THE BURDEN OF 'URBAN' AND THE MYTH OF MARKETABILITY:

A STUDY INTO RACISM IN THE BRITISH MUSIC INDUSTRY

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

In this study I investigate the nature of racism in the British music industry today, and unpick the claim that black artists are not as marketable as white artists. Further, I examine the role the term 'Urban' has within the complex systems of the industry, now that 'Urban' as a musical category has become dominant and replaced former 'race' categories. My research involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 12 participants who are part of the industry in various ways, either as artists or professionals. I also analysed online interviews with other artists and professionals as secondary data. My interviews revealed that expropriation and exploitation, domination and subordination are still prevalent features of the way the music industry is run. 'Urban' as a catch-all term for black music is marginalised and hierarchically inferior to the mainstream, restricting black artists through this racialisation of music. On the flip side, 'Urban' is politically-neutral and open to all, regardless of race, allowing white artists and white owned corporations to dominate and benefit from 'Urban' music above black artists. The post-racial and multicultural image of 'Cool Britannia' that this corporate 'Urban' promotes, conceals structural racism both in the industry and wider society, making claims of racism seem unfounded. Claims that black artists are less marketable rest on racist deeply imbedded industry practices that ensure a lack of black successful artists, which in turn is used as evidence for this lack of marketability.

These findings reflect a collaborative approach with the inspiring and talented individuals who participated in my research. I would like to thank them for sharing their time, knowledge and experiences with me. I hope that this research can contribute towards building a fairer music industry, so that Britain's cultural production can accurately reflect Britain's talent.

INTRODUCTION

Promoting and supporting underground music talent has been a passion of mine for the last six years, and this passion is now becoming a career: CleeCo is a creative agency and platform that I have founded, focusing on supporting musicians by developing creative revenue streams, so that an independent route is viable and profitable without dependence on major record labels. As Kelley quoted in *Rhythm & Business: The Political Economy of Black Music* (2002):

> *"the price one pays for pursuing any profession or one's calling is an intimate knowledge of its ugly side"* - James Baldwin, nobody knows my name

Racism in the popular British music industry has been in the headlines this year. #BritsSoWhite became a trending topic on Twitter after only 3 nominations went to black artists out of the 53 available to British artists. Media responses to #BritsSoWhite reveal popular assumptions that the best music is fairly rewarded, and that those who are systematically discriminated against by the industry are in fact not making music worthy of awards. This is entirely illogical considering the history of black music that I will touch upon in my literature review; the defence of this position thus rests upon another assumption. The Brits are assessed against chart success, so a lack of black artists being rewarded by the Brits is put down to industry assumptions that black artists are simply unmarketable to the majority white British population. All the while, white artists like Adele and Sam Smith are winning the awards and dominating the charts making heavily Soul influenced pop music. Furthermore, Grime MC Stormzy managed to chart in the top 10 with a freestyle, without a record label behind him. In his words: "*None of my Gs nominated for Brits/ Are you taking the p***?/ Embarrassing/ Last year they told the mandem that to be nominated*

you've gotta go on UK charts/ So what do we do? We chart/ Don't come here with your lies/ Don't start" (One Take Freestyle).

The argument follows that as minorities in the country, black artists should not expect to be fairly rewarded, and should instead create their own awards and celebrate themselves. However, when the MOBO (Music of Black Origin) awards intended to do just that, popular media reported that this was 'dangerously divisive', exclusionary, unnecessary and even 'outright racist', despite the fact that a large number of white artists have been awarded at the MOBOs (Lister, 2008). The MOBO's Wikipedia page has an entire section dedicated to 'Criticisms' - while neither the Brit's or Asian Music awards' Wikipedia page has anything of the sort. The presence of black artists - largely American - in the charts contributed to presenting an image of Britain as post-racial, where diversity is tolerated and equality is paramount. This acts to disguise ongoing discrimination by the industry and a need to celebrate and reward the diverse black talents that are consistently overlooked, marginalised and exploited. This further acts to disguise the discrimination embedded in wider society that marginalises ethnic minorities.

The marketability argument that I have outlined is given wide legitimation, despite the fact that no evidence has been supplied to back it up. The rise of the term 'Urban' to replace 'race' as a musical category feeds into this racialised marketability assumption. My research into racism in the British music industry seeks to uncover the following:

- **Are discriminatory and exploitative practices present within the British music industry?**

- **If so, to what extent is the argument of marketability driven by these practices?**

- **What forms do discriminatory practices assume in the UK music industry now that 'Urban' as a music category has come to replace former 'race' categories?**

The British music industry does not exist in a social vacuum, neither does it exist in a post-racial utopia. As cultural theorist Paul Gilroy makes clear, "to engage racism seriously involves moving simultaneously onto historical and political ground" (Gilroy, 2005:23). This paper will begin with a literature review, in order to situate the British music industry within the historical, global, political, social and cultural contexts in which it exists so that we can understand the significance of structural racism in the music industry and be able to accurately interpret the racialisation of music that underpins it. Racism in the British music industry is extremely under-studied, and there were no studies whose blueprint I could follow. In the following section I will outline my research methods - interviewing artists and professionals involved in the music industry. Next I will share the findings of my research, and analyse these to address my research questions and conclude.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Setting the Scene

In studying racism and racialisation, it is important to first clarify the terms. 'Race' will be written throughout this study in inverted commas to highlight a 'deconstructive' approach, indicating that the concept is "under erasure", to use Stuart Hall's terminology (Gunaratnam, 2003:31). 'Race' is a political and social construct, not a scientific or biological category; 'race' is a powerful and hierarchical fiction upon which a "system of socio-economic power, exploitation and exclusion" has been constructed (Hall, 2000:222). This system, through processes of racialisation, centres white interests at the expense of the 'Other' - historically justifying the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and other brutalities and lasting inequalities that are definitive of Britain's history (Gilborn, 2006). Racism is therefore not simply 'making things about race' - as the post-racial argument goes; rather, it is exclusion from rights, "protection, privilege, property, or profit" through the "depreciation" that the hierarchical nature of 'race' ensures (Goldberg, 2009:5). Racist ideology, through racialisation, provides a series of "rationalisations" for this exclusion, maintaining white hegemony by "designating Black people as separate, visible 'others' to be contrasted in every way" with the dominant group (Crenshaw, 1988:1369). Britain has been a colonising power since its birth as a nation, having "continuous intercourse with 'difference'" that have profoundly shaped notions of identity and national belonging against its racialised "Others" (Hall, 2000:218). The movement to post-colonial times, as Hall argues, simply "marks the passage from one historical power-configuration or conjuncture to another" (Hall, 2000:213). Throughout this study I will utilise bell hooks' term and refer to this power-con-

figuration broadly as "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy", in order to highlight the inseparable functionality of both class and gender (hooks, 1998).

