friends and community members. Such dialogue, observed in a variety of public places in Moss Side, significantly centred on themes and issues

relating to the ancestral homeland. In Maurice's barbershop, for instance, a half-hour argument between two elderly Jamaican clients focused on whether the road from Mandeville to Kingston was or was not the 'best road back-a-Yard'. In the Wellington, Junior had an ongoing dispute with his friend Ed concerning the extent to which 'big ships cum by Alligator Pond' (south coast of Jamaica). Another similar argument was evoked in the Normington, a Jamaican public house in Derby (English Midlands) that was visited during a weekend break arranged by Junior's Youth Centre. This debate was concerned with which of the beaches around Westmoreland (west coast of Jamaica) was the superior in terms of 'attractiveness' and 'cleanliness', and in terms of being 'untouched by tourists'.

These intra-island discussions[15] disclose ways in which particular place images can be dramatised and personified. They also exemplify the social and cultural significance of the ancestral destination to the lives of those concerned. Social relationships founded on ethnic ties can thus extend the socialisation process responsible for 'island identification'. Accordingly, social interactive factors are considered to be responsible for the production and reproduction of cultural information concerning the island destination. Images which are created, modified and communicated through family and peer group narratives, past experiences and visible representations of the homeland, i.e. the 'organic images', play a more central role in creating and enhancing the desire to travel to the homeland than those produced and promoted by the tourism industry itself, i.e. the 'induced images' (Gartner, 1993: 196; Gunn, 1972). Consequently, homeland images and representations are not essentially created or induced by the tourism industry's 'image formation agents' (Gartner, 1993: 199) but are socially constructed through group interaction, negotiation and intervention.

'Anticipation' and 'daydreaming' are integral components of the (diasporic) travel experience in that they stimulate individuals to 'calmly go travelling without leaving the home' (Rojek, 1993: 201). These post-tourist type traits help to manufacture vivid images of the ancestral island within the context of the home and community environment. Yet there are more tangible elements to the diasporic experience, such as the production and consumption of ethnic products (e.g. Caribbean food, literature and music). These ethnic resources are increasingly available in cosmopolitan societies and have the possibility of enabling individuals to experience the cultural and social qualities of their island. Although this paper does not address ways in which diasporic forms of consumption signify the homeland, the underlying point is that destination images are particularistic in both character and form, distinguished mainly by their ethnic and social attributes. Consequently, travel and homeland perceptions are stimulated by informal elements of communication, involving socially interactive knowledge and both individually and collectively negotiated forms of information.

The process of acquiring detailed social knowledge of the ancestral destination may also assist in the reinforcement or mediation of an individual's identification with that destination. Moreover, 'insider knowledge' can arguably facilitate the process of island identification and at the same time encourage the process of self-identification. One particular conversation, based on a heated (intra-island) dispute occurring during a late 'lock in' at the Wellington, directly

illustrates how travel and knowledge are closely interconnected with aspects of personal identity. The researcher, seated in the corner of the room pretending to fill in a crossword on a local newspaper, recorded an in-depth debate involving Junior and Clive (Junior's regular drinking partner). Clive provoked the following argument by claiming:

> Yuh buy a house 'pon dere in Yard, fi thirty thousan' . . . dat is English pound not de dollar.

Junior immediately replied:

> No man, less dan dat, mi tellin' you, even de houses in dem tourist places less dan dat.

Clive strongly responded:

> Yuh talkin' fuckry man! De last time mi pass down dere mi see it wid mi own eye . . . You tellin' me, mi blind . . . it neva cheap, dey 'ave to pay de cost of de material, labour an' de lan'. Dey 'ave to import plenty of tings.

Junior retaliated:

> Yu mus' be mad! Mi know different dan dat . . .

Clive began to personalise the dispute, questioning Junior:

> Yu tellin' me dat yu know Jamaica better dan me? Yu know it more dan me?

Junior proudly declared:

> Yes man, mi do . . .

Clive attempted to test Junior's knowledge of Jamaica:

> Name a town in every parish? Come on man tell me 'bout back-a-Yard?

Junior shouted:

> Blaad klaat man! Don' give mi fuckry! Dat too easy a question, ask me a difficult one dan dat!

Clive quietly inquired:

> Yu know Gibraltar?

Junior posed a similar question:

> Do yu know Bamboo Grove? Anyone can say dese tings man.

His friend questioned Junior persistently:

> Cum, answer mi question Junior, whe' Gibraltar? . . . Mi know dese tings, mi been Yard plenty times, plenty times more dan yuh!

At this point Junior jumped from his chair and waved a finger profusely at Clive, yelling:

> Shut y' rass! Yu don' know yuh head from a bull foot! Mi travel in all dem parish, time and time over . . . Mi been Yard six times, so mi know all dese tings. An' yu, yu know blaad klaat!

This debate, continuing into the early hours of the morning and provoking the opinions of others, indicates how memories, knowledge of particular places and travel experiences help to verify an individual's identification with the ancestral homeland. It also suggests that the ability to acquire detailed knowledge and effectively impart that knowledge on to 'significant others' depends upon the quality and quantity of accumulated information and travel experiences.

Island identification was affirmed or reaffirmed through other conflict-based conversations, such as those which resulted from 'inter-island dialogue'. Such disputes usually occurred in situations where individuals from different Caribbean islands interacted with one another. Numerous inter-island disputes were often noted in the Wellington. Although this public house was predominantly visited by first- and second-generation Jamaicans, the presence of a minority of Barbadian clients would often arouse rather amusing 'island squabbles'. These (male-centred) disputes would focus on arguments such as which of the two islands, Jamaica or Barbados, 'bred de best cricketers', 'produced de strongest rum' and 'contained de most sexiest gals'.

Junior, celebrating his 40th birthday party at his home with his family and friends, began to chastise his 'Bajan friend', Vincent, for describing Barbados as the 'Capital of the West Indies'. Junior told Vincent:

> Mi been to Bajan country twice, you have been one time, dat is not my homeland, so what do you know? Capital of de West Indies, mi batty 'ole!

Vincent retaliated:

> Mi born dere. Yu not born in Jamaica, you is an English man.

Junior rebuked Vincent's statement:

> You left many years ago, dat don' count. You have only been back one time!

Vincent responded:

> Yes tru', but mi went and mi can went again if mi waan to.

Junior, usually having the final say in debates of this kind, declared:

> You is fram small island where dey love up de white man, so what de fuckries do you know?

