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**Exploring 'mixed-race' identities in Scotland through a
familial lens**

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract

This thesis takes ‘mixed-race’ individuals and parents of ‘mixed-race’ children in Scotland as its subject, exploring the meanings and significance of ‘mixed-race’ and the process by which ‘mixed-race’ identities are constructed. Contributing to the burgeoning ‘mixed-race’ scholarship in Britain, and more broadly to the intersection of the sociology of ‘race’ and the sociology of family relationships literature, this thesis presents a qualitative analysis of ‘mixed-race’ identities by exploring how mixed individuals view themselves through interactions with others. Informed by a theoretical approach combining interactionist and intersectional perspectives, this thesis stresses the role of everyday interactions with family members in shaping one’s views of the self, but it also pays attention to the ways in which meanings associated with ‘mixed-race’ are conditioned by and produced in the wider social context.

Based upon thirty-one in-depth interviews with ‘mixed-race’ individuals and parents of mixed children conducted over a 24-month period, this thesis qualitatively examines interviewees’ experiences and interpretations of ‘mixed-race’ by locating them within the wider socio-cultural context. Focusing on personal and family experiences of being ‘mixed race’ or being associated with mixedness, this thesis pays particular attention to family dynamics, seeking to explore the ways in which family practices influence children’s attitudes towards mixed heritages. In so doing, empirical data is analysed and presented in a ‘thick description’ fashion. Illustrative cases are employed to draw out and exemplify the complex processes of negotiating and constructing meanings of ‘mixed-race’. Contending that the relative centrality of mixedness varies between individuals, the analysis shows that ‘mixed-race’ identities are embedded in various forms of social relations and conditioned by structural constraints. Due to the uneven access to symbolic and material resources, mixed individuals have different capacities to mobilise collective meanings ascribed to ethnicities in order to negotiate racialised differences. Within this process, ‘mixed-race’ families play a pertinent role in providing their children with access to knowledge about their mixed heritage. Furthermore, parents have an impact on children’s early attitudes towards their ethnic heritages by either reinterpreting or reproducing racial ideologies. Once again, parents’ priorities, strategies and specific plans to communicate the idea of ‘mixed-race’ are structured by their racialised, classed and gendered positions.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

Printed name: Mengxi Pang

Chapter 1 Introduction

In the early 2000s, my mother started working for a Danish FDI (foreign direct investment) company in China. The senior management team of this company were solely made up of Danes who were sent directly from head office. Mostly male and single, these Danes were in China for only a few years as part of a process of job rotation. When they returned to Denmark, most of them were no longer single: often accompanied by their Chinese wives, some of them even had ‘mixed-race’ children. These Chinese-Danish families and their ‘blond Chinese’ babies frequently became topics of private conversations among Chinese staff. Gossip quickly spread about how the local girls had ‘strategically’ become Danish wives, and how ‘cute and beautiful’ the mixed babies were. People’s interests in these international families never seemed to cease. As the young Danes continued to arrive, so did the stories about Chinese brides marrying Danish grooms.

I left home to study in the UK in 2010. During this stay, I met a few people of half-Chinese heritage and had the chance for some brief chats. Unlike the strange obsession with mixedness I witnessed back home, these mixed individuals did not seem too enthusiastic about their mixed heritage, nor were they aware of the fascination in the Far East attached to ‘mixed-race’ people and their families. In fact, one of them told me that she did not like to be called ‘Chinese’ as she could not relate to it. Amazed by the different receptions of mixedness back home and over here in the UK, I became curious about why mixedness should be desirable in one place yet not in the other. I was also intrigued by a list of questions surrounding the meanings attached to the idea of ‘mixed-race’. Why do mixed families, as a charged site for public and private imaginations, continue to occupy a special space in society? Why do people from different societies hold different opinions about mixed-race people and their families? After all, if children and marriages are common practice in modern societies, why do people raise their eyebrows when ‘race’ comes into play?

The controversies surrounding mixedness explain my early motivations to study ‘mixed-race’ experiences¹. These romanticised, fantasised and often sexualised imaginations of mixed relationships invoke important questions about how people live with ‘race’ in their everyday lives, how they experience and negotiate differences and similarities, and how

¹ A detailed discussion on the use of inverted commas and the broader terminology choice made by this thesis can be found at the end of this chapter (p.21-22) and Part 2 of Chapter 3.

they understand inclusion, exclusion and power in ordinary settings. Driven by these curiosities, I embarked on a PhD journey to explore how ‘mixed-race’ is experienced by individuals and their family members. I wanted to know what being mixed meant to them and how they arrived at these conclusions. More specifically, I wanted to find out how ‘mixed-race’ families conceptualise and communicate ‘race’.

These early curiosities led to the production of this thesis. This thesis sets out to present an exploratory account of what it is like to be a mixed person or a parent of mixed children in Scotland, and how these experiences influence their understanding of the concept of ‘mixed-race’. The study seeks to explore the meanings, significance and interpretations of mixedness by interconnecting and expanding upon existing knowledge of ‘race’, identity and family relationships. As meanings of mixedness are often informed by a range of factors, including historical trajectories, official categorisations, shifting political landscapes, and public discourses around ‘race’, interpretations of mixedness are often reflective of the process of making sense of social meanings arising from these variables. In this sense, this study of ‘mixed-race’ identities attends to both the macro-level context, in terms of social relations and racial landscapes, and the micro-site of everyday life, where individuals negotiate and articulate their sense of self. In so doing, this study seeks to delineate the dynamics involved in constructing ‘mixed-race’ identities.

1. Setting the scene: defining the topic

‘Mixed-race’ populations are not new. The perpetuated public fantasy of ‘mixed-race’ couples and their children demonstrates a “covert but insistent obsession with transgression, interracial sex, hybridity and miscegenation” (Young, 1994: xii) . The controversies around the idea of ‘mixed-race’ not only continue to reinforce the idea of concrete, fixed racial groups, they are also reflective of ever-changing racial ideologies. One way to understand mixedness is to situate the notion of the historical development of ‘race’. Long documented as a means of social control, ‘race’ has been employed to divide human populations in order to ensure control over resources and labour in colonial expansion (Solomos and Back, 1996; Fredrickson, 2002). With the advancement of modern science, an emerging scientific discourse of ‘race’, in response to the rise of social Darwinism and eugenics, sustained the idea of racial hierarchies serving to theorise ‘race’ from a biological perspective. These pseudo-scientific discourses were structured on the

basis of inherent biological variances, promoting a fixed distinction between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ races (for typical arguments see work by Robert Knox, 1862).

The idea of concrete ‘races’ based on physiognomic differences has profound implications for the ways in which ‘mixed-race’ is perceived by the wider public. The development of modern thought around mixedness is underpinned by an opposition to and fear of racial mixture (Furedi, 2001). An examination of early images of ‘mixed-race’ people has shown that mixed populations have often emerged from ‘imperial sexual conquest and enslavement’ (Parker and Song, 2001: 13) within the greater context of colonialism and imperialism. In this context, the mixing of different ‘races’ signalled a threat of contamination to the coloniser’s ‘race’, provoking anxieties and resentments regarding the breaching of racial purity (Brah and Coombes, 2005). As a result, mixed populations were framed as biologically deficient and culturally unfit, with an assumed pathological identity inherent to their mixed bodies (Ifekwunigwe, 2004; Gunaratnam, 2014). In discussing the reason for this, Yuval-Davis et al. (1989) argue that the pathologisation of mixedness reflects a priority to ‘manage’ the colonised subjects in order to facilitate the exploitation of their cheap labour and the accumulation of capital for colonial expansion. Even to this day, the colonial legacy continues to influence public perceptions of ‘mixed-race’. Furedi (2001) points out that the stigmatisation of mixedness nowadays is driven by a fear over racial dilutions and a loss of white privilege. He adds that the increase in interracial intimacies will disrupt the social order established by the existing racial hierarchy. Taking all arguments into consideration, the concerns over the rise of ‘mixed-race’ populations are rooted in a desire to maintain existing social, cultural and racial boundaries and power relations.

More recently, there has been a noticeable shift in the popular imagination of mixedness. ‘Mixed-race’ populations have been described in a celebratory but also often problematic tone that uncritically praised a ‘hybrid’ identity (Ifekwunigwe, 2004). The glorification of mixedness is based on a celebration of the very existence of mixed people, portraying them as the embodiment of transgressive power and boundary crossing (Parker and Song, 2001). Perhaps more problematically, this interpretation of mixedness has often indicated a sense of contemporary progressiveness that ignored the unequal power relations and complex racial hierarchies within the ‘mixing’ of intimate relationships (Brah and Coombes, 2005). Situated in the broader discursive context, this simplified reading of mixedness is often

coupled with post-racial discourses that celebrate convivial colour-blindness². Nonetheless, in recognising the mobility, uncertainty and multiplicity of border crossings, discussions surrounding the hybrid identity may help open up new possibilities for considering how evolving meanings of ‘race’ and ethnicity could be employed by individuals to create a ‘third space’ that disavows a singular, fixed notion of race but embraces instead a more fluid interpretation of identity (Bhabha, 2012; Hall, 1996a; Grossberg, 1996).

Parker and Song (2001) accurately point out that the topic of ‘mixed-race’ can bring out “the worst in people” (p.1). The above discussions have explored the ever-changing connotations of mixedness, outlining the evolving meanings attached to mixedness: as an embodiment of maladjustment, a hybrid entity, and as a post-racial signifier. In the next chapter, I will situate the current study in a wider body of ‘mixed-race’ literature conducted in Britain, highlighting how this thesis will expand our understanding of the ‘mixed-race’ phenomenon but also address a knowledge gap.

2. The research setting: foregrounding the Scottish context

When I started exploring literature on ‘mixed-race’, it struck me how little was known about the ‘mixed-race’ population in Scotland. Compared with England, particularly southern England and the Greater London area where most existing studies were conducted, Scotland remained a lesser-known site for the sociological investigation of ‘mixed-race’ experiences. In view of the lack of a concerted effort to address the ‘mixed-race’ experiences in Scotland, recognising the importance of the Scottish context not only acknowledges the ever-changing sociodemographic patterns in Scotland but also helps us to obtain a more comprehensive picture about the different experiences of being ‘mixed-race’ in different nations within the British Isles.

Aiming to address the gap in the current knowledge, this study seeks to explore the significance of ‘race’ and ‘mixed-race’ for individuals growing up in Scotland, which cannot be understood in isolation from the context in which these meanings are generated. In this section, I will take a closer look at the context of this study and consider three contextual elements: official terminologies of ‘mixed-race’, Scottishness and Scottish

² A comprehensive discussion of the implications of post-racial discourses will be presented in Chapter 3.

identity, and the socio-political context of Scotland. The three factors are considered pertinent to the research context and they influence the data generated from the fieldwork.

In Scotland, the ‘mixed-race’ category was officially introduced to the Scottish Census in 2001. The ‘Mixed’ category that was contained in the original version was revised with the new heading ‘Mixed or multiple ethnic groups’ in the recent 2011 version (The Scottish Government, 2008). Compared to the 2011 Census questionnaire by the Office of National Statistics (ONS henceforth), which collected data about the English and Welsh populations and required individuals to choose between multiple options for ‘racial identity’, the 2011 Scottish census asked respondents to describe their type of mixedness in an open-ended format (i.e. fill in the blank space). The evolving terminologies and the ways in which the question is asked are possible indicators of the ever-changing demographic patterns and the growing ethnic dynamics of the Scottish context. The fact that the public authority has the analytical capacity to accommodate data generated in these free-text fields may reflect the fact that in Scotland the size of the mixed population remains relatively low³ (The Scottish Government, 2011). Despite its small overall size, the mixed population is projected to be one of the fastest growing groups in Scotland and expected to increase by 181% between 2001 and 2051 (Rees, 2015). As Omi and Winant (2004) note, the state plays a key role in the construction and labelling of ethnic and racial categories. In fact, the official classification system reflects and shapes everyday discussions of ‘race’ (Morning, 2012). Therefore, the discussions of the current classification scheme operated by the Scottish government might imply two things: first, due to the relatively small population, official understandings and recognition of this group remain limited. On the other hand, the open-field shown in the official questionnaire indicates an intention to capture the ‘hybridity’ of this population as opposed to labelling the group with fixed options.

However, the meaning of ‘Scottishness’ requires further unpacking. Due to the devolved political system, Scottishness has a dominant position in the national narratives and it represents a tendency to impose a Scottish identity over a British one (McCrone, 2002a; Bond, 2006). Based on a recent analysis of 2011 Census data, an overwhelming proportion of Scotland’s residents (83%) feel Scottish (CoDE, 2014). Markers of Scottishness include, but are not limited to, birth, ancestry and residence (Kiely et al., 2001), although accent has also been recognised as a key sign of Scottishness, representing an attribute that reflects a

³ The 2011 Scottish census reveals that the number of population who self-identify as ‘multi- or mixed ethnicity’ was 19815 comprising 0.3% of total population, which is far less than the 1.2 million mixed population in England and Wales which accounts for 2.2% of the whole population of the two nations.

syncretised identity expressed by ethnic minorities (Virdee et al., 2006). With regard to the relationship between Scottishness and ‘race’, while Scotland is a predominately ‘white’ nation where the vast majority (84%) of residents self-identify as ‘White Scottish’ and a further 12% of residents identify as ‘White’ (CoDE, 2014), ‘race’ and ethnicity are considered by some to be less prominent factors in defining Scottishness compared to the way Englishness is defined (Hopkins, 2001; Kiely et al., 2005). As the census data illustrates, being born in Scotland makes people feel Scottish, and almost all minority groups are more likely to identify with Scottishness in Scotland than with an English identity in England (CoDE, 2014). It is possible that, as Kiely et al. (2001) suggest, the construction and mobilisation of ethnic identities in Scotland is likely to take a different form “given distinctive cultural and political conditions which pertain in Scotland” (p.171).

Despite the noticeable absence of contemporary racialised politics (Miles and Dunlop, 1987) and the prevalence of national narratives that Scotland is civic and inclusive (Hepburn and Rosie, 2014), there is no evidence suggesting that Scotland is free from racism and the circulation of racist discourses. Neither does this climate mean that every claim to a Scottish identity is acknowledged in the same way. Drawing on a mixed-method study combining survey questionnaires and qualitative interviews, McCrone and Bechhofer (2008) contend that it is harder for non-white individuals to claim a Scottish identity than white individuals since ‘race’ remains a barrier to social inclusion. Therefore, recognising the construction of Scottishness as a political project calls for a distinction between the public narrative of national identity and the private experiences of ‘race’ (Meer, 2015; Mycock, 2012). The dynamics surrounding Scottishness imply an open category that is historically contingent and contested. As the forthcoming analysis is to show, the mutually implicated categories of ‘race’ and Scottishness are interpreted in different fashions, serving to justify an individual’s claims to membership.

Finally, the socio-political context of Scotland is pertinent in the present analysis. This study was conducted over a period of political change⁴. The beginning of my fieldwork was marked by the height and immediate aftermath of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, whereas my analysis took place during the 2015 UK General Election and the Referendum on the UK’s EU membership that followed in June 2016. Scotland’s decisions on these major political events (and its inner divisions, most remarkably evident in

⁴ The context of fieldwork is to be discussed in more detail in the Methodology Chapter and four empirical data chapters.

Glasgow and Edinburgh), alongside the political campaigns surrounding these issues, not only led to wide public discussions in the media and public sphere but also sparked individual reflections on the difference between a national identity (Scottish) and a state identity (British). As social, moral and political attitudes are increasingly taken as evidence of what it means to be Scottish, individuals' reflections on these political events inevitably shed light on the construction of their identities as 'Scots'.

3. Aims of the thesis and the research questions

Departing from existing 'mixed-race' identity studies, this thesis aims to present a sociological investigation of the formation of 'mixed-race' identities, considering the ways in which meanings of mixedness are generated from social interactions, particularly from family practices. The present thesis intends to achieve four specific goals: first, it aspires to achieve a grounded understanding of 'mixed-race' experiences in Scotland by exploring the significance and meanings attached to mixed heritage from the perspective of mixed individuals and parents of mixed children. Second, this thesis seeks to delineate the ways in which meanings of mixedness are generated and consequently expressed as identities. Revolving around the concept of ethnic options, which originates in the American context describing identity options of second-generation European immigrants (Waters, 1990) but more generally refers to choices about one's ethnic memberships and racial allegiance (Song and Aspinall, 2013), this thesis seeks to expand on existing knowledge of this concept to consider the roles of agency and structural constraints in shaping one's ability to exercise ethnic identifications. In achieving this, this study employs an intersectional lens to examine how multiple axes of differences - 'race', gender and class in particular - lead to disparate experiences and interpretations of mixedness. Closely related to the second aim, the third aim of this thesis is to probe the role of the family in shaping children's understandings of 'race' and mixedness. Notably, the notion of racial literacy, defined as the everyday practices that allow parents to explain 'race' and racism (Twine and Steinbugler, 2006), is scrutinised under the familial context to explain mixed individuals' varying capabilities to mobilise language of 'race' so as to articulate desired ethnic options. The second and third aims collectively point to the centrality of the concept of ethnic options. Finally, this thesis critically evaluates the potential of 'mixed-race' to contest operating racial ideologies and to defy the racial hierarchy.

In this vein, the overarching aim of this thesis is to present a theoretically informed and empirically grounded account of the lived experiences of mixed individuals and parents of mixed children. The thesis seeks to explore the ways in which the idea of ‘mixed-race’ is understood by mixed individuals and parents of mixed children. Specifically, the thesis sets out to address three main questions:

- In what ways do ‘mixed-race’ individuals generate and utilise understandings of their mixed heritages to identify themselves?
- How do parents of mixed children weave understandings of ‘race’ and ‘mixed-race’ into their everyday parenting practices?
- To what extent do both parties share a common approach and understanding of ‘mixed-race’?

The three questions place emphasis on the meanings and significance attributed to the notion of mixedness, and they draw attention to the process by which identities are being ‘done’ within a network of relationships. The thesis employs four empirical data chapters to answer these questions. Chapters 5 and 6 will jointly tackle the first question, while Chapters 7 and 8 will address the second and third questions respectively. The four chapters, although presenting different aspects of ‘mixed-race’ experiences, are mutually constitutive and interdependent.

4. Key arguments of this thesis

Primarily concerned with the identities of ‘mixed-race’ individuals in Scotland, the investigative focus of this thesis is on the process by which mixed people make sense of who they are and how these interpretations could be understood in relation to family relationships. The thesis approaches the identity enquiry in terms of its sociality, by revealing the process by which identities are forged and conditioned by one’s social location and access to resources. Central to this process is a theoretical framework that attends to the negotiation of ‘mixed-race’ identities as illustrated by expressions of ethnic options. This thesis contends that ethnic options are not simply imposed but are often articulated by mixed interviewees as agentic choices. Constituting the main contents of ethnic options, racial literacy is understood through the intersectional lens in the current context, which acknowledges a grid of power relations where individuals are located but also recognises varying abilities to make sense of categories of signification (Anthias, 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2006). On the one hand, parents’ social locations – particularly in

terms of social class and gender - have a profound impact on the strategies and motivations to conduct the 'race talk'; on the other hand, mixed individuals' ability to make sense of their heritage is often influenced by their own experiences and positionalities, hence leading to disparate interpretations of 'race'. In examining the personal, ambivalent and complex messages that usually characterise the 'personal' dimension of the self, this study contends that 'private' accounts of being 'mixed race' or being associated with mixedness are intricately embedded in the social.

This thesis makes the following arguments. First, 'mixed-race' identities are constructed by meanings arising from social interactions with significant others, which allow mixed individuals to develop a set of self-knowledge such as norms, routines and meanings associated with collective identity categories. The knowledge acquired over the course of one's life plays a crucial role in defining the contents of one's identity repertoire, which in turn enables one to negotiate - by either investing in or divesting - racialised differences. Notably, this thesis contends that collective meanings ascribed to ethnic and racialised categories, such as Scottish, Black, Chinese, Asian or Muslim, form the bedrock of articulating mixed identities. On the one hand, the existing ethnic categories work as contexts to define and limit the kinds of identity available to mixed individuals; on the other hand, mixed individuals creatively engage in deploying these meanings so as to negotiate racialised differences entailed by their non-white heritages. When constructed ethnic categories are mutually exclusive, for instance, being black and being Scottish, articulating mixed identities requires negotiating cross-categorical messages.

Second, this thesis contends that not all mixed identities are created equal. Facing uneven access to constructing and articulating identities, some mixed individuals enjoy a wider range of identity options than others. Three elements arguably factor into this process: the frequency and quality of interactions with family members from both sides of mixed heritage; parental attitudes and the socio-economic status of the family; individuals' abilities to make sense of and mobilise symbolic materials. These factors are reflective of structural constraints that are imposed upon mixed individuals, which means that articulating identity options is more than an individual decision.

Third, people's understandings about their mixed heritages are profoundly shaped by their early experiences at home. The family, a "circumscribed vantage point" from which one views and relates to these larger structures (Berger and Berger, 1976:93), links individuals

to the macro-world. Parents of mixed children organise and deliver family practices to address racial issues, especially the communications of racial literacy, based on their interpretations of racial hierarchies and previous experiences of racism, as well as the socio-economic condition of their family. Not only do parents tailor their parenting practices in relation to their social locations, they also relate to their own experiences as they come to decide what actions and plans should be implemented when raising their children. Therefore, a ‘mixed-race’ family is a contested site where inequalities are unwrapped.

Finally, in thinking beyond specific interpretations of ‘mixed-race’, wider discursive schemas of post-raciality and individualisation provide powerful language with which the significance of mixedness can be mobilised and reinterpreted. The two identified interpretations of mixedness, namely the cosmopolitan and the ethnic-absolutist orientations, both employ a common vocabulary of motives concerning ‘individual choices’ with an emphasis on colour-blindness. Mixedness as a “category of practice” (Brubaker, 2013), a category of self- and other-identification (p.1), implies differential strategies as parents and mixed individuals draw on different strands of social discourses. The interpreted significance of mixedness is hence reflective of the interplay of privileges and inequalities entailed by one’s social location.

5. Contributions of this thesis

This thesis aims to make a fourfold contribution to the growing field of ‘mixed-race’ scholarship. First, it tackles the question of ‘mixed-race’ identity in terms of its social construction, considering the process of identity-making through an interactionist and intersectional lens. By exploring the ways in which one expresses one’s ethnic options, the analysis places emphasis on the meanings and significance of ‘race’ and ‘mixed-race’, considering these meanings as the building blocks for constructing ‘mixed-race’ identities. In essence, the thesis considers the articulation of ethnic options as a process of identification (Williams, 2000), revealing the mechanism by which individuals organise these identity claims. By attending to both the specific contents of ethnic options and the contexts from which these articulations emerge, this theoretical approach complements the ‘snapshot’ approach to identity adopted by previous research.

Second, this thesis presents an empirically grounded account that integrates theoretical perspectives drawn from the sociology of ‘race’ and the sociology of family. Recognising a

lack of literature focussing upon the intersection of ‘race’ and family, especially on interethnic families that are not white-black, this thesis problematises the role played by parents of mixed children by seeking to investigate how ‘race’ factors into everyday family dynamics. By focussing on challenges and concerns of mixed parents from a variety of backgrounds, this thesis delineates the ways in which the family influences children’s perceptions of their mixed heritage.

Third, the thesis contributes to the refinement of theories on ‘race’, racialisation, and racism. In analysing individuals’ interpretations of the meanings and significance of mixedness, the thesis depicts different strategies employed by individuals to negotiate their (and/or their children’s) racialised differences. The analysis reveals that in different contexts racialised differences can be a source of stigma or a means to distinguish oneself from others, recognising the changing forms and conditions in which racism is generated without losing sight of the delicate relationship between racism and racialisation. Furthermore, by drawing out the link between circulating social discourses and individual receptions of them, this thesis delineates how individuals internalise and consume racial messages as they progress through life.

Finally, the thesis expands on the existing knowledge regarding British ‘mixed-race’ experiences by moving beyond the English orientation in the current ‘mixed-race’ scholarship to focus on the Scottish case. It takes into account the socio-political context of Scotland and recognises the influential role of national identities (Scottishness) and site-specific demographics. As a “social space in which matters of structure and culture come together” (McCrone, 2001:3), the Scottish society proves to be a fruitful site to examine contested meanings and the significance of ‘race’ and nation.

6. The structure of this thesis

The current chapter achieves four purposes: it explained the motivation for pursuing the research topic, it situated the topic within the broader literature, it contextualised the study, and it defined the key aims and the research questions. It also introduced the main theoretical and empirical approaches within which the research questions are situated.

The next two chapters consist of a critical review of key empirical studies conducted on the topic of ‘mixed-race’ and a presentation of the thesis’s theoretical approach. In Chapter 2, selected studies are employed to point out key areas of current debate surrounding mixed

identities and parenting mixed children, thereby highlighting the gap in knowledge as well as the role of these controversies in informing the formulation of the research questions. Departing from the empirical evidence outlined in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 embarks on a detailed elaboration of the theoretical framework which this thesis utilises to tackle the question of identity. Drawing upon a wide range of theoretical perspectives, including symbolic interactionism, the sociology of personal and family relationships, the sociology of 'race' and ethnicity, intersectionality, and broader theories of identity, the proposed framework tackles the question of identity at both the micro- and macro-levels, giving consideration to everyday interactions and the wider power dynamics that shape the classification and the representation of ethnic groups. Notably, the framework considers that the negotiation of racialised differences lies at the heart of doing 'mixed-race' identities, as an individual's ability to do so is underpinned by their capability to mobilise available symbolic and material resources. The proposed approach to identity foregrounds the analytical potential of the concept of racialised difference, contending that not only does it shape the dynamics of social encounters it also implies the operation and reproduction of racial ideologies.

Chapter 4 considers the methodological issues of this study. It discusses the overall research design concerning the collection, analysis and presentation of empirical data. It also reflectively reviews the research process, looking at my position as a non-white, non-Scottish researcher and its impact on the fieldwork dynamics and discussing the problematic use of the language of 'race' in research interviews.

Chapter 5 is the first of four empirical chapters and it addresses the first research question together with Chapter 6. This chapter illustrates the process by which mixed individuals obtain knowledge about their mixed heritages and consequently utilise this knowledge to justify their asserted identities. The discussion revolves around the concept of ethnic option and argues that the formation of ethnic options is firmly embedded in interactions with significant others from one's networks of relationships. The finding reveals that when interpreted alongside the spatial and temporal changes over the life course, mixedness is a significant element in defining a sense of selfhood.

Revealing a rather different picture, Chapter 6 describes the ways in which mixedness is divested by individuals. Racialised differences are perceived to be a stigmatised attribute inviting negative connotations that disqualify mixed individuals from being Scots.

Individuals who share such an experience often experience a disjuncture of expressed ethnicity and an externally assigned 'race'. Being brought up in a 'white' environment and internalising a 'white' standard, mixed individuals represented by this chapter tend to view their mixed body as a marker of non-whiteness, which prevents them from achieving a desirable white identity. What they do instead is to subscribe to a set of norms and values associated with Scottishness in the hope of negotiating their phenotypical differences. The complexities involved in negotiating categorical meanings can be more usefully understood in relation to racism, inequalities and conflated assumptions concerning nation and ethnicity.

Dealing with the second research question, Chapter 7 shifts the analytical focus from mixed individuals to parents of mixed children. By analysing parents' accounts of their strategies for raising 'mixed-race' children and the rationale behind their practices, the chapter exposes the parents' various concerns and priorities. Given their differential social locations and previous experiences with racism, parents in this study have shown varying grasps of racial literacy and different abilities to conduct the 'race talk'. In relation to the first-person accounts of family lives offered by mixed individuals in the previous two chapters, this chapter consolidates the thesis's argument that 'mixed-race' families are "factories which produce human personalities" (Parsons and Bales, 1956: 16). 'Race' and other forms of stratification continue to structure family life, influencing family responsibilities, expectations and priorities.

The eighth chapter is the last substantive empirical chapter of this thesis. Aiming to address the third research question, this chapter cross-compares the two data sets comprised of interview transcripts of mixed individuals and parents, and it identifies two common ways to conceptualise mixedness, namely as a cosmopolitan orientation and as an ethnic-absolutist orientation. The former views mixedness as an enabling agent to achieve a globalised, liberal lifestyle, while the latter downplays the significance of mixedness to emphasise instead the importance of adopting 'normative' values associated with Scottishness/Britishness. Based on the identified typologies, this chapter finds that differential social roles lead to different standpoints towards the issues of mixedness. While parents' approaches to mixedness are often prescriptive, mixed individuals tend to obtain their knowledge about mixedness 'reactively' over the course of their lives, hence their interpretations of mixedness are acquired understandings.

Finally, this thesis presents its concluding remarks in Chapter 9, discussing the main findings in relation to the theoretical framework and signalling directions for future research. The discussion demonstrates how the proposed approach to identity, together with an analytical focus on the familial context, can expand knowledge on ‘mixed-race’ identities and the experiences of being (or being associated with) mixedness in Scotland. Departing from the empirical findings, the discussions raise further questions concerning identity politics of mixedness, the possibility of moving beyond ‘race’ and a need to investigate the implementation of anti-racism education at schools. Emerging over the course of this research, these questions are beyond the limits of this topic but they propose important directions for how to develop a more comprehensive understanding about ‘mixed-race’.

7. A note on terminology

Before proceeding to the next chapter, it is worth addressing a potential concern over the terminological choices. In this thesis, the term ‘mixed-race’ is used interchangeably with the terms ‘mixedness’ and ‘mixed heritage’ to refer to offspring of intimate unions where parents are from different socially-constructed ethnic categories and are phenotypically different from one another. This terminological choice, as I am aware, is clearly contested. Edwards et al. (2010) discuss the struggle to find an appropriate term to describe this population. They note that numerous terms have been employed interchangeably in ‘mixed-race’ scholarship, ranging from ‘mixed-race’, ‘mixed-ethnicity’, ‘multi-ethnic’, ‘dual heritage’, ‘mixed heritage’, to ‘mixed parentage’ or simply ‘mixed’. Meanwhile, terms commonly employed by American sociologists, such as ‘multiracial’ and ‘racial mixture’, “grates on a British ear” (Parker and Song, 2001:8).

Among these variations, the decision to employ ‘mixed-race’ is based on the reading of existing literature and the nature of the research inquiry. Widely accepted by the mixed community as a self-descriptor, the term ‘mixed race’ has been considered to be the most widely used term in relation to mixed individuals and policy discussions both colloquially and academically (Parker and Song, 2001; Aspinall, 2009). The term ‘mixed-race’ also reflects the historical legacy of unequal power and domination entailed by ‘race’ that ranks populations of different origins differentially. The term ‘race’ indicates power relations and hierarchy produced in the history of colonial encounters (Bonilla-Silva, 1999). Therefore, using ‘mixed-race’ throughout the thesis is an informed decision.

Granted, using the term ‘mixed-race’ risks reifying ‘race’. Yet as Song and Gutierrez (2015) point out, without recourse to some common-sensual language, researchers of ‘race’ cannot discuss and analyse the experiences of mixed individuals and their children. In this vein, this study contends that the prevailing folk beliefs about ‘race’ and racial differences shape the everyday experience of mixed individuals and their family members. By placing inverted commas around the phrase ‘mixed race’, this thesis holds that the term should be contested rather than assumed. It reflects my stance that while I recognise the real purchase and experiential reality of ‘race’, I continue to problematise ‘race’ as well as to highlight my scepticism towards the idea of racial mixture.

As we shall see in the main body of the analysis, I employ racialised categories such as ‘black’, ‘white’, ‘Chinese’, and ‘Asian’ when conducting analyses. These broad ethnic categories are employed to refer to individual ethnic heritages at the broad pan-ethnic level, and they were the chosen terms by the interviewees of this study. Aware that such terminology may take advantage of common/folk understandings of ethnic groups in society, I will specify the content of each category and highlight its problematic meaning wherever possible.

Chapter 2 Researching ‘mixed-race’ experiences and mixed families: a review of the literature

In theorising identity, Jenkins (1997) contends that the act of “identifying ourselves is a matter of meaning, and meaning always involves interaction, agreement and disagreement, convention or innovation, communication and negotiation (p.4).” Jenkins’ argument encapsulates the central theme of this thesis, which is the construction and negotiation of meanings associated with mixedness. Focusing on individuals’ interpretations of the experience of being mixed or being associated with mixedness, the present thesis seeks to gain an understanding of the production of ‘mixed-race’ identities by delineating the process of ‘doing’ identities, principally through a familial lens.

In this vein, this chapter serves two purposes. First, it explains how the existing ‘mixed-race’ scholarship offers valuable insights into understanding mixed experiences and helps inform the formulation of the research questions. Second, this chapter foregrounds the importance of researching ‘mixed-race’ families in understanding identity formations by drawing on theoretical perspectives from the sociology of ‘race’ and the sociology of family relationships, highlighting key issues and debates over parenting children of mixed backgrounds. By situating this study within the extant ‘mixed-race’ scholarship, this chapter seeks to clarify the contribution of this thesis to the wider body of knowledge.

Before moving into the next section, it might be useful to highlight that both the current chapter and Chapter 3, which elaborates the theoretical framework of this thesis, serve to situate this thesis into relevant literature and theories. The decision to employ two separate chapters is based upon a recognition of different roles played by each chapter: whilst the current chapter presents a summary of relevant ‘mixed-race’ scholarship in order to identify the knowledge gaps and to explain how this thesis sets to address these gaps, the next chapter will be centred on the ways in which this thesis tackles the research questions theoretically. However, the refined distinction made on literature by no means assume a clear distinction between empirical and theoretical research, and, as shown in the forthcoming theoretical chapter, some empirical studies on mixedness have been cited to demonstrate the utility of the theoretical framework. The purpose to employ a separate chapter on the theoretical framework is to foreground the two key concepts of this study, namely identity and racialised differences, and the discursive context of this study, which

underpin the data analysis process. Therefore, the discussion of the theoretical framework should be treated on its own right.

Part 1 Theorising ‘Mixed-race’

Although it is fair to consider ‘mixed-race’ scholarship as a subset of the broader ethnic and racial studies, this chapter intends to begin the discussion with a review of the literature on ‘mixed-race’ identities. This is because a discussion of ‘mixed-race’ scholarship not only outlines key areas of theoretical debates pertinent to my topic and research questions, it also prefaces the forthcoming discussion in the next chapter concerning the interplay between identity, racialised differences and racial discourses. Part 1 starts off by attending to the historical and social conditions in which ‘mixed-race’ populations are produced, followed by a review of empirical studies on the same or similar topics. The aim of this section is to situate the present study in the existing body of literature and to illustrate the knowledge gap this thesis seeks to address.

1.1 The Marginal Man Thesis

A literature review of ‘mixed-race’ studies would not be complete without addressing the contribution of American sociologists to the field. One of the earliest sociological attempts to study mixed people was made by Robert Park in the 1920s. In his influential work *The Marginal Man* (Park, 1928), mixedness was introduced as one of the consequences of human migration resulting in conflicting cultures and values. Park claimed that individuals encountering different cultures inevitably experienced an internal division which broke apart their old and new selves and personalities, as ongoing changes and cultural fusions reflected a state of permanent crisis for the marginal man. Based on this argument, Park’s student, Stonequist (1935), elaborated the Marginal Man Thesis with more specific reference to the ‘mixed-race’ population. In his evaluation of the social status of the ‘mixed-blood’, Stonequist claimed that mixed people were simultaneously placed between two racial groups, which led them to see themselves from the standpoints of each group. The clash of images left mixed people in an ambivalent and often conflicting state that produced a divided self. It also generated a contradictory feeling, a simultaneous sense of superiority and inferiority. Stonequist then proposed a framework based on the ‘identity crisis’ experienced by the marginal man and suggested ‘solutions’ for them: either incorporating themselves in the dominant group, or constituting a group in themselves progressing in self-respect and cultural development. Both arguments of Park and

Stonequist appear to recognise the existence of concrete boundaries between racial groups, viewing the marginal man as a product of racial transgressions and irreconcilable conflicts.