In 1948, the arrival of the Windrush from Jamaica to London marked the beginning of significant migration of West Indians to help rebuild the country after the devastation of World War Two. English identities have been historically rooted in "white superiority over those other people and places which made up the British Empire" (Hall, 1998:28); thus the arrival of these immigrants, despite their British citizenship, was "understood to be an act of invasive warfare" (Gilroy, 2005:101). The post-war history of these groups, along with others from various parts of the former British Empire, has been "marked by struggles against racialised disadvantage, confrontations with racist groups and the police, and institutional racism". These newcomers were largely "clustered at the lower end of the social deprivation spectrum, characterised by high relative levels of poverty, unemployment and educational underachievement" (Hall, 2000:219). As Hall points out, Britain was a "multi-culturally diverse society" long before the development of "post-migration multi-ethnic communities" (2000:230), yet intricate ties between 'race' and national identity form an obstacle to black "authentic national membership" (Gilroy, 1987:46).

Urban areas such as London and Birmingham have substantial black and ethnic minority populations - 44% of London's population are now said to be black or ethnic minority citizens, although unlike the US, there are no racially segregated ghettoes, and communities are ethnically and racially mixed to varying degrees (BBC, 2015). Despite this significant non-white presence in England's major cities, Gilroy and Hall both argue convincingly that British nationalism is "stained with the memory of imperial greatness", creating an ethnic absolutist racial "common sense" in which England is a 'white country'. The non-white presence is thus "constructed as a problem or threat against which a homogenous, white,

national 'we' could be unified" (Gilroy, 1987:79,49). While those from the Caribbean and the Asian sub-continent were, and continue to be, socially excluded and "depreciated", racialised images are simultaneously "instrumentally constitutive of the shared imaginary repertoires of the dominant culture", which in fact legitimise said exclusion (Stalleybrass, 1989:6). For example, since Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech in 1968, Gilroy argues, the idea that blacks are a high crime group, and that "their criminality is an expression of their distinctive culture", have become "integral to British racism" (Gilroy, 1987:140), "justifying racist policies [and policing] directed at blacks" (Codrington, 2005).

The Black Atlantic

While the majority of the UK's black communities are of relatively recent origin, and have a different history to African Americans, Gilroy argues that the Black Atlantic is a cultural and political formation that transcends national boundaries. Established through the transatlantic slave trade, which produced both modern western civilisation and the recent black music forms that now "dominate its popular cultures", the Black Atlantic has "a system of global communications constituted by flows" (Gilroy, 1993:80). Through the music and cultures produced in Afro-America and the Caribbean, "oppositional ideas, ideologies, theologies and philosophies" have shaped understandings of 'blackness' throughout the world (Eyerman, 2002:447). Music can "articulate as well as fuse a group", as Eyerman argues, and "offer a sense of group belonging and collectivity" that offers strength in the face of violent repressive authority (2002:447). UK populations "seized upon" both Afro-American and Caribbean cultural products, adapting them to distinctly British circumstances and creating a "connective culture" (Gilroy 1991:115). Blues, Gospel, Soul, Reggae and Hip-Hop connected with worldwide audiences, often articulating explicitly "political language,

symbols and meanings given by the struggle of social movements for emancipation and equality" such as the Black Power movement and the Civil Rights movement in the US. This "political inheritance" was similarly "adapted to British circumstances" (Gilroy, 1987:228) along with the self-identity and "grounded aesthetics" constructed through music circulating through the Black Atlantic (Gilroy, 1993:102). Hall highlights the importance of representation in self-identity and self-understanding: "it is only through the ways in which we represent and imagine ourselves that we come to know how we are constituted and who we are" (1996:476). Black music also had a huge cultural impact beyond black audiences. For example, a "strong anti-racist current" was established in young whites by the likes of James Brown and Aretha Franklyn through their Soul musical expression of the Black Power movement (Gilroy, 1987:237). Likewise, a mass movement in the UK during the 1970s was generated through the Pan-African and Ethiopianist ideology of Rastafari through Reggae music and its surrounding 'bass culture' - to use Mykaell Riley's term (Riley, 2014). As Gilroy argues, this highlights the "potency of culture as a conductor of political ideologies" particularly through the black Atlantic (Gilroy, 1987:250).

While today the adoption of elements of "political sensibility and cultural expression transmitted from black America" and the Caribbean by Britain's black settler communities remain central, for a long time they were dominant (Gilroy, 1993:15). British reggae was seen as an awkward imitation of authentic Caribbean Reggae - until white British reggae artists took over the mainstream; and British rappers only stopped putting on fake American accents in the mid 1990s. An "American-centred, consumer-oriented culture of blackness was prominent", conditioning "the dreams of many young Britons, irrespective of their ancestral origins or physical appearance" (Gilroy, 1987:xvi). Britain had much tighter restrictions on the production and distribution of black music. During much of the post-war period, the BBC "was not interested in including African and Caribbean music in their pro-

grams" (Gilroy, 1987:218). It is hard to over-emphasise the cultural dominance of the BBC in the UK: Radio 1 has the power to "virtually make or break a record". By comparison, the US had a developed market for 'race records' and dedicated black radio stations. Besides restricted access to the largest means through which to spread music, when 'pop charts' began, "black shops and products" including print media, "were structurally excluded from the operations" that generated them (Gilroy, 1987:218).

Power, Capital and Music

Popular culture, through the industries that produce it globally, "enter directly into the circuits of a dominant technology—the circuits of power and capital" (Hall, 1996:472). Music is an incredibly culturally pervasive and important constituent of popular culture today. While music can carry the seeds of social identity, it can also be used to formulate preconceptions of other people. Black cultural production, along with other forms of production, has historically been exploited and undervalued within the white supremacist capitalist patriarchal system, where it bears the "weight of the fantasies and mythologies constructed around black music and black people by whites" (Murray, 1989. in Stephens, 1998:114). Kelley notes that almost all endeavours by African Americans have been given less consideration than that of whites. Rather than being seen as the product of "sustained learning, practice, discipline and most importantly intelligence", it is seen as 'natural talent': "like air, forever abundant and there for the taking" (Kelley, 2002:7). The history of black music in the Black Atlantic has seen ceaseless expropriation and annexation of black cultural forms for the economic, cultural and social benefit of whites; what Garofalo called "black roots, white fruits" (2002:112). American popular culture has become global popular culture, and American popular music derives from black music. When black cultural forms are

accepted by the mainstream, they become "universal" and representative of America or Britain, while the cultural forms that are not absorbed are stigmatised as "deviant" (Crenshaw, 1991).