Inter-island disputes of this kind are concerned with people's territorial allegiances and social attachments to the ancestral destination, and thus indicate further ways in which ethnic and island identities are defined, counter-defined and individually and collectively mediated. They contribute to an understanding of how identities are 'externalized in social interaction and internalized in personal self-identification' (Jenkins, 1997: 14). Yet because these debates mutually involve members of the Caribbean diaspora and are articulated within a shared social space and cultural context, they also demonstrate how ethnic and

island identities are symbolically enclosed within a common boundary that is marked by a wider Caribbean/West Indian identification.

The emotional content of intra- and inter-island conversations illustrates the profound need for individuals to be closely associated with the ancestral homeland, especially as homeland connections and experiences manifest significant elements of social pride and self-esteem. However, an individual's ability to participate in the homeland experience should not necessarily be viewed as a symbol of social distinction, nor as a sign of superiority over others, but should be perceived in terms of personal achievement and self-attainment. Errol's narrative clarifies this point:

> When I went back home [to Moss Side], people at the factory kept tellin' me how lucky I was [visiting Jamaica]. I just tell them that they are too 'licky, licky' . . . you know covetous, but I was joking really. I am pleased to see anyone travelling to the place where their roots are, you know what I mean?.. We should all get to go if we want to . . . it means a lot to us. If you get to go you are proud. Some like to rub it in a bit and piss you off with it by tellin' y' that they've been back home and you haven't, but it's fun and joke . . . Some may mean it, but it's not to show off like, it's to say that you should go to see where you come from . . .

Furthermore, intra- and inter-island conversations manifest the right to contest destination knowledge and illustrate the privilege of having common access to island-based information, i.e. 'insider knowledge'. These rights and privileges are exclusive to the descendants of island communities, and are key components in the maintenance of ethnic boundaries between Caribbean and non-Caribbean people. Thus, 'insider knowledge' can enable members of an ethnic (minority) group to maintain their social distance from others. This was illustrated by the researcher's own position within the field. As a consequence of limited cultural capacity and social ability to actively participate in inter/intra-island discussions, the researcher could not fully adopt a complete participant observational role during the study.

There were other types of knowledge-based conversations which exemplified people's right to perform a sense of 'insidership', those which focused on the political and social climate of the ancestral destination. For instance, on one evening spent in a Moss Side shebeen with Junior and several other friends, a conversation drew attention to issues concerning the cultural and material ownership of Jamaica, highlighting how it was becoming 'Americanised' and how 'Germans were buying up de place'. On another occasion in the West Indian Social Club with Errol's father, Ralston, and several of Ralston's friends, one discussion directed attention to the fact that the hotel developments built on Jamaica's north coast were preventing Jamaicans from accessing their own land. The documentary, *The Yardies* (Carlton Television, 21 February 1995),[16] shown on UK television earlier that week, provoked a further discussion relating to the negative media representations of Jamaica. This programme presented a range of images portraying the effects of drug dealing in Kingston's Trench Town: gang warfare, acid attacks and funerals. The group, incensed by the way in which the programme dramatised events, generally implied that such images manufactured stereotypes of their homeland. Hence, Jamaica was portrayed as a 'danger-

ous place', 'full of villains' and 'full gangster men'. These images were apparently far removed from their own perceptions of Jamaica.

These discussions interestingly illustrate the extent to which individuals are politically concerned about their homeland. They also embody a critical awareness which transcends mainstream perceptions and representations. Consequently, politically based narratives can be seen as necessary forms of 'counterrepresentation' (Hollinshead, 1998: 70), particularly as they expose a concerted attempt by individuals to nullify normative representations through 'correctively reprojecting critically important images' (1998: 70).

Caribbean migration to UK metropolitan societies has gradually created intersubjective discourses which signify the relevance of the ancestral homeland in people's lives. These discourses are based on the content and expression of community narratives, debates and political discussions, and importantly demonstrate how group memberships are mediated and how island identities are enunciated. Appropriately, Clifford emphasises the importance of collective discourses as signifiers of group attachment:

> Diasporist discourses reflect the sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes the homeland, not as something simply left behind, but as a place of attachment in a contrapuntal modernity. (1994: 311).

In order to develop a deeper understanding of how members of a UK Carribean community perceive and communicate their own ethnic and self-identities, it is now appropriate to consider people's perceptions concerning personal experiences and encounters within the homeland. This insight could contribute to a further realisation of how ethnic boundaries are negotiated and/ or renegotiated by group members.

The Ancestral Homeland: Experiences and Encounters

Being a non-tourist

Given that people's desires and aspirations to travel did not consistently typify conventional forms of tourism motivation, it was important to discuss whether individuals actually perceived themselves to be culturally distinct from other tourists. One mechanism was to formulate an inquiry concerned with how members of the study group viewed their roles and statuses during particular visits.

Key informants generally drew attention to how their activities and encounters limited their ability to perceive themselves as tourists, despite some informants acknowledging some tentative similarities between the nature of their activities and the activities of tourists. This point was clear in Valerie's narrative describing her holiday activities in Jamaica:

> I did go to some of the tourist places and do some things tourists do . . . I went to the beaches at Montego Bay, Dunn's River Falls and the Bob Marley Mausoleum. But I still felt I was coming to a place where I was already known and I knew a bit about . . . I went to church, a school, things like that . . . We would go in a big family with neighbours on a picnic. We would

take loads of food and music to the beach, they are not like the beach parties the tourists have.

Joyce, for instance, openly explained why she did not consider herself as a tourist during her visit to Grenada:

> I have been all over Grenada, through the mountains and to both sides of the island, but I didn't see myself as a tourist . . . But I was always going back to my aunty's home, not the hotels . . . We would go to the local beaches, they were a bit more isolated and rugged, you wouldn't usually see a white person there . . . and if we couldn't get tap water coming through the pipes, we would go down to the local river and we would have our own area to wash our clothes and stones to bleach the sheets and things in the sun. I got into the spirit of things . . . Yes, it was a sort of holiday, but it is also a family routine. I helped a lot around the house and things like that, things tourists don't do and don't want to do . . . I'm not knockin' what they do, but I imagine their experiences are different.

In the Prestatyn Cricket Pavilion (North Wales), visited during an annual cricket tournament organised by Lenny of the Wellington, Junior had informed Vincent of the researcher's recent visit to Barbados. Vincent, leaving Junior standing at the bar, rushed over to the crowded table where the researcher was sitting and amusingly shouted:

> When you were in my country you would have been to Christ Church, you would go fram town to town. You not been to villages in St Peter where I am from [a northern parish], or down to the cane fields . . . White people don't go to those places like dat, we don' allow it. We like to contain you, you are too much trouble!