While it is arguably true that the Marginal Man Thesis marks the first sociological attempt at understanding mixedness, its value-laden approach to mixedness inevitably added further layers of obfuscation. The problematic depiction of mixed individuals as ‘culturally unfit’ was historically embedded, based on the race relations paradigm which views racialised groups as homogenised crowds holding distinct cultures from each other. The assumption of concrete boundaries between cultures explained the ‘collisions’ when the two cultures came into contact (Park, 1928). Later on, Root (1990) described a phenomenological experience of biracial individuals occupying a marginal status, and she argued that the marginality was socially produced rather than being inherent in one’s racial heritage. Whilst coming from a socio-psychological background, Root’s approach demonstrates a sociological awareness in that she recognised the forces of socio-cultural, political and familial influences in forming a positive self-concept. Moving forward from the arguments of Park and Stonequist, Root foregrounds the role of other social elements, such as family involvements, gender and social class, in shaping mixed experiences. She puts forward the notion of ‘the hierarchy of colour’ (p.188), contending that there is a hierarchy of racial groups based upon their similarity to the middle-class white social structure and values: the more similar a minority group is to the white middle-class, the higher social status the group has. The element of relativity of by Root’s observation still holds analytical value today, as her argument has prompted later researchers to move beyond a fixed reading to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of ‘mixed-race’ experience.

Following Root, there has been an expanding body of American ‘multiracial’ literature, the term favoured by American social scientists. Among researchers, Naomi Zack, a philosopher by profession, notes that due to its historical ‘one-drop’ rule, i.e. any person with even one ancestor of African ancestry is considered black, America operates a biracial system in the past which did not permit the identification of individuals as mixed (Zack, 1993). Arguing that an asymmetrical schema of racial designation leads to the emergence of ‘marginal man’ thinking, Zack stresses the need to connect specific socio-historical contexts in which mixedness and meanings of mixedness are produced. In the American context where the racial schema implies that “both whiteness and blackness are defined in

terms of blackness” (ibid., 11), all racial categories are interdependent and relational to the black group.

More recently, multiracial studies in the US have largely focussed on the patterns and outcomes of multiracial identifications, explaining the steady increase in quantitative analyses of racial classifications based on census questionnaires and large-scale surveys. Gullickson and Morning (2011) note that multiracial identification in the US reflects both a “macro level historical trend in racial ideology” and “micro-level mechanisms that shape individual decisions” (p. 499). The historical patterns of the US to denote ‘European’, ‘African’ and ‘American Indian’ as national races prominently shape racial classification and assignments. In contrast with studies focusing on individual-level decisions regarding ethnic identities (which will be addressed in the forthcoming discussion), racial identification literature focuses on “how multiracial people racially classify and designate themselves on surveys and censuses” (Brunsma, 2005). Aiming to explore factors and mechanisms of the decision-making process, most research seeks to identify factors influencing multiracial self-identification, such as economic status, appearance, and parental influence (Harris and Sim, 2002; Rockquemore and Brunsma, 2002; Xie and Goyette, 1997). While many of these quantitatively-driven investigations are often constrained by methodological challenges concerning the definition and measurement of the studied population (Harris and Sim, 2002), they have nevertheless helped elucidate the importance of recognising the historical contexts and specific patterns of racialisation of each minoritised group (Gullickson and Morning, 2011).

1.2 The British perspective of mixedness

The emergence of multiracial literature in the US defines the scope of ‘mixed-race’ studies; it also, meanwhile, highlights the local specificities in researching mixed experience. Compared to its American counterpart, British ‘mixed-race’ scholarship stresses the temporal and spatial specificities often associated with mixedness. Often characterised by uneven social distances between white and minority groups, British society has seen different modes of interaction between ethnicities in which connections are forged (Back, 1996). Using the Labour Force Survey household data between 2004 and 2008, Platt (2010) finds that 48% of Black Caribbean men and 29% of women in couples were in an interethnic partnership, and that 39% of Chinese women in couples had partners of a different ethnic background. In comparison, individuals of Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds tended to have lower rates of interethnic partnerships. The visible, albeit

uneven, pattern of interracial partnering has led to a diverse range of experiences derived from disparate types of mixedness. Their experiences are often characterised as ‘superdiverse’ reflecting ever-changing ethnic landscapes and migration patterns, which need to be interpreted with caution (Aspinall and Song, 2013).

Over the short course of its development, British ‘mixed-race’ scholarship has demonstrated two distinct features. First, the British preoccupation with ‘mixed-race’ is linked to a colonial legacy, where ethnic minority populations have been subject to various forms of racialisation, usually from the perspective of the colonisers. Wilson (1984) notes that both popular and public languages of ethnicity have used a range of ethnic labels, such as skin colour (e.g. ‘brown’), territory (e.g. ‘West Indies’), culture and nationality (e.g. ‘Indian’) to describe Britain’s ethnic minority populations. Marked by a perceptible apprehension about directly employing ‘race’ as an analytical category, the British approach reflects the ambiguity and complexity of racialised classifications. In a recent study, Song and Aspinall (2012) highlight the varieties of respondents’ attitudes towards misrecognition of their ethnic backgrounds, noting that the basis of identification for mixed individuals is hybrid and multiple. In reacting to racial mismanagements from others, mixed individuals cited national identity as being more salient than their racial or ethnic identities. For this, the researchers contend that “a shared sense of being British was a strong undercurrent across all the mixed groups, and served to dilute the force of differently expressed racial identifications” (p. 748). In other words, a national model of identification (i.e. British) can sometimes take precedence over ethnic or racial identifications, while the meaning and connotations of national and racial identity categories are not mutually exclusive as the two categories can shade into each other.

This particular trend highlights two issues that are relevant to this study: first, there might be multifaceted layers of belonging (e.g. belongings on the basis of locality, ethnicity, nationality) that contributed to ‘mixed-race’ self-identifications; second, there is a need to recognise the symbolic power of norms and cultural practices in framing one’s cultural belonging. These often-conflated categories not only create challenges to producing a comprehensive range of entries to capture ‘mixed-race’ populations, but they also indicate an element of subjectiveness in defining ‘mixed-race’. As the method and data chapters of this thesis will show, there was a noticeable pattern among interviewees to describe their ethnic backgrounds in various ways, which reflects a conflation of racialised terminologies.

The second feature of British ‘mixed-race’ studies is marked by its interest in capturing the diverse experience of mixed individuals and the ways in which these individuals identify, as opposed to the quantitative-driven approach adopted by most American sociologists. Notably, early studies in Britain still appeared to echo the Marginal Man Thesis by implying that mixed individuals inevitably suffered from low self-esteem and identity confusion (Wilson, 1987; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002). Being mixed often entailed a sense of ‘inbetweenness’, or a liminal state, that led to a sense of “scattered belonging with an inherent inability to incorporate two incompatible ethnic backgrounds” (Ifekwunigwe, 1999).

However, a new wave of empirical investigations of ‘mixed-race’ Britons has engaged in incorporating a wider array of ‘mixed-race’ profiles in terms of ethnic makeups, gender, and class backgrounds, demonstrating a steady break-away from a simplified reading of mixedness (Ali, 2003; Song, 2010; Aspinall and Song, 2013). This signifies a more visible effort to interpret ‘mixed-race’ experiences taking theoretical perspectives from the sociology of ‘race’ and other social dimensions. For instance, Ali (2003) incorporates the gender dimension to investigate how mixed children come to read ‘race’. In her ethnographic study conducted with ‘mixed-race’ children from two London primary schools, Ali finds that in articulating racialised identities the children in her study constantly make reference to popular cultural representations and visual images of their families in a creative fashion. Her findings also pointed to the individual creativity in the production of narratives about identity. Noting that although the children and parents in her study were “trapped within contemporary linguistic and conceptual frameworks” (p.168), she contends that the emerging creative articulations of identities shed positive light on the process of dismantling “hegemonic discourses of racialisation and a ‘racial’ politics of singularity in societies” (ibid.).

1.3 Situating this study in the current body of literature

In many aspects, the studies mentioned above form the bedrock of British ‘mixed-race’ scholarship and they point to the significance of studying mixedness for substantiating the knowledge of the sociology of ‘race’. By highlighting the contingency between national, state and racial modes of identifications, these studies demonstrate the complexities and fluidity of ‘mixed-race’ identifications but also foreground the importance of recognising the ‘super-diverse’ demographic profile of the mixed populations. In this sense, the

aforementioned studies helped inform the ways the sample of this study was defined and stratified.

However, in reviewing the current British ‘mixed-race’ literature, one may easily find that while most studies make claims about the British ‘mixed-race’ experience, their findings and research agendas are orientated by an English context, which leaves the Scottish case underrepresented. In fact, the mixed population in Scotland has received so little academic attention that there is no published study available to date. The gap in the literature signifies a need to expand current investigations geographically and demographically in order to capture a more comprehensive range of experiences across the different nations within the UK.

Another area to which these studies have not given sufficient attention is the interrelationship between expressed ‘mixed-race’ identities and the contexts in which these expressions are produced. Individuals’ interpretations of their mixed heritages should be more firmly embedded in the social context in which they were situated. An associated problem is that instead of paying attention to the process whereby these identifications are formulated, these studies seem to focus more on elaborating specific forms of ethnic identifications nominated by mixed people. Few studies have substantiated their theoretical approaches to identity with sufficient contextual information to delineate the ways in which they arrive at their conclusions. Because of this, the previous analyses tend to offer ‘snapshots’ of identities without embedding these identifications into the wider social context. Additionally, these segmented analyses of identities are inclined to overlook differences and similarities across different types of mixed ethnicities due to the lack of an organic, holistic approach that would enable cross-comparison in a broad sense.

Nonetheless, most existing literature has taken the role of families for granted. First-person accounts of growing up in mixed families are also relatively under-researched. Taking these concerns on board, the extant ‘mixed-race’ identity research can be further consolidated by recognising and elaborating the social dynamics involved in the formation of identities, especially in the family, arguably the most important institution of the private sphere (Berger and Berger, 1976). As the next section will outline, there is a growing body of literature addressing mixed families that explores experiences of parenting mixed children. Holding the position that studying mixed families complements our current

understanding of mixed identities, this thesis will move on to explore the role of family in more detail.

Part 2 Situating ‘mixed-race’ families

Treating families as a pertinent site for the reproduction of racial, gender and class inequalities, this thesis distinguishes itself from other studies by investigating, rather than assuming, the role of families. The intention to foreground the role of family is reflected in the second research question, which sets out to investigate the ways in which parents communicate the idea of ‘race’ to their children, by drawing upon their own understandings of ‘race’. Family is considered to be one of the primary sites where individuals learn about the significance of ‘race’, which in turn allows them to make sense of their heritages.

Part 2 will start with an examination of two concepts derived from the sociology of family, namely family practices (Morgan, 2011a; Morgan, 2011b) and family display (Finch, 2007). The two concepts provide conceptual tools for analysing interviewees’ accounts of family relationships. The discussion will then sketch the contour of current research on ethnic minority families in an attempt to highlight the central element – inequality – that shapes differential family experience. The last section will review a range of key studies on parents’ strategies, concerns and questions pertinent to parenting mixed children, with a focus on the familial transmission of racial literacy and parenting (especially mothering) experiences of raising mixed children. The three sections in Part 2 together describe the conceptual tools and scopes of analysis underpinning the upcoming data analysis, outlining this thesis’s approach to addressing mixed identity through a familial lens.

2.1 Practising and displaying families

In considering the connection between family and identity, the focus of analysis is on relationships and activities carried out by family members. Family relations, as Lawler (2014) contends, lie at the heart of understanding identity. Finch and Mason (2000) also argue that important messages about identity can be revealed through the “doing of family relationship and through understandings of kin groups and one’s place within them” (p.5). The notion of family practices is considered one of the most influential concepts in understanding the aforementioned family dynamics. Elaborating on the idea of ‘doing’ family, Morgan (2011b) suggests that the key features of a family practices approach can

be summarised as follows: an emphasis on the ‘doing’ of families, a sense of the everyday, and an attempt to link the perspectives of the observers with those of the social actors. The key to understanding this concept is to see that a family is a facet of social life rather than a social institution, and that family members have an active role in interpreting and organising family lives as informed by social, cultural and individual/personal biographies (Morgan, 1999; Morgan, 1996).

Indeed, the strength of this concept lies in its emphasis on ‘doing’, rather than ‘being’ a family. The family practices approach goes beyond particular family models, hence rejecting the idealised and abstract notion of ‘the family’, namely white, middle-class nuclear families. Recognising that a family is constituted by connections rather than a specific thing (Morgan, 2011a), this approach proposes a more process-orientated reading of family which places more emphasis on actions, customs and practices, as opposed to kinship or marriage-based co-residence (Morgan, 1996; Chambers, 2012; Weddell, 2012; Roseneil and Ketokivi, 2016). In short, the concept of family practices helps downplay the ideal version of ‘the family’ but tries to capture the fluidity, diversity and multifacetedness of contemporary families. It also acknowledges the role of social actors in making sense of their own social world and producing meanings for what they understand as ‘family’ (Finch, 2007; Chambers, 2012). In this regard, applying the notion of family practices to ‘mixed-race’ families draws attention to social actors’ agency in making sense of being a member of mixed families, analysing the rationales and motives behind these activities.

In addition to placing an emphasis on ‘doing family’, the sociology of family also recognises the importance of displaying families. Researchers working on this topic emphasise the significance of social interactions and performance, particularly the ways in which social meanings about ‘family-like’ features are conveyed to and understood by relevant others (Finch, 2007; Dermott and Seymour, 2011). Following the Goffmanian tradition, the concept of displaying family suggests that a sense of family is only validated if the meanings of families are mutually recognised by both parties participating in the act of display. In the face of criticisms for connotations with performance theory, Finch (2007) defends her terminological choices by emphasising that the identities of actors and audience are constantly shifting depending on the context in the process of displaying. In other words, there is not always a need for display; the need arises when a sense of family-ness needs to be demonstrated.

In relation to mixed families, the concept of displaying family helps to identify situations when mixedness needs to be displayed to audiences by members of mixed families. Haynes and Dermott (2011) employ this concept to understand the dynamics of parental differences in and strategies of displaying the mixedness of their children. Drawing on the notion of ‘degrees of intensity’ in the need for display, they discover that parents tend to have a stronger intention to display when ethnic, religious, national or other differences become a salient factor requiring recognition. Specifically, parents of mixed children usually have imagined audiences in mind when making long-term decisions over a child’s name, religious affiliation, language use and schooling, as well as in a range of other scenarios when ethnicity happens (Brubaker et al., 2004). In relation to the discussion of an interactionist approach to identity in the next chapter, displaying family often entails a communication and mutual recognition of ethnic symbols that family members are keen to bring to the front. The utility of the concept of family display lies in its potential to reveal the diverse mechanisms in which mixedness is foregrounded.

2.2 Under the same roof: ‘race’, class, gender and inequalities

Having outlined the concept of family practice and displaying family, I will now consider how social divisions, particularly ‘race’, shape family dynamics. The family has been regarded as a productive site for sociologists to explore the reconfiguration and resistance of race and ethnicity (Solomos and Collins, 2010). Meanwhile, families also occupy a central place in social life as a means of transmitting cultural and social capital (Lawler, 2014). Because of this, a family constitutes a primary site for the development of a sense belonging to a social group and a major conduit for reproducing race, class and gender inequalities (Collins, 1998; Solomos and Collins, 2010). Stratifications based on assumed racial differences continue to shape family resources and to structure the ways family activities are organised (Burton et al., 2010).

In multi-ethnic societies where the white population is the majority, many non-white parents adopt an active role in communicating ‘race’ in the hope of preparing their children for the forthcoming racist encounters, which is particularly the case for African-American families in the American context (Burton et al., 2010; Zinn, 2010). However, analysing family practices of non-white families in Britain is far from straightforward. In the era of ‘superdiversity’ (Vertovec, 2007), over the past few decades Britain has seen transformations of demographic and social patterns characterised by an increase in migrant populations with socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified backgrounds. The

changing demographic landscape, alongside the established ethnic minority communities, poses new challenges for the theorisation of the ever-changing experiences of 'mixed-race' populations. It further poses questions about the transformations of the meaning of 'race' and racism and about their everyday manifestations. Moreover, whilst the sociology of 'race' and the sociology of family have seen substantial theoretical developments over the past few decades in Britain, surprisingly little attention has been given to the intersection of the two (with one exception, Smart and Shipman, 2004). This not only leads to a lack of literature addressing non-white families but also contributes to an ethnocentric reading of such families as culturally deviant and backwards and in need of modernisation and assimilation (Zinn, 2010; Chambers, 2012).

In British society, where racial divisions are becoming ever more pervasive in their effect, it is perhaps true that a better understanding of how 'race' factors into family lives is needed. In writing about black families, Collins (1998) contends that mothering practices in a racist society are often mediated by membership to a class and by racial hierarchies. Compared to their counterparts in the U.S., the vast majority of studies into the British family place the analytical lens on white families, while studies of non-white families remain peripheral. Among the few existing investigations looking at non-white families are early studies which have typically focused on different types of family formation, such as family structures and partnering patterns (Beishon et al., 1998; Berthoud, 2000). More recently, studies have been preoccupied with theorising the links between ethnicity and social capital, elaborating on the ways in which migrants utilise the family networks and kinship ties available to them (Reynolds and Zontini, 2006; Zontini and Reynolds, 2007; Chamberlain, 1999; Goulbourne and Solomos, 2003). Among the few that implicate 'race' in their arguments, Vincent et al. (2012) discuss how parental awareness and experience of racism shape black middle-class parents' involvement with schools, especially in arranging extra-curriculum activities for their children. Another excellent work reviewing the intersection of 'race' and parenting has been produced by Byrne (2006a), who examines the ways in which mothering practices are intertwined with classed and raced discourses. These studies challenge normative assumptions associated with 'the family' and tackle ethnocentric biases which treat ethnic minority families as deviant cultural artefacts (Zinn, 2010; Chambers, 2012). Nonetheless, inadequate effort has been made to examine the intersection of 'race' and family and examine how family reproduces racial inequalities which in turn influence the ways in which family is being 'done' by its members.

Although this thesis foregrounds the role of 'race' in shaping the experience of 'mixed-race' families, it recognises the classed nature of family relations that underpins the whole debate. While the few studies that have been carried out on ethnic minority families tend to obscure the power of class given the visibility of 'race', family studies centred on social class issues are usually dominated by nuanced depictions and comparisons between white working-class families and white middle-class families (Perrier, 2013; Vincent and Ball, 2007; Gillies, 2005), with few studies focussing on the intersection of 'race' and class. That said, one American study conducted by Annette Lareau (2011) has addressed this relationship by comparing life experiences of black and white families of different class backgrounds. In her book, *Unequal Childhoods: class, race, and family life*, Lareau offers a good discussion on the interplay of 'race' and class. Based on her longitudinal ethnography of twelve American families - of which six were white, five were black and one was mixed - Lareau proposes a powerful (yet also controversial) argument that it is social class - rather than 'race' - that plays a decisive role in shaping daily family practices and in furthering the socio-economic attainments of children. The main message of Lareau's study is that social class defines parenting priorities. It determines the daily rhythms of families and frames the 'cultural logic' of rearing children by utilising a dominant set of cultural repertoires about how children should be raised. In this sense, middle-class children inevitably benefit scholastically and socially from the rich cultural capital provided by their parents regardless of their racial backgrounds, while the conditions experienced by working-class children tend to closely parallel the adverse circumstances and hardships their parents have experienced.

In elaborating her argument, Lareau notes that even the idea of social class is not a systematic part of daily vocabularies of most Americans; the existing social inequalities have been reproduced over time on a class basis. She uses the concepts of 'concerted cultivation' and 'natural accomplishment' to describe two distinct styles of parenting distinguished by the amount of resources (for example, time, literacy, money) available to parents. Regardless of 'race', she argued, middle-class families demonstrated a "deliberate and sustained effort to stimulate children's development and to cultivate their cognitive and social skills" (p.238), whereas working-class families were more likely to utilise a natural accomplishment logic that viewed children's development as a spontaneously unfolding process provided that children receive basic support. In ensuring the transmission of cultural capital in middle-class families, parents placed great emphasis on language use, extra-curricular activities, and engagement with social institutions such as

schools and summer camps. Lacking both money and time, working-class parents could not provide the same level of support. Although Lareau's work mostly focused on 'monoracial' families, where both parents shared the same ethnicity, her study provides an invaluable framework to illustrate the process of capital transmission and to conceptualise the family dynamics within non-white families.

In the British context, a team of researchers expanded on Lareau's framework to explore further the dynamics of interplay between 'race' and class. Rollock et al. (2011) studied sixty-two middle-class families of black Caribbean heritage and observed that 'race' remained a central concern for black British middle-class parents. They note that the experiences and awareness of racism informed all aspects of child rearing, and a widespread anxiety and a heightened sense of responsibility were evident among black British parents. Black mothers in particular are more attuned to issues of racial exclusion. The heightened awareness is partly explained by parents' experiences of racial discrimination and partly derived from a salient black identity. Contrasting with Lareau's contention, they argue that parenting is both classed and racialised, which is translated into efforts by black parents to protect their children against the effects of racial inequality (Rollock et al., 2011). Elsewhere, the same team notice that one particular parenting strategy by black British parents was to enrol children in extra-curricular activities in the hope that they would obtain higher educational qualifications as well as cultural resources and life skills. These personal qualities, tastes and affinities were deemed useful to gain an advantage for their children in the labour and education market (Vincent et al., 2012). The researchers also note that the parents in their study were keen to encourage their children to foster a black pride but they also strived to distance their children from the stereotypical version of working-class blackness by moderating their children's language and limiting space for play. The multiple layers of oppression faced by members of non-white families, as shown in these studies, demand a more nuanced understanding of the individual circumstances of each family and as such an intersected understanding.

2.3 Mapping the diversity of 'mixed-race' families

In pointing out the direction for future research on 'mixed-race', Song (2012) contends that it is necessary to study how mixedness is understood in contemporary families across the globe. Embodying the 'cultures of mixing' (Caballero et al., 2008), British mixed families are characterised by different socio-economic circumstances and patterns of residence. The spatially and socially uneven state of mixed families demands a nuanced interpretation in

order to gain an understanding of the ways in which family influences the ethnic identity of mixed children.

In this sub-section, a range of studies conducted on the topic of mixed families will be discussed. I will specifically examine three aspects closely related to this study, namely the impact of parental attitudes, the communication of racial literacy, and the experience of racism. The three aspects are intrinsically intertwined with the racialised and classed identities of parents. Moreover, with most studies focusing on mothers' experiences, we need to recognise the gendered nature of family practices when analysing accounts of parenting mixed children.

2.3.1 Parents' identities, experiences and their influence on children's identities

One of the earliest British studies on the 'mixed-race' family was conducted by Wilson (1984; 1987) and focused upon the interrelationship between mothers' identities and the identities of mixed children with half African/Caribbean heritage. Seeking to explore the impact of mothering practices, Wilson identifies a link between mothers' perceptions of 'race' and children's identity: a mother's assumptions of her children's heritage shape her mothering practices but also influence her decision to socialise her children with a particular ethnic group(s). A mother's view of her racial background also affects her children's racial categorisation: if a mother feels ambivalent about the value of her own racial identity, her child will also be prone to self-depreciation. In other words, the way a mother assigns her children racially influences the ways in which children perceive themselves racially. Whilst Wilson's work is relatively under-quoted, her study marks the beginning of a systematic investigation of 'mixed-race' identities and parental practices. Even today, her observations are relevant in that she identifies various degrees of cultural awareness in mothers and constructively links mothering practices to the formation of children's identities. More importantly, Wilson suggests that parents' racial beliefs are crucial in children's early experiences and perceptions of different 'races'. Their knowledge, perceptions and understandings of current ethnic relations and racism are considered to provide an initial benchmark for a child's view of him/herself (Wilson, 1987). Resonating with Wilson's view, sociologists in the US recognise that parental awareness and understanding of racial issues influence children's identities and racial classifications (Brunsma, 2005; Rockquemore and Brunsma, 2002). Parents not only influence children's racial identity by racial assignment, they also invoke their own

perceptions of racial division and affect the racial composition of the social networks and social organisations in which mixed children socialise.

Expanding on Wilson's claims concerning the maternal influence on children, this thesis suggests that there is a need to recognise the racism experienced by parents of mixed children. Frankenberg (1993) discusses the stigma attached to interracial intimacies based on white supremacist beliefs and stereotypes structured on 'race' and class. In the British context, Harman (2010) argues that while whiteness is commonly perceived as a structural advantage, such privilege is largely based on a middle-class assumption. For working-class white mothers, the material and psychological privileges are more limited as they are constrained by their stigmatised social status. For some mothers, parenting 'mixed-race' children not only evokes isolation from the white side of the extended family but also triggers racist and sexist abuse from the wider public. Often stigmatised as being promiscuous and perceived as posing a threat to other white women, white working-class mothers' experiences illustrate the particular ways in which gender is imagined in relation to whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993). In response to these difficult conditions, the mothers in Harman's study draw on informal social support such as friends and some family members in order to establish informal safety networks. The value of friendship with other lone white mothers of mixed children is appreciated, especially because of the non-judgemental, empathetic attitudes that function as concrete bonding capital. Elsewhere, Britton (2013) calls for a critical examination of the racialised identity of white mothers by exploring how their white identity exists in relation to the racialised identities of their children and other family members. In situating whiteness within kinship relationships and social networks, Britton suggests that white privilege is relinquished, exercised and negotiated both within and outside family with profound implications for a child's cultural identification and sense of belonging.

As mothers are usually considered to be the main bearers of culture who pass down cultural practices to their children (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1993), exploring mothering experiences proves to be a meaningful way of revealing the complex interplay of 'race' and cultural representations, which this thesis also seeks to show. However, while the existing body of literature tends to focus on white mothers and their identities, this should not mean that the experiences of non-white mothers and fathers should be overlooked. Taking the knowledge gap in literature into consideration, this thesis seeks to incorporate a wider range of perspectives from parents - not only mothers but also fathers - of different

ethnic backgrounds in order to further investigate the content and implications of family practices.

2.3.2 Racial literacy: configuration, production and communication

Another significant issue to consider when analysing mixed families is how the idea of 'race' is communicated between parents and children. Twine's studies on English black-white mixed families break new ground for this field of research (Twine, 1999a; Twine, 2004). Drawing on her seven-year longitudinal ethnographic research with 102 participants from mixed families in England, Twine focuses on the nuances and concerns over 'race' embedded in parents' everyday decision-making processes. With specific interest in the ways in which 'race' is communicated at home, she advances the notion of racial literacy to describe everyday practices that enable members of interracial families to "translate racial codes, decipher racial structures, and manage the racial climate in their local and national communities" (Twine and Steinbulger, 2006:344). The concept of racial literacy highlights parental efforts to explain 'race' and to teach their children ways of recognising, responding to and counteracting racism. In advancing this concept, Twine assumes that racism exists and remains a key issue faced by mixed-race families, and that racial literacy is inherently a form of anti-racist labour performed by parents in an attempt to cultivate a prominent black identity for their children. Twine's assumption is not without reason. Given the historical 'one-drop rule', it has been noted that many children of half-black heritage are raised as black so as to acquire a sense of black identity (Rockquemore et al., 2006). However, whether parents of children of non-black heritage will recognise the importance of racial literacy remains under-researched.

When interviewing parents of 'mixed-race' children, Twine (1999) discovers that white mothers in her study demonstrated great interest in fostering their children's racial identity, contradicting the common assumption that they are less capable due to a supposed lack of empathy and lived experiences of racism. She also observes that white middle-class mothers, especially those who received higher education, were more aware of the importance of cultivating a 'black' identity for their children and more capable of mobilising the available resources to do so. For example, Twine notices that these mothers voluntarily chose to stay in black communities in order to maintain contact with blacks and other ethnic groups. They also made sure their children travelled to their countries of origin to strengthen their cultural and emotional ties with their black heritage. In addition to

investing emotionally and financially in their children's well-being, middle-class white mothers were keen to establish support networks where they felt comfortable sharing their concerns and receiving support from other parents of black children. In Twine's conclusion, she suggests that cultural capital and deployable social resources enable these mothers to utilise their racial and class privilege to create more favourable conditions in which their children can foster a positive black identity. In other words, the capacity and willingness to communicate racial literacy are profoundly classed.

In addition to the impact of social class, Twine's study also reveals the fluidity and contested meanings of whiteness. In her analysis of discourses about the meaning and value of whiteness, Twine (2010) contends that white women (and men) are usually perceived as cultural insiders and racial outsiders by black members of interracial families. White members' experiences are usually mediated by the social, economic and cultural capital they possess⁵. Specifically, Twine identifies four general understandings associated with whiteness, namely that it is as an asset, a source of injury, a cultural liability, and a source of sexual adventure threatening the respectability of the family. The differential interpretations reveal the contingent and unstable meanings associated with whiteness and the situated functions of whiteness in the familial context⁶. Overall, Twine's work on black-white mixed English families makes significant contributions to understanding the parental concerns regarding the cultivation of racial identity. Her work highlights the relational nature of 'race', where children of black-white heritage were perceived as white in relation to monoracial black children; whereas in the eyes of white people they were undoubtedly black (Twine 1999). This resonates with Fanon's observation that "not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man" (1970, quoted by Nayak, 2006).

That being said, the concept of racial literacy has its limits in that it is framed by a particular set of conditions: it is influenced by whiteness studies and black British studies with a specific focus on children of African-Caribbean ancestry (Twine, 2004). Her analysis revolves around the idea that blackness can be mobilised as a cultural and political resource to assert a politicised identity, which might not apply to mixed children not having a black-white parentage. In this sense, there is a need to expand the concept of

⁵ The concept of capital is used in Bourdieusian context. For definitions of these terms please read *The Forms of Capital*. Bourdieu, P. (2011 [1986]) 'The forms of capital', in I. Szeman & T. Kaposy (eds.) *Cultural theory: An anthology*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

⁶ Part 4 of this chapter will explain the concept of whiteness in relation to racialised differences.

racial literacy so as to examine its implementation in other mixed families. With the introduction of the concept of family practices, this thesis will reiterate the importance of examining everyday family practices and family members' personal experience, looking more closely into the ways in which parents of mixed children produce and communicate racial literacy.

2.3.3 Situated parenting strategies

Another strand of literature on mixed families, with a slightly different focus, is concerned with the ways in which parents of mixed children negotiate differences in their child-rearing process. One relatively recent qualitative study was conducted by Edwards and her colleagues in southern England (Edwards et al., 2010), which explores the way parents of mixed children understand and negotiate difference and belonging in bringing up their children. The study identifies three ways employed by parents to communicate mixed-heritage to their children. The first typification, 'open individualised', rejects the notion that a child's identity is essentially rooted in their particular 'racial' background; this belief inspires parents to encourage children to become world citizens by transcending their skin colour to embrace a wider range of social possibilities. The researchers argue that this stance is characterised by a sense of post-raciality, a motif of colour transcendence and an idea of choice. Nevertheless, they also recognise that this standpoint is more likely to be observed in middle-class parents, who are equipped with the economic resources to create options for their children, such as travelling abroad and choosing the 'right' neighbourhood. The second typification is 'single collective', which rests on a strong commitment to a singular heritage and which enforces a sense of belonging to that particular heritage. This heritage is no longer confined to the racial or ethnic element, but instead encompasses durable rules and values (usually embodied in the form of religion such as in Islam) that are frequently the prevalent forms of identification and affiliation. The last typification is 'mixed collective' by which parents encourage children to acknowledge both sides of their heritage and to reconfigure their identity through a notion of mixedness. More often than not, the mixed collective orientation is adopted by middle-class parents who are able to provide resources to actualise this goal.

In researching these typifications of differences and belonging, Edwards and her colleagues (2010) contend that parents develop situated understandings of their racial, ethnic and faith differences. These understandings are embedded into their personal trajectories and the contexts in which they are placed and are later applied to parenting

practices that foster in their children a sense of belonging. Here, the researchers once again reinforce the idea that parenting practices are deeply classed, racialised and gendered. Any attempt to provide a broader examination of parenting and family practices would require a more nuanced grasp of parents' circumstances.

Although they have different focuses, all of the studies discussed in Section 2.3 constitute a sophisticated reflection on the intersection of 'race', gender and class within mixed families. Racial boundaries and hierarchies are contested, reproduced and transformed in interethnic families (Twine, 1999b; Twine and Steinbugler, 2006). By acknowledging the interplay of the different social factors shaping their lives and social perceptions, these studies highlight particular concerns experienced by parents and acknowledge the importance of external factors that shape the dynamics within 'mixed-race' families, including uneven socio-economic circumstances, the strength of social support, and parents' experiences of racism and their own racialised identity. Exploring the dynamics of mixed families can effectively destabilise the line of continuity and challenge the normalising practices of many 'monoracial' relationships (Luke and Luke, 1998) as well as offer new lines of investigation into mixed identities.

Conclusion of Chapter 2

This literature review chapter was written with three aims in mind. First, it explained in detail the ways in which this PhD study can be situated in the wider body of literature. Second, it elaborated the gap in knowledge between the two bodies of literature and it emphasised the need to bridge the two for a more rounded understanding of 'mixed-race' identities. Third, the discussion of 'mixed-race' families has theoretically informed this study in terms of its approach to studying the lived experiences of 'mixed-race' families. The discussions presented thus far highlight the importance of foregrounding the role of 'race' in families and argue for a synthesised understanding of family practices as raced, gendered and classed. Parents' priorities and decisions in developing specific parenting strategies are informed by their individual circumstances. In this regard, the question about how parents understand and communicate 'mixed-race' should be answered by acknowledging the often-intersecting oppressions and challenges they face.

Before moving onto the next section, it is perhaps worth noting that the 'mixed-race' scholarship discussed in this section is by no means exhaustive. As the discussion unfolds,

a wider range of mixed-race studies will be introduced alongside these discussions. Part 3, for instance, will propose a conceptual framework that tackles the question of identity by taking individual differences and structural constraints into consideration. It will explain why the notion of ethnic options (Waters, 1990; Song, 2003) is a helpful tool for delineating the dynamics derived from the immediate and the wider context.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

Departing from the discussion of empirical ‘mixed-race’ studies, this chapter will consider the theoretical dimension of this thesis. By elaborating the theoretical framework underpinning the analysis of empirical data, this chapter delineates the ways this thesis conceptualises the concept of identity, considering how both micro- and macro-dynamics influence the making of identities. Specifically, Part 1 outlines how two theoretical perspectives - interactionist and intersectional - help conceptualise identity formation. Part 2 cross-examines processes of racialisation, racism and whiteness to describe the mechanism by which racialised difference is negotiated. Part 3 attends to the discursive context by considering how social discourses surrounding the ideas of post-raciality and individualisation might influence the language of mixedness. It analyses the content and implications of these discourses and discusses why they are particularly influential in shaping the ways in which mixedness is interpreted.

Part 1 A theoretical approach to ‘mixed-race’ identities

The question of identity lies at the heart of this thesis; it is directly dealt with by the first research question that concerns the formation of mixed identity, and it is complemented by the second and third research question which respectively addresses parents’ attitudes towards mixedness and intergenerational differences in interpreting mixedness. This thesis tackles the question of identity through an extension of the concept of ethnic options, arguing that the articulations of ethnic options are in fact a process of negotiating racialised differences. The capacity to negotiate these identities is underpinned by how resourceful one is in mobilising the available symbolic and material resources.

While both this section and Part 2 will outline the conceptual basis for understanding ‘mixed-race’ identity, the current section focuses on the relationality and sociality of identity. Specifically, in emulating the familial lens, this thesis first proposes the interactionist scope and emphasises how identities are firmly embedded in kinship relationships. It also contends that the intersectional perspective helps bring out the social inequalities underpinning family life. This combined approach recognises the relational nature of identity without neglecting the structural constraints faced by individuals. Both the interactionist and intersectional approaches contribute to elaborating identity as “a deeply social category far from being personal and individual” (Lawler, 2015:180). In this

respect, the two approaches complement each other as they enhance our understanding of how identity is ‘done’, providing a rounded framework to interpret empirical data.

1.1 Interaction, kinship and the relational self

Inspired by G. H. Mead and the symbolic interactionist tradition, scholarship on the sociology of personal life places relationality at the centre of understanding the self (Holmes, 2010). The interactionist approach to the social self contends that selfhood is embedded in social interaction at the micro-level (Scott, 2015). The self is constructed in ongoing relations with both intimate and general others (Holmes, 2010). One critical message emerging from the relational-self thesis is that individuals can only achieve an understanding of themselves by relating to others. In Mason’s (2004) words, individual understandings of the self are always informed by social relations with others and these knowledges are characterised by “contextuality, contingency and rationality” (p.162). Questioning the idea of absolute individualisation, Smart (2007) clarifies that there is no such “autonomous individual who can make free choices and exercise unfettered agency” (p.28). In her version, Smart projects the differentiation between two interdependent phases of the self, namely the ‘I’ as the agentic ego and the ‘me’ as an interconnected social person, and emphasises the connectedness and social embeddedness of people’s lives. Expanding on this, May (2011) maintains that one’s sense of self is constructed in a relational process through our interactions with others as well as in relation to more abstract notions of collectively held social norms, values and customs. This process entails a sense of engagement, knowing and citing these unwritten rules and being able to conduct oneself in an appropriate manner during the interactions. Derived from the notion of ‘unwritten rules’, obtaining a sense of self is also deeply rooted in an understanding of social norms and the power underpinning these norms. Furthermore, the interactionist lens focuses on the temporality and reflexivity of the self (Jackson, 2010). Viewing identity as a process of becoming which is constantly mediated by social interactions (Scott, 2015), individuals reflexively draw on events happening in the past and reconstruct their past in relation to the present. They creatively interpret these events with the knowledge and resources at hand and re-appropriate these materials to articulate a sense of self.