A digital analysis of chord patterns and tonal shifts in popular music found that the most important evolution in American pop over the last 50 years was not Rock'n'Roll, but Hip-Hop (Ali and Brown, 2015). Despite this, the formation of the modern music industry is built around rock bands; dominant practices within major record companies in Britain were established by primarily white, male, middle class staff drawn from backgrounds in the rock tradition. In the US, record companies have employed specialist, predominantly black, staff to manage Rap, Soul and R&B departments, while in the UK there has been a "conspicuous absence of black people in the major labels in Britain" (Negus, 1992:60). Black and ethnic minority individuals made up only 4% of employees in the Music sector in 2012, against 10% in the total UK economy. The music industry is overwhelmingly London-centric, and despite London's 40% black and ethnic minority population, the representation of these individuals has been decreasing. Employment of ethnic minorities has dropped from 9% in 1996, despite increasing total employment in the industry (King, 2007a). As Sajid Javid, former Culture Secretary accurately pointed out, entry into jobs in the arts often requires people to receive little to no pay, and with London's living costs extortionately high and rising, this effectively bars access "if you don't have 'the Bank of Mum and Dad'" - disproportionately affecting those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds (Sparrow, 2014). As Negus points out, the demographic make up of the industry means that commercial strategies are not "simply business decisions… but are informed by a number of value judgements and cultural beliefs" (1999. in Strachan, 2014:78). The racialisation of music is evidence of this.

The Racialisation of Music

Through the "artificial segregation" of black and white audiences, "black music has been relegated to a separate and unequal marketing structure" (Garofalo, 2002:112). This is illustrated in a report from 1978 by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) into the US record industry. They found that it was "overwhelmingly segregated and discrimination is rampant" (1987:56). The racialisation of music, and separating black artists into a special, devalued category, meant that black artists were not promoted to white radio stations but confined to black oriented stations, where "smaller audiences result in smaller sales" (The NAACP Report, 1987:56). While black promoters were effectively barred from 'white' outlets, white promoters could take their artists to reach both black and white audiences. Since the outlets which black departments had access to reached smaller audiences, this offered legitimation to black departments receiving smaller budgets and fewer resources - making mainstream success, and high income, further from reach. Once a black artist manages to achieve 'crossover' status by getting airplay on 'pop stations' and features in the 'pop charts' - the artist is removed from the black music division to the pop music division. This allows the white dominated pop music division to become the "beneficiary of revenues generated by such crossover artists", once again leaving less resources available in the black music division for artist development, promotion and marketing (The NAACP Report, 1987:47). All major labels in the US are still white owned; the sale of Motown records to "giant multinational corporate conglomerate" Universal/Vivendi in 1993 marked the end of the last fully independent black-owned major label (Roberts, 2014).

Current Cultural Context

The racialisation of music in the UK has similar effects, for example in radio. Despite charges in 2001 that the make up of the BBC was "hideously white", BBC Radio DJ Nihal claims that rather than having improved, the situation has deteriorated, with the BBC creating racialised staff divisions between the stations Radio 1, 1Xtra and the Asian Network. The eighth floor of BBC Broadcasting House sees "all the Asians sitting in one corner, all the white people in Radio 1 and all the black people in 1Xtra" (Plunkett, 2015). Radio 1Xtra was launched with the slogan 'Love Black Music, Love 1Xtra', but in 2010 removed it to focus on the best in Urban music. The term Urban, which originated as a radio category in the US, is used as a politically neutral euphemism for 'black', replacing previous 'race' categories. The adoption of the term 'urban' represents a manifestation of what Murray argues is "the central thrust" of popular music: "the need to separate black music from black people" (Murray, 1989. in Stephens, 1998:151). 1Xtra collated a 'PowerList' in 2014, promoted by the BBC as naming the "most important UK artists in the black and urban music scene". Topping the list was Ed Sheeran, who is neither black nor urban - he grew up in rural Framlingham - and makes folk based pop music (Lusher, 2014).

The music of the black Atlantic was initially created out of a desire for covert, safe social spaces in the context of a white supremacist capitalism that since transatlantic slavery "obliterated distinctions between public and private life for those enslaved", and Neal notes that this pursuit of spaces has remained dominant up to this day (1997:119). Choice FM was a popular black community radio station that not only gave a platform to black music in the UK, but also had talk shows discussing issues in the black community, and as Okereke argued, "it was about identity" (2014). However, in 2013, Choice became Capital

Xtra, the 'sister station' to Capital - the UK's most dominant national radio station after BBC Radio 1 - with the slogan 'Dance. Urban. UK'.

The Gendered Politics of Urban

Dabiri notes that the popular symbols of 'Urban' are often black men with white females - or sometimes a light skinned, mixed race female - representing mainstream youth culture by promoting an image of multiculturalism that is "almost entirely devoid of black women" (2013). Simon Frith, chair of the Mercury Prize, commenting on the lack of sustained successful black female artists, claimed that "Britain has a blind-spot" when it comes to new female urban acts (Paterson, 2010). There is an often expressed assumption that black women are hard to market to predominantly white audiences. However, popular music is, a majority of the time, "designed to meet the needs of the radio industry rather than individual consumers or the culture at large" (Rothenbuhler and McCourt, 2006:310). Only three of the top 100 biggest tracks on UK radio last year were not from major labels - lower than both France and Germany - highlighting the intricate relationship between major labels and radio (Ingham, 2016). Both radio and record label staff carry out a process of what Hirsch (1969) calls "preselection" - anticipating what the public will like, and making risk-averse choices about what will be successful based on feedback from recent and past successes (Rothenbuhler and McCourt, 2006:310).