This claim implies that tourists are defined by their racial background and physical distance from local areas. Members of the study group thus did not generally imagine themselves as tourists. Their knowledge of the island and involvement in the daily activities of others (relatives and friends) were key factors contributing to lack of identification with tourists. Subsequently, it appears that UK Caribbean visitors can approach and experience the 'back regions' of everyday life; an opportunity that is not always presented to tourists (MacCannell, 1976: 92). Elaine's description of her second visit to Barbados, since emigrating from the island in the mid-1970s, clearly illustrates this point:

> I have never looked at visiting families as being a touristy thing . . . On my last visit I went to this big tourist place, Sam Lord's Castle . . . near where my family lives down in Apple Hall, where I grew up [St Philip, a south-eastern parish]. Well, we went to the beach there and all the tourists went through the front entrance. I think they had to pay to get down on the beach . . . we didn't, we went in the back way, they wouldn't have a clue . . . So yes, it's these things that make you different. You just do things different, you join in with the family activities and chores and that . . . sortin' the house out, looking after the kids, plattin' their hair . . .

This narrative also indicates that particular experiences emulate behaviour patterns apparent in the structured environment of everyday life. As Errol expressed:

> When I was there [Jamaica] . . . I helped around the house and I helped my brother fix and spray his car, things like this . . . Yes, things I would do here, you know in Moss Side. I can't see tourists doing those sort of things.

Caroline discussed how her duties and tasks determined the nature of her stay in Jamaica:

> There is not much difference to what you do here. When I was there I went shopping for the weekly meals and that, and I took the kids to their friends . . . But I suppose you do some things different . . . You know, like going to town to get gas bottles to work the oven and like not having all the mod cons in the kitchen, having to walk everywhere and that. But my holiday was not a complete rest, say like if you go and stay in a hotel complex and get everything done for you.

Given that some of the informants acknowledged that they were significantly involved in domestic duties and responsibilities, it could be claimed that UK Caribbean visitors do not always adopt new statuses and roles associated with liberated experiences and changed circumstances. Hence, the tendency to continue with daily duties and family responsibilities during the visit suggests that people's experiences do not fully embody those patterns of behaviour commonly ascribed to tourists: 'role reversals', 'cultural inversions' and 'anti-structural behaviour' (Gottlieb, 1982; Graburn, 1983, 1989; Jafari, 1987).

One coincidental theme to emerge from descriptions of personal encounters in the Caribbean was the way in which individuals can be prejudged and pre-defined by tourists. Errol, for instance, revealed how he was mistaken for a 'beach peddler':

> When I went to some of the tourist areas some tourists would think I'm from the local area. I will tell you this, when I was carrying a cool box on the beach at Negril [Westmoreland, West Jamaica], for a family meal and that, some tourists there . . . white people, moved away when I was walking towards them. I think they thought I was trying to make a little money sellin' drink . . .

Joyce spoke of an occasion when she and several children, carrying large buckets of clothes they had just washed in the local river, were photographed by two 'white tourists' from a nearby car. This event prompted Joyce to reassess her identity:

> When they did this . . . I was seen as being Grenadian full stop, and that made me feel good. When you think about it, I was only there for three weeks . . . When I thought about it later, especially through listening to views from relatives, I thought about how they must feel . . . You know, how they can be patronised when they come up against tourists.

Longmore's (1989) book, *Tap-Taps to Trinidad: A Journey Through the Caribbean*, presents an interesting account of her travel experiences during her visits to

different islands. Writing of her encounters in Dominica, Martinique and St Lucia, she critically describes how tourists often behaved in a contemptuous manner, 'gazing' at her with 'mistrustful eyes' (1989: 133). She continues:

> Black people were here to provide a dash of local colour, and serve them rum punches, not sit among them as equals. It was all wrong. (Longmore, 1989: 133–4)

Given that some of the above narratives indicate that tourists have the potential to denigrate both locals and 'black visitors' alike, it could be asserted that the 'white tourist gaze' has a limited capacity to distinguish 'black visitors' from 'black locals'. Moreover, as a consequence of tourists' negative reactions, it possible for these visitors to perceive themselves as locals or members of the host community, albeit for a limited period. This issue was clear in Valerie's account of her encounters within tourist areas:

> When I was there, if you went to some of the tourist places, now and again some Americans and British people would come and ask you for directions. I thought it was funny, it doesn't seem to happen a lot in England . . .

During a coach trip to a funeral in Leeds, arranged by Lenny who was a relative of the deceased, one man described to his friend his recent travel experiences in Montego Bay (St James, North-west Jamaica). His comments were concerned with how tourists reacted towards him during his stay in a large hotel complex. The researcher was seated behind the two men and recorded some of his comments:

> They kept asking me all about Jamaica, askin' me why I wasn't staying with family . . . White people always messin' about in black people's business . . . But it makes me feel good, 'cause they kept asking me about local areas, where to go and not to go . . . I didn't feel that mi just come from the same country as them.

On one level it would seem that UK Caribbean visitors naturally differentiate themselves from tourists on the basis of phenotypical characteristics, illustrated by common reference to colour in describing contrasting roles and statuses. However, visitors' perceptions and categorisations are founded on ideologies of difference. These differences are not necessarily determined by physical characteristics but by differing motivations, priorities, behaviour patterns and practices, and indeed social stereotypes.

Some of the narratives strongly implied that tourists are also defined by their desire to participate in activities perceived to be of secondary or marginal interest to people of Carribean descent. One particular activity that was commonly perceived as a popular feature of tourist-type behaviour was that of sunbathing. Errol, for instance, remarked:

> Tourists go to the Caribbean to get a tan, it's an obvious thing for them to do. That's why a lot of white people go to hot places . . . You mus' have heard this, 'Only mad dogs and Englishmen prefer to sit in the midday sun'. This is true, they like to burn themselves up man, big time!

Delphene also declared:

I wouldn't want to go and sunbathe. I may sit in the sun now and again because it's there all the time, but it's for white people to do . . . They do it all the time in places like Barbados.

Marvin viewed the act of sunbathing as a source of amusement, implying that it was not a major priority for people from the Caribbean:

You see dem tourism people in St Vincent doin' de tan on de beach . . . Dere is an old African sayin', 'Walk where de elephant walk an' you won't get de sun stroke'. De white man, de red skin man, is not as wise as de elephant, but de black man knows dese tings, he use to it . . . You see plenty white people lying around an' de darky dere, well dey not as foolish, dey shade under de tree.