Of specific relevance to this thesis, Mason (2008) notes that family and kinship continue to be significant means of framing and understanding the self because individual identities usually mesh with the connectivity of kinship and interpersonal relationships. Defined as “a whole network of ties which may or may not be characterised as blood ties” (Lawler,

2015:46), kinship determines with whom we are related in a wider range of ‘natural’ networks. An emphasis on blood ties, genealogy and family heritage provides crucial symbolic material for mixed individuals and their family members to mediate their position in relation to others. As illustrated by a study concerning the inheritance of interracial identities in Leicester, Tyler (2005) notes that idioms of biology and inheritance, such as kinship, ancestry and descent, are employed to configure mixed individuals’ narratives and feelings of relatedness across the colour-lines. In this sense, kinship ties are often used to authenticate one’s identity claim; as investing in genealogy allows one to forge identities to undo otherwise concrete categorical boundaries.

Finally, a relational lens enables us to understand the relational emergence of individuality that foregrounds the distinctiveness of each person (Roseneil and Ketokivi, 2016). It reveals how individuals interpret and reflect on the dynamic unfolding of their relationships with others, which is often understood as processes of negotiation. As will be touched upon in the next few sections, but more systematically in Part 2, the notion of racialised difference occupies a central space in understanding the process of negotiating ‘mixed-race’ identities. Individuals employ agentic reflexivity to mobilise their racialised differences to achieve desired identifications.

1.1.1 Informed difference and double consciousness

Scott (2015) encapsulates the symbolic interactionist approach in three key features: first, identity is a process mediated by social interactions; second, identity is performative and can be actively accomplished by individuals; third, identity is pragmatic in that it is not abstract but tangibly expressed through lines of action. This subsection will expand on the interactionist approach to identity by taking a closer look at the specific act of ‘doing’ identity, considering the ways in which ‘mixed-race’ identity is formulated and negotiated at a micro-site. Two notions, namely double consciousness and stigma, are chosen to help explain the formulation of self-understandings through social interactions.

One consequence of the social construction of ‘race’ is the circulation of hegemonic beliefs of what individuals of certain ‘races’ should look like (Omi and Winant, 2004). For ‘mixed-race’ individuals, others’ reactions to their physical appearance based on assumed racialised stereotypes can profoundly influence their perceptions of self (Song and Aspinall, 2012; Herman, 2004). Often perceived as being ‘racially ambiguous’, mixed individuals experience inconsistent and conflictual misrecognition and consequently receive

differential treatment on the basis of assumed ‘races’(Sims, 2016). At this point, mixed people come to learn about their ‘differences’ and internalise racial categorisations projected onto them as a result (Herman, 2004). This means that others’ perceptions and reactions to their ethnic origins profoundly influence how mixed individuals obtain a sense of self. Nevertheless, individuals do not passively receive the information; they employ agentic reflexivity to negotiate these messages instead. The processes of projecting oneself onto others to make them perceive the individual as the individual would like to be perceived (Kaufman and Johnson, 2004) will be more systematically discussed in Part 2.

Returning to the discussion of informed differences, the internalisation of negative receptions often has a profound impact upon the ways mixed people interpret their experiences. Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness (2007[1903]) is a helpful concept to explain how individuals’ internal conflicts are shaped by the wider structural forces. His observation stresses the unequal power relation between the white and the black groups, where the former determines the dominant meanings, standards and norms and designates the collective meanings of groups. In addressing how non-white Americans are subject to the negative attitudes that the white population holds of them, Du Bois describes a feeling of ‘twoness’, namely two souls, two selves, two communities, two sets of values, and two directions that tear the self with different expectations. The racial prejudice forms “the veil” (p.3) between the black and the white, preventing the former from seeing itself outside of what the latter describes and prescribes. A useful message from Du Bois’ work is that in a predominantly white society, non-white people are usually subject to conferred identities and stereotypes, and they are consequently forced to internalise the negative images the white majority impose. As a result, the repertoire available for identity work is shaped by the perceptions of the dominant group. Members of racialised groups are required to negotiate two sets of contrasting values, namely the white norms and the counter-narratives, and gradually develop self-understandings based on others’ perceptions of their racialised differences.

1.1.2 ‘mixed-race’ and stigma

Despite the above considerations, Du Bois’ observation has somehow overlooked the role of the reflexive agency that individuals possess in negotiating the images imposed on them. A more ‘agentic’ theorisation of negotiating imposed racialised differences can be found in Goffman’s (1990) work on spoiled identities, which places the analytical focus on how people live with negative perceptions. According to Goffman, stigma refers to discrediting

attributes and undesired differences arising from a discrepancy between two versions of the self, i.e. the 'virtual' and 'actual' social identity. The virtual identity is constituted by the impressions an individual hopes to create, while the actual identity is what the individual in fact possesses. For the stigmatised, their actual identity is often in conflict with or undermines their virtual identity. Goffman further introduces two types of stigma, namely discredited stigma, which is obvious and known, and discreditable stigma, which is non-obvious hence unknown. The key task for individuals possessing stigma is to manage the tension generated during social contact. For those individuals who have a discreditable stigma, the task is to manage information about their stigma by using a range of information-controlling techniques. Among a series of such techniques is a strategy to control the information conveyed through the body, i.e. 'passing'. For those who possess discredited stigma, the strategy of 'covering' is often utilised in order to minimise the obtrusiveness of their stigma.

The concept of stigma helps unravel the formation of identity with the relationality the concept entails. For one, the stigmatised should be understood in relation to the 'normal' because it is the disjuncture between normative expectations and perceived difference that creates the perception of stigma (Scott, 2015). As 'race' is defined as a tribal stigma by Goffman (1990), 'mixed-race' may imply a spoiled identity given the prevailing cultural racism and negative connotations of 'race'. Being different in a racial sense can be a distressing experience for mixed individuals on the receiving end (Aspinall and Song, 2013). However, the management and negotiation of a spoiled identity is by no means straightforward. If we conceptualise mixedness as a potential form of social stigma, visibility then becomes the key to differentiate the negotiated experiences. People perceived to be visibly 'mixed' or simply not looking white enough are more likely to view their mixedness as a discredited attribute. In social encounters they are likely to meet with prejudice, not because they are 'mixed-race' per se but because they are seen as non-white (Aspinall and Song, 2013). In contrast, for those who can pass as white - or as invisibly mixed - mixedness is more of a matter of discreditable stigma. With greater freedom to control information about their ethnic background, faith or other information at initial encounters, being able to pass means being able to escape the detrimental impact of 'race' (Williams, 1997). Therefore, depending on the visibility of their mixedness, individuals have a varying degree of capability to manage their spoiled identity and, hence, differential experiences in relation to their mixedness.

For mixed individuals, one means of mediating stigma is through strategic deployment of ethnic symbols. Khanna (2011) studied the performance of symbolic ethnicity by mixed American youths and observed that individuals of black-white heritage deliberately employed ethnic and racial symbols, e.g. wearing particular types of clothing, choosing specific words, and cooking German cuisine, to highlight their white heritage in front of their white peers. The purpose of practising symbolic ethnicity, Khanna contends, is not to identify as white, but to use mixedness to establish rapport and networking resources. Khanna's study illustrates how discredited individuals who are disadvantaged and feel victimised for being half-black manage to negotiate racialised differences by showing alignment with the 'normal' whites. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are few studies documenting how racialised differences are performed by mixed people who can pass as white. This once again alludes to the role of visibility in determining one's strategies in dealing with racialised differences: whilst for some it is a responsive action, it might be a voluntary choice for others.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned empirical studies, it is perhaps true that from an interactionist perspective the visibility of mixedness lies at the heart of making sense of identities. In this thesis, the differential experiences of interacting with 'normal', namely white Scottish (or British in a more general sense), imply different motivations for foregrounding or downplaying one's mixedness. While the interactionist approach sheds light on the formations of relational self, there are different voices pointing to the lack of recognition of social inequalities in this approach. Scott (2015) holds that both power relations and social divisions can be found through patterns of interaction, normative conventions and dominant, agreed-upon definitions of reality. Indeed, as we will uncover in Section 2, power dynamics often underpin the ways in which 'race' and radicalised differences are perceived and ascribed. To better address the balance, we will now turn to consider the power dynamics in the meaning generation process.

1.2 The intersectional self: social location

The discussion thus far has largely focussed on the 'micro' side of identity, which concerns how individuals learn about and negotiate their identities through personal encounters. Utilising the intersectional lens, this section will explore how one makes sense of the self in relation to the social. This thesis proposes the notion of 'social location' to explore the relation between social relations and identities, explaining the integrated process in which

an individual negotiates structural constraints and invests available symbolic, social and cultural resources in their identities.

From the intersectional perspective, identity is a contingent project deeply rooted in social inequalities and stratifications (Anthias, 2005). Constructed along multiple axes of differences, such as gender, ethnicity and social class, one's social location is by no means a singular entity but underpinned by a grid of power relations where members are located (Anthias, 2013). The working of structural constraints is manifested through various modalities of power, operating social discourses and individuals' abilities to mobilise these elements. In describing the fluidity of identities, Hall (1996a) projects a useful way to view identity as a meeting point, i.e. the point of "suture" (p.598), between discourses and the processes producing subjectivities. In the suturing metaphor, identity is the result of successful articulations of the subject into the flow of discourses. It is a process whereby an individual takes up a position whilst knowing that it is a representation. It is arguably true that in a post-modernism fashion, Hall's writing was a response to the structural and institutional changes in contending that identity is a fluid enterprise. The significance of cultural representations and the importance of agentic investments are highlighted here, and the suturing framework places a more explicit focus on the process in which these factors influence identities in fragmented, unfinished projects.

However, what Hall has not fully addressed is the varying capacity possessed by individuals to identify and employ cultural representations. An intersectional interpretation contends that any articulations of identity are subject to individuals' capacities to make identity claims. Individuals need to decide which social division to bring out when asserting their identities. Based on specific social locations, individuals generate disparate readings of their differences so that they may attach different forms of emotion to various groupings (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Different circumstances can also lead to people identifying exclusively with one form of difference or highlighting one identity category in order to achieve certain purposes. This indicates a danger of assuming a unitary subject whose identity is given by a position, calling for a need to explore how and why one comes to choose and decide the significant aspect of identity.

Meanwhile, the ability to make sense of their experience is often shaped and conditioned by an individual's social location. Social class is one determinant factor which exerts a profound influence on one's ability to interpret and make sense of social phenomena

(Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002). In a familial context, class is also embodied in family practices in structuring parents decisions and styles given differential availability of resources (Byrne, 2006a; Lareau, 2011). To sum up, the intersectional approach underscores the dialogical process of constructing a situated understanding of self. It allows us to better theorise and analyse the situated, complex ways in which categories are co-constitutive (Phoenix, 2011). Individuals utilise their imaginations to create suitable language to describe a category that is informed by one or more particular dimension(s) or one's social location. After all, constructing categories of signification is "a product of human creative freedom and autonomy" (Yuval-Davis, 2006:201).

1.3 Choosing ethnic identities: collective meanings and individual interpretations

Having examined the immediate and broader influences on the formation of identities, I will now apply this integrated approach to explore 'mixed-race' identities. This thesis proposes that processes of doing mixed identities are embodied in the expression of identity options, namely choosing one or more identity option(s) in a way which is structured by the resources one has at hand. It has been widely recognised that 'mixed-race' individuals have more ethnic options than their monoracial counterparts do (Song, 2003; Ali, 2003; Khanna, 2011; Rockquemore and Brunσμα, 2002). The process of choosing ethnic identities is essentially a process of justifying one's ethnic membership; it is inherently a boundary-making process where mixed individuals align themselves with one collective group based on meanings generated from social interaction. In so doing, they simultaneously dissociate themselves from other groups.

Before turning to address how the concept of ethnic options is utilised in the data analysis, it is necessary to first consider the relationship between individual and collective identities. The two concepts cannot be mutually substituted or imagined in isolation. Collective identity is a process of signification whereby commonalities of experience around a specific axis of differentiation are invested with meanings (Brah, 2005). A collective sense of ethnicity is usually associated with particular 'scripts' stipulating particular sets of behaviour and values (Appiah and Gutmann, 1998). Collective ethnicity can provide assumed members with emotional and material forms of support, but it may also generate expectations about the cultural contents of a group (Song, 2003). The potential tension between individual and group identities, as Song notes, indicates a personalised stance towards ethnic group membership: on the one hand, individuals value their group

membership, however vague its meaning might be; on the other hand, they assert their own version of what it means to be a member of a certain ethnicity. Nonetheless, any discussions on individual ethnic options will make no sense without making reference to group options, given how important group membership is in structuring or limiting individual options. The process of choosing an ethnic identity, therefore, reveals the interrelationship between individual expressions of identity and collective meanings associated with specific ethnicities. In expressing who they are and who they are not, individuals construct their identities drawing upon and negotiating shared meanings based on their situated interpretations of these meanings.

Based upon collective meanings associated with ethnicities, 'mixed-race' people are able to articulate their identity options. The concept of ethnic option is initially advanced to describe how Americans of European descent come to identify themselves by gauging the importance of their European origins and their status of being American (Waters, 1990). Waters observes that for white European descendants, articulating ethnicity is a costless activity allowing them to celebrate their "individualistic symbolic ethnic identity" (p.449), without impairing their primary identity of being American. Waters suggests that claiming ethnic options is a "costless activity" (p.117) for these Americans because these asserted options are often a matter of personal choice without much real effect on their everyday lives. This is because a costless identity is built on an assimilationist model where an assumed, dominant, and 'neutral' Anglo culture serves as the prototype (see Alba and Nee (2009) for a detailed theorisation of this process), while other ethnicities are assessed against it. In other words, one limit of the notion of ethnic options lies in the fact that it operates in a colour-coded fashion. Not all ethnicities can equally enjoy this costless activity; while white European descendants can easily mention their white European roots without impairing their American-ness, non-white Americans have to navigate their identity expression in order to secure their American status.

In relation to the concept of collective identity, Waters' concept of ethnic option demonstrates its potential to incorporate the aforementioned relational and intersectional perspective in three ways. First, it reiterates the symbolic importance of physical appearance in determining membership of an ethnic group. While mixed individuals who 'look white' can exercise their ethnic option of being white without being challenged, those who are 'not white enough' or 'ambiguously white' might encounter further questioning if they make the same claim. The definition and maintenance of ethnic

boundaries returns to using racialised difference as a point of reference. Second, an individual's decision to identify with one side of their heritage needs to be interpreted alongside the racial hierarchy and their fluid positions within it. Third, the concept of ethnic options reveals the sociological significance behind the action of choosing an ethnic identity; identity choices are constrained and constituted by social practices, which determine available forms and meanings for these options (Aspinall and Song, 2013). This means that expressions of identity options are not solely determined by the individuals who exercise the choice but also by the social matrix in which the individuals live. They can be creative about the ways they negotiate their identity, but this creativity is bound by their resources, location and the specific socio-historical conditions in which they are situated.

1.4 Conclusion

The chapter thus far has explained how one's identity is simultaneously embedded in social relationships and constrained by one's social location. Through the theoretical framework, the sociality of identity is reiterated: not only are memories and reflections always constructed within the dominant categories of the social world (Ahmed, 1997), but the telling of memories and reflection should only be understood in a situational and contextual fashion. The discussion here suggests that mixed individuals obtain meanings of collective ethnicities from daily interactions, which in turn become the building blocks used to frame their personalised identity articulations. Individuals' capabilities to make sense of and reinterpret meaning are bounded by the resources available to them. Therefore, not every mixed individual makes sense of their mixedness in the same way because the ways the individuals relate to the world differ.

As mentioned several times in this section already, one emerging message is that identity is a dialectic process between similarity and difference. Doing an identity is about connecting oneself to a complex range of relationships but also about drawing out boundaries to differentiate oneself from other people. Therefore, the concept of difference occupies a central space in the conceptualisation of identity, in that differences are revoked and valorised through the process of relating and comparing against what is considered as the normative convention and the dominant, agreed-upon definition of reality (Scott, 2015). To complement this section, the next one will take a closer look at the production, negotiation and resistance of racialised differences.

Part 2 Contesting racialised difference

Whilst not explicitly citing the interactionist tradition, Hall (1996b) reminds us that “it is only through the relation to the other, the relation to what it is not [...] that identity can be constructed” (p.4). Hall’s quote not merely encapsulates the relational and interactive nature of identity, but it also recognises the role of differences in the making of identity. The concept of racialised difference holds great analytical value for the exploration of how ‘mixed-race’ becomes meaningful in certain contexts. Imbued with meanings, racialised difference is made explicit over the course of forming relations with others. Therefore, any discussions on how one comes to understand one’s identity should be premised on an understanding of the production and elicitation of racialised differences.

Before embarking on a discussion about racialised difference, it is perhaps helpful to first define the meaning of difference. Like many sociological concepts, difference is a socially constructed notion amenable to the power dynamics of social differentiations (Anthias, 1998). The making of difference is essentially a process of signification whereby commonalities around a specific axis of differentiation are invested with particular meanings (Brah, 2005). What lies at the heart of signifying differences is power, which is performatively constituted in and through economic, political, and cultural practices (Brah, 2005). In most cases, the differences are defined by the powerful to designate whom ‘others’ are, which objectifies and essentialises subordinate groups with a limited set of characteristics (Hall and du Gay, 1996; Bhabha, 2012).

Nonetheless, there is not an “overarching locus of power where dominance, subordination, solidarity and affiliation are based” (Brah, 2005:125). Specific discourses of difference are often “constituted, contested, reproduced, or re-signified” (p.125). In other words, difference is not always imposed with negative connotations; voluntary nominations of difference can also be deployed to signify freedom and agency. Therefore, the language of difference is sometimes used by the dominated group to stress its separateness in order to authorise its own representations (Bulmer and Solomos, 1998). A more detailed discussion that focuses on the deployment of racialised difference for resistance can be found in Section 2.4.

2.1 The making of racialised difference⁷

One way to make sense of racialised difference is to investigate how it is reified. Bulmer and Solomos (1998) note that ‘race’ and ethnicity are systematic representations of difference whereby the dominated come to see and experience themselves as the ‘other’. Situating the concept of racialised difference in the sociology of ‘race’, one will find that the meaning of racialised difference is engendered during a process of racialisation, often denoting racism. The intricate inter-relationships between the three concepts, namely racialised difference, racism and racialisation, hence require a synthesised interpretation.

At the heart of social control, racial classifications were consequential for everyday lives through their use in the allocation of resources and penalties within power relations (Jenkins, 1996). In investigating how ‘race’ comes to be seen, Byrne (2006b) observes that ‘race’ is a particular way of seeing and categorising differences. It is achieved through linking visible differences to so-called racialised categories, which demands that “differences are defined and that a particular kind of seeing the human body is learnt, and then that those differences are placed in a hierarchy of power and value” (p.21). She then quotes Goldberg to delineate the power behind the production of racialised difference noting that “racist culture has been one of the central ways that modern social subjects make sense of and express themselves about the world they inhabit and invent” (p.9).

In line with this statement, racialised difference plays an important role in sustaining the racial logic. The construction of these ‘natural traits’, namely collective attributions and the production of categories, are central to producing racialised depictions and dispositions (Anthias, 2005). Scott (1992) contends that rather than seeing differences as a result of different ‘races’, it is racism that brings ‘race’ into being. The process of marking and classifying certain groups, as encapsulated by Hall (1997), is a significant exercise of symbolic power. In other words, what gets to be counted as a racial difference is whatever meanings racism attributes to those differences. These observations point to how racialised differences come into being by revealing the power of racism in eliciting and signifying racial differences. In relation to our current discussion, the process of negotiating racialised difference for mixed individuals implies an interpretation of traits ascribed to each racial heritage. This process is intrinsically intertwined with the working of racism, as one only

⁷ The singular form of the concept of racialised difference implies the very concept and experience of being different, whereas the plural form (differences) are also used by this thesis when the need arises to describe how difference is being made in many situations and times.

comes to be aware of the stigmatising effect of racialised differences within a racist context.

Moreover, racism exists in various forms. One form of racism places ‘races’ in a hierarchy founded on assumed biological inequalities, thus determining human inferiority and superiority based on phenotypical traits, for instance skintone, hair texture and height (Lentin, 2012). The production and institutionalisation of ‘natural’ racial categories, such as in survey questionnaires and official census forms, reflects the power to construct and assign meanings to groups based on physical differences (Omi and Winant, 2004). A more recent form of racism is manifest in culturalism, which claims that different racial groups hold fundamentally different cultures that are fixed and mutually exclusive (Barker, 1982). ‘Cultural difference’ is employed as a metaphor to illustrate the dominant racial ideology and cultural racism (Solomos and Back, 1996). This newer form of racism, as Small (1994) observes, is “closely tied into the end of the British Empire and a lingering ambivalence and prevarication over what to do with the colonies and the commonwealths” (p. 91). Small further notes that the new racism is premised on the stance that ‘it is natural for people to want to live amongst their own kind’ (ibid). The operation of cultural discourses has become a crucial part of the racialisation process that sustains the assumed fundamental differences and intensifies distrust among members of different groups. A consequence of this is the internalisation of cultural tropes, which contributes to the formulation of a belief of immutable cultures (Gilroy, 2004).

The purpose of discussing ‘old’ and ‘new’ racisms here is to illustrate various ‘sources’ contributing to the production of racialised differences: it could be one’s skintone or hair texture but it could also be one’s name, religion, or food consumption. Using either the culture or ‘nature’ tropes, both forms of racism are premised on the existence of natural races, whose members are inherently characterised by certain traits that make them inferior or superior, in order to maintain a racial hierarchy.

2.2 Seeing, living and learning about ‘race’

Having examined how racialised difference is created, I will now consider how it is learned in the social world. Viewing racialised difference as an outcome of racism encourages us to pay attention to the signifying process in which ‘race’ becomes an important element in differentiating one from others. It calls for a closer examination of the conditions in which this occurs and who the agents are (Garner, 2009). The discussion to

be presented below aims at explaining the process of racialisation and delineating why 'race' remains central in everyday interactions.

Particularly prone to a conceptual conflation with 'race', racialisation moves beyond the relations among 'races' to investigating the process in which groups are defined as different 'races' (Small, 1994). A primary feature of racialisation is to use inherent and biological characteristics to produce boundaries for the purpose of racial classification (Miles and Brown, 2003). Racialisation also indicates the incorporation of cultural and political processes that evoke 'race' as a means of understanding (Murji and Solomos, 2005). On other side of the Atlantic, Omi and Winant's racial formation theory (2004) and the racialised system theory by Bonilla-Silva (1997) also demonstrate a similar theoretical position towards the social construction of 'race'. 'Race' as a social construct operates at both the individual level and the social level, shaping how people perceive populations in society and the ways they ascribe meanings to bodily features (Omi and Winant, 2004). The systematic operation of racial domination profoundly influences the organisation of social interactions and material allocations, generating differential juridical and civil treatments on the basis of phenotypical differences and racial stereotypes (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). These conceptual frameworks recognise racialisation as an ideological process through which racial categories are created, inhabited and transformed. In this process, social, economic and political forces determine the content and significance of racial categories. Moving on, the next subsection will elaborate on how racism renders racialised difference 'deviant' from white norms.

2.3 Theorising whiteness: the unspoken register of racial thinking

The notion of racialised difference implies a sense of comparison: it benchmarks against what is considered 'normative' and 'standard' and it implies a form of othering that objectifies and essentialises subordinated groups. Racialisation remains an active process resting in the hands of the most powerful who designate the 'natural' status of whiteness (Ali, 2003). Therefore, examining the contents and conceptual development of whiteness helps us account for individual rationales for choosing a particular ethnic option, and understand parents' motivations for encouraging their children to form particular ethnic identities.

Long perceived as a homogenous and invisible category, whiteness has operated as a taken-for-granted concept serving as an unspoken register of racist thinking (Nayak, 2007). Whiteness occupies the position of the norm in racialised schemas (Byrne, 2006b) and it only becomes visible and problematic from the perspective of the non-white (Frankenberg, 1993; Garner, 2006). The process of othering in most predominantly white societies is a process of placing ethnic minority groups in racial categories separate from the dominant white group (Cornell and Hartmann, 2007). In the racialisation process, racism endows whiteness with positive values and assigns negative values to blackness as part of a continuing effort to employ whiteness as a signifier of privileged access to resources, materials, psychological and social capital (Fanon, 2009 [1986]). Specifically, there has been a common allegiance to ‘hegemonic whiteness’ (Hughey, 2010), referring to an ideal type of whiteness shared between and across white racial actors in divergent social worlds. People obtain and internalise “culturally valorised mythologies taught in social interactions” which they accept as a priori reality over time (Hughey, 2015:220).

Extending the sociological gaze to whiteness opens up the possibility of using the concept as an analytical category for unravelling the weaving and reweaving of racial categories, hierarchies and boundaries (Twine and Gallagher, 2008). It also highlights how whiteness can be used as a resource and contingent hierarchy (Garner, 2006). It elicits, as Nayak (2007) puts it, “many shades of differences that lie within the category of whiteness to achieve a nuanced understanding that some people are ‘whiter’ than others whilst some are not white enough” (p.738). Particularly relevant to this study, Twine and Gallagher (2008) observe that the formation of white identity among members of racial and ethnic minorities has been a salient feature of the latest wave of research on whiteness. Twine contends that whiteness is illustrated in its situational and relational contingencies that reshape white identities within a context of shifting racial boundaries. Through studying the nuanced and locally specific ways in which whiteness as a form of power is defined and deployed, Twine and Gallagher (2008) find that whiteness can be deployed as a “taken-for-granted entitlement, a desired social status, a perceived source of victimisation and a tenuous situational identity” (p.7).

Granted, whiteness has been increasingly problematised in Britain in terms of ethnic and religious differences, where the broad ‘white’ category refers to a large population that includes the Jewish, the Welsh, the Scottish, Irish Catholics and White English Protestants (Jenkins, 1997). This division within the white group is further complicated by the

inclusion of EU migrants, especially those from Eastern Europe. Therefore, there is not a simple answer to address the questions of who counts as white and how ‘white’ they are. However, the reason that this thesis employs ‘whiteness’ as a generalised term to refer to Scottishness and/or Britishness is to highlight “the commonality of experiences of ethnic minorities in relation to the white majority” (Song, 2003:126).

Applying whiteness to mixedness

In the current context, whiteness can be conceptualised as a form of social capital. One particularly helpful argument by Coleman (1988) is that group enforcements of norms and individual internalisation of norms are a key vehicle for sustaining the acquisition of social capital. In line with this argument, a shared understanding and practice of whiteness can be understood as a means for ethnic minorities of achieving social mobility and recognition from the white majority. However, whiteness is often class-specific and value-laden (Reay et al., 2008). The privilege associated with whiteness is not open to all and deeply ingrained in both the personal and the structural (Knowles, 2008). Nonetheless, for those who have access to resources, whiteness operates as a set of values and routines that mixed individuals and/or their parents can voluntarily adhere to in order to obtain increased social mobility and to access social privileges. The voluntary adoption of a white identity resonates with what Twine and Gallagher (2008) observe to be “the third wave of whiteness”, namely the recruitment of ethnic minorities to whiteness. It offers a degree of mobility to access social privileges and to dissociate from the stigma attached to racialised minorities, thereby gaining both tangible and intangible benefits.

In negotiating racialised differences, mixed individuals of partial white heritage are reported to make efforts to deploy the delicate distance between whiteness and racialised differences (Twine and Gallagher, 2008). The purpose of doing this is arguably seeking to “maintain, shift, blur, sidestep, subvert, erode, eliminate or merely accept such boundaries” (Telles and Sue, 2009:131). It has been observed that mixed people mobilise a range of social credentials, such as accent, birthplace and ‘blood’ to match the hegemonic discourse on cultural and national acceptability so as to qualify for the honourable white status (Ali, 2003). As the data derived from this study is about to reveal, the case of mixedness complicates the conventional reading of whiteness by associating one’s white identity with a colonial fantasy based on a usually vague interpretation of one’s non-white heritage. This tendency can find discursive evidence in colonial discourses, which are usually compounded by imaginary history (Bhabha, 2012).

In relation to the Scottish context, in a quantitative study concerning Scottish national identity, McCrone and Bechhofer (2010) find that Scots are less likely to accept claims from non-white persons to be Scottish. They conclude that Scottishness is more likely to be equated with whiteness; hence Scottishness is a more exclusive category when it comes to national identity. Elsewhere, in studying multiculturalism in Scotland by exploring minority ethnic communities' engagement in the arts, Netto (2008) contends that minority ethnic groups still struggle to be recognised as part of the 'meta' Scottish community; barriers remain for ethnic minorities who want to claim membership to Scottishness. In relation to the situation in England, Tizard and Phoenix (2002) study has also shown that many mixed English youths view Englishness as synonymous with whiteness; they were hence more likely to classify themselves as British. These observations raise questions about the interrelation between a national self-definition and the way the majority perceive racialised minorities, highlighting the importance of embedding the identity enquiry within a wider socio-cultural environment. In the Scottish context, where the white population constitutes the vast majority⁸, there is a range of normative assumptions of what Scottishness entails and who could be a Scot. Not only does this indicate that some 'non-white' mixed Scots might be denied a Scottish membership, they might also internalise a desire for whiteness and voluntarily seek to justify whiteness.

Whiteness is a manifestation of racial classifications. It serves as an unspoken register for a particular set of norms, cultures and values against which racialised differences are elicited. Embodied in a sense of Scottishness, whiteness is a key element in constructing the language of cultural racism in Scotland and it plays a key role in defining the boundary of who counts as a Scot. The structural racism indicates that the values, norms and practices associated with whiteness continue to prevail (Burton et al., 2010). Individuals within the racialised system may contribute to the reproduction of this system through social practices (ibid., 442). By examining the mechanism of seeing and recognising racialised difference through the white gaze, we can better interpret an individual's motivation behind their self-positioning in relation to their white heritage.

⁸ According to the 2011 Scottish Census, 96% (i.e. 5,084,407 out of 5,295,403) of the Scottish population was identified as white, whereas this figure is 87% in England and Wales.

2.4 An alternative interpretation of racialised difference: resistance, exoticness and freedom

The discussion thus far has focused on the negative connotations associated with racialised differences, but racialised difference is not inherently negative. It only becomes a stigma when imbued with negative valuations. Song (2014) calls for a clearer theoretical distinction between racialisation and racism and contends that the former is a looser concept incorporating a variety of racial thinking and attributions. Therefore, it is necessary to include a “relativistic assessment of each racial interaction and the degree to which it can be regarded as racist” (ibid., 115) when one draws distinctions between the two concepts. This distinction is relevant in order to better make sense of ‘mixed-race’ identities, since the concept of racialised difference offer possibilities of reconceptualising ‘race’ in different contexts.

An alternative interpretation of racialised difference means that the concept does not necessarily signify inferiority; it can also be strategically employed to become an advantage. The main contention is that ‘race’, constituted by racialised differences, is a mobilising power in the social and cultural process to construct a sense of collective identity (Murji and Solomos, 2015). Individuals identified as being different seek to legitimise their definitions of cultural differences by claiming a racial category and reversing it into a positive value (Bulmer and Solomos, 1998). An example of critical engagement with racialised difference can be found in Hall (2000) work on the formation of collective blackness. Hall looks into the mechanisms by which racially ascribed identities are transformed into a form of resistance to counter racism while also explaining why collective blackness simultaneously valorises and silences black experience (Hall, 1991; Hall, 1996b). In this vein, identities based on ‘race’ are not simply imposed, but are often the outcome of resistance and political struggle in which racialised minorities play a key and active role (Bulmer and Solomos, 1998).

In the case of mixedness, Ali (2005) discusses the ways in which the exoticisation of mixedness functions as a mediator of racialised (hetero)sexualities for mixed people. Adopting a Foucauldian approach, she contends that whilst mixed people are constrained by the discursive regime in which they are induced to become racialised subjects, they still have opportunities to subvert these dominant discourses and challenge the dominant ideals of ‘race’. Through managing and contesting the discursive uncertainties of racialised bodies at the intersection with dominant notions of exoticness and attractiveness, a female

mixed body can be framed to be desirable. Elsewhere, mixedness is considered to transform one's 'race' from a burden into an opportunity. Comparing the life experiences of two mixed individuals, Barack Obama and Cedric Dover, Slate (2014) theorises 'race' as freedom by arguing that both men have achieved transracial solidarity based on their 'coloured' side rather than their white side. Aiming to achieve transracial solidarity based on their 'colouredness', Obama and Dover share a cosmopolitan imaginary, namely being black while remaining mixed, in the context of racialised societies, so that they transcend racial and national boundaries to embrace a variety of affiliations. However, Slate points out that the 'race' as freedom model does not necessarily apply to every mixed individual. Born in a racialised society, neither Obama nor Dover could choose to be white, yet both of them have privileged access to interpersonal networks and other material resources that provided them with the capacity to cross both national and racial borders thanks to their middle-class backgrounds. Linking this to the previous discussion on social location, seeing 'race' as a freedom might only apply to the privileged few.

The main purpose of the second section of this chapter is to delineate the mechanisms by which racialised differences are enacted and signified. Complementing the preceding discussion, this section further explains why the negotiation of racialised differences lies at the heart of doing mixed identities and how one comes to learn about and deal with these differences. However, it is worth emphasising that although 'race' features prominently in the formation of mixed identities, we should not ignore other dimensions of social differentiation, such as gender, class and migration trajectory, or the intersection of these as embodied by mixed individuals and their families. These contextual factors influence 'mixed-race' experiences by determining the repertoires available for identity work. Some axes of difference will be foregrounded when interpreting meanings of mixedness.

Part 3 The discursive construction of mixedness

This final section of this chapter will consider the role of social discourse, the last key element in the construction of mixed identities. As Hall (1996b) notes, identity is produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices. The role of social discourse in reproducing cultural representations is also noted in the aforementioned suturing metaphor. In this vein, the present section will focus on social discourses, particularly those revolving around the ideas of post-raciality and individualisation. The upcoming discussion seeks to explain why the internalisation of these discourses profoundly shapes the ways in which mixed individuals and parents

interpret their experiences and make sense of mixedness. As these discursive elements feature widely in the interviewees' accounts, exploring these discourses helps interpret the meanings of and motivations for adopting these languages. In this regard, the discussion below provides a theoretical foundation to address the third research question, which concerns the similarities and differences in interpretations of mixedness by parents and by mixed individuals.

3.1 A post-racial future? The emerging discourse of post-raciality

As a form of social practice, discourse plays a crucial role in producing, maintaining and changing social relations of power (Fairclough, 1992). Individuals internalise what is socially made available to them and they use these internalised discourses in their social activities. This thesis maintains that individuals' interpretations of mixedness are essentially based on the deployment of social discourses around 'race' that are often reflexive of dominant ideologies. In Britain, the dominant folk conception of 'race' has associated physical appearance with a particular, bounded heritage and cultural ancestry (Tyler, 2005). In the midst of ongoing racism and social divisions based on 'race', the public and private readings of the 'mixed-race' phenomenon inevitably draw on various forms of racial discourses to serve different purposes.

As Wacquant (1997) notes, 'race' from its inception has been a mixture of science with common sense and it is traded on the complicity between them. The socio-historical formation of 'race' has produced a broad range of discourses around the idea of 'race'. It is therefore necessary to distinguish the folk, lay language of 'race' from sociological interpretations of 'race'. Set out to review a selected range of racial discourses often associated with mixedness, the discussion shown below will show why these post-racial discourses, often evident in political rhetoric, not only encourage an uncritical celebration of diversity but they silence the experiences of the disadvantaged by eliminating the language used to describe racism.

Over recent years, there has been a growth in media coverage of the topic of 'mixed-race' and interracial families in Britain. While some stories maintain a journalistic neutrality by paying attention to the historical and social implications of recognising this group (BBC, 2011; The Economist, 2014; The Guardian, 2011), others adopt an over-simplified and often speculative view which associates mixedness with exoticness, attractiveness and

sometimes progressive social milieu (Daily Mail, 2011; Metro, 2016) . Although most stories seem to move away from the ‘marginal man’ standpoint, there is an understood advocating that things are getting better through portraying ‘mixed-race’ as the embodiment of post-racial diversity.