While black female acts are seen as unmarketable, the popular representations of black women in cultural imagery suggests that *certain* racialised tropes *are* marketable. Black women are more frequently oversexualised in music videos than white women (Coy, 2014). Dagbovie-Mullins argues that popular representations of black women prompt us to

"think about black girls in two interrelated and degrading ways: they are forgettable and invisible and yet highly visible, hypersexual, and repelling" (2013:746). Crenshaw suggests that the devaluation of women of colour that is produced by the intersection of racism and sexism in black women's lives is linked to how women of colour are represented in cultural imagery (1991:1245).

The Rise of Grime

A large number of both 1Xtra and Capital Xtra's specialist black music DJs have been axed in the last few years to be replaced by club and house DJ's, including grime specialists. Okereke argues that grime is the most important homegrown British music since punk rock, and is "the closest thing that the Black British community have had to call their own" in recent years (2014). Grime - a form of Rap that is uniquely British - has been consistently marginalised by the British music industry, despite it's cultural impact. It was incubated through pirate radio stations in the early 2000s which were constantly being shut down by the authorities. Zuberi points out that its growth coincided with the boom in low budget music video production and internet music distribution, and was given a legitimated although marginal radio platform through 1Xtra and Choice FM (2014:198). Mykaell Riley, academic and founding member of Steel Pulse - a groundbreaking British Reggae group - noted that in the last quarter of 2010, while the industry was slumping due to the success of online downloads, an unusually high number of black British acts rose to chart success from the underground Grime scene (2014:111).

In 2010 'Urban' music made up 30% of the charts (Topping, 2010). This includes Dizzee Rascal, Tinie Tempah and Wretch 32. Riley notes how this music was rebranded into "brit pop", "subsumed into club culture and repackaged as dance music" (2014, 112). Popular music in Britain has come to symbolise diversity: an open, tolerant and post-racial society we could term "Cool Britannia". Dizzee Rascal performed at the opening ceremony of the London Olympics in 2012, in which music "in particular represented a multicultural and popular history of Britain" (Zuberi, 2014:189). Meanwhile The Voice - the UK's largest and longest serving black publication - was denied media access by the British Olympics Association. As British artist George The Poet eloquently stated in his BBC Arts Night documentary: "we've watched our creations commercialise, while our histories and spaces are blown to bits" (2015).

Surveillance and Control

Since the rise of politically threatening artists such as Public Enemy and NWA in the 1980's, Hip-Hop has become a highly regulated culture form. Taking a prominent place in the culture industries globally, Hip-Hop is worth more than $1.8 billion in annual sales and is controlled by white owned establishments (Roberts, 2014). Gangsta Rap, a form of Hip-Hop, was pushed by the white owned establishments to large white audiences. Consequently, Gangsta Rap came to define Rap music as a whole (Rebollo-Gil and Moras, 2012:125). Like the corporate annexation of Soul music before it, "corporate America's uncompromising exploitation and revisioning of the meanings and icons of Blackness would introduce both cartoonish and surreal constructions of Blackness to a mass buying public" (Neal, 1997:120). This construction of blackness has become engrained into the UK's consciousness, such that Rap artists are forced to conform to what the major labels

deem marketable in order to have a chance at securing a record deal. As the music industry is characterised by unpredictability and high failure rates, staff are not encouraged to take risks, resulting in a tendency to sign acts according to what has proved successful in the past (Negus, 1992:60). In other words, the degree to which black artists embody familiar racist stereotypes are relative to the amount of support or affirmation found in the culture (Small,1994:18). The stereotypes exacerbate the image of black male criminality, functioning ideologically to make the "overrepresentation of black men in the prison industrial system" appear to be "the direct product of overly increasing black male criminality as opposed to a systematic and institutionalised system of white supremacy" (Rebollo-Gil and Moras, 2012:121). Black individuals are 6 times more likely to be stopped and searched by police in the UK than a white person. As Zuberi points out, Prime Minister Blair in 2007 blamed a succession of knife and gun murders in London on "distinctive black culture" rather than "social deprivation, unequal opportunities and the drug economy" (2014:188).

Live performance has been a key part of 'bass culture' since the sound systems of the 1970s, and the current 696 form is directly targeting black live performance through discriminatory practice. Venues and promotors have to fill in the 696 form for the Met police to let them know, among other things, the "style of music to be played/performed" at their event, and whether there will be a DJ or MC - both tied to 'bass culture', sound systems and the Hip-Hop tradition (Hancox, 2009). Prior to 2006, the form explicitly asked the racial makeup of the anticipated audience. The police can then call for the event to be cancelled at the last minute, harass and search the performers (usually rappers), and extort the promotors into paying thousands of pounds for security, and in some cases armed police. This is despite the fact that there is no evidence that 'urban' events are less safe than events with white performers and/or audiences, or that the policy has any impact - that is, beyond scaring promotors out of organising Hip-Hop and Grime events. Giggs - an MC

from Peckham who won a BET (Black Entertainment Television) award for Best UK Hip Hop in 2008, had to cancel his tour because the police "strongly advised" venues not to book him, so "impinging on his ability to make a living" (Zuberi, 2014:200). Cashmore writes that "the most significant value of black culture may be in providing whites with proof of the end of racism while keeping the racial hierarchy essentially intact" (1997. in Sanjek, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

Research Aims and Objectives

As the NAACP Report noted, unlike industries that have well integrated structures, the music industry has various autonomous entities "including major record companies, independent labels, recording artists, managers, agents, promoters, distributors, radio, TV and retailers", interacting in complex ways with no regulatory body. Simultaneously, "the industry is a tightly knit and closed society that jealously guards information on its activities" (The NAACP Report, 1987:45). These factors make studying the music industry a challenge. When we add the highly politically charged and socially sensitive topic of 'race' into the aims of our research, the challenge intensifies exponentially.

I used my existing networks and friendships in the music industry to create a purposive sample of individuals with insight into the popular music industry. Snowball sampling occurred after I started my research, with respondents putting me in touch with other individuals who they felt I should interview. Since the interviews were established upon friendships, in many cases previous conversations had been had about racism, and thus the interviewees were comfortable to express themselves. 11 out of 12 of my interviewees identify as black, and one was Asian. My participants were part of the music industry as either signed or unsigned artists, producers, staff at major labels, radio and media personnel (see appendix 1 for a list of participants).