On a more personal level, Elaine explained that she was disappointed with her former English partner who during their visit to Barbados spent most of the three weeks 'lapin' up the sun', instead of mixing with her family and becoming more acquainted with the 'Bajan way of life'.

Junior, who often asked the researcher to brief him on emergent issues in the field, commented on informants' views of sunbathing activities:

Yes it is all on the right lines. You don't see it [the suntan] as a big thing . . . Well it's like taking bricks to Accrington [Lancashire: the researcher's birth-place] . . . that's what your town is famous for, in it? [manufacturing red bricks] . . . So if you are used to something why go somewhere else and get more of it? The sun is second nature to black people, especially the older people . . . Yes, it's always nice to sit out sometimes and soak a bit . . . but, but it's not a big thing.

Turner and Ash (1975) note that given the increasing significance of sunbathing as a mass tourism activity, the acquisition of a suntan is now considered to be a quintessential pursuit for those of European origin, symbolising not only a tour-ist identity but also a racial identity. Furthermore, Rojek (1993: 190) maintains that a suntan represents a new identity associated with the 'abandonment of work'. He also emphasises that media representations popularly convey the productive and universal attributes of the suntan: 'health', 'leisure', 'vigour' and 'sophistication' (1993: 190).

Yet from the above narratives it appears that the suntan signifies the act of being 'white', 'English' or 'European'. Thus the act of sunbathing is not socially perceived as an ultimate leisure pursuit, nor is viewed as a significant priority in the lives of those concerned. If it is to be asserted that the suntan is a universal sign of tourism consumption (Rojek, 1993) and a symbol of tourist identity (Turner & Ash, 1975), then in this context it could be argued that UK Caribbean visitors do not fully consume tourism and do not significantly adopt a tourist identity.

Negative perceptions and stereotypical approximations of tourist-type behav-iour suggest that members of the study group actively differentiate themselves from tourists in an attempt to establish their own roles and statuses. Tourists were defined in ways which represent a direct contrast to visitors' self-percep-tions, personal experiences and patterns of behaviour. Accordingly, tourists were conceived as those individuals who had restricted access to local territory,

limited capacity to acquire local knowledge and regular involvement in more popular and less meaningful pursuits. Moreover, their imperious attitudes towards visitors and locals alike often contributed to their status as 'tourists'. Tourists were perceived in monotypic terms as a group of like-minded individuals who have common ideologies and cultures, and similar patterns of behaviour.

The process of categorising and perceiving tourists is influenced by socially and politically constructed encounters and experiences, therefore illustrating ways in which ethnic boundaries are mediated and group differences and memberships are defined. As Jenkins states, 'To put Others in their place is necessarily to claim a place for ourselves (and vice versa)' (1997: 166).

The perceptions that individuals have of tourists, together with their own internalised self-perceptions, seemingly expose the ethnic and racial differences existing between the two groups. However, claiming a clearly defined identity is by no means an easy task for UK Caribbean visitors, especially as their roles and statuses are also defined by host communities in ways which distort perceptions of themselves.

Being a foreigner

People's statuses and roles can also be contextualised through indigenous interpretations. Despite attempts by members of the study group to dissociate themselves from tourists, there was a general recognition that their identities within host environments can be personally ambiguous. As Antonio, an elderly informant who had lived in Barbados for the first 20 years of his life, explained:

> If I go back now, I don't say I'm a tourist, but it's the people who live there . . . they'd pick up on things very quickly, especially if you have not been keeping in touch with your roots . . . They label you as 'foreigner', you're a bit alien. As soon as you arrive there at Giantly Adams Airport, they'd know you as a 'foreigner' . . . But I think there are two different concepts, you [the researcher] would be seen as a tourist, we'd be seen as a foreigner. It just depends on who is looking at who.

Errol described why he was perceived as a 'foreigner' in Jamaica:

> I asked my brother . . . He lives in St Elisabeth [a south-western parish] . . . I asked him about people who kept saying to me that I was a 'foreigner', because I wasn't prepared for it. He said to me, if I can remember, it was something like, 'Yu is family fram foreign place so, so yu is a foreigner . . . Yu 'ave ways dat is different to me but, but different to dem white tourist' dem' . . . I laughed mi bloody socks off!

Lloyd, like Errol, did not expect to be referred to as a 'foreigner' during his first trip to Jamaica in the mid-1980s, stating:

> People were saying now and again, 'Hey yu, foreign', addressing me like that . . . I didn't cotton on to it at first. I didn't realise it was directed at me. I was a bit shocked . . . I saw myself going to my homeland . . . Well they see your clothes, the things you got on, the English accents and all that, and they say 'y' foreign' . . . That's the way it can be.

Longmore interestingly described her travel experiences in Jamaica:

> Many heads turned on seeing me in the market place, blank eyes gazing at me, and expressionless mouths muttering, 'foreigner'. It took me a long time to realise that 'foreigner' was not meant as an insult, but merely a bald statement . . . They could tell I was a foreigner by the way I walked, and the clothes I wore, long before I opened my mouth. (1989: 17)

Paulette, who had lived most of her life in the parish of Portland (East Jamaica), provided a more localised account concerning the classification of 'foreigners':

> People there call black people who visit 'foreign'. If they [the foreigners] go back and show off on people and they have a credit card and hire a car, they [the locals] call their behaviour 'pop-style' . . . they get their jewellery out of the catalogue just to make themselves fancy . . . they're different, especially the youngsters, to show some prosperity, so they get called 'foreigner' or sometimes 'English' . . . If people who go back now and don't stay with their relatives . . . they get called 'black tourist' . . . But it's sarcasm, they're not a tourist really . . .

There were occasions when several of the informants were labelled 'English' during their visits. Joyce, for instance, said

> they tell you that you're an English girl. You look different and talk different. But I have Grenadian blood in me, so it affected me a bit.

The social connotations associated with being foreign (or English) may question one's identity as a Jamaican, Barbadian or Grenadian. Despite wanting to embrace one's cultural heritage and ethnic roots, the experience of visiting the ancestral homeland can encourage individuals to reassess their own identities. Thus, identities are not fixed but 'are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference' (Hall, 1990: 235). Travel experiences present diverse social contexts within which individuals have to reconstruct their identities as a consequence of being culturally displaced and socially disconnected from the ancestral homeland.