A more sociological, and perhaps less colloquial, concept to use in reference to ‘mixed-race’ is ‘conviviality’. Defined by Gilroy (2005), conviviality is “the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multi-cultures an ordinary feature of social life in Britain’s urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere” (ibid., xv). Proposed to signify and foresee a ‘planetary humanism’, conviviality functions as a challenge to the idea of absolute races and fixed identities by highlighting a collective sense of belonging regardless of racial differences (Gilroy, 2005; Wise and Velayutham, 2013). Particularly evident in music and other features of youth lifestyle consumption, the spontaneous, tolerant and open conviviality turns racial and ethnic differences into an unremarkable principle of metropolitan life. In this regard, the concept of conviviality does provide a new discursively crafted device to negotiate racialised differences and to imagine how to live with differences. Nonetheless, there is a danger in the simplistic framing of mixedness as an illustration of convivial culture, as noted by Caballero et al. (2008), which bypasses forms of mixing that have occurred between other generations and in other forms outside of urban areas. Elsewhere, in criticising the associations of mixedness and diversity, Song (2015) contends that it is opportunistic to view the phenomenon of mixedness as evidence of the demise of racism and social barriers. Notwithstanding the growing degree of mixing, Britain is far from being ‘post-racial’; and the level and pattern of ethnic mixing remain largely uneven (Caballero et al., 2008).

The unscrutinised associations between mixedness and social progression can be partly explained by the rise of post-racial discourses. Researchers working on ‘race’ have documented the rise of post-racial discourse in the US (Gallagher, 2003; Omi and Winant, 2009; Da Costa, 2014) and in the UK (Nayak, 2006; Harries, 2014) in response to state-led political projects to silence ‘race’ and dismiss racism. Interestingly, in contrast to the sociological reading of post-raciality which employs the notion as a conceptual tool to destabilise and dismantle the process of racialisation (Ali, 2003; Byrne, 2011), the folklore version of post-raciality often holds an impressionistic and superficial view that sees ‘race’ as an irrelevancy to everyday lives (Gallagher, 2003; St Louis, 2015). A commonly held view, as observed by Redclift (2014), is that diversity can dissolve racism. Often cited by

politicians and the popular media, the post-racial discourse undermines the achievements of anti-racist movements and dismisses racial inequalities.

In Britain, the public erasure of the language of 'race' is addressed by some sociologists. Kapoor (2013) notes that the absence of 'race' and racism in official discourse has become a growing concern. It has been noticed that the language used to refer to racism has become gradually more ambiguous or even started to disappear; rather, a 'benign' version framed around 'diversity' is steadily on the rise (Kapoor, 2013). The adoption of a more publicly palatable term 'diversity' indicates the UK government's continual efforts to legitimise and institutionalise racism by changing the language to describe the issue (Rollock et al., 2011). As a result, structural inequalities are overlooked whilst racism is often framed as an individual problem in the neo-liberal tone. The profound (and possibly intended) consequence of the erasure of 'race' in the public sphere is turning 'race' into a private matter (Goldberg, 2009). Furthermore, 'race' is rendered a banal and harmless idea that is replaced by de-politicised terms such as 'culture' or 'background' (Harries, 2014). The use of these ambiguous terms obscures the unequal power relations while the oppressing power of 'race' is not dwindled because of this (Harries, 2014). The direct consequence of the privatisation of 'race' and the muting the terms of 'race' is to "make the multiple racism which continue more difficult to name, to identify, to address" (Kapoor, 2013:1043).

Reflecting the post-racial agenda, the discourse of multiculturalism is arguably one of the most prevailing discourses addressomg the comptemporary racial landscape. For Nobles (2002), the very idea of multiculturalism is premised on the idea that discrete racial groups exist. Celebrating differences at a collective level, the discourse of multiculturalism reduces inequalities to discussions of differences and diversity (Lentin and Titley, 2008). This particular rhetoric views diversity as a capitalist assert and a governed and managed activity, supporting a particular form of "civic multi-culture in which conflicts, contestation and inequality are not visible, [and] where discrimination on racial or other grounds is not discussed" (Jones, 2014:611). Employed to incorporate social subjects that does not fit into the 'norm' (Lentin and Titley, 2012), multiculturalism, together with the notion of 'diversity', is a powerful discursive device and conceptual tool to address the problem of difference, most specifically ethnic and racial. It is used to maintain normative whiteness that colonises British political life, and it acts as a discursive tool in constructing a seemingly progressive political milieu (Kapoor, 2013; Modood, 1998). Given the pan-

European meta-narrative surrounding the idea of ‘failed’ multiculturalism, Lentin and Titley (2012) contend that the current backlash against multiculturalism is essentially a denial of the lived experience of the multicultural and a refusal to acknowledge the centrality of ‘race’ in the modern political formation. The language of multiculturalism is implicitly underpinned by a single, often Eurocentric version of cultural practice and hence reproduces the existing racial hierarchy.

The implications of these post-racial discourses discussed above are multifold. Much of this post-racial language projects a rosy picture of an inclusive and diverse society without paying attention to the real conflicts and divisions based on ‘race’. It blends circulating racial ideology with the seemingly banal language of diversity to depoliticise anti-racism, creating an illusion for many that it is not ‘race’ but ‘differences’ that matter. Stressing social interaction and adherence to ‘British value’, the language surrounding post-raciality silences the real issue of racism and structural inequalities. As a result, individuals are reluctant to name and address racism and are more inclined to see racism as an individual problem rather than as a social one. Exposed to the post-racial language, mixed people and parents of mixed children inevitably draw upon these discourses when they try to make sense of their lives and experiences, as these prevalent post-racial discourses shape the language they utilise to describe their identities and influence their perceptions of the mixed population in society.

3.2 A ‘dis-embedded’ version of individualisation

In this much shorter section, individualisation and discourses around this notion will be considered in relation to their relevancy to mixedness. Within the substantial body of sociological literature, Beck, Giddens and Bauman are commonly identified as the main individualisation theorists. While they, and others, do not necessarily hold the same view on the topic, the individualisation thesis is marked by an emphasis on personal choice, on individual responsibility and on the evolving relationship between individuals and social determinants (Howard, 2012; Dawson, 2012). In a review of contemporary sociological literature on individualisation, Dawson (2012) proposes a distinction between an ‘embedded’ version and a ‘disembedded’ version of individualisation. Dawson argues that the embedded version of individualisation describes “the condition in which individuals live their life in late modernity” (p.314). With empirical backing, it takes forms of stratification into consideration and suggests that social members may actively exercise reflexivity and choices within the context of traditional ties, relations and norms. One

example can be found in Smart and Shipman's 2004 study of transnational families. Given differential migration histories and personal routes, individuals of ethnic minority backgrounds may hold different perceptions of their traditional culture and religion. They avail themselves of different routes to find meanings either by following traditions or by breaking with some traditions; it is also possible that they voluntarily commit to both tradition and change. Therefore, this study demonstrates how individual approaches to conventions are increasingly diversified, as individuals exercise "contextual choice among socially constructed options, or relational choices taken in the setting of attentiveness to others" (p. 493). In other words, the 'freedom' to define individual biography is not available to most.

It appears that the latter version that Dawson proposed, the disembedded individualisation, is more suitable for describing the experiences of the individuals in this study. Best understood as a "common vocabulary of motives", as termed by Mills (1940:906), this version has little empirical backing when describing how individuals take greater control of their own lives. The purchase of this particular version of individualisation lies in its potential to allow people to "explain themselves to the world" (Dawson, 2012:314). Individuals employ the language of individualisation to describe ideas, hopes, aspirations and justifications as they come to account for their behaviours, decisions and claims of identities. They may deliberately downplay immediate structural constraints but construct their motives based on self-defined individuality. Compared to the embedded version, disembedded individualisation has a rhetorical power that allows for a slippery usage in narrating individual biography, especially when it is coupled with post-racial discourses. This usage enables individuals to assert a particular kind of individuality based on being mixed or being associated with 'mixed-race'. As will be revealed in the empirical data chapters, there is a tendency among interviewees to configure mixedness as an enabling agent that 'empowers' them to become whom they want to be. This disembedded empowerment is often presented as a lifestyle, a personal choice and an informed decision. It enables one to re-interpret racialised difference and to negotiate a potentially disadvantaged position, accommodating the uncertain individualities and expressing a distinctive type of authority and identity (Chaney, 1996).

Overall, the complex interplay of individualisation and post-raciality discourses offer individuals different routes to interpret mixed experiences. Part 3 has demonstrated that whilst framed in a progressive fashion, the so-called post-racial discourses signify

continuing reliance upon the conceptualisation of concrete 'races' and show the resilience of racial thinking and the perpetuation of racial ideologies. On the other hand, individualisation discourses offer discursive space for the creation of biographical accounts to connect one to others. These discourses provide socially produced ideas and knowledge for mixed people and their families, opening up possibilities to generate meanings of mixedness creatively.

Conclusion of Chapter 3

Drawing on theoretical perspectives from the sociology of 'race', identity, and the wider discursive context, the theoretical framework presented above attends to different dimensions of the social conditioning from which identities are formulated. Together with the empirical studies discussed in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework not only provides powerful tools to analyse experiences of both sets of interviewees but also creates opportunities to bring both sets of experiences together. With regard to the methodological implications, the integrated theoretical approach implies an analytical focus on the process in which identities are being 'done' or made. This highlights the value of using illustrative cases that elaborate the social conditioning and relationships through which one obtains a sense of self.

Chapter 4 Methodology

1. Introduction

In an article discussing the problems and implications of researching identity, Anthias (2002) notes that in most cases, researchers might not find “useful or interesting answers by asking direct questions about identity” (p.492). The best way to tackle this question, according to Anthias, is to allow subjects to talk about themselves and their experiences so that their identities could emerge through the narration. Seeking to explore the formation of ‘mixed-race’ identities, this thesis has adopted a similar strategy. By inviting interviewees to share their experiences and stories, I was able to ‘tease out’ answers about their identities.

Informed by the research aim and questions (as laid out on p.16 of this thesis), qualitative semi-structured interviews were selected as the main data collection method. Generally, the method described above has the potential to capture nuanced, complex and sophisticated information with an interpretivist tradition that enables researchers to focus on the ways in which world is interpreted, understood and experienced by the researched subject (Mason, 2002). Particularly in relation to the scope of the study, the selected approach can be justified from three perspectives. First, as with most sociological concepts, meanings associated with ‘race’ and ‘mixed-race’ are deeply situational and contextualised. Qualitative interviewing can bring out the tensions and contradictions involved in interpreting ‘race’, revealing the changes in identities over time and the complex interplay of social dimensions. Second, a broader life-story approach is central to understanding the construction, maintenance, expression and reforming of individual identities (Howard, 2012). The focus on individuals’ autobiographical accounts helps reveal the meaning-making process, offering space for researchers to explore why interviewees think these experiences are relevant to their identities. Finally, the chosen approach to data collection and analysis helps delineate the workings of ‘race’, namely the mechanism that makes ‘race’ salient and the real-life effects brought about by ‘race’. As Knowles (2003) puts, ‘race’ is simultaneously personal and social. It creates differential experiences for individuals but it is actualised through social practices. In this vein, the focus on lived experiences of being racialised resonates with Mills’ discussion of the interrelation between “personal troubles and public issues” (Mills. 1959:8), highlighting the necessity to attend to individual biographies and social settings.

The key purpose of this chapter is to delineate the steps taken before, during, and after the fieldwork, and to explain how the research method was suited to answering the research questions. The rest of the chapter consists of four major sections addressing different yet interrelated methodological concerns. It starts with an overview of the fieldwork, providing detail on the data collection procedure which the recruitment and stratification of the sample. It then moves on to address the research context and ethics issues, reviewing the research process as a whole. The third substantive part tackles data analysis. By specifying the two phases of data analysis, I will explain what steps were taken in each phase and why a major change of analysis strategy was introduced halfway through the analysis. The last section will reflect on two issues deemed pertinent to the production of interview knowledge, namely my positionalities and the language of ‘race’ adopted by interviewees throughout the fieldwork.

2. An overview of the interview process

One element missing from the current scholarship on ‘mixed-race’, according to Song (2012), is the study of the ‘mixed-race’ experience in a comparative and holistic manner. Song points to the lack of research comparing empirical data obtained from mixed populations of a variety of ethnic backgrounds in Britain. Up to now, most studies have focussed on one particular form of mixedness (black-white) and analysed only this group’s experiences. Meanwhile, there is a disjunction between the studies conducted with mixed individuals and the studies conducted with the parents of mixed individuals; there has been hardly any scholarly attempt to bring the perspectives of the two groups together in a single piece of analysis. In view of these knowledge gaps, this study aims to broaden the scope of analysis by not only incorporating parents’ accounts but also cross-analysing a wider range of mixed experiences in order to achieve a more comprehensive account of mixed identities.

To this end, I decided to include two sets of interviewees in this study: individuals who self-identified as ‘mixed-race’ and parents of ‘mixed-race’ children. As a result, a total of thirty-one interviews were conducted across Scotland between July 2014 and June 2016⁹. Interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and two hours. Two separate sets of interview guides were prepared with each guide consisting of a list of open-ended questions designed to explore the nuances of meanings derived from a variety of social situations¹⁰.

⁹ A spreadsheet with interviewee information is available in the appendix section of this thesis.

¹⁰ Interview guides used for both sets of interviews can be found in appendix 3 and 4.

For interviews with mixed individuals, the intention was to produce nuanced accounts of the ways in which they identified themselves in various contexts and the extent to which they considered their parental family had influenced their identifications. These interviews focused on first-hand accounts of how the subjects made sense of meaningful events and drew out family relationships to substantiate their identity claims. The interview guide for parents was designed with the primary goal of exploring their experiences of being a member of an interethnic family and of understanding their attitudes towards their children's mixed heritage. Additionally, each version of the interview guide allowed space for my participants to discuss anything they felt relevant to the topic of 'mixed-race'. The significance and interpretations of 'race', as well as the social conditionings through which these meanings are generated, slowly surfaced over our conversations. In spite of the different scopes of investigation, the data generated from these two sets of interviews helped collaboratively address the formation of 'mixed-race' identities in a familial context. The dual-focus allowed for an enhanced understanding of the formation of mixed identities, as the multiple perspectives derived from differential social positions revealed a bigger picture.

The fieldwork started shortly after securing the ethics approval in June 2014. Both sets of interviewees were recruited at the same time. As anticipated beforehand, recruiting participants proved to be challenging. One complicating issue was the relatively small size of the mixed population based on the 2011 Scottish Census (The Scottish Government, 2011). Another problem was that the mixed population tended to be 'hidden' as there were no third sectors or charity organisations in Scotland addressing the needs of mixed families. Therefore, the initial stage of recruitment was heavily reliant on snowballing. I made my initial contacts through personal and extended networks and I managed to secure seven interviewees within the first two months. In fact, snowballing proved to be an efficient way to gain access to this hidden group, as eleven of the thirty-one interviewees (both mixed individuals and parents) were recruited with this method. The first few interviews were also utilised as pilot studies whereby I tested the accessibility of interview questions. Nonetheless, it quickly came to my attention that the snowballing technique had led to a homogenous pattern of participants. For instance, the first two parents I interviewed were of Chinese ethnicity, with one coming from Hong Kong and the other from mainland China. Four other mixed individuals, who were contacted by my colleagues at the university, were all educated at the same HE institution.

Aware of the risk of obtaining a partial picture, I complemented the snowballing method by using online and newspaper advertisements. Targeting residents in Scotland, the advertisements were posted in the Scottish sections of two popular online forums, Gumtree and Netmums (one of the biggest UK parenting advice websites), a UK-focussed mixed family blog (<http://mixedracefamilies.blogspot.co.uk/>), and one free Glasgow-based newspaper. The online recruitment was ongoing throughout the whole fieldwork period. At the mid-stage of the recruitment, a £5 prepaid gift card was introduced in order to boost the response rate. Towards the final stages of recruitment, £10 prepaid gift cards replaced the £5 ones in order to secure the last five suitable participants within the shortest timeframe. The open recruitment seemed to offset the ‘biases’ implied by the snowballing method, as participants at this stage appeared to come from a broader range of backgrounds in terms of age, ethnicity, social class and migration history.

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that whilst this study by no means intended to achieve a comprehensive representation of the entire ‘mixed-race’ population in Scotland, it was nevertheless the intention to obtain a sample that was as diverse as possible. Therefore, the overarching principle of the sampling process was to maximise diversity in terms of the key demographic characteristics of ethnic makeups, gender, class, age/generation, immigration status, and family structure. This was to obtain information relevant to the research questions and to the understanding of the formation of mixed identity. The aforementioned information sheet allowed me to track the recruitment process but also to adjust recruitment strategies during the process. Therefore, a stricter set of selection criteria was applied at the later stage of the recruitment process. In other words, the early stage of recruitment was more ‘relaxed’ than the latter stage. The sampling process will be elaborated in the next section.

In terms of making interview arrangements, my student email address and office telephone number were provided in all versions of the advertisements. When interested individuals got in touch, they would usually introduce their ethnic background and their ‘role’ in relation to mixedness. In return, I would enclose the information sheet and consent form¹¹ to explain the research purposes and aims. For interested individuals, I also let them decide when and where to meet. Most interviewees were happy to meet in public, but a few preferred to be interviewed at home, mostly due to childcare commitments. All

¹¹ Samples of information sheet and consent form can be found in Appendices 1, 2 and 5.

interviewees were asked to sign the relevant information sheet and consent form prior to the interviews. Interviewees were also given time to decide whether they wanted to be recorded. Of the thirty-one interviewees, six declined to be recorded due to personal reasons, and in these cases, I was given permissions to take notes¹². Interestingly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, racialised physical features were often mentioned as clues for how to spot each other at each initial encounter. When making interview arrangements, Maria, mother of two boys of Polish-African heritage, wrote that she would be “easy to spot” because she “will be with two young boys with large-standing Afro hair”. Linda, a German mother who converted to Islam, mentioned that she would probably be “the only white person wearing a hijab in the café.” I also somehow resorted to the same strategy by highlighting my ethnicity on a few occasions, although I suspected that in most cases my name had already given my ethnicity away. To address these racialised dynamics occurring during the fieldwork, Part 5 of this chapter will reflect in detail on how racialised features have been internalised and utilised by individuals as identity markers in their interactions with others.

2.1 Locating and categorising the sample

As mentioned before, the decision to include participants from diverse ethnic backgrounds was informed by the literature and the research questions. Whilst it was beyond the thesis’ scope to compare group experiences or to summarise how one form of mixedness might experience racialisation differently from another, I believed that gathering a broader sample would maximise the possibility of understanding mixed experience and help answer the research questions.

That said, during the recruitment process I attempted to classify participants based on their ethnicities. Parent interviewees were classified based on their self-nominated nationalities (and specific ethnic group if they come from multi-ethnic countries). While the categorisation of mixed interviewees was less straightforward, four broad categories were generated based on parental heritages, namely *White-Black*, *White-Asian*, *White-Chinese* and *White-Other*. The purpose of doing so was to give readers an overview of the participants’ backgrounds as well as to facilitate my own data coding. As shown in the data analysis, these classifications had few implications for the ways data was presented as the actual analysis was orientated by differential interpretations of meanings of mixedness. In

¹² More detail about research ethics can be found in Section 3.2 (pp.76-78).

fact, on more than one occasion, interviewees sharing a similar ethnic background, for instance, White-Asian, demonstrated different attitudes towards their mixed heritages. Therefore, these classifications did not necessarily link to subject identifications and interpretations of experience.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to point out that the four categories were of a contested nature. Most terminologies entail both ancestral and actual origins that demand further clarification in analyses. For instance, the *White* category was further disaggregated into four sub-categories, namely *White Scottish*, *White English*, *White Irish*, and *White Other*. For the non-white categories, *Black* was used to describe participants with black Caribbean and black African heritage, *Chinese* for those who identified as ethnic Chinese, whether it be mainland Chinese, Hong Kongese or Singaporean Chinese, *Asian* for people originating from South Asia and those of Indian descent. For other cases, *Other* was used to refer to interviewees who did not fall into any of the previously mentioned categories.

Furthermore, when it came to describing the ethnicities of participants, a conflation of racial and ethnic categories in the classification system was inevitable. For instance, there was a combination of racial terminologies (e.g. Black and White) and ethnic categories (e.g. Asian, Arab and Chinese) when I tried to describe a participant's ethnicity. This practice has also been identified in official census questionnaires and recognised as problematic by some sociologists (Aspinall, 2012; Morning, 2008), who argue that ethnicity in this case is measured by 'racial' dimensions such as skin colour. Nonetheless, for the current analysis, information about interviewees' ethnic and racial backgrounds is important because they profoundly shape the lived realities of the individuals. Recognising the controversies surrounding the usage of these categories, this study will provide details about each individual's ethnic background alongside the use of these terminologies in order to avoid further confusion or over-simplification.

2.2 The sample breakdown

The thirty-one interviewees were grouped into two categories, with sixteen falling under the *Mixed Individuals* category and fifteen under the *Parents* category. The two sets of interviewees were not biologically related; instead they were recruited separately via different routes. There were two occasions where mixed individuals were parents themselves (Ian and Charlene), in which case they were counted only once under the mixed individual category. On two other occasions, couples were jointly interviewed

(Cathy & Malik, Kat & Charlie). In these cases, each couple was counted as one parent (rather than two), as shown in the interviewee information sheet (Appendix 7).

Interviewee information overview

Group 1: 'Mixed-race' participants

Age Profile		
18-29yrs	30-39yrs	40s
9	6	1
Gender Profile		
Female	Male	
10	6	
Ethnic Profile		
White – Asian	7	
White– Chinese	4	
White - Black	3	
White - Other	2	

Group 2: Parent participants

Age Profile			
20s	30s	40s	50s+
4	5	5	1
Gender Profile			
Female	13		
Male	4 (including the two occasions where the fathers accompanied their spouses)		
Ethnic profile			
White Scottish/English	6		
White Others (non-British)	4		
Chinese (including interviewees from mainland China, Singapore and Hong Kong)	4		
African	3 (including the two fathers mentioned above, one of whom was from Congo and the other from Libya)		

The sample comprised individuals from highly diverse backgrounds. The majority of interviewees (n=29) lived in either Glasgow or Edinburgh at the time of interview. For the mixed individual group, the 16 interviewees were aged between 18 and their late 40s, and were from different social class backgrounds depending on their parents' occupations (for those in full-time education) or on their own occupations (for those with full-time jobs). They were indexed by four categories, namely White-Asian, White-Chinese, White-Black and White-Other. All mixed interviewees had one parent that could be broadly categorised as 'white'. For the parent group, the respondents self-identified as white (including Scottish, English, European and South African), Chinese (including mainland

Chinese, Hong Kongese and Singaporean Chinese), Arabic (Libyan) and African (Congolese). The group's ages spanned from their early 20s to their 70s, and interviewees came from a variety of social backgrounds and had taken different migration routes to Scotland.

3. Reflection of the fieldwork process

Having reviewed the actual research procedure, I will now address elements that might influence the whole research process. I will start by examining the research context, Scotland, through a methodological lens, and then move on to consider some ethical issues associated with researching 'race' and family relationships. Towards the end of this section, I will reflect on plans and attempts that were not actualised in real research practice and on the decisions I made during the process to address these changes.

3.1 Foregrounding the Scottish context

While the significance of addressing the Scottish context has been discussed in the Introduction, I want to return to this now by pointing out its methodological implications. In addition to filling the knowledge gap in the current body of British 'mixed-race' scholarship, researching Scottish 'mixed-race' experiences at a particular time also contextualised the study.

Scotland was the site where the fieldwork took place. The majority of interviews were conducted within the three-month period before and after the independence referendum taking place on 18th September 2014. During this period, local and national media provided coverage of the campaign on a daily basis. Not only did the discussions of Scottish identity and its relationship with a British/English identity permeate the public sphere, but people in Scotland were also exposed to the language of identity. As I soon found out from my interviewees, almost all were prompted to think and talk about it. They either initiated the identity talks themselves or they went into detail when the question was posed. They appeared to enter interviews with a firm stance, drawing on both personal and public examples that helped consolidate arguments in favour of their chosen identities. Of the thirty-one interviews, twenty-nine were conducted in the two largest Scottish cities, Edinburgh and Glasgow. A broad impression I had was that the interviewees from (or living in) Edinburgh appeared to consider the capital a very "white, middle-class" and perhaps less a "Scottish" city than Glasgow. In contrast, Glasgow was widely recognised

as more “down-to-earth” and “diverse”. Given the different voting patterns in the independence referendum in the two largest Scottish cities¹³, it might be true that the experiences of living and being brought up in different areas of Scotland entail different interpretations of identities that are intrinsically embedded in the spatial. In this sense, the particular timing of this research accentuated the ‘Scottish’ elements of this study.

Two years later, another referendum took place. In the EU referendum, Scotland overwhelmingly voted to remain, including areas that voted ‘No’ in the independence referendum in 2014. In the aftermath of Brexit, I conducted my last interview in late June 2016 with a white Scottish woman who mothered a mixed child of half-Nigerian heritage. Although the conversation was thought-provoking in that we did indeed touch upon Brexit, I thought an interview with someone from the rest of the EU might have yielded a more fruitful discussion. Nonetheless, although the study foregrounds a Scottish case, it should be recognised that findings derived from this study may not be unique to Scotland and cannot be understood in isolation from a wider British context. Issues and problems illuminated by the interviews will also reflect a broader range of concerns not exclusive to the Scottish context.

3.2 Ethical issues of researching ‘race’ and family relationships

The process of obtaining the necessary ethical approval started in February 2014 and final approval was secured in June 2014. Following the research ethics guidelines of the British Sociological Association and those of the College of Social Sciences of the University of Glasgow, a range of documents was prepared, including two versions of the information sheet, consent forms, recruitment advertisements and interview guides, which can be found in the appendices of this thesis. Within the original ethics applications, an information sheet and a consent form for a focus group discussion session were also included, which was later omitted due to a lack of interest from parents. The application process involved one round of amendments, as suggested by the research ethics committee, which asked me to simplify the wording of the information sheet to make it more accessible.

A few ethical issues were recognised prior to and during the fieldwork. The foremost concern was about discussing sensitive topics. As outlined in the interview guides (attached in the appendices), the interviews contained questions about family life,

¹³ Glasgow voted ‘Yes’ while Edinburgh voted ‘No’ in the 2014 independence referendum.

friendships, subjective interpretations of 'race' and 'mixed-race', experiences of racist encounters, temporal and spatial changes in the life course, and marriage and partnership. Researching family and personal relationships is considered a challenging site for ethics (Jamieson et al., 2011), and this tension was further intensified with the introduction of the 'racial' element. The compounded ethics concern posed two particular challenges for this research: first, sharing life stories was deeply personal. Studying personal relationships generally involves trying to obtain insights into experiences, thoughts and feelings that many people consider private (ibid.). Indeed, the decision to share family secrets and intimate aspects of life, including relationships with one's children, was usually a personal and brave one. Whilst this type of data would be most valuable for the analysis, it should only emerge from the participants voluntarily and should not be forced.

The second challenging dimension was to facilitate the difficult discussion of 'race'. While my racialised, gendered profile might alleviate the tension to a certain extent, there was a tangible feeling of awkwardness whenever the topic of 'race' was initiated, especially in public spaces such as cafés and libraries. Conscious of curious (or even hostile) stares from others, a sense of pressure when talking about 'race' in public was not just sensed by me but also by my interviewees. In comparison, those interviews conducted in a more personal space (for instance, at interviewees' homes) offered a welcomed break from the public gaze. In addition to the unease associated with talking about 'race', the normative standpoint regarding 'race' further complicated the research process. Meer and Nayak (2013) contend that a standpoint of working against racial inequality should be shared by all researchers on 'race'. In view of the 'normative' approach and its impact on the generated data, I feared that it might have been the case that my presence and the way the questions were framed would influence the ways interviewees responded to them. Despite these concerns, I found that some interviewees appeared rather relaxed when articulating their views of their co-ethnics or of the co-ethnics of their partners or general others.

Aware of potential discomforts these issues might cause, I took a few measures to ensure my ethical practices complied with the ethics guidelines. I would always send through the relevant information before making an interview appointment, and I allowed sufficient time for interviewees to make an informed decision. Upon request, I was also happy to send through the relevant interview guide in order to give them an idea of the type of questions they should anticipate in the upcoming interview. Out of thirty-one interviews, only one interviewee requested the interview guide.

In addition to the aforementioned specific measures, other measures were put in place to protect the identity and well-being of my interviewees. Before and after each interview, interviewees were given time to reconsider their participation. They were also given the option to contact me within seven days after the interview if they wished to remove data or withdraw from the interview. A pseudonym, either selected by interviewees themselves or proposed by me, that shared the initial of their first name was assigned to each interviewee in an attempt to protect their identity. Although some interviewees clearly expressed a willingness to have their real name appear in the final draft, all names used in this thesis are pseudonyms.

3.3 Plans and attempts that did not deliver

One research design that was not actualised was the recruiting of both parents and mixed (adult) children on a family basis. Invitations for their parent to attend an interview were usually transmitted orally at the end of the interview or included in the follow-up thank-you emails/texts, but in both cases, invitations were turned down by mixed interviewees. They either appeared reluctant to invite their parent(s) to the study or reported that their parents had turned down their oral invitation. As for the parent interviewees, it was impossible to recruit their children as nearly all of these children¹⁴ were under eighteen years of age and I did not have the official clearance to work with such vulnerable groups.

Another challenging situation emerged as the fieldwork unfolded. In the initial research design, I proposed to include a parent focus group to further explore the necessity to communicate about ‘race’ with their children, an issue pertinent to the second research question. The proposed focus group was intended to be a supplementary method to identify the participants’ multiple understandings and meanings and to uncover opinions that were otherwise difficult to obtain (Kitzinger, 1995). Yet in the practice, I had difficulty in inviting parent interviewees to participate in a post-interview focus group discussion. Adopting similar formats of verbal invitations or follow-up emails, I received only one tentative confirmation while the rest either directly turned down the invitation at the interview or implicitly declined by not replying to the invitation emails. Considering the number of discussants required for a focus group, this plan had to be abandoned.

¹⁴ One parent participant was in her 70s but she had a poor relationship with her Scottish-Pakistani daughter, to an extent that they had not spoken for nearly one decade.

The last major challenge, which occurred at the sampling stage, was to obtain personal information prior to making an interview arrangement. In order to determine an individual's suitability for an interview, I needed to obtain a certain amount of information about the person. In most cases, potential interviewees were happy to provide information about their ethnicity, gender and age in the first few rounds of email exchange. Yet information such as social class and immigration history was often more implicit and it required a stronger rapport beyond the initial communication via emails. Nonetheless, a relatively even distribution in terms of sociodemographic characteristics was achieved.

4. Working on interview data

As discussed briefly in the Introduction, the chosen data collection method of semi-structured interviewing provided a comfortable means for answering the research questions. It created a suitable environment for interviewees to articulate their thoughts and allowed researchers to probe into their motivations for and purposes of making certain claims (Kvale, 2008). This face-to-face interaction generated situational and contextual knowledge (Mason, 2002), which in my case was often illustrated by life stories that drew out the complexity of the 'mixed-race' experience. Furthermore, the interviews allowed me to capture ethnographic elements, such as emotions, body gestures and facial expressions, occurring at the interview site. These were telling elements that helped generate more nuanced interpretations of the interviewees' circumstances.

More importantly, qualitative interviewing made possible the explorations of connections between family life and understandings of mixedness. In recounting their life stories, memoirs, and family tales, interviewees were engaged in an active production of meanings by articulating how mixedness was subjectively experienced. This engagement was sociologically significant, as it entailed "mechanisms of everyday memory making, identity constructions, bonding and othering" (Smart, 2011:551). The construction of narratives is informed by their social location and their relations with others, characterised by contextuality, contingency and relationality (Mason, 2004).

Lastly, stories generated from interviews illustrate the intricate relationship between individual accounts and cultural discourses. As Lawler (2014) argues, the former cannot stand alone but must draw on the latter. Narrative is "both a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation" (Richardson, 1990:118), a primary way through which individuals organise their experiences into temporally meaningful stories (Polkinghorne, 1988). In this

process, individuals creatively situated their experiences and memories within the meta-cultural repertoires by deploying cultural symbols and cultural discourses. One example from the current study to illustrate this process is through ‘race’. When interviewees expressed their opinions about ‘race’, they inevitably situated their interpretations within a framework where one particular ‘race’ was the ‘norm’. In this respect, all the interviewees’ accounts were to a certain extent reflective of the operating racial discourses, revealing a historicised social view of ‘race’ and ethnicity.

However, the richness of the data posed a unique analytical challenge: how to identify appropriate analytical techniques to ‘do justice’ to the gathered data. On the one hand, the small yet diverse sample and the multi-dimensional nature of the data generated from each interview meant that it was inappropriate to analyse data along a particular axis, such as ethnicity or gender. On the other hand, the conventional thematic analysis approach could compromise the comprehensiveness of the data by partially presenting ‘snapshots’ of interviewees’ stories. As a result, the data analysis process went through two phases that involved a major change in the analytical strategy. While the two approaches were distinct from each other, they together provided a better understanding of the whole data set. In fact, the second phase was premised on the preceding stage that offered a better understanding of the two data sets. The rest of this section will describe these two phases in detail and will outline the decision-making process involved in each step of the data analysis.

4.1 Phase One: re-reading and coding with NVivo

With twenty-five transcripts and six interview notes at hand, the first task of Phase One was to index the empirical data and to identify emergent themes and topics. Coding involved a process of identifying meaningful data and acquiring a sense of scope and coverage, setting the stage for interpretation and drawing conclusions (Mason, 2002). In Phase One, the coding process began with a re-reading strategy and then moved onto computer-assisted data analysis using NVivo for further classifications of codes.

4.1.1 A re-reading strategy

The first step of coding was informed by the ‘re-reading strategy’ advanced by Doucet and Mauthner (2008). Aimed at obtaining an overview of the data, this holistic approach involved repeatedly reading transcripts to record reoccurring themes, topics and events. A

Word document was created at that time to record the emerging themes, which I called ‘data-driven codes’. Another way to organise data was to apply ‘theory-driven codes’ to the empirical data. Informed by the ongoing reading of literature, theory-informed codes, such as ‘the racialisation process’, ‘communication of racial literacy’, and ‘informed difference’, were applied to the data. It is worth noting that while I made a distinction here between the theory-driven codes and data-driven codes, they often overlapped in the early stages of coding and both formed the foundation and initial structure of NVivo nodes.

Despite the employment of two parallel coding systems, there was little strategy in place. Largely relying on good memory and note-taking skills, this re-reading method lacked an overall management of data hence proving difficult to conduct cross-comparisons. In this sense, the paper-based data analysis tended to be more improvised and less systematic. That said, the re-reading strategy allowed me to establish a holistic understanding of the whole data set; it was through this stage of work that I obtained a list of codes, which were later substantiated by a list of key themes in the NVivo software. More importantly, this re-reading strategy allowed me to obtain a better grasp of the ‘flow’ of conversations, which proved fundamental in Phase Two, where a narrative-driven method was introduced.

4.1.2 Using NVivo for data coding

Given these issues associated with the re-reading strategy, a more systematic strategy was implemented by using NVivo. From my training, I was able to recognise what NVivo could and could not achieve. Although it was a good tool to index complex data, it could not replace the actual thinking process. After importing interview transcripts into NVivo based on two data sets, i.e. *parent interviewees* and *‘mixed-race’ interviewees*, I started importing codes generated in the previous stage to each of the two sets. Codes that could be used to describe both mixed individuals and parents were assigned twice.

Once all nodes had been imported, I started assigning passages of texts (e.g. words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs) to the nodes. This process engendered a new round of coding. As I went through this process, I realised some existing nodes could not accommodate a potentially important quote. In this case, I created a new node with a short explanation of why this node was created. This new range of nodes indicated a process of producing inductive, grounded themes. In situations where data (e.g. incidents, events and individuals) was too peculiar to be subsumed into an existing node, it was marked out and grouped in the Annotation section. In the writing-up stage, some of these ‘isolated’ events

were useful in providing contextualised information. Most of the new nodes generated during this time were those previously overlooked or recorded in the form of memos. By grouping similar data together based on nodes but also forming relationships among nodes, I started to acquire a bigger picture of the data.

However, there were a few issues associated with NVivo coding. One problematic element was that in a reductionist fashion it typically presented data that was fragmented and descriptive. Another issue concerned the capacity of a single node. In many circumstances, one passage of text (a short paragraph or a piece of narrative, a group of sentences, phrases or words) might address several nodes at once; at other times, some interviewees kept returning to the same topic (hence the use of the same node for coding) at different stages of the conversation. In both cases, it was not possible to neatly bundle data together based on nodes. This required the skills to identify and capture the ‘data meaning threads’ running through each transcript.