I did twelve in-depth, semi-structured interviews using an interview guide that had a few introductory questions and a list of talking points (see appendix 3). This generated qualita-

tive data in the form of respondents' answers to my questions, and the experiences and thoughts that my interviewees chose to share in the open conversation that followed. The length of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two hours, as it was dependent on how much the individual had to share, allowing me to generate a large amount of data. While I could not verify the experiences that participants had experienced, I treated the information they gave me as fact. As we live in a hierarchical society, some groups are given more respect and authority than others; in order to understand racism it is important that the voices of those who experience it are heard and taken seriously.

I also used a number of online interviews with artists and individuals in the industry as secondary data, in order to get a broader understanding beyond those who I was in contact with (see appendix 2). In some cases, I did not know what the interview process was, or what processes the material may have gone through between being spoken and being published. I navigated this limitation by prioritising video interviews in which the artists themselves spoke. However, I still included some written interviews as I assessed it as worth analysing the experiences they shared.

Data Analysis

The research I read spanned over a century and crossed the world, documenting the development of tens of musical genres, case studies of hundreds of artists and the creation and evolution or many different legal, economic and cultural formations involved in the production and promotion of music. When studying this literature, having only just started my interviews, I found a significant amount had been written on racism in the US music industry both before and during the civil rights era (see Kelley, 2002). This documented the ways in which black artists, songwriters and musicians were cheated out of royalties

through explicit exploitation. While taking in this information, I considered it to be relevant in establishing historical context, but less towards building theory around current industry practices. On reflection, I find that during my research I was still unconsciously subscribed in varying degrees to the idea of Britain in 2016 as post-racial. I did not assume that discrimination was as explicit and controlling as my data collection later revealed it to be.

Ethical issues

Before beginning my interviews, I gave the participants consent forms and ensured that they understood that the interview would be recorded, that it was confidential, and that they could stop the research at any point and withdraw from the study. Given the highly political nature of my research, many participants would only agree to partake if I could guarantee that they would remain anonymous and any identifiers and distinguishing factors about their stories would be replaced as to not risk the information being traced back to them.

I was mindful during my research to not inscribe and reinforce essentialist notions of race, and to not reduce the complexity of black life into an effect of racism; as Gilroy pointed out, the victim role is imprinted into blackness in British racism (1987:197). I was conscious of the two questions that Bhavnani (1993) suggests researchers must ask themselves: "Does this work/analysis define the researched as either passive victims or as deviant? Does it reinscribe the researched into prevailing representations?" (in Gunaratnam, 2003:40). In my research, it was impossible to perceive my interviewees as passive victims, even though they were all conscious of the limitations that racism in the industry imposes upon them. They were equally fully aware of their individual power to build and create without being taken advantage of by the industry.

The Ghettoisation of Black Music

The racialisation of music, and the use of 'Urban' as the umbrella term for all music of black origin, essentially represents a ghettoising that allows limited space for black artists, creating high competition and a lack of opportunity, forcing many black artists into lower paid support roles for other, mainly white artists, for example as session musicians, writers and back up singers. Wretch 32 said in an interview in 2015:

> *"They always make us feel like our dinner is limited. [..] The problem is there can only be a certain number of MCs on the playlist at the same time on the major radios. But if there's Westlife, can there be Take That too?"*

This lack of opportunity creates high competition. Comparing the UK to the US, singer-songwriter A said:

> *"I don't feel like its the same in this country 'cause its so much smaller, music is controlled even more here, not everyone is getting on radio and getting the royalties that they should be getting.. you know, really making money from music. For that reason, everyone is strategic. There's only a few artists that are constantly on putting people on"*

The marginalising of black artists to limited roles pushes many black artists into roles with significantly lower pay. Music Producer C described the position many musicians have to take as session musicians:

> *"The black musicians that are making all the hit shows, all the hit bands, they are making £150, £300; then you have the white guys buying houses from this thing, setting their families up, they are on the road for 20 years."*

Ty, a rapper, wrote in an interview in 2013 that:

> *"Most Black singers that I know have settled into backing singing in the UK for this very reason. There is a high demand for Black girls to be in the background in the UK, it's a lucrative business"*

Thus, this marginalisation and discrimination creates a form of exploitation whereby black artists and musicians are collecting significantly less revenue out of the music that they are contributing to; while the artists they are supporting, and the labels behind them, are profiting greatly.

White artists, white owned brands, and white owned corporations capitalise on the cool/edgy aesthetics of 'Urban', and their authenticity is seen to be legitimated by their proximity to blackness. Artist D described a situation he was in where a label contacted him to remix a newly signed white artists' single. D charged his price for a remix, did the song, and even shot the video with his production company at a fee that did not cover the costs. The song was then released not as the remix but as the official single, as D described it:

> *"it became apparent that they've just attached an 'urban' artist to the white singer-songwriter to give it that credibility, but what they're really trying to do is lead off my name 'cause of my buzz"*

White Faces, Black Styles

Riley (2014:110) described his experience of working as a writer and producer for major labels:

> "When working with white artists I ensured the production had an element of "street". A sound and style of production routed in black culture capable of transferring an element of street cred to the artist in question. At different times in different ways it was simply understood that this was a missing ingredient that had to be added."

Similarly, Rapper Akala noted this in an interview this year:

> "I know so many black artists who have been signed who go through this process with the label where if you're a black artist, you have to do what they call white music, or sound white. If you're white, they want you to sound black, they are going to surround you with a whole band of black musicians to give you credibility. Go watch any white RnB, Soul, Reggae type artist, look at their band. If you're a black artist.. if you surround the black artist with an all black band, ooh it gets a bit intimidating."

In this exploitative relationship, white artists - directed by the white owned corporations - capitalise off the 'Urban' aesthetic, and underpay and undervalue the artists who give them their legitimacy. In contrast, as Riley (2014:110) notes:

> "when working on black British artists my primary goal was to make them 'radio friendly', that is 'not to sound too black'".

Singer-songwriter J explains what her time in the industry taught her:

"If I want to make it and stand out in the industry I'd have to ideally make music that was Rock/pop or something that was more marketable to white people. With middle class white people being the main people who buy music or invest in musicians, then the music I make has to target the people that I want to buy my music. So then if I don't look like them, I have to be somewhat relatable to them, and essentially me being black is not relatable because there's nothing white about me, so theres nothing they can relate to. So if I want to get signed then I have to make myself white, make pop music. I look at Adele who makes soul music and is able to do really well making soul music, and I look at Alexandra Burke who started off making soul music but was made to do pop, and I really don't think that was her. I can't think of a black artist, especially in the UK, that makes soul or RnB music that does well. I don't necessarily believe it but the labels seem to think that a black soul artist wont be received well."