In an attempt to clarify the reasons why particular identities were perceived as being problematic, the researcher provided Junior with a written summary of the problems that informants had encountered. Junior thus explained:

> Yes, I can understand this foreign thing, it gets to you a bit . . . When you are over here you naturally identify with your heritage over there [Jamaica], because of your cultural upbringing. So when you get there and you are not instantly seen as a Jamaican . . . it's a bit disappointing . . . Listen to me now Stevy [the researcher's personal nickname], you see the way I see it as well, it's not the learning process that we have been taught and forced to learn in Britain . . . through you white people. You see us as Jamaican or West Indian, whatever. We can feel it as well don't get me wrong, but when you visit the place the whole concepts mash up!

Riley's (1985) novel, *The Unbelonging*, illustrates how feelings of 'homelessness' within metropolitan communities can be reproduced through alienated travel experiences within the ancestral homeland. She presents a fictitious narrative of a young woman, Hyacinth, whose positive vision, myths and fantasies of

Jamaica made her endure a racially hostile and impoverished life in Britain. The dilemma for Hyacinth was when she eventually travelled to Jamaica, a country which she had left at a young age – she felt as though she no longer belonged. Her social disconnection from her ancestral island exacerbated her feelings of loneliness and isolation.

These ambiguous and awkward experiences highlight a community of people that could be considered as a 'halfway population' (Hollinshead, 1998: 71). The concept, 'halfway', was developed by Bhabha (1994: 13) to refer to an individual who 'inhabits the rim of an in-between reality'. In his application of Bhabha's (1994) work to the dialectical study of cultural differences in tourism, Hollinshead (1998) attempts to clarify the complex situational context of 'halfway populations'. He asserts:

> 'Halfway populations' are those communities of people who are caught in difficult cultural locations or in strained representative situations, in awkward intervening space between established frames of reference, or who are otherwise sandwiched or lost between established and emergent identities. (Hollinshead, 1998: 71)

Halfway populations are ambiguously positioned in terms of their 'split (hybrid) identities' and 'split (liminal) locations' (Bhabha, 1994: 216–17). Importantly, Bhabha maintains that the 'journeys of migration' and the 'dwellings of the diasporic' have generated 'psychic anxieties' (1994: 213–14) among those who are involved in a 'restless movement' of 'here and there … hither and thither, back and forth' (1994: 1). Consequently, the daily frustrations of leading double lives and engaging in borderline experiences can provoke emotional anxieties for members of diasporic communities.

The process of becoming temporarily located or relocated into the ancestral domain can be traumatising for UK Caribbean visitors, particularly in cases where travel experiences and encounters create personal anxieties over self-identification and social position. The disjunctive condition of being a 'foreigner' in the ancestral homeland can initially confuse one's self-identity and challenge one's positive identification with that destination. The foreigner condition arguably reflects an enforced history of 'unbelonging', but this condition should not necessarily be directly equated with the status of a 'foreigner' within a metropolitan context. In the UK, for instance, members of the Caribbean community have arguably had to deal with the 'horrors of their exile' (James, 1993: 244). Critical enquiries concerning race relations in the UK have profiled the inhumanities faced by black communities: racial surveillance, racial violence (Fryer, 1984; Ramdin, 1987), economic exploitation (Rex, 1973; Rex & Tomlinson, 1979) and institutional racism (Peach & Byron, 1993; Small, 1994).

Although the above ethnographic narratives indicate that those who had travelled to the ancestral homeland did not feel fully accepted as part of a national society or 'bounded community' (Barker, 1981: 21), feelings of complete isolation from Caribbean island life were not significantly forthcoming. Despite initial problems in adjusting to the new environment and concerns over identity issues, various members of the study group impulsively discussed how particular strategies could be employed to help them adapt and conform to island life.

Lucia, a locally known writer in Moss Side, had visited Jamaica on two occasions since leaving the island in the early 1960s and explained how she had to readapt to the norms of the community:

> When mi go Yard mi 'ave to tink back wen mi live dere, like wen mi go on a bus an' mi waan get off it, mi 'ave to shout, 'Stop bus!' . . . Mi know now mi 'ave to take off mi jewellery an' look like dem. You 'ave to pick up on a 'hole heap of tings, if yu don' do dese tings people make joke.

Travel experiences thus may help to reconstruct displaced knowledge. Yet, despite the relearning process that Lucia had to undergo, experiences can be more difficult for those who had not lived in the Caribbean. This issue was first acknowledged in one observed conversation in the sauna at the Moss Side Sports Centre, when one young man had remarked to his friend the difficulties he had encountered during his first visit to Jamaica:

> You get hassled a lot. These people coming up and selling things like jerk pork an' a whole heap of things, troubling you. It really began to fuck with my mind! . . . I thought they were my brethren. It upset me . . .

His friend, who had apparently been to Jamaica on several occasions, suggested:

> Next time you go do what I do, dress locally man . . . Try an' speak some patois, tell them you're from Treawny or St James or wherever and show respect, be more relaxed . . .

Other narratives indicate how it is possible to confront or even resolve any previous difficulties that one may have experienced in adapting to the homeland environment. Valerie, for instance, said:

> Next time I go to Jamaica, apart from taking presents and some clothes, I'm going to go with the bare necessities, not over the top. I'm going to try to be more Jamaican . . .

In developing a deeper understanding of the cultural norms of island life, individuals may have to endure trial and error experiences. Yet they can experiment with different methods in an attempt to confront or challenge any prevailing differences. Joyce, for instance, stated:

> I took a lot of cultural baggage with me to Grenada . . . You know how we are in England, ruled by the clock. Well, when I first went, I was with my cousin and we would walk fast all over the place . . . But what happens is that they [the locals] say to you, 'Slow down, take it easy' . . . they kind of teach you how to do things in a way, how to be a part of it all.

These narratives indicate ways in which individuals can confront and contest their 'foreigner' status. They also illustrate how it is possible for individuals to constructively manage and redirect their own anxieties into positive outcomes: having more potential to become slowly accustomed to the cultural codes of Caribbean island life than to the cultural codes of tourism. This possibility does not necessarily extend to others: post-tourists, for instance, although wanting to embrace the 'back regions' of other cultures or societies, often remain as 'outsiders', conscious of the fact that their own 'received conventions, beliefs and prac-

tices' are indeed 'problematic' (Rojek, 1993: 185). Whilst members of the study group were also aware of the differences that can prevail within the homeland society, their ethnic histories, cultural knowledge and social experiences provided them with the necessary cultural skills to socially engineer difficult situations, roles and events. Moreover, the pursuit of multiple and intense experiences can inspire visitors to become reacquainted or more acquainted with the host community. This opportunity is not completely open to those who are in search of decentred, temporary and singular experiences, i.e. post-tourists.

