

# Suspect Communities: Policing, Race and Black Britons

THE LEGACY OF PROHIBITION: COMMUNITIES, JUSTICE,  
AND THE WAR ON DRUGS

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Dr Bisi Akintoye  
University of Roehampton

A photograph of a group of people in a field, possibly a sports field, with a green overlay. The text "WHAT'S THE STORY?" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center. A thin white horizontal line is positioned below the text. The background shows several people, some wearing white shirts and dark vests, and others in casual clothing. There are water bottles and other items on the ground. The overall tone is green, suggesting a connection to nature or sports.

# WHAT'S THE STORY?

# DATA ANALYSIS

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SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS





# "SUSPECT COMMUNITIES"

*"Bordertown has always been at the forefront of these battles"* **Ruff Diamond, 63, Black British Female**

*"They do the same thing there they do in every Black area"* **Bev, 65, Black British Female**

*"Back then, we used to get thrown in the meatwagon every time we left the house, and there would be groups of us, and anything could happen once you were in it"* **Moses, 66, Black British Male 66**

*"Half the time when you're out and about and they stop you, you just want to go back to your yard [home], 'cos you know they'll just keep stopping you. So, you may as well just stay at home, cos then they can't get you"* **Kyra, 14, Black British Female**

# DRUG POLICING, IDENTITY, BELONGING

- *"You just feel like the police don't trust you, don't like you and of course you know why... 'cause you're black or maybe because of what you're wearing or whatever. It makes you not trust them either. Why would I trust them? I know what they're thinking. I wouldn't even bother making a complaint, because I know it wouldn't do anything"* **Jamal, 35, London.**
- *"It's their way of reminding you that you don't have anything. Like, it doesn't matter what you do, how hard you work, how much money you earn...at the end of the day, you're still just a black man"* **Lekan 35, London**
- *"People were invited to this country. During Windrush, they couldn't rent a place. They'd rather rent the place to a dog than a human being in those days. They were asked to come here and do a job. That's why you see them in the NHS, or driving a bus or working on the underground because they needed all those key workers. And of course, they had families. The way Windrush people were treated, some that have lived in this country for over 50 years...they are now deporting them back to West Indies. How do you want those people to feel? That's why you have Black people thinking there's no sense of belonging in this country. Some are moving out"* **Tayo, 65, Nigerian Male.**

# KEY THEMES

- Drug policing the intersection of the state and racialised, criminalised communities: drug policing and drug legislation embody state social control and regulation of criminalised other
- Intergenerational experience of racialised drug policing: historical and contemporary over-policing and under-protecting of Black British communities
- “Criminalisation is the fulcrum of racialised social exclusion; it is where the metaphor of social exclusion is transformed into an explicit, formal social practice and into the personal experience of being literally excluded from society through imprisonment and all that flows from that” (Williams & Phillips, 2002)
- Negative impact on trust and confidence in the police, cooperation and reporting
- Competing narratives: no monolithic experience, mediated by factors such as age, gender, class status and immigration histories

THANKS FOR LISTENING

BISI.AKINTOYE@ROEHAMPTON.AC.UK