These sentiments are based on the argument of marketability:

"You just have to face that fact that minorities are a minority for a reason. You are a minority in this country. Most people, and when you work at a label, you know the label loans you money, and the label wants to know what is the safest investment. Sam Smith as a young Londoner, who's got an amazing voice, is going to give you the best opportunity to make your money back, and then some. Because in America, you can sell to just your demographic and sell millions of records. The numbers aren't like that here, the people are just not there" (Radio Producer - G)

This is an attitude I have come across many times in the industry and in media discussions of the recent #BritsSoWhite outrage. Artist E recalled a conversation that he overheard in

a studio between two white male A&R's (artist and repertoire) from Sony and another label, which went along the lines of:

> *"A black girl singing black music, how are you going to sell it? If we can get a white girl singing that now, we're making money".*

Ty overheard two white male A&R's talking brazenly on the train espousing similar sentiments, and in an later interview he wrote:

> *"What they quickly certified for me, is that it's been decided that sounding Black is okay, but you being Black is not. It's not sellable and is not desirable in mainstream UK, hence the lack of new, emerging Black Soul singers in the UK, doing what they want to do, NOT what radio is suggesting. It is scarce, Black females singing soul how they want to sing it, is at an all time low."*

Unwritten Rules

Music industry executives and staff abide by unwritten rules about what they will market and sell. These rules are determined based on both history - what has failed and succeeded in the past - and a host of unconscious beliefs that create attractions and aversions. In this melange of unconscious desires and fears are attitudes towards women, and towards people of colour, that are brought into their "rational" decision making. Music industry staff and executives are influenced as much as the rest of the population by the racialised and stereotypical imagery that the music industry itself produces, alongside other and closely related entertainment and news media.

Artist E continued:

> "I remember hearing that and thinking to myself, I didn't realise how simplistic it is.
> But he's right, because that's how the industry is set up. The people that run these
> labels are generally white, they don't want posters of a black guy on their daugh-
> ters room. So if they can get a face that they are more comfortable with, they'd
> much prefer that. They wouldn't call themselves racist, they are just focused on
> money. The racism is so intrinsic that they are oblivious to it. They are not trying to
> change it, they are just trying to work with it as it is"

The structure of the music industry is based on internal assumptions about the market,
which are legitimised or evidenced through the limited success of previous black artists,
without ever addressing the discriminatory practices within the industry that have severely
restricted the success of these artists in the past. The marketability argument that there is
a limited audience for black artists becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy since less money and
time is then invested into them.

The structure of the music industry assumes that limited spaces are suitable for not only
black artists but also for professionals within the music industry. As an industry categorised
by high pressure, high risk and high failure rates, with employment rates of ethnic minori-
ties decreasing in the industry, the pressure to conform to the status quo is becoming
greater. Music PR H explained the impact this has:

> "people make it then they shut the door behind them, and it's all due to this whole
> 'house slave' mentality, where the whole industry is so racist that when one black

person does get through.. they are so scared to lose their positions that they shut the door behind them"

Black individuals are thus under further pressure to subscribe to the industry norms that are structurally racist. PR H shared their experience:

"When it came to searching for publications, I admit when I used to go on the websites I used to check if they're urban or not, I would check what artists they were promoting to see if they are urban or not in order to decide to stay away from this because they don't want their artists on this thing. All urban platforms are literally a no-no, even though this artist liked those publications and listened to grime etc."

The marginalisation of black publications and platforms is thus mirrored in the marginalisation of both black individuals within the industry, and black artists. Black professionals are branded as urban and restricted by the racialised category, as Music PR H illustrates:

"When I was working with major labels I was scared for them to know I was black… because from the moment they know you are black they start to associate you with the word 'urban'. So now all of a sudden they don't want you to plug their artist to urban publications. They said we're too 'urban' for the project. By urban you know they mean black. From when a major label actually said we are too 'urban' for their project, you feel the extra pressure to be extra professional and make sure that all the publications you're reaching out to are considered 'urban' just to stay on the labels good side".

The Burden of Urban -

The Glass Ceiling

Similarly, while white artists and brands can wear 'Urban' like an accessory, the label 'Urban' restricts black artists by attaching itself to them, regardless of what genre of music they make. This has a number of functions. Firstly, the relationship between mainstream and Urban is hierarchical, reflecting the symbolic and material associations they have to different socio-economic groups. This means that when black artists do manage to break into the mainstream, they are still contained by the inferior 'Urban' category - thus creating a glass ceiling, and reinforcing white hegemony in the mainstream. Producer C notes how a popular black singer/producer, despite making pop music, was limited by the racialised category 'Urban':

> *"Even though he was making their type of music, they boxed him off by calling him The KING of Urban. He's not an international selling artist, he's the king of Urban, which only has a certain ceiling. This is how urban works, anyone can be urban. But let's make a black Take That and see if it happens. Let's put four black guys together, singing Take That songs - no black in it, let's see if gets signed. We can't go and do what they do."*

Singer and popstar Taio Cruz highlighted a similar experience:

> *"I actually don't like being put into that urban category simply for the fact that in the UK, they usually find it as an excuse not to play your records."* (Egere-Cooper, 2008)

Because of institutional racism in the popular music industry that is designed around white rock groups, black artists are incorporated only when they are seen as becoming or being part of a "trend" - the associated expectation being that they only reflect a temporary popularity. As Negus writes, 'staff view artists that can be accommodated to the naturalistic organic conventions of the rock tradition as long term career acts, and pop, soul and dance acts as short term, fashion dependent artists' (Negus, 1992:60). The consequences of this is illustrated in Producer C's description:

> "They are giving artists mean-time money, not build a legacy money. They are still going to keep your life in that position, for their gain. It's a high-class job, we ain't got no stars. We've got guys working for the man."

Once a black artist breaks through and becomes commercial, and their style is proven to be popular and profitable, the popular music industry separates the music from its roots both ideologically and materially. It incorporates the music and profits from it by signing new artists who are seen as similar, and attempting to fit them into this template.

The current biggest black pop stars are clearly still seen as high risk and are restricted by these racial assessments, despite having previous albums that far exceeded the expectations of their labels. Producer C explains:

> "They've made albums, that the fans would love, but the labels keep saying they don't like it.. The label changes what they want based on what is a hit right now. They've made all this music that they love but every time the label says they don't like it and wont put it out, so they make more and the same happens again."