Consequently, there are three fairly distinguishable (self-oriented) perceptions which illustrate that members of the study do not significantly identify themselves as tourists: personally viewing their own intentions, behaviour patterns and activities as distinct from tourists; conceiving themselves as indigenous members of the host community in situations defined by tourists; and perceiving themselves as 'foreigners' in situations defined by hosts and family relatives. Nonetheless, these categorisations are by no means fixed or absolute as it is possible for individuals to contest prescribed statuses and roles in an attempt to mediate their own personal identities.

Family expectations: Gifts, presents and material items

The conceptual categorisation and application of UK Caribbeans as 'foreigners' by members of the host community is arguably multi-dimensional. Individuals were classified, not always on the basis of having 'foreign ways' or displaying cultural habits that seemed to be at odds with the norms of the host culture, but also in terms of their capacity to represent or possess material wealth. This issue was particularly evident in narratives which described people's initial encounters in the ancestral homeland, especially those concerning the range of expectations that host families have of their visiting relatives. Valerie, for instance, commented:

> The main difference is that they think we are rich . . . They think we have it good over here . . . There is a problem when you go there, you get some family expecting things from you. They say things like, 'Wha' yuh got dere gal?' They look you up and down and see what you are going to give them. They are very offended if they don't get anything.

Elaine expressed similar concerns:

> When you go there [Barbados] people think that you have more money than they have . . . they want shoes and items, whatever you have. But you see they don't realise that you have saved for like umpteen years to be able to afford two or three weeks . . . When my family go, they come back here with forty kilos less than when they went . . .

Staying with family members may manifest latent forms of social conflict. This was evident in cases where individuals felt obliged and sometimes pressurised to make material contributions. As Caroline explained:

> they may have less money in comparison, but they fail to realise that holidays are becoming cheaper and cheaper, so you are getting the lower income brackets over there . . . My uncle would be saying things like, 'You

have a little money to put petrol in the car, I have to fix this and I have to fix that'. His perception of my wealth was far more than I actually had, so it pressurises you . . . They think England is paved with gold. But you see a lot of them don't get the opportunity to travel, except when they have to search for work . . . So yes, they don't get to know the problems black people have had to suffer, and the sort of jobs we get, and the level of black unemployment . . . We know their position, to an extent, 'cause we travel there and see it, but they don't get to see our situation.

The social antagonisms that individuals face during their visits to the ancestral homeland have been briefly acknowledged in Khan's (1977) study of the Pakistani (Mirpuri) community in Bradford (UK). The work revealed how trips to the ancestral villages in Mirpur (Pakistani district in Kashmir) often involved unsettling experiences. Mirpuri visitors were usually expected to make personal contributions (money and presents) to family members and close relatives. This obligation agitated some of the visitors who generally found it difficult to cope with their new economic status. Thus, they chose to stay in hotel accommodation or reside in the city during their visits (Khan, 1977).

In her first visit to Jamaica, two years after emigrating from the island, Paulette explained how and why she was immediately seen as a symbol of wealth:

Even though I have lived there most of my life, people want things from you . . . I found that it doesn't matter how small it is, everybody is looking for something, because you're coming from abroad . . . they just think that things come easier. Some of them still have this view that England is the workshop of the world. They believe that all the best things come from here and that you are part of it . . . like for example, a pair of leather shoes, they want them . . . It's because people conjure an image, a product, and a lot of old folks would like, maybe, a souvenir from the Royals, Diana or Prince Charles.

It could be argued that the economic opportunity to visit the ancestral homeland, the symbolic status of visitors as consumers of Western products and the preference by some visitors to use private transport to travel to different parts of the island, all variously represent acts of 'conspicuous consumption' (Veblen, 1970). This behavioural characteristic is ascribed to particular types of tourist behaviour which illustrate a desire to exhibit one's social prominence to others (Smith, 1993). Although 'foreigners' may also be perceived in terms of their economic prosperity and socially distinctive attributes, the responsibilities and obligations involved in visiting relatives indicate that these individuals are socially and culturally dissimilar to tourists. Yet despite some individuals being financially reluctant to purchase expensive items for family and friends, the act of giving gifts and presents to others is indeed purposeful.

Errol's narrative clearly explains why it is important to give presents to family relatives:

relatives hear that you are coming and they just write and tell you directly what they want, a pair of Nike trainers or whatever . . . Jamaicans are not like the English, they just come straight out with it . . . I can understand it you know, because you are staying with them it saves you money and they

do what they can for you. They make their preparations for when you arrive. When you are there they watch your back, you know what I mean? I suppose what goes around comes around . . .

Joyce's narrative suggests that the process of giving embodies a sense of duty:

When you go, you don't just take things for yourself, like, like tourists tend to do, or even me. If I was to go to France or anywhere outside my own family, I would take things for me . . . but it is part and parcel of your duties to take presents with you [when visiting the family] . . . I know that when people go to Grenada they take other things such as letters and photographs for the family . . . so it's not just commodities like kitchen utensils, ornaments. They look forward to things that keep them in touch with people over here.

Valerie, however, had not anticipated the material expectations of others. She commented:

I will go again to mi aunty's house because if I don't she will say things like, 'Wha' mi house no good for yuh' . . . Yes she would take offence . . . but thinking about it, that is their way of givin'. They do what they can because they are glad to see you. They picked me up at the airport, sorted out sleeping arrangements and things like that.

It is customary for individuals to support family members living in the ancestral destination. In her study of the Nevisian community in Leicester (UK), Byron (1994) noted that during the early years of migration individuals sent remittances of money to support their relatives in Nevis and to facilitate the journey of particular family members to the UK. This form of contribution involved a reciprocal process as family members in Nevis had financially assisted the passage of earlier migrants to Britain.

The behaviour patterns associated with taking gifts, souvenirs and personal items to the ancestral homeland represent a contrast to the popular tourist convention of bringing back souvenirs from particular destinations. Various discussions have focused on the symbolic dimensions associated with souvenir collecting (Gordon, 1986; Harkin, 1995; MacCannell, 1976). MacCannell (1976: 150), for instance, emphasised that souvenirs can act as 'totemic symbols' of consumption, signifying to a wider audience that individuals have auspiciously consumed other cultures. Gordon (1986) maintained that souvenirs can also metaphorically represent a continuity of experiences and encounters by prompting individuals to remember or re-enact short-term events.