That said, Phase One of coding contributed towards the objective of identifying data indicating key arguments and themes. The re-reading practice shed light on the overall structure and reoccurring themes of each transcript, and NVivo coding supplemented this process by creating a manageable and retrievable coding system. Retrospectively, the coding process was by no means a linear process. It was however through this learning curve that I gained a better understanding of both sets of interview data, marking a step from coding to interpretation.

4.2 Phase Two: Gearing towards a narrative-centred approach

Spanning from August 2014 to August 2015, I produced a series of fieldwork reports and the early versions of two empirical chapters reporting on ‘mixed-race’ experiences following the method mentioned in Phase One. The arguments of these documents reflected the coding of transcribed interviews, orientated by themes stemming from nodes, and supported by fragmented quotes from multiple interviewees as evidence. While the thematic approach brought key themes to the fore, namely *mechanisms of identification*, *processes of racialisation of mixedness*, and *performances of mixedness*, I became aware that this thematic approach could not fully deliver the intersectional and relational orientation proposed by the thesis because it provided ‘snapshots’ of individual stories without room for contextual information. Therefore, the supervision team and I reached a collective decision to introduce a new strategy for data analysis and presentation.

4.2.1 Towards an interpretive approach: thick description and illustrative cases

The new data analysis method, manifesting the ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) tradition and a stronger focus on interviewees’ life stories, was introduced to address the problem of compromising empirical data. In this fashion, the terms ‘narrative’, ‘story’ and ‘account’ were used interchangeably in analysis to describe the interactional communication arising out of circumstance (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009). The new approach saw autobiographical accounts begin to emerge from the interviewees, shedding light on key arguments for each chapter. Within each story, I selected quotes from an interview transcript and reconstructed these quotes into storied narratives. By using these examples, I intended to highlight usually intertwining relations between identifications and social locations, and to demonstrate the formation of relational self. By showing an individual’s life story and the trajectory of changes occurring in their understandings of identity, this method could bring out the contextual information to provide readers with the “vicarious experiences of having been there with the researcher” by seeing “what they saw, [feel] what they felt, [conclude] what they concluded” (Geertz 1973:16). This approach could also realise the transferability of qualitative research that lies in a reader’s ability to judge whether the arguments put forward are applicable to other contexts and a reader’s skills to establish whether the conditions they have encountered would have led them to reach the same conclusion (Seale, 1999a).

Furthermore, the narrative-orientated approach brought out the relationality of individual experiences. With the central aim of exploring the formation of ‘mixed-race’ identities, the data analysis was designed to illustrate how mixedness was a “deeply social category far from being personal and individual” (Lawler, 2015:180). This demanded an analysis that delineated the complex reasoning behind any articulations of mixed identifications. In order to contextualise the analysis, non-verbal data generated during and outside the immediate interview contexts was included. Two documents - a fieldwork diary and an analysis diary - were introduced to enhance the validity of the analysis. The former was written during the fieldwork period to capture reflections before and after each interview. The latter document was to document emergent thoughts and ideas during the analysis stage. These documents, despite being impressionistic and ethnographic, aided the analysis by highlighting the key messages of each case and helped keep track of the central issues underpinning each chapter. These supporting documents enabled me to retrieve the

emotion, the atmosphere and the environment of each interview, thereby effectively addressing the reductionist tendency brought by the coding process.

Nonetheless, the use of illustrative cases posed a challenge for disentangling theories from data. While the interpretation of data was informed by the theoretical framework and previous literature, the presentation of analysis was largely data orientated. The deliberate attempt to downplay the role of theories was to minimise interruptions and to ensure the flow of analysis. Instead, a ‘theoretical cluster’ was presented at the beginning of each chapter where possible to outline how certain theories defined scopes of interpretations.

4.2.2 Presenting the data: selecting cases for analysis

The new approach not only led to new data analysis but it also introduced a new structure for presenting the data. Although I often started each data chapter with a relatively clear argument, the actual writing process was not straightforward. The process of deciding which data to present and how to present it was often recursive, messy and sometimes compromising. The first and most important decision for each data chapter was in selecting cases for analysis. The choice of illustrative cases was informed by the theoretical framework but also by practical concerns. Of coded interviews, I needed to decide which three (or four) interviews could best illustrate the key arguments advanced by each chapter. In this case, the selection of interviews was based on their power to explain rather than their typicality (Seale, 1999b). The key criterion for determining the explanatory power of the interview was what Gubrium and Holstein (2009) termed ‘narrative adequacy’, which is contingent both on “the work of storytelling and what is at stake for participants” (p.xvii). A good story should be based on a rich, specific and relevant narrative when assessed against the context (Kvale, 1996). In practice, not all interviewees were happy to be recorded or willing to share their experiences, so the ‘quality’ of each interview was not consistent. Consequently, although the thirty-one interviews as a whole contributed to an understanding of the Scottish ‘mixed-race’ experience, not all interviews demonstrated equal potential for the analytical purpose.

In the process of selecting illustrative cases, there were two requirements: first, selected cases must contain rich autobiographical detail to allow me to restructure them into revealing stories. Second, the selected cases should demonstrate the diverse ethnic, gender and class backgrounds of the interviewees, signifying the importance of studying mixed experiences in a comparative and holistic manner, as opposed to focusing on one particular

group. Having decided upon the cases for analysis, the second decision was to select and arrange the order of quotes for each story. Because of the nature of semi-structured interviewing, many interviews did not necessarily follow a certain order (such as a chronological order) and read rather free-floatingly. Given the word limits of this thesis, it was unfeasible to include every detail of each case for presentation. Therefore, I selected sections that contained key themes or that highlighted arguments of the chapter in question, and then reordered the texts to make the storied narrative ‘flow’. The rationale behind choosing one quote over another was based on its relevance to the central argument; once again, many selected quotes had already been highlighted in the coding process that took place in Phrase One. That being said, this approach raised a new concern: the reliance on thirteen illustrative cases which constituted just under half the sample. This pattern appeared to downplay the rest of sample and could not indicate the trend these selected cases represented as a whole. Bearing these issues in mind, I weaved into the data analysis quotes from other interviewees wherever possible. I also provided at the beginning of each chapter explanations of how the selected cases indicate general patterns of the whole sample.

Whilst there was no doubt that the Phase Two had benefited from the previous stage in terms of understanding key themes and data, the key difference was that there was a clear intention to move beyond classifying data to a more holistic approach. The focus on personal narratives emphasised the role of the sequential and structural features of each interview, which was sometimes overlooked by traditional categorical/thematic approach (Riessman, 2007). The analysis also addresses what Gubrium and Holstein (2009) termed a ‘narrative environment’ (p.xvii), which concerns the particular settings in which stories are told and the purposes and consequences of storying experiences. Last, the new analysis method foregrounded the interaction context in which narratives were performed. It recognises the social and contextual elements of story-telling, which is critical for understanding what is at stake for storytellers (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009).

5 Reflective comments on methodology

When I started working on the data generated from parents, I came across a piece by Morgan (2011a) pointing out the complexities involved in researching family practices. In the text he wrote, “The relationship between what is said in an interview situation and what is actually done remains a complex issue within qualitative family studies” (p. 169). Morgan then suggests recognising that an interview itself is a form of family practice and a

way of constructing the family self. Although Morgan's claim addressed issues related to researching family practice, I found the same observation could be applied to researching 'race'. Prior to being invited to share their experiences, many participants had probably already anticipated that there would be an element of 'race talk' at some point during their interviews. They might have entered their interviews with some prepared, self-censored ideas and they might even have framed their responses in a specific way in order to support their identity claims.

An interview is a situation highlighting the intersubjectivity and the co-production of knowledge (Edwards and Holland, 2013). Therefore, rather than as a site of knowledge transmission, the interview should be treated as "a social encounter and a site of producing reportable knowledge itself" (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003:68). When analysing the interview transcripts, I always reminded myself that any accounts generated from interviewees were what they felt 'right and good' to say at that point. As the last major section of this chapter, the rest of the discussion will reflect on two particularly salient issues associated with the fieldwork. One concerned my role as a racialised researcher and the other concerned the language used in interviews.

5.1 The 'insider/outsider debate': a self-positioning process

Among a growing body of methodological literature addressing the challenges of researching 'race' and ethnicity, one salient issue is the role of researchers' ethnicities in shaping the interview dynamics and outcomes (Twine and Warren, 2000; Gunaratnam, 2003; Bulmer and Solomos, 2004). While some believe that being an outsider can stimulate interesting conversations (Young Jr, 2004), others problematise the insider status of interviewers by arguing that 'race' does not trump all other social statuses in all situations (Twine and Warren, 2000). There have also been discussions as to whether in addition to the ethnic background of the researchers, a further interrogation of the researchers' cultural identities might also be necessary (Song and Parker, 1995). Many of these discussions revolved around the ontological and epistemological implications of a researcher occupying an 'insider/outsider' position, which generate diverse experiences in conducting interethnic research.

In real research practice, the insider/outsider distinction tends to be more complex. When conducting fieldwork, I found that my identity as a non-white, non-British female research student was 'odd' yet methodologically interesting. Not being 'mixed-race' nor from

Scotland or the rest of the UK often automatically, I was often classified as an 'outsider'. One question I was frequently asked by my interviewees was my personal motivation for conducting this study. Another interesting pattern was that many interviewees assumed that I knew very little about Scotland (and Britain in general). As a result, they were usually willing to explain their viewpoints on socio-cultural issues, such as sectarianism in the West of Scotland, postcode politics, and connotations of Scottishness and its relation to Britishness. Accepting, perhaps strategically, these assumptions made about me, I found my outsider position helped me explore interviewees' explanations of their values and social positions, and these explanations often offered valuable insights into the socio-cultural dynamics of the Scottish context.

Meanwhile, being a racialised woman could facilitate the establishment of a rapport with those interviewees who did not feel fully entitled to Scottish/British membership. The turning point usually occurred when the topic of racism was initiated. In these situations, interviewees would make comments such as "perhaps you've got similar experiences" to suggest mutual understanding and recognition of racism. On other occasions, I would use my own experiences to introduce a difficult question related to 'race' in the hope that by sharing my stories the interviewees would be more comfortable with sharing theirs. This 'insider' experience is echoed by Song and Parker (1995), who note that recognising both parties' experiences of racism has a positive effect in terms of establishing a sense of trust.

The insider/outsider problematic was epitomised when I interviewed ethnic Chinese individuals, who were either migrant parents (both first- and second-generation) or mixed individuals who had partial Chinese/Hong Kongese heritage. I found myself constantly adjusting my position when trying to establish relationships with interviewees. To those who grew up in Scotland or migrated from somewhere other than mainland China, I was clearly a foreigner and/or 'mainlander', someone growing up in a distinct political environment with a different socio-cultural orientation. This was despite the fact that we were all perceived as 'Chinese' and subject to the same range of stereotypes in the eyes of the wider public. This shared experience of being racialised others in Scottish society, together with other intricate divisions within the pan-ethnic identity of being Chinese, required me to constantly dissociate from and associate with my interviewees according to specific topics. In a reflective account of interviewing second-generation British Chinese, Song and Parker (1995) found that a dichotomised category such as insider/outsider was inadequate to capture the complex and multiple research relations. Interviewees'

attributions of commonalities and differences in relation to the researchers affected what they chose to reveal. Therefore, the development of a research relationship was contingent and constantly developing over the course of the interview rather than merely being dictated by assumed racial similarities or differences.

5.2 The language of ‘race’: what are we talking about when we use ‘race’?

Another intriguing issue emerging from the fieldwork was the use of racialised language. Whilst we have seen in Chapter 3 a discussion of the problematic entwining of folklore imaginations of ‘race’ and the social science interpretations, the implications of this relationship mattered not only analytically but also methodologically. One readily recognisable pattern was an indiscriminate use of ‘race’. It struck me how interviewees readily employed terminologies that reified ‘race’ when describing themselves or their family. It was common to read comments such as “the white race” or “my husband’s race is effectively different from mine”. Furthermore, some parent participants seemed comfortable to describe their children using dated and derogatory racial terminologies, such as “half-caste”, “mixed-raced” and “mixed-breed”, which often had colonial undertones. Resonating with the discussion on the key features of British ‘mixed-race’ research in Chapter 2, the continual use of these terminologies demonstrated the profound impact of colonialism in shaping the public imagination of ethnicities, alluding to the robust usage of the folklore concept of ‘race’.

Perhaps an interesting contradiction to the indiscriminate use of ‘race’ was the tendency to replace ‘race’ with ‘culture’. For mixed individuals, the cultural terms were associated with markers of their claimed cultural identities, utilised to highlight their ethnic affiliations as well as to pre-empt potential accusations of prejudice towards their non-white heritages. Particularly common among parents from European countries, culture was employed as a synonym of ‘race’. They emphasised a shared European identity and highlighted cultural similarities with Britain. The fact that they were “from Europe” entitled them to a closer link with Scotland than their non-European partners. Meanwhile, by stressing that Scottishness was “tolerant”, these European parents appeared to imply a sense of solidarity and cultural similarity to Scotland, which provided them with privileged access to bringing up their children in a ‘Scottish’ way. However, the fact that these interviews were conducted prior to the EU referendum in June 2016 posed further questions regarding the extent to which they would offer the same claims in the aftermath of Brexit in view of the

fact that Scotland voted to remain. Given the record number of hate crimes targeted at EU nationals reported by the media, it is possible that new research would reveal different patterns and arguments.

The final issue concerning racial language was the conflation of racial, national and ethnic categories. Having acknowledged the terminological conflation in data analysis in the Introduction chapter, evidence from the fieldwork suggested a far more problematic overlap of racial, ethnic, national and regional categories in interviewees' accounts. Racialised terminologies were described as being common sense: the term 'white' was frequently linked to being Scottish (and/or being British or European), whilst being 'brown' was associated with people of South Asian origins. Relating to my earlier discussion in Part 2 of this chapter about exploiting racialised imaginations to spot participants at our initial encounters, the observations alluded to an internalised colour-coded system shared by many of us in everyday conversations. This led me to reflect on the conceptual dilemma between the sociology of 'race' and the everyday use of language, considering why the language of 'race' continues to thrive.

Concluding remarks: where do we go from here?

The experience of researching 'mixed-race' identity exposed the complexities and dilemmas associated with researching 'race' and family relationships. It linked the methodological to the theoretical and raised important questions about how we could understand the influence of 'race'. As captured by Higginbotham (1992), "race has a function as a meta-language in its discursive representation and construction of social relations" (p.255). Moreover, my interviewees demonstrated varying degrees of capability to internalise and reproduce racial discourses. This suggests a return to the research questions and the theoretical framework to link one's account to one's social locations. Finally, as we will soon see, the data chapters reveal that the meanings of 'race' are not stagnant. Not only do these meanings of race and ethnicity vary across countries, they also change over the life course of an individual and continue to evolve in a local and global context. As the political context in Scotland (and the UK) has changed significantly over the past three years, it is even more crucial to recognise the socio-cultural specificities of the data.

Chapter 5 Doing ‘mixed-race’ identities

Introduction

Like much of the literature on mixed identities, the question of what mixed people think they are intrigues me. It is my primary goal to find out what mixedness means to my interviewees and how they ascribe meanings and significance to their mixedness. However, I am keen to push the boundaries by also investigating how they arrived at these conclusions. Pursuing the identity enquiries through a familial lens, I engaged in sixteen inspiring conversations with ‘mixed-race’ Scots from different social backgrounds, in order to explore the ways in which they make sense of their mixedness by interpreting their experiences. Much as I anticipated, the varying lived experiences led to different interpretations of mixed identities. Two salient ‘tones’ nevertheless emerged from these interviews. One tone was a ‘positive’ one that favourably framed mixedness as a meaningful experience that offered individuals a sense of uniqueness. The other tone, however, tended to view being mixed as synonymous with being non-white, which to a certain extent stood as a demoralising racialised stigma. Although the two identified approaches could not neatly ‘index’ all sixteen mixed interviewees as there were occasions where one interviewee express identifications with both approaches at different stages of his/her interview, the two typologies were worth considering when examining ‘mixed-race’ experiences and identities.

To elaborate the two interpretations of mixedness, I will dedicate two chapters, each of which will focus on a single approach. In this chapter, the central argument is that doing ‘mixed-race’ identities is a meaningful process of relating. The process is situated in a network constituted by kinship ties, where individuals actively engage in reconfiguring and (re)imagining the significance of collective identities so as to draw out what they perceived to be the core elements of mixedness. In so doing, mixed individuals authenticate their identity claims and/or defy assigned identities. The production of meanings arises from the symbolic resources available at the time of articulation, yet is simultaneously constrained by an individual’s social location concerning their specific ethnic makeup and other non-ethnicity-based differences. The chapter illustrates how individual identities mesh with the connectivity of kinship and interpersonal relationships, and explains why people, self and value are always “relational, connected and embedded” (Mason, 2004:163) .

The present chapter will present the life stories of three ‘mixed-race’ individuals - Haifa, Sophie and Shab - as it explores how mixedness is given different meanings over their life courses to identify with specific heritage. The three stories were selected based on their potential to illustrate the ways in which the mixed interviewees drew out family connections to identify themselves. Of the sixteen mixed interviewees, eight grew up with the dual-influence, namely interacting with both sides of their parents’ extended families. Over the course of their lives, they gradually acquired a set of knowledge about their dual-ethnic background and developed repertoires to describe their mixed experience. One message arising from the accounts of Haifa, Sophie and Shab, as well as the rest of the eight interviewees, was that mixedness makes them feel ‘special’. The sense of uniqueness was constructed out of collective meanings about their ethnic heritages derived from interactions with intimate others, which helped them negotiate otherwise stigmatising racialised differences. The three cases demonstrate the ways in which ‘mixed-race’ identities are achieved by making sense of the surrounding networks and by negotiating relationships with significant others from these networks. Finally, as the opening data chapter, the findings to be presented here raise several issues that will be taken up in the three remaining data chapters. Issues pertaining to ‘mixed-race’ identities, such as whiteness, parenting practices and the wider social discourses, will be further expanded on in the following chapters.

Haifa

Born in London to a Glaswegian father and a Palestinian mother, Haifa moved to Scotland when she completed her undergraduate degree. Haifa’s father was an economist by training, with a PhD on a topic related to Middle Eastern economics. Haifa’s mother was born in Palestine but grew up in Lebanon who worked as a teacher prior to her marriage. Haifa’s father met her mother when he was conducting research in Lebanon, and they moved back to Britain after getting married.

Haifa and I were scheduled to meet outside a café in Edinburgh. On most occasions, I was able to ‘spot’ my interviewees, partly based on their self-descriptions written in their email and partly based on my own racialised imaginations of how they ‘should’ look. However, I was completely unaware of Haifa’s arrival until she turned to me for confirmation. Reading my apparently surprised look, Haifa laughed, “Oh that’s fine. I know, it happens all the time.” This initial encounter formed my first impression of Haifa: she did not look ‘mixed’; in fact, she was ‘white’. She was not racially ambiguous in the way that mixed

individuals are stereotypically considered to be. To put in another way, she could pass without cost.

This anecdote also reminded me of our initial contacts via Gumtree emails. In the first round of email exchanges, Haifa described herself as “mixed ethnicity” of half-Scottish and half Palestinian/Lebanese origin. Unlike many other people who described themselves with phrases such as ‘mixed-race’, ‘mixed-blood’, or even ‘half-caste’, Haifa was certain about her terminology choice, i.e. ‘ethnicity’, and was able to maintain a consistent usage throughout the conversation. In fact, the term ‘race’ was never mentioned in our conversation. As illustrated by our talk, a fairly large part of her reflections on being mixed derived from her everyday experiences of being treated as a member of the white majority. Perhaps it was because of this that Haifa never viewed herself in the light of ‘race’. Meanwhile, her insistence on using ‘ethnicity’ instead of ‘race’ might suggest a more comprehensive repertoire about ‘race’ due to her middle-class upbringing, which differentiated her from her working-class peers.

As the interview unfolded, it occurred to me that Haifa demonstrated a distinguishing quality: she was able to draw on a wide range of examples to describe her mixedness in a reflexive fashion. She also had a good command of vocabulary to compose a rich ‘mixed-race’ repertoire. Expressing her motivation to participate in this study, she said:

Over the years, I’ve been thinking quite a lot about what it meant to be a mixed-ethnic person. To be honest I’ve always struggled with the identity aspect of it. I’ve always felt unsure where I belong. I don’t feel fully Scottish, I just don’t, because of the Arab side of me. The Arab influence I have has been very significant.

Like many mixed interviewees in this study, Haifa started the interview with a statement about her ‘split’ identity. However, she did not exhibit a salient affinity with one specific heritage but put forward a rather ambivalent proposition. In elaborating why she felt unsure where she belonged, Haifa started recounting her childhood experiences.

Growing up in a “very, very white” town in the suburb of London in the 1980s, Haifa quickly realised her differences through interacting with other kids at school. Unlike her English peers who grew up with a big extended family, Haifa grew up in a nuclear family with her parents and younger sister. Moreover, she was a bilingual child as her mother

insisted on speaking Arabic at home. As a result, she would unconsciously use Arabic words in class whilst everyone else spoke English. These experiences led to an increasingly strong self-consciousness as she became more aware of the ways that her Arabic background set her apart from others.

Name was one of the first things picked up on. Instead of her “obviously different Arabic” name, which was often joked about by her peers in the classroom, Haifa longed for “an Anglicised name”. Underlying this name anecdote was a sense of anxiety caused by cultural alienation. Compared with other kids, she felt incapable of comprehending the cultural symbols of Englishness that other children took for granted:

I think there are cultural things in England. They can be silly things, not even important but noticeable. You really felt that when you were a child. I remember it was common to have a summer roast dinner in England. To me that was alien. I never had that so I don't understand the concept.

The word ‘alien’ was reiterated several times at this point of the conversation. Growing up speaking Arabic at home and consuming ‘non-British’ food at school, these ‘non-English’ practices created a huge pressure that even became a source of embarrassment for Haifa. This led to her developing a sense of inferiority, which made her desperate to follow the norm embodied in Englishness. She described this feeling as “I felt I had to try to fit in more. It's a feeling of being different but not wanting to be different.” Such an ambivalent and bitter feeling was shared by many of the mixed interviewees who had grown up under significant non-British (or Scottish) influences at home. It usually started with a negative experience of having their ‘differences’ pointed out, followed by an internalisation of these negative feelings through which the differences became a source of self-perception. In hindsight, although it was the Englishness that Haifa found alienating, she was also implying British culture in general. While a symbolic status of being half-British (yet not English) proved to be powerful later in her life, young Haifa still felt culturally incapable next to her childhood peers, who shared a monolithic cultural background which she did not have. In this sense, ethnicity is reified in forms of signs and symbols which ‘bleed in’ the public realm, hindering her ability to claim full membership to the society.

However, things began to change when she started attending “a much more diverse” high school in the City. In describing this experience, she adopted a rather different language

that foregrounded a regional identity of being a Londoner. She recalled the exhilarating feeling of leaving the town as follows:

It was fantastic. I wished I could have had that all the time while I was growing up. I suddenly felt that I actually belonged somewhere. I guess my identity actually would be a Londoner.

Apparently London was imagined as a place that was saliently different from the rural English town where she grew up. Being urban and cosmopolitan, London was a symbol of ethnic diversity and a place where differences were tolerated, a quality that Haifa strived to embrace. This form of geographical identification, as noted by Song (2003), was a sense of localised belonging which indicated an open formation as opposed to the essentialised, primordial mode of ethnicity. ‘Coming from London’ hence became a desirable identity allowing her to transcend the boundary of national identity and to place her mixedness in the centre. From high school on, Haifa experienced with ever less frequency the unpleasantness of having her differences pointed out. The alienating feeling gradually diminished as Haifa became an adult. Her white-skinned appearance played a decisive role in soothing the tension of racial misrecognition during initial encounters. As illustrated by our first encounter, most people simply assumed Haifa to be white. To this Haifa remarked:

You know, I’ve got the real Scottish colour, like very white skin and blue eyes. People always just assume that I am British because I don’t look very Arabic. They wouldn’t think I am mixed unless I tell them my name [...] My sister has got darker skin, dark eyes and she really does look more mixed. So I think she probably stood out more physically, and I think she was very conscious about it.

By comparing herself with her sister, Haifa proposed what she perceived as the core quality of Scottishness: whiteness. She visualised an explicit connection between Scottishness and whiteness with phenotype lying at the heart of the relationship. In this regard, words such as ‘Scottish’, ‘name’, and ‘skin’ have been given racialised connotations that moved beyond their original meanings. Also illustrated by this quote was an implicit negotiation of discreditable stigma. Being invisibly mixed (unlike her sister), Haifa had the power to withhold information about her non-British background if she chose not to divulge her name or Arabic background. For her sister, on the other hand, mixedness was a discredited trait given her immediately visible “Arabic look”. Having

little control over whether to ‘hold back’ the information about her ethnic background, Haifa’s sister was “desperate for years to have her characteristic Arab nose straightened” in order to show her alignment with the ‘normal’ whites. Elsewhere in the conversation, Haifa also recalled that the main reason that her mother was isolated in the town was the way she looked and spoke. Witnessing the experiences of her family members, Haifa internalised the idea that an ‘Arab look’ was negatively received by society and associated with exclusion. She was also prompted to reflect on the relationship between phenotype and perceived ‘race’. In comparing her experiences with her mixed peers, she articulated her concerns:

I think the appearance means an awful lot. You can make ridiculous judgments based on appearances. You know I am mixed and my mum is Arab, but just the colour of my skin makes all the difference. And then there were other mixed people. One of their parents were ...be it Asian, Chinese or African... so their colouring is different from the normal British whites, and I think they stood out more than I did. It’s amazing how the colour of the skin has incredible power. It’s the most unimportant but the biggest thing.

It seemed that when making this claim, Haifa positioned herself as someone unaffected by racialised stigma. This represented a contrast with her early experiences at the primary school where her name and ‘non-English’ practices were frequently mocked. It might be the case that in her early school years, Haifa had been less likely to pass as white because it was more difficult for her to conceal information about her background in the school context. Whereas as an adult, she had acquired better control over the information and was less likely to be ‘forced’ to reveal any personal information, such as her name or ethnicity. In other words, the background no longer intruded on the front stage.

Another interesting observation she made was on phenotype: on the one hand, she adopted a post-racial tone ridiculing the centrality of ‘race’, while on the other, seeing her significant others being excluded on racial grounds, she was forced to recognise the everyday effect of ‘race’ in shaping people’s experiences. It exposed the contradictory arguments between the public discourse on colour-blindness and the lived experiences of racialised minorities. This, once again, poses questions about the visibility of mixedness. The (in)visibility of mixedness illuminates the subjective process of racial assignments, where the old model of racist thinking based on phenotype remained a critical factor

marking out the ‘other’ from the ‘normal’. Therefore, even though Haifa acknowledged the protective power of her whiteness, she flagged up the problematic legitimacy of racial assignment: “Who gets to decide someone’s cultural identity? I think it can only be the person himself.”

In calling for a need to recognise an individual’s choice of ethnicity, Haifa started to steer the conversation into a new direction where she began to strongly embrace her Arabic heritage. It appeared that as she grew older, it became ever more appealing to be able to pass as white British. However, she experienced a point of transition as she started forming an intimate relationship with a Scottish man, and ever since that time, she had sought to reclaim an Arabic identity.

You know, the weird thing is that I wish I could have looked more Arabic. As an adult, I really do now. I think it’s because this part of the identity is really important to me.

The temporal element was introduced as an agent of change. From being resentful of her Arabic name as a child to wishing to look more Arabic as an adult, there was certainly a performative element in this claim in that she wanted to foreground this shift in identification. However, as Haifa went on explaining, the shifted identification was also motivated by changes in her personal circumstances. Having spent five years with her “very Scottish” partner, Haifa never felt so strongly about her heritage when it came to family planning.

Funny enough, my husband might be one of the reasons why it [her Palestinian heritage] becomes so important to me. When we moved in together, I found it very, very important to bring as much of my cultural background with me as possible. You know, I have a lot of Palestinian arts. like embroidery, around the house. I cook a lot of Palestinian food so we eat that regularly. And I think if we have children, they are going to 100% Scottish. For me, it’s important that they have some Arab heritage, that they have an Arabic name, eat Arabic food and speak some language. It’s difficult for him to appreciate all of that.

Compared to her ‘Ethnocentric’ Scottish husband who had “no concept of cultural identity”, Haifa presented herself as a more progressive figure, not only conscious of the

value of cultural diversity but also keen to maintain the cultural diversity within her household. Even though both partners identified with being ‘Scottish’, Haifa maintained that her mixedness allowed her to achieve a more sophisticated interpretation of Scottishness than ‘monoracial’ Scots as represented by her husband and his side of the family. To further illustrate the static, outdated ‘Scottish mentality’, Haifa used the example of her mother-in-law:

Even though I’ve been with my partner for many years, my mother-in-law will still often say things to me like: “Well, you are not Scottish so you wouldn’t know this. But you see, in Scotland, you will be used to doing this and this.”

Elsewhere, Haifa complained that she was always assumed to be English because of her accent, and this misconception was still held by her husband’s side of the family. Her accent was a persistent marker drawing out the boundary between her husband’s family and her. When saying this, Haifa became quite upset and she made a strong case for being Scottish:

I have roots here. I have a history. I was once interested in genealogy and I managed to trace hundreds and hundreds of years in Scotland from my family tree. But again, you know, there are things in Scotland that don't make me feel 100% Scottish. It’s the cultural thing. People who grow up here just take it for granted that’s how the world is.

In such an emotional defence of her Scottish identity, Haifa quoted discourses of genealogy to emphasise her entitlement to a Scottish identity. She believed that the genealogical investigations she had conducted were solid proof of her Scottish blood. In this regard, identity was seen as a form of ‘natural inheritance’, which was deeply embedded in kinship ties. However, even with a demonstrable kinship tie, Scottish identity for Haifa was not always straightforward: she felt ‘racially’ competent yet not culturally so. In negotiating this divergence, her mixedness became a mediating agent. It is possible that highlighting her differences, i.e. the Palestinian heritage, was one strategy Haifa used to counterbalance the otherwise challenging situation.

By drawing a comparison between her husband's family and herself, Haifa placed her identifications in a relational framework. Scottishness was given different meanings

depending on different contexts: when applied to her husband's side of the family, Scottishness entailed a static and conservative mentality; whereas in her case, a combination of mixed Scottishness was elevated to signify a sense of progressiveness that allowed one to embrace cultural differences. Her mixedness was hence an enabling agent in distancing her from the majority of Scots who viewed ethnicity in a primordial fashion. In this sense, even though Haifa constantly shifted her position between being Palestinian and being Scottish in the interview, it almost appeared that Haifa's motive for embracing her Palestinian heritage was driven by an urge to distinguish herself from other Scots.

Having expressed her identifications in relation to her husband's side of the family, Haifa returned to explain how her identity was ingrained with characteristics of her original family. Her mother profoundly influenced Haifa's formation of her sense of self. She vividly recalled her mother's efforts to cultivate a sense of Palestinian identity through family activities. She recounted annual trips to Lebanon, where she could speak Arabic freely with her extended family without being marginalised. She also recounted the hardships experienced by her mother's family during wartime. By recalling these memories, her mixedness evoked a Palestinian diaspora that was politically significant. As Haifa came to talk about being taken to her childhood playgroup where the majority of families were migrants, she further specified the ways in which her early social network strengthened her emotional attachment to Palestine:

The Palestinian thought, Palestinian identity and culture are hugely important to the diaspora. A lot of Palestinian people marry people from other countries so there are many mixed Palestinian people. Within the Palestinian community we are all considered Palestinians.

Fostered by the Palestinian diaspora was a Palestinian identity characterised by a sense of inclusiveness that Haifa found appealing. Framing the Palestinian identity in contrast with the exclusive Scottish/British identity, Haifa projected an imagined pan-ethnic community to which she could harmlessly subscribe. Growing up with the Palestinian diaspora and being mixed added another layer of significance to her mixedness: a political motivation to pass on the Palestinian identity. As we approached the end of the interview, I asked Haifa to reflect on the meanings of being mixed in general. She then drew on the interplay of being Palestinian, being Scottish, and being mixed to describe what she considered the core meaning of mixedness:

Since my mum was a foreigner, she would make friends with other women in our local community who were also foreign, all children were usually ‘half - half’. Not always half-British and half-something else; it can be half-another two, like two really exotic mixes. That’s great for me, you know, because we all experience a mixed consciousness at home, and our home life wasn’t like all the British people. So we all have different types of food, speaking different languages, and having different cultures. And I think it’s important for all of us to have each other as friends. Obviously, there are different types of mixedness, but the fact that we are all different from British, or whatever the majority is, came to give us the common thing. So I was really thankful for having that experience. It would have been a lot worse for me if all the friends I had were from the school.

In the quotes above, racialised differences were negotiated with a bonding effect that united mixed people together. The foundation of this uniting power was a shared experience of being marginalised and being stigmatised in relation to the ‘normal’. Regardless of the multi-dimensional facets of difference, being different per se stood as the core quality of mixedness. All forms of mixedness were perceived equal and positioned in opposition to the normative, monolithic Englishness and Scottishness. Additionally, Haifa also praised diversity by employing a celebratory tone to describe the “cultural feast” she experienced as a child. The diversity of her playgroup had provided her with emotional security and a sense of belonging but the trait of being different also fit nicely in her identity repertoire, highlighting an appreciation of difference and a pluralist worldview. As she concluded, “Being mixed ethnicity is really less about any physical feature but more about the culture you grow up with.” In saying this, the once stigmatising cultural symbols such as Arabic name, food and language were ‘played up’ to characterise her identity repertoire, signifying a cosmopolitan orientation. As will be elaborated in more detail in the next few chapters, a cosmopolitan orientation was cited by several of the interviewees, both mixed individuals and parents, as a key feature of being mixed. This claim is often classed, however, as not everyone has similar access to the resources to sustain this repertoire.

Conclusion of Haifa’s story

For Haifa, mixedness is a multi-dimensional experience. It is framed as an appreciation of cultural diversity, a sense of openness to difference, sympathy for the marginalised, and an

aspiration to become a world citizen. Haifa was not alone in her ability to pass as white; there were other mixed interviewees who enjoy both the white-skin privilege and accesses to a good understanding of both of their heritages, as will be discussed in Jenny's story in the last data chapter. The ability to pass provides these mixed people with the valuable flexibility of being able to frame their identities in different ways without risking impairing their status of being Scots or Brits. Nonetheless, Haifa's specific interpretations of mixedness cannot be understood in isolation from her personal biography. Her middle-class upbringing, her academic father, and her teacher-activist mother together provided a space for Haifa to develop a rich 'mixed-race' repertoire. Compared with some interviewees who had not grown up with both parents at home, Haifa was able to maintain a strong familial connection and to interact with both parents and their extended families. Furthermore, with an affluent background, she travelled and met a wide group of people, which allowed her to acquire a broader range of vocabularies to support her identity claims.

We should also remember that being light-skinned, Haifa enjoys more freedom to choose her desired identity and to articulate her identity options competently. She can express desired identities according to the context without affecting her primary status as white British. Haifa's experience was echoed by George, a young university student born to a Scottish mother and a Hong Kongese father. During the interview, George jokingly recounted the reactions of people in Hong Kong when they learnt that he was from a mixed background and could speak Cantonese. For him, disclosing his Chinese heritage after being (mis)recognised as white was a "fun" experience. It distinguished him from the crowd and perhaps even allowed for a sense of superiority over his monoracial peers. George's and Haifa's expressions of identity were aligned with what Waters called a 'costless activity' (Waters, 1990). Their white appearance safeguarded them from potential prejudice in social encounters, while the disclosure of their background could be used a functional tool in order to make themselves feel unique in a social climate that currently celebrates multiculturalism.

In this regard, Haifa's story was significantly different from those visibly mixed individuals who had a difficult time securing their British membership, let alone a Scottish one, as we will observe in the next chapter. Therefore, while Haifa's story was representative due to her deployment of collective meanings based on involvements in kinship networks, the ways Haifa perceived and consequently negotiated her racialised

differences were deeply contextualised and therefore could not be applied to another mixed individual without specifying the contextual factors. In the next story, another meaning of mixedness is revealed. The person in question had different life experiences, which led her to arrive at a rather different set of conclusions.