Producer C puts this down to control and a desire to get rid of Urban, highlighting the marginal and temporary nature of the Urban category:

> *"down to last year the whole industry was going around saying 'urban's dead, urban's dead'. I am like, how? How did it die? The industry doesn't want Urban any more, they want to settle it back to what it already was"*

The Burden of Urban -
The Weight of Fantasies and Mythologies

Secondly, the equation of Urban and Black means that stereotyped images of black criminality is attached to the category Urban. Talking about his experience at a major label, Artist F said:

> *"Look what gets promoted and look what gets ignored from black males. Look what they put money into. The things that get promoted over [my album], are pretty different from [my album] - which I would say is journalistic and socially relevant. I don't know what is socially relevant about most of the output from black males on mainstream radio. It is - I would say - 70% of the time, based on taking another mans woman. If I had that whole production but instead the lyrics were about taking hard drugs, or just drugs, I think they would have dug it. If every single poem was about a heroin trip or a night of pilling, they would have said 'we've got it mate, we're on the money'".*

Artist I discusses his experience with the discriminatory 696 form previously mentioned, putting it down to the association between black artists and criminality that is perpetuated in order to justify the tight regulatory control over black cultural forms:

> *"It's harassment, it's straight up harassment. I've had to turn down shows because I don't want to be harassed. Like I have to sit down with police, to talk about what? So they can tell me what I can and can't say. It's mad."*

He explains:

> *"In England music has no political power, they refuse to let "urban" or what we know as black music / street music / lower class music to have any political power whatsoever. And any time that it does, it's rapidly shut down because of the places that they say it comes from. Of course it's going to get shut down. You're going to find drugs and violent crimes if you look through these rappers socially deprived backgrounds because that's what happens in socially deprived spaces. So it's so easy to shut it down. Because of where they're from, the anomalies that come through are so quickly shut down."*

Thus, the active persecution of black men and women by the criminal justice system is justified through the confluence of black criminality and Urban as a musical category. Further, the post-racial imagery of 'Urban' acts to hide and disguise the unequal social conditions experienced by marginalised groups, making criminality seem like a voluntary, egotistical and materialistic criminal identity rather than the product of social deprivation.

Legal Representation and The Unfair Fight

Further to this, the socio economic positioning of many black artists makes them more vulnerable to exploitation. Producer C illustrates:

> *"Contracts seem appealing when it comes with a £100,000 advance and you have never seen £100,000, even if your brand is worth £1million. Then once they sign, its at the labels discretion, they can now tell you what music they want you to make even if thats not the music they signed you doing. If the artist doesn't have a lawyer then in most cases the label will provide you one. A bit creepy. Conflict of interest maybe?"*

Producer C had a publishing contract that he was able to arrange with a very good lawyer. He said:

> *"We had to alter my contract - changing CD sales to downloads because of iTunes. We aren't going to do albums either, because most people are making EP's now. So if you put down album in the contract, again, I'm not going to fulfil because an EP doesn't count, you can only fulfil an album. Do you know what the label said to us once we made those changes? They put a clause IN the contract saying that this contract couldn't be shown to anyone"*

He continued:

> *"There was a case when an artist wrote a whole song and was only given 5%. We're not talking about Motown days, we're talking about now. People get bullied. Publishers are still signing black kids and then not paying their royalties. But what*

are they going to do? Take them to court? This is how the war is, they're like 'I've got bigger lawyers than you so I don't care if I've raped you, take me to court, I'll just dun out your pocket'. It's not a game, its real stuff. There are so many instances when we should have more, that we're not getting."

This lasting history of black exploitation is further concealed and rendered unimaginable by the post-racial image of the music industry that the rise of Urban contributes to.

Black Roots, Urban Fruits

The category 'Urban' separates the music from its roots in black culture, while simultaneously binding itself to all black artists. I asked Artist I what he thought about the term 'Urban', and he summed it up with humour:

"Well as an urban man with urban coloured skin, obviously I'm very happy that i'm being so explicitly represented within the media right now. The urban struggle has been a long one and there's been many urban heroes before us who have given up their time and their lives so that we could be stood on this stage having urban music played around the world, so thank you for accepting Urban within the country, because without you, England wouldn't even know what urban is. They'd be calling me something offensive like 'black'"

The detachment of politically-neutral 'Urban' from its roots in black cultural creation, allows it to be subsumed as part of a cosmopolitan, multicultural "youth culture" that supports and maintains a post-racial and colour-blind image of Britain. This image then makes claims of racism harder to make. As Music PR H remarked:

"It's just another word for black isn't it. Its just a polite way of saying black. But we all know what it means. Its just another way of them saying like 'oh no its not about race'"

Thus, claims of racism when white people dominate within the Urban category are seen as baseless and even 'racist', while the post-racial, colour-blind image of the industry and the country is maintained by giving a white face to appropriated black musical forms.

'Urban' music is not an explicitly racial category - 'Urban' music and culture are available to artists of any race. But since white artists are seen as more marketable, white artists making urban music are promoted over black artists making urban music - despite the fact that 'Urban' explicitly replaced previous 'race' categories. As Artist E expressed:

"when you look at the artists that are making black music (white artists).. they seem to have such a machine and such a push behind them. The platforms that they seem to just get to walk into, black artists have to work haaarrrddddd for"

Producer C illustrates this further:

"If it was two white boys that did what [two black pop stars] did, it would be a whole other game. It would have been a go-er from the jump. What it is is the expectation of the black man. In their mind, we've always been the leaders in music.. so they expect more from us, but they expect us to take less. With the white kids, they can do what they're doing and it will be accepted, immediately, no questions asked, we're running with it. And they will get signed for more. For instance. [a white rapper] is not an artist on [the black popstar's] level.. he's just a Grime MC. He doesn't

produce, he just spits Grime bars. [the black popstar] produces, all different genres,

he sings, raps, performance God. They got signed for the same amount of money.