Yet the taking of gifts, presents and personal items to the ancestral homeland indicates how individuals adopt roles which are based more on altruistic concerns than on personal accomplishments. As the above narratives indicate, individuals can be viewed as intermediaries and/or communicators of family knowledge, donators to the family household and receivers of hospitality. The giving of presents and the receiving of hospitality embodies reciprocal social relationships based on the mutual interchange of personal resources. These courteous forms of exchange arguably help to establish or re-establish intimate relations between family members.

Furthermore, the process of giving and receiving highlights the importance of the 'gift relationship', i.e. the ritualistic exchange of gifts for the purpose of endorsing one's identity as a family or community member (Malinowski, 1978; Mauss, 1970). As Mauss (1970) would concede, the giving of gifts relates not just to the significance of the objects themselves but to the quality of personal relationships that exists between individuals and groups[17].

Members of the study group often spoke of, or exhibited to the researcher, particular items they had acquired during their visits. Apart from the most obvious souvenirs (e.g. key rings, Jamaican and Grenadian flags, and local history books), perishable items (e.g. cashew nuts, flying fish, mangoes, sugar cane brandy and yams, which were either donated by relatives or purchased at local markets) were often brought to the UK and shared between family and friends. Although tourists often return to the home country with locally produced items (Gordon, 1986: 142), UK Caribbean visitors return with ethnically familiar and culturally specific products and souvenirs. These items represent not only a taste of the ancestral island but an encounter with the 'old country'.

Conclusions and Research Implications

The study strongly suggests that the desire to travel to the ancestral homeland is, by and large, the outcome of preformed mental images and retained cultural knowledge, reconstructed and transmitted within metropolitan societies. Maternal relationships and social networks have an influential role in promoting homeland affiliations and identities. Importantly, the work highlights two fundamental needs: to maintain social ties with family members and to consummate a long-term ambition to claim or reclaim one's cultural heritage. Ethnic reunion allows members of culturally displaced communities to renew or reconstruct a personal association with the ancestral homeland. Organic information, which has been produced and reproduced through local discourse and dialogue, seemingly has more of a direct role in creating a desire to travel than the 'language of tourism'.

Motivations to participate in ethnic reunion activities involve voluntary and personalised objectives, and also socially interactive commitments. Nonetheless, ethnic reunion distinguishes itself from other conventional forms of tourism in that it entails practices of an obligatory nature. Yet it would be too simplistic to argue that homeland aspirations and experiences are primarily based on people's desires and opportunities to 'rediscover' their cultural heritage. As Hall states:

> The homeland is not waiting back there for new ethnics to rediscover it. There is a past to be learned about, but the past is now seen, and it has to be grasped as a history, as something that has to be told. It is narrated. It is grasped through memory. It is grasped through desire. It is grasped through reconstruction. It is not just a fact that has been waiting to ground our identities. (1991: 38)

Childhood stories, community narratives and personal experiences enable individuals to construct and/or reconstruct an image of the homeland, and also to contemplate an identity of themselves. Although destination experiences and

encounters do not always encourage individuals to perceive themselves to be more Jamaican or Barbadian, for example, they do provide an opportunity for them to reassess their own identities. People's personal engagements with the ancestral homeland involve a complex process of learning or relearning old practices, adopting new values and embracing changed circumstances.

The visitor may initially possess an ambivalent identity, one which is liminal in nature and lies betwixt and between the 'tourist' and the 'host'. This position is partly determined by particular social interactions, group categorisations and unequal relationships with others. However, the process of dissociation from the adoption of a tourist identity is illustrative of how boundaries between groups are maintained and/or renegotiated. Members of the study group generally believe that in comparison to other tourists they have more access to local territory and greater intracultural insight into the local way of life. Individuals are further discouraged from imagining themselves as tourists because of the cultural practices and social expectations involved in visiting their families and friends.

The process of learning or relearning the cultural codes of island life, encouraged through multiple experiences, parental and peer group instructions and trial and error experiences, provides visitors with the opportunity to challenge their socially ascribed positions as 'foreigners'. The degree to which this challenge is effective is dependent upon the extent to which they allow themselves to learn from others and adapt to island life, and whether they are able to engage in future visits. Although visits can entail novel experiences, particularly for those who do not frequently travel to the ancestral homeland, the preacquisition of destination knowledge questions the extent to which experiences are entirely diverse and perceptions are decentred.

Future research programmes which focus on the structural and material problems affecting people's ability to travel and participate in tourism, may contribute to a deeper understanding of how it could be difficult for particular groups to perceive themselves (and be perceived by others) as tourists. Hence, if attention is directed to examining the racial encounters and problems experienced by black individuals in 'white destinations' in Europe (Stephenson & Hughes, 1995), it may be the case that any personal aspirations to acquire a tourist identity in such contexts could be precluded on the grounds that people's statuses are defined more by racial classifications than by tourist classifications. Also, if research studies examine the extent to which the commodification of tourism experiences directly impacts people's ability to freely participate in tourism (Hughes, 1991), it could possibly be asserted that individuals from economically marginalised groups (e.g. the UK black community) will find it difficult to instantly engage in tourism and thus readily adopt a tourist identity.

The prevailing view that 'people are much of the time tourists whether they like it or not' (Urry, 1990: 82) is particularly concerning. It does not consider people's right to determine or interpret their own roles and statuses. Traditionally, tourist perceptions and experiences have been conceptually invented and imagined through a myriad of arbitrary inferences and non-empirical accounts of tourism behaviour. It is therefore essential that people's personal aspirations and experiences are initially observed within a range of contexts and settings. This point underlines the argument that enquiries concerning tourism

motivation and behaviour ought to allow those concerned to speak for themselves and express their immediate needs and interests from within their own familiar and vocalised environments. The attempt to reveal multiple perspectives and contending truths is one constructive way forward. Ethnographic research which illustrates the dynamic and complex nature of identity issues in travel and tourism could arguably contribute to an understanding of the process of 'belonging' and 'unbelonging', and could also provide an insight into how ethnic-based choices determine different travel experiences.

Interestingly, Gilroy (1993a, 1993b) argues that black cultures are beginning to utilise a range of cultural resources which exceed national and ethnic boundaries, especially those resources which reflect intercultural affiliations with other black cultures and societies. He asserts that both the rise of international leisure industries and the developing interest in global (black) products (e.g. music and literature) provide an opportunity for the 'consolidation of diaspora awareness' (1993a: 33). Gilroy (1993b) thus maintains that black communities can create a sense of nationalism that extends beyond the boundaries of a nation, encouraged through mutual aspirations between cultures and societies of the 'black Atlantic' (Africa, Caribbean, Europe, North America, etc.) (Gilroy, 1993b). Gilroy's (1993a, 1993b) position further infers that studies of black communities should examine ways in which territorial boundaries are disintegrating and black identities are decentring, especially as a consequence of the increasing globalisation of black cultures and economies.