Sophie

I had a moment of doubt when I first met Sophie. Possibly having noticed my hesitation, Sophie pre-empted my question: “People always think I am Chinese, but I am actually a quarter Scottish.” Sophie’s mother was born to a white Scottish mother and a Chinese father who migrated from Hong Kong. After the divorce of her parents, Sophie’s mother was raised by her Scottish mother alone in a small village in the 1970s. Sophie’s father ran several takeaway shops and was “always very busy”. As a result, Sophie spent most of the time with her mother, who could only speak English. At the time of the interview, Sophie was pursuing an undergraduate degree in politics at a Scottish university.

What struck me about Sophie was that she entered the interview with a strong ambivalence towards her cultural identity. Constantly feeling a need to explain who she was and to negotiate the 'mismatch' between the expressed and assigned identity, Sophie’s story showed that not all mixed identities are created equal. Sophie faced greater barriers to being seen as a Scot due to the interplay of the normative status of whiteness and Scottishness. While throughout the interview, her stories tended to revolve around her Scottish identity, Sophie appeared unwilling to assert her Scottishness. In fact, she rushed to explain this ambivalent feeling not long after the interview, “I’ve been told that I was fully Chinese by quite a lot of people. I think they just judge me based on my look. But I want to be mixed. I don’t want to be fully Scottish.”

The juxtaposition of ‘mixed’ and ‘fully Scottish’ was interesting. Unlike Haifa, Sophie was constantly reminded of her foreignness. Her appearance always stood out before she could even have a chance to explain her background. Over numerous encounters of informed differences, Sophie developed a particular reading of herself that made her feel ineligible for claiming a Scottish identity. Consequently, she felt a pressing need to explain who she was in order to pre-empt questions about her background. Having internalised this sense of otherness, Sophie established part of her self-understanding based on the reactions of others. Nonetheless, in reconciling the conflict between her assigned and chosen identities, Sophie carefully constructed a set of narratives by means of which she could exploit the

meaning of her mixedness according to specific contexts. These narratives were structured within a relational network constituted by family members from both sides of her heritage, as well as by friends and acquaintances. Sophie positioned herself in carefully selected locations by drawing on locally available elements and strategically weaving them into her articulated identities.

One prominent element in this narrative was Sophie's relationship with 'the Chinese people'. I used the inverted commas to suggest a lack of a clear definition for the term 'Chinese' as Sophie seemed to employ this umbrella term to refer to both first- and second-generation migrants of Chinese origin, which included Hong Kong and mainland China. She observed that she found it difficult to relate to those who were "fully" Chinese. To elaborate her argument, she started talking about the Chinese pupils at her high school.

I went to a quite multicultural high school. There were a few Chinese people but I felt they kind of kept to themselves a bit, because they spoke in Chinese quite a lot. I had a group of friends from all kinds of backgrounds, and one of them was Chinese. But her parents were from Hong Kong too and she was born here. She was bilingual but obviously she was fully Chinese. I felt she was kind of a link between me and other Chinese people.

In the quotes, Sophie nominated two groups that could be subsumed under the category of 'Chinese': the Mandarin-speaking Chinese pupils and her Hong Kong-born friend. She clearly positioned herself outside the Mandarin-speaking group, which she found self-segregating, while she felt more emotionally attached to her Hong Kongese friend who was also born and raised in Scotland. The bond between Sophie and her friend was based on an imagined 'Hong Kongness' and a shared Scottish experience. On top of this, there was an imagined distance between being Scottish Chinese and Chinese. With a subtle yet detectable cultural preference for having a Hong Kong rather than a mainland Chinese heritage, Sophie viewed herself vastly different from the Mandarin-speaking classmates, with whom she shared little if nothing except for her presumed 'race'. As for her close friend, Sophie framed her in a hybrid fashion which simultaneously embodied Chinese and/or Hong Kong culture and Scottish culture. That said, Sophie was keen to show her difference as a result of being mixed. She believed her mixedness allowed her to form a different pattern of friendship network:

It was funny that I had very few fully Scottish friends. I did end up with people of all kinds of backgrounds. Maybe it was to do with the fact that even though I didn't talk about it all the time, we still had some common ground. One of my friends is African and the other one is from North Africa; she would call herself Muslim. There is another one who is from Pakistan. They are not properly mixed but they were all born and brought up here. I am the only one who is actually physically mixed, if you know what I mean.

By enumerating her friends' countries of origin, Sophie stressed the diversity of her friendship network, which was presumably far more sophisticated than those of the other 'Chinese' pupils. Sophie adopted a similar narrative to Haifa by suggesting that being brought up with different cultures was a bonding factor; she located a sense of collectivity in the fact that all Sophie's friends had been raised in Scotland but practised different cultures at home. By pointing this out, Sophie was essentially expanding the meaning of 'mixedness' from merely having a racial perspective to having a cultural perspective, too, which not only foregrounded her cosmopolitan orientation but also dissociated herself from the other Chinese pupils who "kept to themselves".

Another group of people falling under the category of 'Chinese' in Sophie's narrative were the Chinese communities both in the UK and in Hong Kong. In describing her feelings towards these two groups, she used two examples, one from her experiences of attending a local Chinese Saturday school and the other from visiting her father's extended family in Hong Kong. These experiences were both "embarrassing" yet somehow relieving. Explaining why this was the case, she presented an interesting dynamic:

I had a few bad experiences with the Chinese language. In Hong Kong, people didn't even try to ask if I spoke Chinese; they would just speak Chinese to me. It's so bad and embarrassing.

Perhaps it was not just the lack of language skill that made Sophie feel so embarrassed; it was also because she was again assigned a racialised identity, which she felt unwilling and unable to embrace. Her frustrating experiences in Hong Kong led Sophie to reconsider her decision to study the language. However, not long after giving up the course she resumed her Chinese classes. This time she was slightly relieved to find that most of her classmates were neither Chinese-looking nor native-speakers:

I was in a few native speaking classes and the teacher would speak to us in Chinese. I just didn't know what was going on. Nowadays, I notice that there are a lot of people now learning Chinese because it's getting popular. There are non-native speakers, like fully Scottish people, who just want to learn Chinese, or other Europeans, so I felt less excluded.

Unlike her experience in Hong Kong, attending Chinese lessons in Scotland with other non-native Chinese speakers made Sophie more comfortable. In this particular situation, she did not need to worry about being assumed to be a native Chinese as her role as a Mandarin-learner clearly indicated her limited linguistic skills. Meanwhile, she was also able to foreground her Scottishness by attending the class with 'non-Chinese looking' students. In the classroom context, Sophie was able to 'disclose' her inability to speak Chinese, which counteracted the possible stereotypes others might ascribe to her. Moreover, Sophie was not the centre of difference in this specific context because most attending students were different from one another in terms of their ethnic backgrounds. This example highlighted the contingent and place-specific nature of identity, as identities are only brought to the fore when differences are evoked.

However, Sophie performed a 'U-turn' in her attitude towards her Chinese heritage when discussing her career prospects. She justified her interest in the Chinese language by placing emphasis on the economic returns associated with acquiring these languages skills. In order to do so, she adopted an economic discourse. Specifically, she claimed:

I just think there will be more opportunities in things. People keep saying that there are more opportunities in business between Scotland and China. I met new people and they asked where I was from, I would say I was mixed but I couldn't speak Chinese. They would be "oh you should. It helps with your career." And I think when you are older, your thoughts are more complex, whereas when you were younger you just wanted to do the easier thing.

In rationalising her motives, Sophie adopted a pragmatic tone that viewed the ability to speak Mandarin as a form of cultural capital with potential for economic returns. However, her interests in learning the language were not solely economically motivated; learning was also a way to negotiate the predicament of being frequently mistaken for Chinese.

Demonstrating her enthusiasm towards Mandarin was one way to achieve a delicate balance between her assigned identity and her subjective identifications.

Having discussed extensively her ambivalence towards her Chinese heritage, Sophie turned to addressing the Scottish side of her identity. She started mapping out her Scottish connections and then explained her position within the network. The mapping process started with a story of her half-Scottish, half-Chinese mother. Sophie described her mother as a less popular figure at school compared to her siblings. Sophie implied a causal relationship between physical appearance and personality when accounting for her mother's isolation at school:

My aunties and my mum were called 'the Chinese girls' at school, but they [Sophie's aunties] were more popular, which was actually more of a joke; whereas my mum was quieter. I think part of it was to do with personalities. Her sisters were completely western so they always went out drinking and smoking. But you know, I honestly feel that my mum looks fully Chinese, even she is only half. Her eyes are really oriental shaped, but my younger aunties actually look more European.

Sophie implied that her mother's appearance was fundamental to her unpopularity. Her "fully Chinese" look stood out as a salient marker of her otherness, so she was more prone to shy away from the majority of white pupils. In contrast, her siblings appeared to utilise their mixedness as an exotic resource to gain popularity. Their exotic bodies functioned as a mediator of racialised differences in a homogenously white context, illuminating a gendered approach to negotiate racialised differences. Of course, the motivation and the ability to adopt a gendered approach vary between individuals. Whilst it was obvious that Sophie had not actually witnessed her mother's schooling experience, it was possibly true that she wanted to use her mother's example to reiterate the importance of physiology, namely looking 'European'. In Sophie's view, looking and acting like a Scot was a pass that allowed the holder to mingle with the Scottish group. Toward the end of this story, Sophie added, "If you are part-Chinese, it will also be part of your personality, whether you want to wear it or not." It seemed clear that she invested her own experience in her mother's story. In saying so, shyness was reified as a collective attribute of Chineseness, something inherited from the familial ties. In this vein, personality was perceived as a form of identity that was 'passed down' via bloodlines and through inheritance.

While Sophie's mother married a man from Hong Kong, her other aunties went on to marry Scottish men and had children who were "effectively a quarter Chinese". Sophie viewed herself as vastly different from her cousins, considering the latter to have completely rejected their Chinese heritage as "the incentive wasn't there". Besides, her cousins' white appearance waived the demand to deal with questions about their origins, which Sophie encountered so frequently:

If people can't see you are mixed, they won't ask you where you are from. You will then talk less about it. It sounds quite shallow, but the way you look is where it has an impact. I will have to explain that my mum is half-Chinese but my cousins never even get asked about it, because people think they are fully Scottish.

The problem was once again rooted in the power for one's phenotype to be perceived in different ways, which generated differential treatments in social encounters. The differential lived experiences formulated a boundary between Sophie and her cousins: the difference was not merely a physical one but also a cultural one. In the following quote, she chose one representative element to illustrate her voluntary detachment from Scottishness.

I think a really big part of the Scottish culture is drinking. Scottish people are massively going out every weekend, you know, drinking and smoking. I mean you can have more of a good time if you don't get drunk, because you can remember having a good time on the next day. I suppose the barrier between me and the Scottish people is the drinking culture. I always feel like I am quite Scottish, but with the drinking thing I just don't understand at all.

While Sophie was keen to highlight her Scottishness by emphasising her Scottish traits, such as her accent and fondness for Scottish TV programs, she also gauged the cultural distance and strategically aligned herself with her Chinese side. The drinking culture was selected to represent one aspect of Scottish culture for which Sophie distinctively framed her lack of appreciation. According to Sophie, binge drinking was a norm shared by Scottish youths, including her cousins, whereas in Chinese and other cultures, the drinking culture did not occupy a central space. Growing up under the Chinese influence at home, she was not ready or willing to participate in this behaviour. In illustrating her claim, she suggested that neither of her parents nor any of her friends at school drank. By implying a

sense of irrationality with the binge-drinking culture, Sophie positioned herself on the opposite side of the Scottish youth, which justified her decision not to mingle with Scottish youngsters. In doing this, Sophie navigated through a range of possible disadvantages of being associated with Chinese and presented herself as someone who cherished and made full use of an otherwise stigmatised identity. Notably, when Sophie described the Scottish side of her family, she maintained an implicit identification with her Chinese heritage. However, Sophie's identification with Chinese was more of a forced decision informed by her lived experience. The constant challenges posed to her Scottishness made her develop a coping strategy to (in)voluntary reject some elements associated with Scottishness.

Conclusion of Sophie's story

Compared to Haifa, Sophie had less freedom in choosing her identities so she needed to phrase her identifications more carefully. Aware that her asserted Scottishness was unlikely to be readily accepted by others, she formulated a strategic identification with her Chinese heritage, emphasising the rewarding kinship ties. She aimed to achieve a delicate balance between her Scottish and Chinese heritages, where her mixedness functioned as a mediator so that she could 'pick and choose' the elements she wanted. This was based on her access to both Chinese and Scottish heritages and a skilful deployment of this cultural capital. When reading the transcripts, one thing that struck me was the repeated occurrence of blood quantifications. Quantifying words, such as "full" and "quarter" frequently came up in Sophie's interview to 'measure' and prove one's ethnic authenticity. The blood quantification was deployed when Sophie emphasised she was only a quarter Scottish, which enabled her to justify her preference for the Chinese culture and her rejection of a Scottish lifestyle. In fact, the blood quantum discourse was used by a few of the mixed interviewees as a means of strengthening their assertions of a particular ethnic identity.

It was also apparent that Sophie conducted constant self-assessments over her eligibility to claim an ethnic membership. She referred to different scripts of behaviour ascribed to Scottishness and Chineseness and then assessed herself against these criteria. Her mixedness was factored smoothly into the process to allow her to role switch between being Chinese and being Scottish. As Song (2003) points out, a collective identity can be positive when it provides emotional and material forms of support to assumed members, yet it can also generate expectations about the cultural contents of a group. Whilst there was no doubt that Sophie found emotional stability in claiming her Chinese heritage, she was not ready (or perhaps willing) to fully participate in the Chinese community, given the

racial stereotypes and stigma attached to a racialised minority status. In other words, her mixedness allowed her to assert an ethnic affiliation without ‘becoming’ a Chinese person. Likewise, her identification with her Scottish side was also situational and temporary in that she selectively subscribed to the ethnic script to demonstrate her membership. Whilst both Haifa and Sophie were mixed, Sophie had a more acute awareness of the cost of ethnicity because her primary identity of being Scottish was harder to secure; in other words, she had to ‘work her way up’ to achieve a Scottish identity. In contrast, for Haifa, despite occasional challenges to her Scottishness, her primary identity of being white British was never questioned. The two individuals hence invested different types of emotion in their mixedness, creating different repertoires and achieving different results.

Shab

In his late 20s, Shab was born to a white Scottish woman and a Pakistani migrant who arrived in the UK in the 1970s. Before moving out to live on his own, Shab used to stay in his parent’s house with four elder half-siblings from his father’s previous marriage. Being the only child from his parents’ marriage and the youngest of all, Shab enjoyed certain privileges: whilst all of Shab’s siblings worked for a family business that their father set up, Shab was exempted from doing so. In fact, he was also the only child who moved out of their parents’ house and settled down in a “less Asian” community. Like Sophie’s usage of the term ‘Chinese’, Shab did not spell out whom he referred to when using the term ‘Asian’. From the context, he appeared to be referring to people of Pakistani origin who practised Islam at home.

Born and bred in one of the most ethnically diverse areas in Glasgow where Pakistani Muslims were well represented, Shab spent most of his youth in the local community hanging out with other children of Pakistani heritage. This experience constituted Shab’s early memories of his friendship network. In his early childhood, he “didn’t mix so much” with children outside his community. Therefore, ‘Asian’ conjured up both religious and racialised connotations. In that period of his life, Shab’s mixedness was downplayed by the family and friendship networks he was surrounded by. Being Asian was prominent for Shab at that time, as illustrated by the frequent “run-ins” with gangs from neighbouring communities:

There were always tensions between Asian and Scottish communities. There were instances when plenty of us Asian people in that gang had run-ins with white people.

It was mainly a geographical issue but it could become a racial thing you know. They [the Scottish] would say racial things, which is the easiest thing for them to say.

The street fights created a racial division where Shab was positioned against the Scottish side. He was perceived by white Scots as an ‘Asian’ in that he formed an alliance with other teenagers from the community. Whilst Shab implied that the reasons behind the fights were complex, he was aware of their racial element, too. In describing his feelings of having racial slurs shouted at him, he said:

I suppose it was just when you were young, you would be tempted to do and say stupid things. You didn’t necessarily mean it but you just did it sometimes. But as I said, as people get older and more educated, it will get better.

Instead of seeing racially motivated clashes as a structural problem, Shab viewed it more as an individual issue deriving from age-related ignorance. He assumed that an increase in age would lead to a mature mentality, which in turn would erase racist beliefs. In fact, seeing racism as an individual problem was a commonly held view among the interviewees in this study. They tended to suggest that education was the cure for racism. One possible explanation for this was the circulation of post-racial discourses that dismissed the existence of racism, as elaborated in Chapter 3 and Chapter 8. On the other hand, the popular imagination of working-class racism also came into play that contributed to the frequent twinning of racism and lack of education.

Maintaining that age was a significant factor in shaping one’s approach to ‘race’, Shab also suggested that there was a growing level of tolerance and respect for people from other ethnicities as one aged. Putting himself forward as an example, Shab neatly tied the temporal dimension into a shift in his identification. He observed that as he grew older he started to rediscover his Scottish side following a changed social network:

When I’ve got older, I have more Scottish friends. I will do stuff with them. It’s better for me personally and I prefer to be more individual. I want to go out, have a drink and enjoy myself. I don’t like to be judged.

In signalling his shifted identifications, Shab utilised the ‘ethnic scripts’ that characterised each ethnicity with certain behaviours. Linking this to Sophie’s account, there is a shared

association of the drinking culture with Scottishness; yet what differentiated the two was that Shab positively framed drinking for fun as a liberal lifestyle choice that allowed him to demonstrate his masculinity. From here, Shab started employing the language of individualisation to explain his decision to break away from the Asian community. In making this claim, Shab formulated a contrast between a modernised, individualised Scottish identity and a restrictive, constraining Muslim identity. Comparing himself with his Asian friends from childhood, Shab thought mixedness gave him an edge:

Obviously, I am mixed-race, so there are certain things that I can do which other people who are not mixed race can't. I am kind of diverse.

The word 'diverse' entailed a freedom to pursue an individualised path. Shab associated his current circumstance with his individualisation to highlight the symbolic power of mixedness: because of his unique background, he was free from the obligations imposed on his siblings and lived on his own; his mixedness also allowed him to expand his friendship network beyond the racialised boundary. Individualisation was deployed in a particular fashion to accommodate Shab's motives for adapting to a new life. The language embodied individually defined actions, emancipation from ethnic scripts, and a breakaway from a backwards lifestyle. It was through this salient contrasting of 'modern' and 'backwards' lifestyles that Shab proved the rationale behind his decisions: in the name of his 'Scottish blood'. However, Shab's version of individualisation was idealised: it perhaps served to account for his behaviours but he could not neglect the social constraints he faced. As he navigated the transition in terms of his lifestyle and ethnic identity, Shab divulged his criticisms of the Pakistani community he grew up in:

Just from what I've seen over these years, I know the difference between Muslim communities. When I was younger, I would never go home smelling of alcohol because there was a big Pakistani community and Pakistani Muslims are more reserved. You are supposed to be more involved in the community and people know you that way, whereas for other Muslims who don't have a big community, like Syrians, Iranians and Libyans, they are more individual.

An interesting set of dynamics implied here signified the difference between the Pakistani Muslim community and other Muslim communities. By indicating a religious-based identification with other Muslims in his network, namely Syrians, Iranians and Libyans, in

terms of an individualised lifestyle, Shab articulated his discontent with the community/kinship-based orientation and suggested that the permeating anti-individualisation was not driven by the religion but by the ethnicity. No longer willing to be labelled as ‘Asian’, Shab opted for a voluntary detachment from his Pakistani heritage and commented on the community’s lifestyle in a more critical fashion:

I’ve seen many Asians who don’t really want to mix too much. They’d rather keep to their own, whereas for myself I made loads of different friends. So I would say the Asian communities are more enclosed; they all work with their family and attend the same school. If I’d stayed in the West End, I would probably have been more involved in all that and stayed close to certain friends.

As a former insider of the Asian community, Shab felt entitled to make these comments. That said, it was clear that some characteristics he ascribed to the Asian community, for example, being self-segregating and showing a lack of awareness of how to integrate into mainstream society, could also be found in tabloid newspapers and in government-funded reports (see the recently published *The Casey Review*, 2016). This indicated Shab’s internalisation of the circulating stigmas attached to Pakistani Muslims, but it also demonstrated his intention to be someone ‘different’. Moreover, Shab reflected on how spatial and geographical identifications could factor in one’s identification process. In this respect, he slightly contradicted his previous statement that mixedness embodied individualisation, but he did however acknowledge that the enabling and liberating effect of mixedness was lessened under the particular spatial conditions. Nonetheless, whilst Shab was keen to distinguish himself from the Pakistani community, there was one case in which he would readily take up a Pakistani identity:

When I was in Bradford, I felt like in Pakistan haha (laughing with embarrassment). I felt more religious, more Muslim, because there were just so many Pakistanis. But when I am back here in Scotland, I am just Scottish. Even when I am abroad, I am always just Scottish.

In Bradford, Shab felt more relaxed about his Pakistani background whilst he usually did not in other contexts. Such an attitudinal change indicated a relational identification: depending on the ethnicity of the majority population; Shab displayed his heritage contextually. In Bradford, Shab was surrounded by co-ethnics who shared the racialised

label of being Pakistani Muslims. The spatial context temporarily lessened the power of stigma and led him to foreground his Pakistani heritage to strengthen the bond. In contrast, back in Scotland, the majority of the white population, together with Islamophobic discourses, viewed Pakistani Muslims with an othering gaze, which encouraged identification with the Scottish heritage. These differential identifications were telling examples of Shab's relational identity, while it remained unclear whether his embracement of a Scottish identity was purely voluntary or a strategic choice. Throughout the interview, he was sending a clear message that being Scottish was central to his identity and 'race' would not affect the ways in which he identified himself. Nonetheless, the quotes suggested that Shab was still conscious of the way he was viewed by others and therefore adjusted his identifications according to contexts.

Earlier in our conversation, Shab revealed that he would like to prioritise a religious identity over his ethnicity. He insisted that being a Muslim was "a bigger deal" and this religious affinity has always been a stable component constituting who he was. This has probably to do with his upbringing given that his once-Catholic mother was converted to Islam in order to "make things easier" when it came to dietary requirements, religious education, and so on. She went on running a florist business with Shab's sister and had only occasional contact with her own siblings. Towards the end of the interview, Shab argued for religious continuity when we talked about his expectations of his future partner. He hoped to utilise the social capital brought by his kinship ties to foster a religious belief in his future partner and children. As he started talking about his vision for a family, he described the overarching role of Islam in organising his personal agenda:

I can't speak for everybody, but for me, if I was going to marry a Scottish girl, I would prefer her to convert. This is purely because when you have a family and kids, it's a lot better for continuity. I think that's why a lot of things were easier for me because my mum converted. It's a huge difference between Catholic and Muslim. Your head will be all over the place, you know.

Here, Shab described his expectations of his future partner by emphasising the importance of "continuity". Seeming to formulate a contrast with his aspirations of a freedom to choose, the idea of continuity indicated an alternative interpretation of individualisation that involved the choice of convention. As argued by Smart and Shipman (2004) work (discussed in the theory chapter), individuals of ethnic minority backgrounds might have

different perceptions of religion, culture and traditions. In Shab's case, his dominant 'Asian' upbringing and significant family ties served to explain his re-appropriation of his family practices. Willing to go along with his decision to continue the Islamic influence at home, the intimate others in Shab's life allowed him to maintain a sense of self. In the same vein, he went on to mention a supportive family network:

If I was to marry someone, my [half-] sisters would probably be the best persons to help [her to convert]. I could also do something, but you know (laughing with embarrassment) I don't know much about that either. But it would be someone who is more involved in the culture to do this, my sister or my dad.

Interestingly, Shab mentioned elsewhere that he did not want to marry an Asian girl. Dating Asian girls was "too complicated" for him because of their "insistent families" and the pressure to commit. In relation to his expectations of his future (Scottish) partner to convert and his enabling mixed heritage, it seemed that the individualisation thesis was interpreted in a different light in his account of his intimate relationships. In addition to manifesting his determination to raise his children based on a shared faith, Shab's accounts also revealed a gendered expectation: being the man of the family, he felt in charge of deciding what forms of support should be provided and where they should come from. He also expected his future wife to acquire a good understanding of the religion even if he himself had not done so. In writing about the myth of the 'macho Scotsman', Howson (1993) notes that Scottishness and national identity are usually framed in a gendered fashion. Gender attitudes in Scotland are arguably more conservative than in England and the rest of Europe (Kiely et al., 2001). In projecting these expectations, Shab implied a reconnection with his kinship ties and, in many ways, a return to the Pakistani Muslim community. Whilst it was unclear whether Shab was consciously adopting a 'macho' tone in articulating his vision of family life, a gendered interpretation of identity was evident from his expectation that someone else, namely female members of his family, would be responsible for organising everyday family activities and for maintaining the relationship. This reflected an intersected standpoint that was both gendered and racialised.

In narrating his trajectory of discovering his Scottish side without cutting off ties with his Asian heritage, Shab availed himself of a different route to finding a secure identity. His story demonstrated how one's identity could be changed by different lifestages, places and relations. In negotiating and seeking this security, Shab identified with different groups at

various points. Growing up imbued with the cultural and social capital associated with being 'Asian', Shab's identity was profoundly shaped by his close family and community connections. He later experienced changes in identity as he moved out and formed new social networks. The connecting agent was the idea of 'choice'; he stressed the importance of choices in his accounts in which his mixedness was the facilitating agent for his role-switching. Therefore, for Shab, mixedness was about making choices, but these choices were always relational and based on socially constructed options in specific contexts.

Concluding remarks

'Mixedness' itself does not contain any meaning; it only becomes meaningful when it is understood relationally. The action of relating was at the heart of this meaning-making process. As Richard, an English-Malaysian young professional in his late 20s, put it: "Being mixed is not so much about belonging to a culture but the experience you get from all of the interactions with your family, from an inward point of view." The insider position is symbolically significant, because it provides a sense of connectedness and embeddedness. Returning to the cases examined in this chapter, Sophie, Haifa and Shab embarked on a journey of exploring the meanings of mixedness by deploying a rich set of resources to actualise their identity claims. From being informed of their racialised differences to acquiring the language to negotiate these differences, the meanings they ascribed to mixedness were not fixed or stable but fluid and contingent. They drew on interactions with others and utilised messages deriving from these experiences as a means to determine which 'side' they were on in each specific context. In fact, the process of articulating the meanings was the process of asserting who they were, who they were not, and why. These different 'sides' were their chosen ethnic options, which contributed to the formation of their mixed identities.

To this end, this chapter answers the first research question concerning the formulation of mixed identities: it explains how a relational self is firmly embedded in the social and how families (and more generally wider kinship networks) play an influential role in the meaning-generation process. From a theoretical perspective, the analysis elaborates the micro-dynamics of identity making, as mixed individuals maintain a sense of self by citing their interactions with intimate others (usually those from their non-white heritages) and by emphasising the symbolic and emotional significance of these interactions.

Nonetheless, the decisions to assert certain identity options were not purely personal. The impact of the social, namely one's social location and the materials at one's ready disposal, factored into the process by shaping the range of options available and the ease with which each option could be asserted. For some such as Haifa, asserting an Arabic/Palestinian identity was relatively easy as her identity of being British was not affected, whereas others like Sophie had to craft their language about identity more carefully in order to articulate their identification; in Sophie's case this meant securing her Chineseness as well as her Scottishness. The two also anticipated different challenges when articulating these identity options. In Shab's case, the option of Scottishness was simply not available to him when he was young, as he lacked the resources and symbolic capital to 'activate' it. His gendered identity also factored into the process, emphasising the importance of an intersectional approach. During the interviews, all three individuals downplayed the role of 'race' in shaping their experiences in their stories, but there was an underlying tension in their accounts where racial differences and hierarchy were still at the heart of the play. All three stories indicate that the phenotype remains a key factor in shaping the ways in which mixed people interact with others, and the outcome of these interactions inevitably influences the self-understanding of mixed people. Therefore, the proposition that mixed people enjoy more ethnic options cannot be interpreted in a simplistic fashion; it needs to be treated with caution by taking the interplay of culture and 'nature' into consideration.

As seen from the previous analysis, mixed individuals often need to negotiate the meaning of mixedness when expressing their identities. One particular challenge faced by mixed people is to 'prove' the authenticity of a claimed ethnicity. On the one hand, mixed people refer to 'blood ties' to guarantee their authenticity; on the other hand, they also invest in kinship ties creatively to forge new identities that allow them to break down the boundaries. Even though the meaning of mixedness shown in this chapter was by no means representative, they all pointed to the key role of mixed-heritage in structuring 'mixed-race' identity repertoires for the interviewees. The key element shared by Haifa, Sophie, Shab and the other mixed interviewees who were not discussed here was a clear message that mixedness was a meaningful experience. By drawing on discourses of genealogy and of individualisation, they are able to navigate the conflict between 'being natural' and 'being cultural'. As far as this thesis was concerned, the significance of coming from a mixed background was rooted in a (relatively) good understanding of both heritages and strong kinship ties with the extended families of both parents. These interactions and knowledges enriched their narratives enabling them to draw on a range of discourses while

also allowing them to invest their personal experience into these discourses. They could therefore challenge the racial stigma attached to their non-white heritage. The very process of negotiating these identifications, despite its often ambivalent and ambiguous nature, demonstrates the interviewees' proactive approach to 'doing' their identities.

Not everyone in this study, however, shared the same level of resources to negotiate the potential stigma brought about by their mixedness. In the next chapter, I will further elaborate on the racialised experiences of mixedness trying to unveil another set of experiences associated with mixedness. Contrasting the findings presented here, the next chapter will consider the lived experience in which racialised differences were more often than not unnegotiable due to structural constraints and inequalities. Exemplified by three individual stories, the experiences of another set of interviewees suggest that being mixed can also be a less meaningful experience which bears the racial stigma of not being-white. 'Race' remains a central category defining individuals' experiences. In this regard, the findings shown in this chapter serve as a point of departure for the next, which will explore the intricate relationship between 'race', mixedness and Scottishness.

Chapter 6 Racialised bodies (un)negotiable differences

Introduction

As stated in the opening of the previous chapter, there were two identified interpretations associated with mixedness. The first interpretation, illustrated in Chapter 5, considers the construction of mixed identities as a process of drawing upon and mobilising the meanings entailed by one's heritages. It stresses the role of kinship networks in providing symbolic and material resources for mixed individuals to articulate their chosen ethnicity. However, for those who have fewer resources to sustain their claim to be 'mixed-race', expressing their identity might entail a greater challenge. In this chapter, I will elaborate the second interpretation. For this group, which accounts for almost half of the sample (n=7), maintaining a bold claim of being a mixed Scot seems to be a greater challenge. For one thing, there appear to be conflicting messages deriving from the interviewees' expressed identifications (being Scottish) and ascribed identities (perceived as being non-white). Another challenge they face is that the lack of mobilisable resources accessible from their families - whether social, economic or cultural capital - limits their ability to mediate racialised differences. As a result, they make various efforts to negotiate these meanings, which are often socially constructed to be mutually exclusive.

Therefore, this chapter sets out to delineate the dynamics involved in the second approach. It reveals a different picture of family lives and it takes a closer look at the often-intertwined relationship of national form and an ethnic form of identification. Specifically, the complex dynamics of relationship between mixedness and whiteness will be unpacked. Three selected individuals, Sara, Ian and Charlene, have two things in common: first, they were all brought up under a 'white' influence, receiving little input about their non-white heritages; second, whilst they practised the white norm at home, they experienced inconsistent racial misrecognition within and beyond the familial context. In fact, nearly half of the 'mixed-race' interviewees shared similar experiences with these three individuals, namely in their late 20s or older at the time of interview, being brought up by a lone white parent, living in what they perceived to be 'less-diverse' areas of Scotland, and being less likely to pass as white. These individuals' interpretations of mixedness were somewhat different from those of Haifa, Sophie and Shab. A sense of white orientation was evident in their accounts, but these expressions were often mediated: knowing that

their claimed whiteness might be questioned by others, these mixed individuals tended to carefully frame whiteness to be a multi-dimensional experience, which was not only about looking white but also about living and thinking in a ‘white’ way. They subscribed to the dominant racialised social norms, which in this context referred to a particular set of behaviours and values associated with whiteness, in an attempt to be seen as a member of Scottish society. What they most wanted to share about their mixed experience was the process of negotiating the space between themselves and the white majority. Their stories alluded to various manifestations of whiteness but also to the contested and racialised nature of national identity.

Furthermore, in contrast with Chapter 5, this chapter seeks to explain why there have been differential attitudes towards mixedness among the interviewees of this study. Extending the gaze to the impact of structural constraints, this chapter contends that recognising the intersection of racial and class inequalities is crucial to making sense of the differential capacities and resources available to mixed individuals to negotiate racialised difference. Individuals reimagine their mixedness by referring to the social contexts within which they are located, and they construct their identity based on socially available options. This perhaps explains why for some, the role of ‘race’ is particularly salient in shaping everyday life experiences.

Sara

Raised by her white Scottish mother on her own, Sara was born in a white working-class community in Edinburgh in the early 1980s. She never had a chance to meet her Ugandan biological father, but she had a ‘mixed-race’ half-sister from her mother’s more recent relationship with a Nigerian man. Despite having two daughters of half-African heritage, Sara’s mother, according to Sara, showed little interest in talking about mixedness or ‘race’. Sara thought that her mother had “ignored the issue completely”, to the extent that she had no idea how to deal with Sara’s question about heritage, including her ‘Afro’ hair. As a result, Sara used to look up websites to read about Uganda, hoping to find out more about the heritage with which she had never previously had any contact.

Entering the interview with strong sentiments regarding her unknown ‘roots’, Sara started her story with a marked tone of ‘being foreign and different’. Being brought up in a predominantly white environment, Sara thought of herself as white but was not treated as such. It slowly emerged that this sentiment was forged out of an ongoing struggle to

validate her whiteness. The experiences of informed difference had an alienating effect, and she found herself struggling to come up with vocabularies to respond to the scrutinising white gaze:

Even as a child I was aware that I was different: from my mum, from her family, from her friends, and from everybody I was around. Everyone at my school was white. I was the only person who was mixed race. Most people didn't understand that. They thought I was foreign and that I had come here from somewhere else. I had a lot of racist bullying and scorn when I was younger, for example, people would say to me: "Go back to where you come from." It was quite difficult when you don't come from anywhere (she laughed bitterly). I was sort of like "Well, where am I supposed to go? This is home. This is where I was born, where my mother was born."

On first appearance, this extract resembled Sophie's experience of being recognised as Chinese. But Sara's account entailed a stronger and more bitter sense of loss due to her lack of agency: whilst Sophie could always return to her Chinese heritage by highlighting her profound connection with her Chinese family, Sara had nowhere to turn to given her limited knowledge about her African heritage. In this case, Sara had to elicit her mother's 'race' hoping that the symbolic power of the blood ties inherited from her mother would improve her situation. In doing so, Sara adopted a similar strategy to Haifa in terms of investing in her genealogy, but the difference was stark: while Haifa could readily claim an authentic Scottish identity without this costing her Britishness, Sara was not even able to secure the latter. Unlike Haifa and Sophie, Sara could 'pass' as neither Scottish nor the other component of her mixed identity. Sara thought her mother was responsible for her daughter's confusion over her identity and her lack of understanding of her African heritage. In reflecting on her mother's approach to her question about 'roots', Sara said, "I think if she had maybe taken the time to listen to what is actually going on, maybe she could have helped a little bit more rather than ignoring it."

Whilst Sara's phenotype disqualified her from Scottishness, Sara was trying to demonstrate her white mentality as a strategic deployment of her white heritage. By actively engaging in negotiating the conflict between culture and nature, she aimed to prove that although she appeared foreign, she was culturally Scottish:

I think especially when I was younger, I used to be drinking and smoking. I think I wanted to prove that I wasn't that kind of uptight, religious, judgmental person who wouldn't have any fun. You know, all the things they assumed about people who were from other cultures.

'Having fun' by drinking and smoking was considered to be the key thing that differentiated Sara from other non-white people. Knowing well the racial stereotypes imposed upon 'culturally others', Sara made a conscious effort to break away from them by adjusting her behaviours to be in line with her white peers. When doing this, she had already taken others' perceptions on board and placed herself in the position of an outsider. She anticipated a change in other people's perceptions, but her efforts did not always pay off:

I always got stares; even when I was out for a night out and forgot all about it, somebody would come and say, "Hey, I like your hair." You know, sometimes it just brought me back. It's kind of erm... I don't know, an isolating experience in a way.