[the black popstar] got signed as a producer, artist AND a label - so he should have

got much more out of the deal"

The Intersection of Race and Gender

Higher expectations from black artists is a discriminatory practice, justified by the argument of marketability. Singer-songwriter B explains:

"you have someone like Adele who can do all these songs and can sing and I've

got nothing against that, but a black girl doing something similar.. it's like she has to

be rapping, she has to be doing something else, she cant just be singing. For her

to just sing a song is not enough now, she has to take her clothes off and she has

to do anaconda videos…"

She continued:

"It's difficult, even more so for black women I think, because for black men you can

still be cool and own it but for women its like, well, how do we get in if everyone's

saying that you're not as beautiful as this person… and for women its so much

about image already"

The racialised tropes of black female sexuality that I addressed in my literature review is evidenced in the contemporary British context by singer-songwriter J:

"For women in general, sex sells, women are marketed as objects, and I've been made to feel like if I don't sexualise myself that no one will notice me. I feel like in particular for black women we are really sexualised"

My research found three shockingly similar stories of discrimination against black women from within major labels, I will illustrate one to show how these unwritten rules operate in practice. Singer-songwriter A took a demo to some A&Rs which had a black female vocalist on it.

"When the label heard the track, they loved the voice and were excited to find out who she was. After a few questions they asked 'Where's she from?' and once they found out she was a black girl, there was no conversation about artistry or anything, they were kind of like 'oh she's black, there's not much we can do with her'"

K Michelle (2016), a US artist signed internationally to Atlantic, said in an interview that she visited the label's UK offices, having the perception that it's better there for black women. One of the top execs said to her:

"the black woman is one of the most unwanted signings [..], it just doesn't even really happen here"

Estelle had to move to America to build her career, and returned with four weeks in the charts, indicating that it is not that black artists are not marketable, but rather that the British music industry, for whatever reason, does not want to market them.

The Myth of Marketability

Many artists are undermining the myth of marketability - rappers Little Simz and Stormzy are good contemporary examples of British artists who have managed to build successful careers without needing the support of the industry.

As Akala points out:

"we already have a diverse music buying/supporting public. We're so focused on the industry, we don't realise the public ain't watching these people to the same degree. Look at how many great conscious outspoken black artists there are who have had successful careers for 20-40 years, who do you think is supporting them? It ain't just black people. Music fans don't necessarily reflect the biases of the industry, many of them can see the biases of the industry"

CONCLUSION

The commercialised 'Urban' has taken over previously explicitly black platforms such as Radio 1Xtra and Choice FM. This mainstream idea of Urban is dominated by white acts, American acts and dance music that has no political or cultural relevance to the communities for whom these stations were designed to serve. As one of my interviewees who was closely involved in the creation of 1Xtra revealed to me:

> *"1Xtra was started because the BBC did a survey about young black audiences, and the only connection that they had to the BBC was Eastenders. The BBC said: 'if we don't make something for them, in 10 years time, they're not going to want to play the license fee'"* (Radio Producer - G).

The removal of so-called 'specialist programming' of black musical forms such as R'n'B and Soul that has occurred since the term Urban took over, represents the cultural annexation of black networks, platforms and cultural spaces that has been taking place for decades. While the largest outlets for marketing black Soul and R'n'B are steadily decreasing, and white artists making Soul influenced pop music are Britain's most profitable cultural exports, it is no wonder the argument of marketability is so staunchly defended.

Commercial Urban platforms represent a 'cool', post-racial, multicultural Urban identity, while the less commercial platforms dedicated to Urban music tend to be more Grime-centred. This leaves a void in which black musical production outside of music deemed 'Urban' (i.e 'white'/Dance music or Rap) falls. Unless - in some cases even if - an artist in this category manages to create a significant buzz, they will find themselves ignored by the in-

dustry, with no major platforms to market them. The issue of "low marketability" of black artists that the music industry preaches as gospel can therefore be traced back to the structure of the music industry itself.

The term Urban morphs according to who it is being applied to. White artists and corporations capitalise on Urban aesthetics, without paying respect or proper dividends to the culture and people who are exploited and give this image its authenticity. The music of black origin that is performed by white acts becomes mainstream, and is seen as 'pop', and therefore white; it not attributed to the marginalised and hierarchically inferior category 'Urban'. Urban is thus an accessory that can be worn by white artists when it is seen as beneficial. Conversely, Urban's conflation with Grime reinforces stereotypes of black criminality. This image - and its consequences - is attached to black artists indiscriminately, regardless of what genre of music they make. This acts to justify the removal and surveillance of black cultural spaces and related black cultural production.

The marginalisation of black artists that occurs through the circular argument of marketability is predicated on the fictional separation of black and white audiences. Structural racism in the music industry requires that black artists conform to gendered and racialised stereotypes that are seen as marketable in order to "make it". The racialisation of music that 'Urban' is a part of thus justifies its marginal space and the discriminatory and exploitative practices that maintain it.

In this paper I have argued that black cultural production is highly regulated by the British music industry. This marginal space and the discriminatory and exploitative practices that maintain it are justified by both the racialisation of music that 'Urban' represents, and the argument of marketability.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Quoted in findings:

Singer-songwriter - A

Singer-songwriter - B

Singer-songwriter - J

Producer - C

Artist - D

Artist - E

Artist - F

Artist - I

Radio Producer - G

Music PR - H

Not quoted in findings:

Events Coordinator

Radio Presenter and DJ at BBC Asian Network

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF SECONDARY DATA SOURCES

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APPENDIX 3

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1) Intro - Role in/relationship to the music industry:

How would you describe what it is that you do?

When did you first enter into the music industry?

Have you ever seen or experienced any issues around race?

Have things changed since you entered the industry?

2) Cultural Disenfranchisement

Sajid Javid, culture secretary has said that the arts world needs to do more to stop poor and people from black and ethnic minority communities being "culturally disenfranchised" not engaging with arts, or involved in arts and culture, despite their taxes paying for them. 14% of population is non-white, BME applicants only awarded 5.5% of the Grants for the Arts awards last year.

• **Black/cultural spaces - MOBOs, 1xtra**

• **Economic ownership**

• **Glass ceiling**

• **Major Label influence**

• **Radio influence**

3) Race, Image and "marketability"

• **"Urban"**

• **The white face of Soul music / 'Elvis Syndrome'**

• **Appropriation of cultural products**
"Gilroy's and Charles Shaar Murray's argument that 'the central thrust of twentieth century American popular music [is] the need to separate black music (which, by and large, white Americans love) from black people (who, by and large, they don't)".

• **Black performativity**

4) America VS UK

What influence do you feel that the US music industry has on the UK?
Have you noticed any differences/similarities between the US and the UK music industries, particularly in regards to race?

5) Gendered experiences

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