Consequently, the 'Black Atlantic' perspective implies that individuals are in the process of decentring their identities and daily aspirations away from specific ethnic groups, kinship networks, place images and territorial boundaries. Whilst this perspective differs from some of the conclusions raised in this paper, it may directly apply to an understanding of the aspirations of a new generation, i.e. third-generation minority groups. It could be the case that such groups have a lesser connection with the 'old country' in comparison to first- and second-generation groups.

For the moment, however, this study suggests that although experiences in the ancestral homeland can provoke less structured self-identities or more flickering, contextual and inter-subjective presentations of identity, these identities are not completely hybridised or permanently fractured by the interplay of disparate elements. Identity formation evolves as a consequence of parental instruction and peer group ratification, processes which enable individuals to learn or relearn their cultural histories and ancestral associations, albeit in more diluted forms. Visiting the ancestral homeland can create alternative identities, such as those associated with being 'foreign', but these identities are not necessarily discontinuous with historical circumstances.

Travel experiences and encounters simply reflect new ways of auditing or checking one's identity; an identity which is still (inter-subjectively) attached to the ancestral homeland. In order for members of the UK Caribbean community to continue to centre their aspirations on the homeland, it is crucial for them to persist with their lived experiences and their own social forms of communication.

Finally, it is important for future studies to consider other UK ethnic groups, such as the Bangladeshi, Jewish and Pakistani communities. These particular

enquiries would contribute to the development of a multi-dimensional approach to the study and practice of 'ethnic reunion', illustrating how ethnicity intersects with gender and religious dimensions. Comparative studies which seek to address similarities and differences between ethnic minority groups would help to promote a clearer understanding of the role of ethnicity as a significant variable in influencing and producing diverse travel motivations and experiences. Future contributions should not be tokenistic, simply paying fleeting attention to minority issues, but should employ research strategies which are more accountable to the views of those concerned.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. The relevance of the VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market as an increasingly significant form of tourism is acknowledged in several statistical-based enquiries (Jackson, 1990; Paci 1994, Seaton & Palmer, 1997).
2. The conceptual usage of the 'old country' was advanced by Gans (1979: 9–11) in his enquiry of ethnic groups in North America. He explored how ethnic groups, especially first-generation migrants, developed 'nostalgic allegiances' with the 'old country'. He emphasised how the 'old country' serves a 'symbolic function' as a marker of identity, illustrated by the political, economic and cultural links that prevail between migrants and their ancestral homeland.
3. 'Primary reference groups' are those groups with whom individuals have regular contact with (e.g. families, peers and community members); sharing similar social and cultural values.
4. Hitchcock (1999) presents a thorough exploration of the situational paradigm of ethnicity in the study of tourism.
5. Gilroy (1993b), in his analysis of the politics of black cultures, provides various examples concerning ways in which ethnic forms of identity are influenced by a fusion of cultural styles and tastes. One illustration was the pop cultural movement of 'hip-hop', which was the product of African-American, Jamaican and Puerto Rican cultural influences.
6. This method of assessment has been implemented in studies of local participatory planning in community tourism development, and arguably is not particularly successful in appreciating host views of development: opinions, ideologies and struc-

tural needs. Mowforth and Munt (1998: 244–7) provide an interesting overview and critique of such techniques within a community development framework.

7. Although the wider study utilised 15 key informants, this paper only deals with the views of 12 key informants. Although *Current Issues in Tourism* provides an opportunity to publish significant amounts of data, it was not possible to represent the concerns and issues of all those who were involved in the study.

8. Spradley (1979: 58–68) discusses at length the importance of utilising the 'casual/ friendly conversation' in ethnographic research, emphasising that one of its main attributes is that it allows the ethnographer to 'interview people without their awareness, merely carrying on a friendly conversation while introducing a few ethnographic questions' (1979: 58).

9. The researcher was an active member of the Moss Side Carnival Development Committee and also a volunteer youth worker.

10. However, it should be noted that MacCannell's work did inspire others to empirically apply his observations and perspectives to the study of tourism experiences: Buck (1978), Gottlieb (1982) and Moscardo and Pearce (1986).

11. Urry (2000: 50–64) presents a detailed summary of the significance of corporeal activities within different travel contexts. This summary thus highlights the socio-spatial practices entailed in various 'travellings'.

12. There are a range of interesting enquiries which discuss the meanings and representations of sacred sites and special places. See especially the work of Carmichael *et al.* (1994) and Reader and Walter (1993).

13. Horne (1984), for instance, was concerned with how European heritage sites reinforce the dominant components of public culture: capitalism, neo-imperialism, patriarchal authority and European hegemony.

14. It should be noted that such forms of travel entailed a racial agenda. As Stauder (1980) notes, the interest by anthropologists in the study of race and slavery was encouraged by the concerns of British governments and private groups to advance their political and economic control of Africa and the Caribbean.

15. 'Intra-island' discussions refers to those conversations involving people who originate from the same Caribbean island, whereas 'inter-island' dialogue, illustrated later in the text, refers to those conversations involving people from different Caribbean islands. Importantly, migration to metropolitan societies has created an interesting mix of inter-island dialogues, enhanced through communication networks and island affiliations and alliances (e.g. Caribbean cultural events, festivals and inter-island marriages). Given the proliferation of inter-island relationships in post-migration societies, some observers have concentrated on examining the various attributes of a 'Caribbean identity' as opposed to an 'island identity'. James's (1993) analysis, for instance, provides an interesting discussion regarding the nature and character of 'Caribbean identities' in the UK.

16. This programme was fervently criticised by sections of the black press for presenting a narrow and unrepresentative account of life in Jamaica, and also for reinforcing Western interpretations of what constitutes a 'Yardie' (*Voice* (21 February 1995b), 13; *Weekly Journal* (2 March 1995), 1)). The Yardie is often defined as someone who is involved in organised criminal activities, rather than someone who simply 'comes from Yard', i.e. 'was born in Jamaica' (*Voice* (21 February 1995a), 3). The negative connotations associated with this term have been endorsed by popular media forms such as novels (e.g. Headley, 1992) and broadsheets (e.g. *The Guardian*, 10 June 1994: 6).

17. Berking (1999) provides a detailed examination of the sociocultural and reciprocal relations involved in gift-giving. This book examines the key sociological components and cultural ambivalences of gift-giving, in particular, its complex codes of conduct and the range of motivations involved.

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