Sara's night out anecdote was one of the everyday illustrations of the othering process: her 'Afro' hair was a topic in itself and was instantly met by others' intrigued stares. Later in the interview, Sara revealed that she had tried different methods to minimise the attention paid to her hair, by straightening it, tying it up, or even cutting it with scissors. She would even exchange 'hair tricks' with her half-sister, as their mother was not responsive to their frustration over hair. Anecdotes like this made Sara recognise that there was an irreconcilable tension between nature and culture: acting like a Scot did not make her a Scot. Due to the centrality of others' perceptions, Sara displayed a heightened racial consciousness resulting from her internalising the status of the racialised other. Her overriding concern about 'race' also intruded in her intimate relationships, as she turned to talk about her 'race' and its effect on the outcomes of her online dating:

When I was growing up finding dates, it turned out to be that I was always the one who was left out. I mean that sort of thing has been a barrier for the last ten years. For example, I've been doing some online dating, and I feel like I need to warn people. I need to sort of say something about my background. I feel I need to mention it somehow.

When she said this, I suggested that ‘warn’ was quite a strong word. She laughed nervously and said, “You know, that [her race] will put a lot of people off.” For Sara, ‘race’ played a huge role in forging an intimate relationship, and a good ‘racial match’ was vital for a lasting relationship. Even from a young age, Sara started to develop a heightened preoccupation that her ethnic background was an off-putting factor for whites. She nonetheless found herself enjoying a light-skinned privilege in relation to black men:

Well, to be honest, to be brutally honest, my preference is the white. But I think that’s a problem for a lot of them. I tend to attract black guys because I’ve got lighter skin. They tend to find me appealing. But we would then clash culturally because I think they are quite erm... maybe traditional.

‘Race’ became relational here: whilst she was ‘dark’ compared to the white, she enjoyed a light-skinned privilege in relation to the black. The physical characteristics entailed by mixedness gave her a sense of psychological advantage in dating black people because her whiteness offered her the desired status of being ‘white’. Nonetheless, Sara was keen to emphasise that her cultural identity differentiated her from black people. A different reading of gender led to the disparity:

The man I’ve been dating has been quite traditional in the sense that he has a certain idea about gender roles. He just doesn’t understand me: he doesn’t understand why I want to do things independently from him. I have been brought up by a very independent single mother who is working and very independent, you know, it’s very difficult for me to be the submissive wife who will do whatever she is told.

In this quote, Sara problematised her partner’s approach to gender relations as she associated her partner with patriarchy in contrast with her more liberal view of gender. The underlying comparison was in fact between two cultures: the “African culture” and the Scottish culture. The conflict over perceptions of gender was indicative of the conflict between different cultural identities. She identified a salient contrast between the African and Scottish approaches to gender issues when she highlighted why she found it ‘difficult’ to deal with her patriarchal African partner. As further illustration, she used her mother as an embodiment of Scottishness. Her mixedness in this context is not merely indicative of a progressive attitude towards gender but also a strong identification with her Scottish heritage. In this regard, Sara’s account of her intimate relationship was a strategic

negotiation of whiteness, an articulation of her white Scottish identity, which was less viable in other contexts. In her concluding remarks, she observed, “It’s not to do with the colour of one person’s skin; it’s to do with their cultural background.”

Commenting on the frequent experience of being informed of her differences, Sara suggested a connection between spatiality and attitudes towards difference. She referred to the community she had grown up in, a predominantly white working-class neighbourhood in the suburbs of Edinburgh, to illustrate the role played by a specific socio-cultural environment:

I think it all boils down to the fact that there is just not enough diversity in Edinburgh for people to get used to people of different stories and different backgrounds. Everyone just sees us with the same story: your parents are from a random place and they came here when you were a baby; your parents have a shop; you don’t speak English; you don’t go out socialising with people. Everyone thinks that is all about us. There is no grey area in between, whereas I was kind of growing up in this grey area.

Edinburgh was considered to be “super white” by Sara, and did not share the same level of ethnic diversity as Glasgow or London. Sara vividly recalled the feeling of seeing “a real-life black baby” for the first time in her local supermarket; she remarked that she “had to go back around to have a wee look”. The lack of ethnic diversity reinforced the monolithic, normative status of whiteness and resulted in an oversimplified reading of migrant communities by white residents, who showed little interest in understanding migrants, let alone interacting with them. When saying this, she introduced the tension between ‘us’ (i.e. migrants or anyone considered foreign) and ‘everyone’ (i.e. the white residents). She conceptualised a social space between the two groups, neither of which she felt she fully belonged to. Unlike Haifa, Sophie and Shab, who availed themselves of different routes to establishing their identities, Sara was not equipped with enough resources to generate alternative meanings to consolidate a non-white identity. Referring to the white gaze, Sara said:

It came to the point that I would just say, “I am from whatever,” because it’s just easier to lie. People believe the lie over the truth. It’s just easier to say, “I came from Uganda when I was 4. My parents were from there and I’ve got loads of family there.

We go there for holiday.” And you know what, people are happy with that! And then they will leave it and you don’t have to go on.

It was heavy to hear this. Tired of going into lengthy detail about her background, Sara stopped making the effort and resorted to giving random answers that catered to the white majority. Not only did she surrender to the symbolic violence of white supremacy, she also internalised and contributed to the reproduction of normative whiteness. This pointed to the power of whiteness as “the unspoken register of race thinking” (Nayak, 2007:746). In addition to the lack of interaction between the indigenous population and migrants, Sara thought racial misrecognition was a problem. Having limited exposure and knowledge of ethnic minorities, people around Sara frequently recognised her as someone from another ethnic background and attacked her on that basis:

A lot of people think I am Pakistani because I have brown skin. I had a lot of racist abuse which was used to target Pakistanis. People here think India, Pakistan, the Caribbean are the same thing, and they see me as a mixture of different cultures, the mixture of everything that is different and scary. They just blend them in together and direct it at me when they see me. You know sometimes I could be a Caribbean woman from Africa but would do an Indian accent. I get these kinds of odd comments: it could be amusing sometimes, but it tends to be insulting. Of course, they got it totally wrong because I am not Pakistani!

Sara’s experience of misrecognition echoed the observation that some mixed people were discriminated against for being non-white rather than being mixed per se (Song and Aspinall, 2012). This revealed the arbitrary nature of racial assignment underpinned by the power of racism and racist culture. The racialisation process enabled a linkage between visible differences and racialised categories based on a particular way of seeing. Specific differences between different ethnicities were not a matter of concern as long as they served to distinguish the white from the non-white. Racialised others, regardless of their experience and background, were unanimously alienating and inferior. Sara had to put up with racist jokes such as “smells like curry” and unfair remarks that were completely irrelevant to her; moreover, she had racialised categories imposed upon her to which she did not relate. The harm of racist thinking was profound on Sara; she was in tears when she told me these heart-breaking anecdotes: “You know I don’t pass because I’ve got brown skin, but this doesn’t mean I am what they think I am.”

Knowing that her appearance did not ‘fit’ with common assumptions of Scottishness, Sara was less assertive about her Scottish identity compared to those who could pass (like Haifa). This anxiety was encapsulated in the quotes below:

I was actually quite nervous about the independence referendum. I think people will accept me better if I identify myself as British, but being Scottish is a different matter. I was frightened to lose the British connection you know because this is the only thing I feel I can be part of. Although my heart feels Scottish, I probably won’t describe myself as Scottish because I know how I look. (Mengxi: Even within Scotland? You know you’ve got a Scottish accent and everything...) Especially in Scotland, because I know people will say “No, you are not” (she laughed nervously).

Sara appeared to be more comfortable with a British than with a Scottish identity. Moving beyond their original labelling of nationalities, the terms ‘British’ and ‘Scottish’ became two deeply racialised concepts which linked physical characteristics to memberships of communities, with ‘race’ at the heart of this racialised imagination. With an assumption that her claim to be a Scot would inevitably be challenged and possibly denied, Sara considered a British identity to be ‘safer’ and more inclusive. In her view, Britishness was inclusive enough to accommodate her foreignness and to preserve her symbolic whiteness - a source of the cultural and social capital entailed by her white heritage that was shared by white members in society. In other words, foregrounding her Britishness provided an alternative route to maintain her weak connection to whiteness.

Sara’s story shed light on how different types of national identities are experienced. Compared to the more ‘tangible’ sense of Scottishness, Britishness in Scotland appeared to be a more free-floating category, where the racialised boundaries could be stretched to accommodate different ‘shades’ of whiteness. On a slightly different note, although in Sara’s case, Scottishness was described as a more exclusive, ‘colour-coded’ national identity, it was framed as a progressive, open and liberal category in Chapter 8. In this sense, analysing the identity expressions of mixedness helps reveal how often an expressed national identity reflected an intersected reading of ethnicity and one’s positioning within society.

Towards the end of the interview, Sara summarised the ambivalent feeling attached to mixedness, which almost echoed what Du Bois framed as double-consciousness. This sense of ‘two-ness’, whereby black people are forced to internalise structural constraints and negative attitudes imposed by the white, was evident in the following quote:

For most people, the way they feel inside and the way they look outside match (she laughed nervously). For me it’s different. It’s a strange thing. On the one hand, it’s with me all the time. I do think about it all the time but sometimes I forget it. I don’t feel like I quite fit or am being accepted...They will always assume that I am lying or exaggerating or trying to be more modern than I actually am.

Sara concluded her story with a feeling of not belonging; her claim to white membership was not acknowledged by others, and she was not as resourceful as Haifa, Sophie or Shab in terms of producing alternative interpretations wherein her black heritage could be highlighted. Her denied white identity had a profound impact upon her understanding of herself. In this process, her mixedness was peripheral and unimportant. It was not deployed as an enabling attribute that allowed her to negotiate adverse situations but it was instead an othering element generating differential treatments on the grounds of ‘race’. The conflictual state between the subjective identification and the assigned identification was difficult to negotiate as she had little power to alter the situation; her powerlessness resided in her inability to be defined as she wished, as the power to define who counted as white or Scot did not lie in her hands. This feeling was shared by many of the interviewees who were informed of their non-whiteness outside the protective environment of the family, and it was particularly hard for those who grew up solely interacting with the white side of their family. While not always intended maliciously, being informed of one’s difference usually has a long-lasting psychological impact on the self-esteem of mixed individuals; this alters their initial understandings of self and triggers a chain reaction in relation to their identifications.

Conclusion of Sara’s story

Sara's experience on the one hand illustrated the exclusive nature of Scottishness, and on the other, the arbitrary logic of racial distinctions. The frequent racial misrecognition and the persistent power of racialised difference exposed the ways in which ‘race’ was reproduced in everyday life. The interviewees who, like Sara, were ‘visibly mixed’, tended to have racialised categories imposed upon them with which they did not identify yet had

little power to challenge. Without meaningful connection with one's other heritage and access to symbolic capital, Sara's story suggested that mixed individuals might not always have the freedom to articulate ethnic options. Sara's experience, echoed by that of Ian and Charlene in the rest of the chapter, represented those who grew up under the white influence and had limited access to their non-white heritage. Their social location engendered a particular reading of whiteness, which Ahmed (2014) called a "proximate" (p. 98), namely that whiteness was a part of their background but was never fully converted into possessions. While some choose to live with it, some choose to invest in a racialised identity instead. In so doing, 'race' was repurposed to support one's identity claim. This paradox is epitomised by the next interviewee I will introduce, Ian.

Ian

The initial contact with Ian did not go as smoothly as expected. When he first got in touch in October 2014, he wanted to know more about me and my research. After receiving a link to my research profile page, the information sheet and the consent form, he requested a copy of the interview guide and asked whether he could be interviewed at home. Then, he cut off communication from his end for two months. In early December 2014, he got in touch again agreeing to meet in his flat, which was located in an Edinburgh suburb.

Ian greeted me with his two children - a five-year-old girl and a three-year-old little boy. He apologised for being "unorganised" and then explained that the reason for the hassle was to make sure his kids were always in a safe environment. Having separated from his ex-partner, who was also 'mixed-race', Ian shared the childcare responsibilities by looking after their children three days a week. The interview took place in the kitchen when his children were watching TV in the living room.

I've never talked about being mixed race with anyone else other than my ex-partner because there weren't that many mixed people around me when I grew up. I am interested in, you know, helping you out and basically talking about it, but also realising something for myself.

Ian introduced three topics in his opening statement: his ex-partner, his upbringing and his aspiration to know himself. These three things turned out to be reoccurring themes in our interview, as Ian kept returning to these points. Ian's mother was a white Canadian, who had gone to Edinburgh in the 1970s to attend a nursing course, where she met Ian's father -

a Pakistani Christian who had migrated to Scotland. As far as Ian was concerned, his parents had completely different personalities: his mother was a “free spirit” whereas his father was uptight, religious and business-minded. Ian also observed that his parents did not have a “normal couple relationship” and this, according to Ian, was mainly down to his father’s “wild, controlling and jealous” personality. During his childhood, Ian and his five siblings “hardly talked to each other”. Ian described his father as a successful businessman running a range of family businesses, including a hotel, but at the same time, his father was a formidable figure with a deeply felt resentment of his Pakistani heritage:

I remember always asking him why he wasn’t open about Pakistan and telling us more about it. He said because it was a backwards country and there was no good in Pakistan. But, you know, there are good people in Pakistan. There are good and bad people everywhere.

The main reason for such resentment, as far as Ian was concerned, was religion. Growing up in Pakistan practising Christianity, Ian’s father had experienced religious prosecution and victimisation from an early age. As a result, he started turning against the Muslim population and developed a negative feeling about being Pakistani. This self-loathing sentiment towards his Pakistani heritage was partly transformed into a motivation to prove that he was better than the rest of the Pakistanis. To illustrate this, Ian recounted an anecdote:

I used to have a friend who was Pakistani, but I was never allowed to play with him. That’s because his dad happened to own a stereotypical corner shop, which was literally across the road from our hotel. My dad loved that fact, because he would never be associated with having a shop or that kind of stereotype. That’s why he chose any business but a corner shop.

A corner shop was seen as symbolically Pakistani by Ian’s father. Driven by a desire to differentiate himself from other Pakistanis and well aware of the stigmas associated with Pakistanis, Ian’s father worked to divest himself of these stereotypes. The internalisation of racial stigma and an open, deliberate rejection of his ‘race’ had profoundly influenced the way Ian was brought up. Ian recalled growing up under a white influence without “knowing anything about Pakistan except the skin colour”. A complete erasure of his Pakistani heritage and an immersion in whiteness led Ian to internalise the shame:

When I was younger, people would say negative things because my dad was Pakistani. That's why I used to hide in my father's car, like pretending to tie my shoelaces, if I saw a friend walking past. I was embarrassed because my dad looked different. He had really dark skin, you know, and obviously, you got racist comments from kids.

For Ian, his father's body was a reminder of his racialised differences, yet his refusal to address 'race' generated confusion and shame for Ian. From a young age, Ian was exposed to negative messages about his phenotype and Pakistani heritage. Ian's hiding in the car illustrated how racist ideas were internalised and reinforced but also illuminated the desire for whiteness that mixed people like Ian had from a young age. Worse still, these racist comments were sparked by the presence of his father, who in turn refused to acknowledge, let alone explain, the 'problem of race'. When Ian articulated his feelings to his father, his father's reaction was not helpful:

I remember the first time they said the P- word, I went to my dad and said, "They said this about me and I don't know what it means." And he actually said, "Well, you are..." [Ian paused and sighed] You know I can't even say that word, it's too racist. I suppose it was his way of saying, "forget what they are saying", but he just did it in the most harmful way.

His father's indifference to racist bullying was disappointing. His refusal to engage in the 'race' talk was not only discouraging but also indicative of the embodiment of racial hierarchy. The oppression generated in a racist system of human classification was so internalised by Ian's father that he voluntarily gave up aspiration to resist the racial hierarchy. Instead, he passed on this passive attitude to his son. As Ian grew up, he developed a belief that he was ineligible to be a Scot because he did not comply with what a Scot should look like. He recounted an anecdote related to growing up near a football stadium:

I think it comes down to Scottish patriotism. I've always grown up and associated that with racism, especially from living near a football stadium. See, if I accidentally walk past a football fans parade, ewww, I would get pushed and shouted at, all that

kind of thing because of the colour of my skin. They won't stop and ask. That's what it was. So anyway, I didn't feel comfortable associating myself with Scottish at all.

Football was usually associated with racial prejudice, driven by a primordial reading of ethnicity and nation. Ian, seen as non-white and non-Scottish, was often confronted with hostility from football fans and consequently excluded from participating in football events. This particular manifestation of masculinity associated with being a Scottish man, namely being into football and involved in rival fan groupings, explained the overt racism Ian had to deal with. These unpleasant experiences contributed to the internalisation of the idea that being white was desirable whereas being brown was not. Over time, he learnt to consciously display the desirable whiteness.

When I grew up I was so sick of explaining to my friends that I was mixed. I used to say, "Yes, my dad is Pakistani", and then I would add "but my mum is white". You know, the 'BUT' makes the difference.

Ian's self-protection strategy was to pre-empt people's questions about his ethnic background by highlighting his white heritage. From what we have seen thus far, Ian was brought up in a household under a white influence. As part of his father's effort to 'whiten' his children, Ian was sent to a private primary school where the majority of pupils were white. Therefore, both within and beyond the family context, Ian found whiteness a more desirable option as a result of the environment in which he was placed. Consequently, he acquired the skill of 'choosing a side' strategically. On the other hand, although Ian mentioned very little about his mother, her symbolic 'value' was accentuated here: her physical whiteness was something that Ian had a desire to share. It was an attribute that Ian thought he was capable of inheriting, albeit partially. After primary school, Ian was sent to a more ethnically diverse high school because his father thought "the private one was too expensive." Unlike Haifa, who was pleasantly surprised to encounter a multi-ethnic population at school, Ian developed a strange feeling towards his new schoolmates initially:

There were a lot of people from different cultures in my high school. When I look at my skin (rubbing his arm while saying this), I thought, "Wow, there are other people who are not white". I tell you what, be honest with you, first I stayed away from them because I didn't want to associate myself with being different at all.

Whilst Haifa articulated a sense of relief about moving to a diverse school, Ian viewed being surrounded by non-white children as a threat. He was ashamed of being seen with other non-white kids because of the emotional baggage his stigmatised 'race' brought with it. At this point, he still wanted to maintain his connection with whiteness as it made him feel superior to other non-white children. Nonetheless, changing school marked the start of a change of attitude. He later elaborated on this transition from resisting being different when I went on probing what he meant by 'being different':

Different colour. At the beginning, I was still kind of stuck with my white friends. In fact, all my friends were white at that point, but then I slowly started to speak to them [non-white children] and realised that I was not the only person who got the weird feeling, which was crazy as a child. In my situation, you would always think you were the only person with this colour.

Whilst whiteness was still viewed as a preferable quality, Ian slowly started to interact with other non-white children, with whom he later established a long-sought-after rapport: there were people who could share the pain of being singled out. Just like Sophie and Haifa when discussing their friendship circles, Ian thought that being different and being othered were bonding factors. Having been the token person for too long, Ian welcomed the shared sense of otherness. The change prompted him to reflect on the contexts in which differences were enacted, and, more importantly, to reflect on the relational nature of racialised difference:

The funny thing is that I didn't look at my brothers and sisters and think we were different from others. I've got a big family but I never associate my family with being different. It's only when I see other people I kind of associate myself with being different. It's weird, it was almost like your brain doesn't register that way.

The family was a site where 'race' had little space to thrive: it filtered out racialised differences but kept what it wanted. For Ian, whiteness was a proximate: he had a 'white home', but what he received at home could not be converted into a possession for use in society. Like Sara, Ian's upbringing provided him with few resources for accepting his mixedness but led him instead to embrace an identity that was not recognised by others. It

was through such a process that whiteness was sustained and eventually preferred over mixedness.

That being said, the protective power of family ceased to work as soon as Ian left the familial context. Ian's life hence consisted of two different worlds: a home where everyone was growing up in a 'white' way, and a wider social context where his skin colour made him self-evidently non-white. The conflicting realities had long been an issue that he had found hard to reconcile. Seeking to secure a sense of belonging was the reason Ian started his own family with Elizabeth, his ex-partner, who was also 'mixed-race'. The two were initially bound by their mixedness, but Ian was more attracted to Elizabeth's experience that he had always lacked:

There was some kind of connection between us. We were both mixed race and we could both relate to having one parent being white, one parent being from a different country. We were able to relate to each other. I was fascinated by Elizabeth also because she was so knowledgeable about her culture. She visited Kenya when she was younger, and her mum was really kind, really welcoming to whomever Elizabeth chose to be with, which was so new to me. It was so interesting that she could teach me about her culture. No one ever did that to me.

Elizabeth had good knowledge of her background whilst Ian did not. Their contrasting experiences were translated into a strong attraction, and they also opened up new possibilities to explore Ian's identity. As he went on: "I fell in love with her personality but also with the fact that I can relate to myself to that feature." The meaning of this quote was two-fold: first, both being non-white, Ian and Elizabeth shared a sense of foreignness. Second, beyond their shared traits of being mixed and physically different from the white majority, Ian aspired to be able to review his mixed identity. Viewing Elizabeth as someone who "shares the colour of the skin", Ian was convinced that sharing a physical similarity with both parents could allow children to relate to both parents much more easily. He also believed that she was different from white women as they did not have the same level of sensitivity and awareness to racism. Perhaps more crucially, he saw an intimate union with a non-white woman could effectively address the problems he encountered as a child. As he puts it: "When there is any racism, we can stick our finger up as a family." Nonetheless, as he divulged elsewhere, his father was "very unhappy with" his relationship because he wanted Ian to date someone white. When Ian went against his

father's will and started a life with Elizabeth, his father subsequently refused to speak to him for a long time.

Another crucial benefit to be derived from his intimate union with Elizabeth was the potential to reinvest in his identity by raising children: the black culture and black community to which Elizabeth had access became a resource with which Ian could establish a sense of belonging. Returning to our earlier discussion of Sara, she had no access to these opportunities and did not interact with the black community when she was young. As a result, she was less likely to be exposed to the ideas of Black Pride or celebrating her African heritage. For the first time in Ian's life, he felt a part of a community:

For our children, they are kind of taught about the African culture, the Kenyan culture. We always went to African parties. Even though we are not together anymore, we still take them to African parties and get them involved as much as possible. You know, it's sad that my father decided not to teach us anything about his background.

Raising his children with the black influence was a conscious decision by Ian. As he himself had experienced a lack of parental input in the fostering of a cultural identity, Ian wanted to do something different with his own children. He perceived that there was value in the opportunities his children had for interacting with the local black community as they could develop an alternative identity to whiteness, thereby ensuring they would not be denied their identifications as he had been. Over time, his interactions with the African community increased. He described an experience at the Edinburgh Mela, a cultural festival held annually in Edinburgh, when he was there with his children:

They were just so understanding. The funny thing was that they [the African community] said to me, "You know what? You fit in this crowd." And then, they gave me extra food just for that. It was empowering just to know that I finally get to make friends.

The acceptance by the African community was empowering. Always having been deterred from being part of the Asian community, Ian experienced a sense of relief: even if he did not speak the language or practise the religion, he could still be part of the African

community. This sense of belonging emerged out of the sense of being recognised and accepted by others. In this light, raising children gave Ian an opportunity to interact with the black community, which in turn provided him with new discourses to articulate his identity.

Conclusion of Ian's story

On my way back to Glasgow, I received a text message from Ian thanking me for “being nice to the kids”. It appeared that he cared a lot about the ways his children were treated, and he constantly worried that they might relive his experience of prejudice and exclusion. His early life experiences had profoundly shaped his choice of partner, his parenting style and other aspects of his life. For Ian, establishing his own family was a ‘solution’ to his long-standing struggle with identity. Raising children with a non-white, black woman generated new discursive resources for Ian to articulate identity that felt real and substantial to him. In this sense, his children were a reassurance of his mixedness. Granted, compared to Sara, Ian demonstrated a sense of agency in terms of partnering with a mixed woman through whom he managed to establish a connection with the black community. He was willing to take part in the construction of a non-white identity despite its irrelevance to his mixedness.

Nonetheless, a sense of displacement was still clearly felt during the interview. Ian had engaged in strenuous work in order to negotiate his relationship with mixedness so that he could foster a sense of emotional security. This included making sense of the whiteness that he did not really ‘possess’ but also generating meaning for his mixedness. Ian's experience to a certain extent could be shared with that of Sara Ahmed, who had grown up in Australia in a white English-Pakistani household in a white way. His father, who had “kind of let go or almost let go of his own history in order to give his children a chance in the new world” (Ahmed, 2014:94), shared the same attitude as Ian's somewhat when it came to their Pakistani heritage. Both of them had so deeply internalised the stigma associated with their ‘race’ that they were keen to eradicate any trace of it from their households. One consequence of such a practice, shared by both Ian and Ahmed, was that they were brought up practising ‘white lifestyles’ whilst not being seen as white. Meanwhile, their fathers also equated whiteness with class; their expectations for their children to move up the racialised hierarchy were achieved by a set of classed parenting practices, such as finding the ‘right’ school and making sure their children had the ‘right’ friends. By creating contexts for their children to develop practices commonly associated

with middle-class whiteness, they hoped this could offset the racial disadvantages their children might face.

Before moving on to the next story, it is perhaps necessary to note that Ian's rediscovery of his mixedness was also perhaps to do with chance. His 'identity U-turn', namely his embracing of a non-white identity, cannot be understood without considering his partnership with Elizabeth. Had he not met Elizabeth, Ian might not have had the access and materials to develop the language to describe his mixedness. That being said, from his accounts, he seemed to suggest that he had been attracted to Elizabeth partly because she was also mixed and partly because they shared an understanding of racism. In other words his choice of partner was probably strategic, and it eventually gave him a chance to 'rediscover' his mixedness.

Charlene

In her mid-20s at the time of the interview, Charlene had grown up in a middle-class suburb in Edinburgh with her adoptive family. Charlene's adoptive father was of half-Indian, half-Scottish heritage and had married a white Scottish woman. Before adopting Charlene, they had had a biological daughter together. Charlene described her sister to be "only a quarter Indian blood" with "very fair skin". When it came to her biological family, the only thing Charlene knew was that she had been born to a white Scottish woman who had had a short relationship with a Pakistani man. Having tried to contact her biological mother for years without any response, Charlene had eventually stopped doing so. Nonetheless, Charlene still found it rather upsetting: "You know, now I have to walk around Edinburgh knowing that I've got my blood family walking around as well".

Turning up at the café with a smoothie flask and a pram, in which her younger son slept soundly, Charlene apologised for being late due to the traffic. She said she had had to send her elder sons to school first but then her bus had got stuck on the way. At the time of the interview, Charlene was also a mother of three children, aged one, five, and eight. Her partner, originally from Gambia, had a day job at a local railway station and occasionally worked night shifts for another job. Charlene had dropped out of school and moved out of her parents' house before turning 18. She had been living with her partner in a more "working-class neighbourhood" ever since. Before we started the formal interview, she tentatively asked about my age. On hearing the answer, she laughed with a slight hint of

embarrassment: “Oh I am the same age as you, but I've had three children already. You are still studying!”

The interview started with her early memories of family life. Growing up in a wealthy, white neighbourhood, Charlene was appreciative of the upbringing she had had. With her father being a very successful businessperson and her mother holding a managerial position in the public sector, Charlene was aware of the class advantage her middle-class upbringing brought to her. She reflected on the ways in which social class had 'buffered' the negative effects of her (and her father's) 'race':

I mean obviously I was raised in a middle-class family and everyone in the area was rich. No one was on benefits, you know, everyone was doctors and things. People were educated. They knew that race was not anything to be bothered about, so they just got on with daily life there. Whereas now, after I moved out of my parent's house, I am living in a more working-class area, and I feel definitely there is more racism out there. You know, the white working-class people, depending on their upbringing, can still have that old-fashioned mentality. I would say it's just that they were raised in that way.

Comparing her current situation with her past, Charlene thought it was social class that caused the difference. She reflected on the relationship between class and 'race' by offering a classed interpretation of racism: the world of the middle-class was a colour-blind one; 'race' was less of an issue and was replaced with a conviviality sustained by a high level of education. With shared class privileges and educational experiences, middle-classness filtered out the significance of 'race'. In comparison, being “white, working-class, living on benefits” was synonymous with being racist. The class determinism underpinning this comparison indicated her belief that one's attitude towards 'race' was not only embedded in different upbringings but also in different mentalities.

In addition to the differential class-related attitudes towards 'race', Charlene was also aware of the advantages and material resources brought by her middle-class upbringing. She felt that the privileges she enjoyed as a child had allowed her to develop a more progressive outlook than her childhood peers:

I think it [her middle-class upbringing] helped in a way that if I was brought up in a working-class family, most of the time you are hanging around in your area, you are not going to different classes and experiences. Whereas for myself, I would go on holidays, two or three a year, to exotic places, if I wanted violin classes I would do it. I was given whatever I wanted basically, or basically whatever they think I needed. I suppose it took your mind off things when you saw different cultures. You see the other half of the world, seeing people of all colours, all cultures, whereas as working-class kids you are kind of in your areas, maybe not getting many opportunities to realise that the world is different.

Somewhat contrasting with Ian who had been sent to a private school for a ‘whiter’ schooling environment, Charlene considered that a middle-class upbringing was empowering in many ways. Not just because growing up in an affluent environment guaranteed a world of material abundance, but also because her middle-class family secured a white environment in which she was brought up acquiring a particular set of cultural capital associated with middle-class whiteness. The class privilege to a certain extent provided Charlene with discursive materials to negotiate her racial disadvantage, which possibly offset the potential disadvantage of being adopted and mixed. Nonetheless, Charlene later admitted that the protective power of her middle-class background had ceased to work once she had stepped outside the familial context:

I had a really hard time at school. I was kind of the only person who was not purely white at school, therefore naturally I got singled out. So yeah it’s quite tough for me growing up, even though I was actually Scottish and born here and everything. There is still a big kind of difference. Yeah, it’s definitely hard.

The contrasting experiences of her home life and her school life proved to be traumatic for Charlene. ‘Race’ started to operate in a way that placed her in a disadvantaged position. Her middle-class family offered her a white environment at home, yet its protective power was lessened as she started interacting with the wider society. Sharing similar experiences to those of Sara and Ian, in this chapter, Charlene found it challenging to reconcile the differential experiences she had inside and outside of her home. She was regarded as ineligible for membership to whiteness in spite of her ethnic identification, yet more crucially, it appeared that she received little emotional support from her family when she

was bullied. When I asked whether she had shared her school experiences with her parents, she replied:

No, I never shared anything with them. I knew my dad had a hard time growing up as he is 60 now. I think he had the problem of being the only person that wasn't white. He now doesn't like to associate himself with any... he just likes to think of himself as Scottish. My mum always wants to go to India to see what the culture is like, but he just doesn't like to have anything to do with it, you know, just brushing it under the carpet.

Charlene suggested that her father's reluctance to disclose his background resulted from his early experiences of racial exclusion. In her opinion, being born in the 1950s as a 'mixed-race' person was even harder than what she experienced. This racial exclusion led her father to internalise the racial stigma and, as a consequence, to dissociate himself from his Indian heritage. By avoiding topics about his Indian heritage and refusing to discuss anything about India, Charlene's father eliminated all forms of 'race talk' at home. The taboo associated with 'race' and racism deterred Charlene from disclosing her feelings to her parents. Ironically, however, the perceived similarities in physical appearance seemed to strengthen the family ties:

I don't think I was chosen because my dad is half-Indian, but people would say I look the double of my dad. We do, funnily enough, look alike, which is very strange. I don't think they chose me because they were a mixed-race family already, but I think they [being a mixed family] definitely helped a lot. If I have to go out for dinner with my family, people aren't looking at me and knowing I am adopted, because they will see my dad is brown and my mum is white. But if I had been adopted by a white mum and a white dad, it would be ten times harder. Automatically people know that you are not blood-related to someone.

In 'people's' eyes, a family should be based on a predictable likeness where members of a family demonstrate shared racialised attributes. Hence, the assumed racial resemblance between Charlene and her father improved the 'authenticity' of the adoptive family. 'Race' hence came to be seen as something 'natural', an embodiment of familial inheritance and genealogical connection. Without such shared racialised features, the family connection would be questioned. For Charlene, too, a familial likeness could be particularly crucial in

that she had been cut off from her biological parents. Therefore, 'looking alike' gave her a sense of emotional security, which compensated for not having a biological family.

As mentioned previously, Charlene, like Sara and Ian, grew up with little input from her parents regarding her mixed heritage; it might well have been even harder for Charlene because she was adopted. Consequently, Charlene embraced the same strategy as Sara did by trying to 'fit in' with the crowd. She recalled herself being a "very difficult teenager", which she qualified by listing a whole series of activities, such as binge drinking, smoking and eventually dropping out. Whilst her family thought her deviance was caused by the fact that she was adopted, she believed 'race' was the real cause. She would resort to particular practices so that her difference would not be picked upon. Specifically, she stated:

If there hadn't been the bullies at school because of the colour of my skin, I would not have kids at such a young age. I found it so hard and I found other ways to be happy. So I would go out to meet other people. I would go out and start drinking under age. And that obviously resulted in different things: I ended up having kids so young. I was trying so hard to fit in with people. If they were doing something wrong, I would just do it because they weren't mentioning my skin colour.

Regarding her earlier comments on age, it seemed that Charlene was aware of the social stigma associated with being a young white working-class mother. In foregrounding the devastating consequences of racism she experienced at school, she was trying to distance herself from the accusation of being irresponsible. She attributed the decision to 'fit in' culturally to her experiences of exclusion. She took up things such as going out, under-age drinking and smoking to prove her whiteness, driven by a desire to conform to, rather than to challenge, the white norms. These behaviours were considered to be culturally appropriate, entitling one to the status of whiteness. In the final data chapter, an 'ethnic-absolutist whiteness' narrative will be introduced to compare different perspectives of mixedness, from the positions of parent and mixed interviewees. The narrative in question delineates the ways in which whiteness was enacted as a form of social capital that led to a more advantageous social status.

Now everyone will compliment me on my look and say it's nice to look different, or it's nice to have a more exotic look than just being white around Scotland. I guess it

depends on who it is applied for, because even when I am on a night out, my race always comes into it. People would say, “Oh, you’ve got a tan”, or “You’ve got nice features”, it’s always brought into the conversation.

Like Sara, Charlene was singled out for her ‘exotic’ appearance. This was arguably an example of ‘banal’ racism, where racialised differences were emphasised in a less malicious fashion in everyday encounters. As Root (1990) observes, comments such as “you are so interesting-looking” or “mixed children are so attractive” heighten the feeling of otherness. Even without any intent to do so, acknowledging someone’s difference can have a stressful impact on the recipient. For Charlene, whilst these comments about her ‘tan’, ‘features’ and ‘exotic look’ were probably intended as friendly gestures, she nevertheless felt their underlying racial logic, which exoticised her body. The white gaze she was subjected to was imbued with sexualised and gendered interpretations of mixedness, which viewed exotic mixed women were the embodiment of racial hybridity. Charlene was not in a position to designate what counted as a difference or defy the designation.

Towards the end the interview, our conversation shifted to her mothering experience. Despite being in a relationship with a Gambian national, Charlene and her children had never met her partner’s family nor been to Gambia. She admitted frankly that she had no plans to visit the place soon, nor at any time in the future, because she found “the cultural difference is too much”. Besides, she was unhappy with her partner’s parenting style. She made her point by using an example of ear-piercing the new-born and suggested that it was “barbaric” and “scary”. It was clear that in making this remark Charlene considered the Gambian practices to be culturally inferior. Determined to raise their children in a ‘white’ way, i.e. with little influence from her partner's heritage, Charlene chose not to accommodate her partner’s background and insist on installing ‘British values’ in the household.

On the other hand, Charlene was aware of the importance of addressing ‘race’ early on. She recalled walking into her son’s nursery once and overhearing a conversation between a white Lithuanian boy and her son. While they were in bakery class, the former said to the latter, “I will use white chocolate and you will use black chocolate, because your skin is brown and my skin is white”. Charlene recounted this in a joking manner as she did not view this to be a mundane example of everyday racism internalised early on in a child’s

life. However, she was prepared to reflect on its implications. She made her stance clear when it came to any forms of exclusion:

Because I had such a hard time growing up, I don't like to hear any kind of comments like this. If my elder son ever said, "I don't want to play with her because she's got big ears", things like that, I would make sure he knows that he can't single out someone by the way they look. I can pretty much say that if I didn't have the bullying at school, I probably wouldn't have kids at such a young age.

Charlene cited the racial bullying incidents when expressing her strong sentiment. Drawing out connections between the two events, Charlene reiterated the lasting impact of racism and how the experience profoundly shaped her mothering practices. She declared an anti-racist stance and extended her claim to all forms of discrimination. Her past deviance served as a regrettable event with profound and ongoing consequences.

There are two reasons why I included Charlene's story here. First, she was the only interviewee who had been adopted and also identified as 'mixed-race'. Second, Charlene's experience closely aligned with the theme this chapter attempts to elicit, namely that being mixed is sometimes overshadowed by (un)negotiable racialised differences. Her mixed heritage, the adoption experience, being a teenage mother, and the loss of social (class) status together conjured up a complex form of stigmatisation that she struggled to navigate. When she tried to make sense of the meaning of mixedness, she explained her complex interpretations of 'race' in classed terms, racial terms and gendered terms. She also implied her understanding of mixedness in describing her mothering practices. The role of 'race' has been both a bonding and splitting element in her efforts to define her belonging. For her, mixedness itself was not so significant; it was the sense of otherness and exclusion due to her non-whiteness that she found pertinent to her identity.

Concluding remarks

The ambivalence and complexity of articulating identities might best be encapsulated by Jon, an Indian-Scottish man in his late 30s. Towards the end of the interview, he identified himself as follows: "I am not white and I am not brown. Just a wee bit of Scottish and a wee bit of Indian." Jon used the double-negation "not white, not brown" to describe the ambivalence of not being recognised as 'white' but also not willing to take on the position of being 'brown'. As Childs and Williams (1997) note, denial is a partial acknowledgment

of the otherness that is denied or even desired. Jon's rejection of racial categories for national categories possibly indicated the comparative neutrality entailed by the latter. However, as we have seen from the discussion above, even meanings of national categories are contested and conflated.

Contrasting the experiences of Haifa, Sophie and Shab with those of the three individuals discussed in this chapter highlights a rather different relationship with mixedness. The three individuals in the previous chapter were all brought up under the influence of two cultures and were resourceful in deploying symbolic capital to validate their identity. In contrast, Sara, Ian and Charlene did not have such straightforward access to multiple ethnic options; the ways they described mixedness were characterised by justifications of being white and an ambivalent attitude towards their mixed heritages. For these people, ethnic options are not always available: not merely because their mixed heritages become associated with two mutually exclusive racialised categories, but also because they have limited materials to mediate the conflicting messages. As a result, they find themselves struggling to come up with alternative languages to negotiate the identities conferred on them, rendering them ineligible to be part of the white Scottish community.

The picture painted in this chapter foregrounds the interplay of racism, inequality and national identity, embodied in the organisation of family practices and everyday interactions with others. Their experiences at home created a 'white orientation' where whiteness was the norm and the desired. The inheritance of whiteness was realised through parents' reluctance to talk about their non-white heritage, their refusal to address 'race' questions, and their explicit or implicit encouragement for their children to develop a white orientation. According to the interviewees, their parents, especially Ian's and Charlene's, believed that raising children in a 'white' way allowed their children to move up the social ladder and occupy a more advantageous position in the social hierarchy. They perhaps arrived at such an understanding based on their own experiences of racial exclusion and discrimination. In this sense, their strategies to 'whiten' their children were also informed decisions, albeit in a different fashion. Taking these views on board, maybe it is not hard to see why these individuals place great emphasis on whiteness, and depreciate mixedness. On the other hand, however, one consequence of growing up 'white' is having to negotiate a racialised body that contradicts public perceptions of Scottishness. Lacking the cultural and social capital to be able to foreground their mixedness, they engage in a variety of attempts to 'prove' and exploit their white identities by subscribing to collective meanings of the latter.

The final message of this chapter is that Scottishness is experienced as a fluid attribute subject to different interpretations. In a study exploring the relationship between ‘race’ and nation, Virdee et al. (2006) contend that ‘race’ is not as significant in the identification of Scottishness in Scottish multi-ethnic neighbourhoods as it once was. There are hybridised codes of cultural belonging, such as accent and value, which allow individuals to reverse the negative valuation of phenotypically categorised non-white Scots. The unstable linkage between Scottishness and whiteness is hence contested under specific conditions. In relation to the stories presented here and in the preceding chapter, this argument also points to the importance of spatiality in investigating how Scottishness is experienced and imagined. Sara, Ian and Charlene’s experiences of growing up in predominately white communities, when contrasted with Sophie and Shab’s experiences of growing up in much more diverse neighbourhoods, illustrate the fluidity associated with Scottishness. Meanwhile, differential social locations and available resources also shape the ways in which one can attach different meanings of national identity. Scottishness is framed in different fashions given its contested and racialised nature. In Chapter 8, the thesis will consider how the wider social discourse has an impact upon the way mixedness is imagined, wherein Scottishness once again entails at times contrasting meanings to serve different purposes.

In the next chapter, the analytical focus will shift to parents of mixed children. The upcoming discussion will examine the ways in which the notion of ‘mixed-race’ was understood and translated by parents. The discussion is premised upon the assumption that parental decisions and their engagement in communicating racial literacy could have a great impact on children’s ethnic identities. Their attitudes to and involvement in ‘race talk’ at home may also influence their children’s approaches to their mixed heritage. By exploring three parents of different ethnic, gender and class backgrounds, this thesis aims to bring the complex dynamics to the fore and reveal the concerns and priorities held by parents.

Chapter 7 Intersected inequalities: challenges and concerns in parenting ‘mixed-race’ children

Introduction

The inspiration for studying parents of ‘mixed-race’ children derived from my reading about racial literacy during the early stages of my PhD. Elaborated in detail by Twine (Twine, 2004; Twine and Steinbugler, 2006), the notion of racial literacy emphasises parental efforts to use a wide range of discursive and social practices to explain ‘race’ to their children and teach them to recognise, respond and counter racism in the context of black-white interracial families in Britain. In order to prepare children for racism and promote high self-esteem, communicating racial literacy is a key element of family practices within mixed households. This conclusion is premised upon the belief that parents of different socially racialised groups are undoubtedly aware of the salience of ‘race’ so that they are prepared to introduce ‘race’ to their children. Specifically, blackness is often mobilised by black communities and parents as a social and cultural resource in order to facilitate black identification. Informed by this theoretical approach, I designed the early version of my interview guides to address the necessity and practicalities of delivering racial literacy.

However, the argument developed by Twine is based on her observation of black-white families living in the English Midlands, whereas the parent interviewees in my sample represented a heterogeneous population in terms of their ethnicity, religion and social class. The parents’ diverse profiles raised questions about the extent to which Twine’s theory could be applied to a wider population in a different location. Aware of the gap in knowledge, I sought to explore the contents of racial literacy from my participants’ points of view and to situate these perspectives within their personal biographies. Therefore, this chapter sets out to explore how parents interpret and communicate the idea of ‘race’ and mixedness, thereby deepening our understanding of the concept of racial literacy and expanding our knowledge of mixed families.

Mainly employing the concept of family practices, but also attending to the social location of each parent, this chapter draws attention to parents’ motives, concerns and decisions regarding child-rearing, particularly in terms of teaching their children about ‘race’. It takes a closer look at parents’ experiences and the socio-cultural contexts of these families,

arguing that parents' decisions to raise children in certain ways are firmly located in the socio-cultural context and personal biography. The analysis also draws out a link between parents' understandings of 'race' and their socio-economic status, highlighting the intersecting nature of parenting practices. The three selected individuals, Natalie, Maggie and Mai, come from different social backgrounds but they represent several typical features of the parent sample: like the other six parents in the sample, they had very young children (under four years of age). Despite the structural constraints and discursive limitations, they creatively constituted their own social worlds. To this end, even though it is not possible to classify parent participants in categorical terms, the illustrative cases reflect general patterns among the fifteen parents: first, parenting strategies often reflected intersecting concerns and experiences; a good command of symbolic and material resources seems to indicate the lessening significance of 'race'. Second, among parents there was a varying degree of willingness and ability to formulate and communicate the language of 'race' within their families.

This chapter will primarily address the second research question, which considers parents' motivations for communicating 'race' with their mixed children. The findings will reveal that the divergence in parents' attitudes should be understood in relation to their social locations formed by axes of differences and the social resources available. Meanwhile, the upcoming discussion also complements the findings presented in the previous two data chapters by explaining why differential family circumstances might have an impact on the formation of identity in mixed children.

Natalie

Born in Glasgow, Natalie was married to a Nigerian national and they had a four-year-old son together. She contacted me after reading my advertisement posted on Gumtree, one of two internet forums I used to recruit participants. In her email, she told me that she was studying part-time at the University of Glasgow so we could arrange an interview on campus. Ten minutes past the scheduled time, I was still anxiously waiting at the entrance of the university library. Just as I was about to leave, a woman wearing a hijab approached me. Her eyes looked particularly blue in the white hijab.

She apologised for being late and explained that she had been delayed by her work. Trying to ease the awkwardness of the initial encounter, I complimented her on her accent, observing that it was not distinctively Glaswegian - an accent I still struggled to

understand. Before I had time to realise that this compliment could be read as rude, she seemed to indicate that she was quite delighted about it and told me that she was pursuing a degree in English literature in the hope of later becoming an English teacher. As I did in most interviews, I opened the conversation by inviting her to introduce herself and to explain what interested her in the study. To this she provided a long answer:

I am 23. So I am still quite young. I am married, and I have one boy who is four years old. I work full-time but I also study part-time. So it's a bit difficult, and I think it was really interesting just as you said, growing up in Scotland, growing up in Glasgow, more specifically, it's very, very difficult. It [intermarriage] is not an unseen thing but it's not as common in Scotland as it is in England. Although generally it's accepted, still it's very uncommon. And I thought, you know, it's especially good that you can do anything, such as a PhD, so that everyone can find a way whether by publications, whether by newspaper, whether both, whether by any sort of dissemination, to make it more socially acceptable in this part of the country. Erm, for me, I thought that was very good, you know anyone who has volunteered to do any research or come up with any solution effectively, for good and for bad, in any case, I thought it was really, really good. Yes, that's what interests me, yeah.

Growing up in one of the most deprived areas in Scotland, Natalie had a very bitter interpretation of her personal circumstances and the prospective for 'mixed-race' families. I was surprised by her readiness for disclosure and frankness at such an early stage of the interview. Without prompting, she pre-empted my questions about her personal circumstances. She summarised her experience of growing up and being in a mixed marriage in Scotland as "difficult". Such difficulty was further compounded by the low social acceptance of mixed marriage in Scotland. Therefore, it appeared that Natalie had approached me with the hope of making mixed marriage more acceptable by raising public awareness. Natalie's opening statement was infused with an anxiety that permeated the whole interview. She was very anxious about public opinion of mixed marriage, and she took public opinion as a norm. Describing herself as coming from a "lower-class" family, Natalie told me about her upbringing, which gave me clues as to why she consistently used the expression 'socially acceptable' throughout her narrative:

In my personal circumstances, because my dad was in the military and my mum worked all the time, my sister basically brought me up. Especially going through our

early teen and teenager years, we were allowed to stay out till late at night. It's quite socially acceptable for the lower class which we grew up in to go away and stay with your friends for one day, and come back to your parents, something like that. So growing up in Scotland is difficult, we were in quite a bit of hardship, but my mum always had food on the table.

With the moral references implied in this quote, Natalie pathologised the working-class upbringing in which she shared strong ties with her siblings and experienced a relaxed parental style. By doing this, she was unconsciously comparing her working-class family experiences with a certain type of family experiences, arguably the dominant middle-class ones, and positioned herself in a morally inferior position. Censoring her working-class background by following a middle-class moral logic, Natalie placed great emphasis on the dominant views of what is 'acceptable', 'natural' and 'common'. Making frequent moral references demonstrated her disapproval of a 'lower class' lifestyle while also possibly revealing an anxiety about straying from the dominant classed and racialised social norms. To further explain her point, she projected the life cycle of the 'lower-class' in a rather bleak light:

And ultimately, you are going through that cycle of dropping out of school early - getting pregnant young - marrying young, possibly to your cousin - working in a dead-end job for the rest of your life. Growing up in Scotland is very difficult. The kids don't have a chance, they never have. I think if there is something going into your research, the economic situation should be one. It has a big impact on whether people have the choice to go out to earn money or stay at school - because of the social set-up and peer pressure, you don't get that chance. As soon as you are born, as soon as you turn five, going to primary school, where you live has a massive impact. (Mengxi: the post-code politics?) Yes definitely, definitely. Where you live has a massive impact on your future.

For Natalie, material deprivation was the prevailing power that shaped every single aspect of 'lower-class' life. The life cycle she projected was extremely depressing. Such a lifestyle seemed inevitable because of the close community connections that forced one to conform to a certain lifestyle. Interestingly, whilst Natalie's narratives allowed her little power to challenge the class schema, she appeared to make a conscious effort to steer away from the 'lower-class' cycle and be different. This effort can be observed in her attempts to

adopt an RP accent, in her pursuit of a university degree, and perhaps even in her marrying a black Muslim. Having shown me what the ‘lower-class’ was like, Natalie started telling me about her marriage. For predictable reasons, the marriage was not well received by her family. She recalled her father’s reaction when he learnt about her conversion to Islam and marriage. This made her even more certain about her opinions of the ‘lower-class’:

They believe that if you are married to a mixed raced person, it’s basically you are not good enough to get someone of your own, or something among the lowest line effectively, you are trying to be different. Similar to trying to get an education, you are just trying to be different. Just the same way when I confronted to my dad and told him I was Muslim, and obviously, you know, dating and being married to one, my dad said, ”Well, under the influence of alcohol, I initially thought you did so to piss me off.” That’s what he thought: I did it just to piss him off. That’s what they say in this society. You want to really annoy your father? Marry a black man!

Natalie started introducing racial tension into her narratives at this point. When speaking about her marriage, Natalie admitted that her family were “certainly racist”, with their white supremacist assumptions expressed through blatantly racist language. In an intersecting social hierarchy, simultaneously being black and Muslim was located at the bottom of the pyramid. Her family’s opposition caused Natalie great distress. She made constant efforts to justify her marriage and detach herself from the “lower-class”. Natalie told me how getting to know her husband’s culture had transformed her perceptions of family relationships:

I used to think it is social acceptable, you know, to do some of the things they do, to say some of the things they say, to accept the way they react in public or in company. The children are extremely disobedient. You know, children talk back to their parents, shout at their parents, swear at their parents, things I used to think were ok when I was growing up before seeing my husband’s culture. I now realise it’s really awful the way people raise their kids in this country.

For her, the mixed marriage was more than simply an intimate union, but a lens through which to discover differences in cultures. Although a mixed marriage was viewed by her family as a disgrace, she managed to come up with alternative discourses to defend her choice. A transformation of beliefs was evident throughout the conversation; she

intentionally contrasted ‘Scottish culture’ with ‘Nigerian culture’ in terms of family practice. In this quote, she distanced herself from her “lower-class” peers by expressing disapproval of “lower-class” parenting styles. This somewhat echoes Lawler (2005) observation that contemporary expressions of disgust by the middle-class are usually coupled with representations of the working class as lacking morality and humanity. Rather than identifying herself in class terms, what Natalie chose to align with in this context was the culture/racial stance. In addition to her previous comments about the adverse economic conditions and lack of education faced by most lower class people, she also used a denouncement of the “lower-class” culture as a discursive tool for defying the outright racism she was exposed to. As the conversation flowed, discussions of parenting practices slowly started to emerge. Apparently having given some thought to the issue of explaining ‘race’ to her son, she told me a metaphor about coffee and skin colour:

As I said, I am a massive coffee fan - I’d like to taste any coffee from anywhere. Instead of doing wine tasting, I do coffee tasting. The way I would explain to him is like, like this (demonstrating with her coffee). You take the coffee, “This is your dad”; you take the milk, “This is your mum”. You pour it in, “That’s why you are that colour!” The best way I think to explain mixed race to a child, rather than explaining origin, is to simply take a cup and pour some coffee and pour some coffee; that’s what I am going to explain to him.

Although the coffee metaphor lacked a critical reading of the social consequences of and value connotations inherent in racial ideology, Natalie’s explanation was one of the most thoughtful answers about ‘race’. Unlike many of the parents, who avoided initiating the ‘race talk’ at all costs, Natalie chose to make it clear to her son. Natalie’s openness reflected how her life had been affected by ‘race’. These experiences made it imperative for her to foreground the ‘race’ issue in order to prepare her son for encounters with racism in the future. Natalie’s parenting strategies were plotted within the racial and class structure in which she was situated. As a result, her decisions were also oriented by what she considered beneficial for her son. Besides introducing ‘race’ early, Natalie also proposed a ‘natural growth’ parenting style that would not deliberately encourage her son to develop a particular ethnic identity. The motive behind this strategy, in her view, was the compelling pressure to integrate:

That's why, you know, it's a lot harder for mixed-race kids to be brought up in Scotland. If they do try to set themselves aside, it is gonna make it even more difficult for them to integrate. But if they choose to just go one way it's gonna be a lot easier. As soon as you start trying to speak a different language in school, or whatever, if you are born and brought up in this country in a mixed-race family, as soon as you try going that way, you will be cast aside, you are gonna be said racial slurs.

Natalie experienced intense pressure to conform with the majority. An environment dominated by whiteness creates little space for Natalie's son to actualise blackness without being stigmatised. Even though she tried hard to distinguish herself from her own group, she was somehow reluctant to see her son following her path to being different. One possible reason for this discrepancy could be that despite all her efforts, she was not able to provide her son with the necessary social and economic resources to develop and sustain his identity options. In other words, a free identity required a material basis to make it possible. With the resources currently available to her, she wanted to see her son quickly fit in with the others at school and not to be singled out on racial grounds. Consequently, Natalie refrained from introducing other possibilities in order not to "confuse" her son. Echoing what Lareau (2011) called 'the accomplishment of natural growth', Natalie's priority to ensure her son 'fit in', rather than emphasise his mixed heritage, reflected a shared concern of the parents in this study whose parenting practices were mediated by a disadvantaged, and often mutually dependent, 'race' and class position.

At the time of interview, Natalie had three jobs: cleaner, customer representative and part-time student; meanwhile her husband was not allowed to work due to visa restrictions. Under the Home Office regulations, his visa could not be renewed until Natalie's annual salary had reached the threshold earning level of £22,500. She told me they had filed an appeal the year before but the decision was still pending at the time of the interview. If her husband's visa application were rejected, she would have to move to Nigeria with him in order to keep the family intact. The institutional regulations exacted a heavy toll on her family, costing her more than she could afford:

Because I work full-time all the time, my son is always with my mum?. And because of that, my son has adopted... he has gone that way already, although he is only four. (Mengxi: How do you know?) From the way he talked to me, and he shouted back at

me, swearing at me, screaming right in your face. He doesn't do what he is told. My mum even jokes with him and calls him 'little nigger' like that. He is like, "Don't call me that!" even though he doesn't know what it means.

For her, what was most devastating was having to witness her son following the 'cycle' from which she tried so hard to break away. She made the difficult decision to secure her own family at the expense of temporarily sacrificing her son. At this point she burst into tears, overwhelmed by feelings of guilt and frustration about her son "being brought up in this awful manner". Towards the end of the interview, she shared her bitter reflections on her marriage:

Being in a mixed-race marriage effectively means that I am going through this situation in my life. If I wasn't in a mixed-race marriage, I wouldn't be fighting for a visa. I would be focused on my education. The system is making it difficult for anyone to have any mixed-race born in here. Anyone who is mixed-race and doesn't come from a rich background has no chance in this country, absolutely none.(...) Being a mixed-race family in Scotland is very, very hard for me personally. Because I am now trying to be different, my family and community at all points have made it difficult for me. Even if it becomes socially acceptable, it's not governmentally acceptable. The easier it becomes on the social side, the harder on the political level.

Conclusion of Natalie's story

Ending the interview with a deeply poignant remark, Natalie summarised the sources of the pressure she felt: her family, the wider society and the institutions. With these three references, she conjured up the image of a powerful oppressive force and painted dark picture for 'mixed-race' families that was in stark contrast with the often-imagined rosy picture of mixed families living in cosmopolitan conviviality. The cause of this bleak picture was a particular combination of social class and regional location. For Natalie, 'race' did matter especially when it was intersected with class. The conflated outcome of institutional and non-institutional racism along with material deprivation led her to the decision to "let go" of the education of her son so that he would perhaps be better off not being 'picked upon' by his working-class peers. In other words, she could not afford to teach her son to be 'proud of their differences' like many wealthy parents could. Furthermore, unlike many of the white mothers of mixed children described in recent studies (Harman, 2010; Twine, 2004), Natalie was constrained by material insufficiencies

and hence unable to transmit practical knowledge and coping strategies to cultivate a black pride.

Reading Natalie's story reminded me of the story of Lily, a Lithuanian-Indian woman born in the 1970s in an industrial town outside Glasgow. From a child's perspective, Lily described the fear of racism her Eastern European mother had lived with and how she consequently had inherited this anxiety. It occurred to me that sometimes the transmission of attitudes towards 'race' and racism did not need to be put down in words. Parents' emotions (such as fear, hatred and negativity) and their solutions for dealing with these emotions could also be sensed by their children. This subtle yet powerful meta-language of racial literacy may only be gathered and analysed when we understand family practices as a holistic concept. In relation to Natalie's story, it might be true that her son will inevitably 'pick up' the messages about 'race' as he grows up, and these in turn will influence his interpretations of identity.

Maggie

Maggie's story intrigued me because of her daughter's 'minority-minority' ethnic background. Unlike most parent interviewees, who were either themselves white or married to a white person, Maggie was Scottish-Chinese and her partner was a Nigerian by birth growing up in London. At the time of the interview, she was raising their daughter on her own with help from her parents while the child's father worked full-time in Hong Kong.

Another reason for choosing Maggie's story was her experience of being a second-generation migrant, which led her to reflect on the differential dynamics in her interactions with her parents and her own 'mixed-race' family. Her parents had migrated to Scotland from Hong Kong in the 1980s and chosen to settle down in a seaside town on the west coast of Scotland. Soon after settling down, they opened up the only Chinese restaurant in town. After establishing themselves there, Maggie was born. The town, as Maggie jokingly remarked, was 99% white. Growing up in a predominantly white town perhaps explained why Maggie demonstrated a heightened self-consciousness and sensitivity regarding 'race' issues. The unspoken boundary between herself and the white Scottish residents had created a profound impact on her life. In recalling her schooling experiences of being the only Chinese student in her class, she admitted being isolated and going through hard times:

Children are mean. I didn't really get much name-calling but I certainly didn't get invited to parties or things like that, which is fine, I am well-adjusted now. But I wouldn't want my daughter to get bullied at school because, you know, her skin is darker.

Maggie had a lived understanding of racial exclusion, and such an experience led her to worry about her daughter's future. Although she appeared to have come to terms with her childhood experiences and argued that racial bullying decreased as children grew up, she was clearly traumatised by her childhood experience and was unwilling to see her daughter experiencing what she had as a child. It was later revealed that the feeling of exclusion had never really left her. When I asked her whether she socialised with the mums in her town, she said:

No, not so much. If I see them I will just say "Hi", like a small chat, but I don't socialise with them that much. I think most of the mums in [the name of the town] were quite... they all went to school together, so they've already known each other. I am mostly socializing with other friends, but they are mostly based in Glasgow, or in that kind of area.

Even though Maggie went to the same school as the majority of mothers in her town, she considered herself an outsider of the exclusive club formed by the white mothers. Maggie seemed to still blame herself for not being able to 'fit in' from the start because her limited language skills at that time meant she could not make many friends. Orientated by this belief, a key theme in her parenting practices was to make sure that her daughter was well-integrated. Unlike Natalie who emphasised the right mix of 'race' and class, Maggie considered that location was crucial. More than once in the interview, Maggie mentioned why she believed a big city e.g. Glasgow or Manchester would be beneficial for her girl's well-being. Planning to move away from her current town, Maggie found the ethnic diversity in Glasgow desirable as it was easier for her to find the company of other mothers, particularly non-white, non-Scottish ones. The child playgroup she attended in Glasgow every week acted as an ideal social site, where she could meet her Chinese friends but also mothers of 'mixed-race' babies. Socialising within this group gave Maggie a shared identity of motherhood, an identity otherwise unobtainable in her local town where the grouping of mothers was highly racialised and exclusive in nature.

As well as having to deal with the outside community, Maggie was pressurised by her parents. Maggie's parents, whom she described as "very traditional", were unhappy with the fact that she had a relationship with a black man, and more so because she even had a kid with him. They found it even more humiliating that Maggie's partner had left Maggie to raise the child on her own. Having anticipated her parents' reaction to her relationship, Maggie did not tell her parents about her partner until she was pregnant. Her parents' initial reactions, as she expected, were not positive:

Erm well... If I am absolutely honest, my mum and dad were very, very traditional Chinese. They were not, when I first told them about my baby, they were not 100% happy that: one, we are not married; two, my partner is black African; and three, the baby is going to be brown (she laughed nervously). You know a lot of... I don't like stereotyping Chinese but my mum and dad's generation are really... (Mengxi: That generation can be quite stubborn!) Yeah! You must be married and then have children, and preferably marry someone Chinese, then maybe somebody Caucasian but definitely not South Asian or African! (She laughed nervously again) I don't know... I don't know if you understand.

Maggie's relationship with her parents was tense for various reasons, but the birth of Maggie's daughter triggered a bigger clash. The conflict arose from the inter-generational tension over the concept of family, which was amplified by their racist beliefs and racial preferences regarding a suitable marriage partner. To further elaborate on the generational differences, Maggie told me about another childhood memory:

When I didn't get invited to the party, I didn't tell my mum and dad. My relationship with my mum and dad was very typical first-generation Chinese. They worked very hard, they just let you, you know, get on with it. It is hard to tell my parents about things that are bothering me. I don't even know if that's just my mum and dad, or just a typical first-generation thing.

Her parents were described as being emotionally indifferent and unable to genuinely understand what she wanted. Such a lack of emotional support was interpreted as a "first-generation thing" and was often with associated early immigrants from Hong Kong, who were hard-working, practised family hierarchy, and hardly socialised beyond their

immediate circle. Maggie evidently saw these characteristics as being undesirable, old-fashioned and “not integrated”. Keen to foreground the discrepancies between her parents and herself, Maggie was determined to adopt a different parenting style in raising her own daughter. To defend her choice of partner in the light of his absence, she adopted a rather pioneering view of family, which she wanted to pass on to her daughter:

I will probably just raise her to be more open about family these days, and tell her that, you know, these days family comes in all shapes and sizes. Some people just have one mum and one dad, or two mums and two dads, and some children don't have any mum and dad, but they have someone very special to look after them. Family is, you know, people who love you, who take care of you.

Besides defending her choice of being a single mother, Maggie offered an interpretation of the family which transcended the nuclear prototype to embrace a more open structure, or ‘families of choices’, as Weeks et al. (1999) term it. That said, Maggie appeared to encourage her daughter to adopt a particular ethnic identity. Although Scottish-born Maggie was keen to dissociate herself from the first generation who were “set in their own race”, she mostly identified with other British-born Chinese. She had a large extended family living in north-western England and quite a few close Chinese friends scattered around Scotland. These close ties led to a densely woven kinship of British Chinese composition from which it was impossible to break away. This created a dilemma for Maggie: she could not deny her daughter's ethnicity, nor could she cut off herself from her family. She did not anticipate much pressure from her peers, i.e. the second-generation Chinese immigrants, because they were more open-minded; the main pressure came from the first generation.

In relation to her social networks, another top issue on Maggie's parenting agenda was the development of language skills. She believed that by speaking both Chinese and English fluently her daughter would be accepted by her peers at school as well as by the wider Chinese community. In envisaging her daughter's ethnic identification, Maggie was wary of the influence within and beyond family:

I suppose she will grow up knowing that she is Chinese... because she will speak Cantonese at home. When I go back to work, my mum will become her main carer, and my mum only speaks Cantonese, so she will grow up speaking Cantonese, eating

congee. I will also try to encourage her to go to Chinese school on Sunday, maybe learning more about the culture as well. But I can imagine that she would grow up to be more Scottish. Just from my own experience of coming up to primary school, especially if she is still in [the town name], most of her friends will be white. She will just be... more Scottish. As far as being Nigerian, [my ex-partner] grew up in London, so he has no roots at all (she laughed).

The first part of the quote highlights an assumed link between language and culture. Most of the interviewees of Chinese heritage ('mixed-race' individuals and parents of half-Chinese children) acknowledged the importance of speaking the language, and they made various efforts to ensure their children acquired the language, too. However, in most cases, language skills deteriorated as the children entered school. Reflecting on the reasons for this loss of linguistic competence, Maggie pointed out that Scottish society, with its homogenous culture, did not encourage the sustained development of a Chinese identity. Relating to her own experience of growing up in Scotland, Maggie recalled the embarrassing feeling associated with speaking Chinese in public and the lack of opportunities to experience cultural festivals. Without strong and consistent cultural import, Maggie was not optimistic about sustaining a Chinese identity for her daughter.

Another interesting issue highlighted in the above quote was that Maggie was not so keen on encouraging her daughter to identify with her Nigerian heritage. It was perhaps the case that in her partner's absence, Maggie had little access to any black cultural resources that could influence her daughter. It may also be the case that she was consciously or unconsciously denying her daughter's Nigerian heritage by preventing her daughter from associating with black culture. Even though she expressed her objection to the racial ideology reproduced by her parents and wider society in everyday encounters, she may still be foregrounding a Chinese identity in the ways she parents her daughter. Nevertheless, her daughter's skin tone concerned her. She was still anxious and uncertain about the right way to raise her child:

It [racism] wouldn't be an issue until she goes to nursery, and then I can imagine some horrible children will bully her and make fun of her, maybe then we will talk about it. But until then, I will probably try to teach her to be as open as possible. I think we just try to raise her to be, you know, confident, happy, just, you know, to

teach her to brush it off. I really don't know what the answer is; probably just waiting for it when it comes.

Maggie did not shy away from the question of racism. In fact, she acknowledged that her daughter was likely to be subjected to racism due to her dark skin colour. Like many parents of young children, Maggie did not seem to give much thought to racism and adopted a reactive attitude to the issue. A sense of helplessness when thinking about encountering racism was common among the parents: while most admitted that they were not ready for this discussion, others hoped that institutions, for instance schools, could provide legislative protection for their children. Even the parents who had themselves been subjected to racism were somewhat reluctant to predispose their children with notions of 'race' for the fear of discouraging them from participating in their everyday activities.

Conclusion of Maggie's story

As we were about to conclude the interview, Maggie took out her mobile phone and showed me her daughter's picture. When I said her daughter was very adorable, she looked into my eyes for a second and said "thank you" in tears. In that moment, I suddenly realised the heavy emotional toll she had been carrying along as a single mother. Growing up as a visible minority in a very white Scottish town, Maggie came to terms with her 'race' early on, and now she faced the new challenge of seeing her daughter caught up in the same identity struggle she had to deal with, with perhaps an even narrower chance of being recognised as Scottish. The other two Chinese parents in the study, Fung and Vicky, exhibited a greater sense of flexibility in their parenting practices, partly because they were both married to white Scottish partners, and partly because their first-generation immigration identity allowed them to 'preserve' their cultural capital, which they could selectively pass down to their children. Maggie, on the other hand, was held back by mothering a 'double-minority' child on her own. Meanwhile, she also continued to negotiate her own racialised identity and its impact upon her mothering experiences.

The two mothers we have discussed thus far were socially excluded on class and racial grounds respectively, and struggled to come to terms with the unequal life opportunities awaiting their children. The two examples exposed from a mother's perspective the particular concerns and negotiations involved in raising 'mixed-race' children. In order to present a fuller picture, the next example will explore the experience from a father's standpoint.

Mai

Mai was introduced to this study by a friend of mine. Educated in the UK from undergraduate level to PhD, Mai was working as a senior researcher at a Russell Group university at the time of our interview. He was married to a white English woman with two-year-old twins and he identified himself as Singaporean-Chinese. Mai's story interested me for two reasons: first, he was one of only four fathers in the study; second, I expected to hear from him some gendered, classed interpretations of raising mixed children. The interview with Mai was conducted in his office. Whereas my previous interviews had been with participants who had little experience of social research, Mai asked me about the transcribing methods I employed, which made me start to panic. Instead of being able to set the scene for the interview at a pace that I was comfortable with, I felt I was being led and judged by him.

Before I had a chance to organise my thoughts, he told me that the interview could start. In most interviews, I started by encouraging my interviewees to adopt a 'free style' narrative during which I would ask follow-up questions in accordance with my interview guide. However, with Mai, the beginning of the interview was interrupted by these unusual power dynamics. The flow was eventually restored as the conversation focus shifted from his personal life to his children. Mai seemed to take pride in his involvement in parenting and slowly opened up. In reflecting upon the conventional notions of parenting, he challenged the gendered practices of caring for children and offered his interpretations:

The fathering experience so far has been quite complete, in a sense, because I was the primary carer for them before I started this job. So, when my wife went back to work after the maternity, I was the main carer. We did have a nanny and nursery, but it was only a few hours a week. So I was basically the guy, the parent who... so I think I had that kind of experience, which I think you need to have, you know, be a proactive father to experience, which I think these days are still... you see more and more, but still the minority.

Recognising the academic discourse on the gendered division of labour, Mai appeared to distinguish himself from stereotypical images of 'irresponsible fathers' who stayed away from the everyday obligations of raising children. The moral argument combined with an emphasis on fathering experience illuminated his intention to portray himself as a 'new father' who was nurturing and responsible. Mai's involvement in the daily care of his

children prompted him to think more about parenting mixed children. When asked whether he would consciously raise his children under the influence of two cultures, he offered some critical insights.

Like Maggie, Mai saw the Chinese language as a means to transmit culture. He talked about his plan to encourage his twins to learn Mandarin by attending Chinese Sunday School and making trips to Singapore. However, he was more sceptical about the relationship between language and culture. Coming from a Chinese family in Singapore, Mai grew up in an environment described as “a big mess”, where different ethnicities had co-existed for centuries. Moreover, his decade-long experience of overseas study had ‘diluted’ his cultural identity as Chinese. Therefore, he was keen to adopt a cosmopolitan orientation when it came to defining himself and rejected any ethnic assumptions based on his physical appearance.

Mai: I don’t have that kind of relationship with the Chinese language and the Chinese identity. Part of this is because even though I am Chinese, I mean I am those... am I those overseas Chinese? Someone has taught me about the difference between *Huaqiao* (华侨) and *Huayi* (华裔).

Mengxi: I think *Huaqiao* is someone who has been away but eventually returns to China, whereas *Huayi* refers to someone who is born to ethnic Chinese parents.

Mai: So I am *Huayi*, I guess. Our starting point is that we are migrants. We were born in this mix, so the current relationship we have with the language is not like a Chinese person from China where the language and the nation are the same. So, when people asked me, “Oh, why don’t you speak Chinese to your kids?” You know, I was, (sighing playfully) I cannot make it a long and boring explanation but it’s actually quite complex for me. And I am very conscious that I don’t want to impose a culture on my children that I myself find obviously artificial.

Mai pointed out the problematic relationship between language and national identity. This ambivalent attitude towards ethnicity differentiated Mai from the previous two interviewees: while Maggie and Natalie took their ethnicity for granted, Mai’s ethnic identity was contested and in conflict. It was interesting to notice that Mai deliberately used Chinese phrases in the quote, seeming to signal his language ability while he was

trying to defy an assumed Chinese identity ascribed to him. Such ambivalence led to a dilemma in terms of passing down the culture: on the one hand, Singapore is a highly cosmopolitan city where there is no single culture with which Mai can completely identify. On the other hand, Mai was somehow expected to assume an identity with which he was not willing to identify. As this forced conformity derived from the expectations of close kin, and even his partner, he was obliged to pass down the Chineseness to his children. Pursuing further the topic of identity, Mai explained why he would encourage his children to choose the identity they wanted:

I think the concept of ethnic identity needs to be unpacked. I am just thinking, perhaps if [his partner] and myself are more... if our identities were individually more defined by our ethnicity, then perhaps the culture would have been stronger. So suddenly, for example, I came from a traditional Chinese family, whether in Singapore or China, and [his partner]'s family were a traditional English protestant family, then probably you will see that kind of interaction a lot more, in terms of how do you teach discipline, or instruct the children, then you will see that dynamic perhaps.

By saying this, Mai suggested that both his partner and he were “culturally soft”, so they were not keen to cultivate the cultural awareness embedded in nationhood. That said, their relaxed approach was complemented by a concerted effort to invest in social capital. Mai revealed later what he deemed important for his children. For him, a diverse social network was at the top of his list:

We don't have an extended family here, but we have a good social network, like friends and their children. I like the thing that people here are nice and warm, more community-orientated. But that's just a generalisation, it's very hard to be more precise. I think because where we live is like an international village. We feel like a part of the community. In fact, there are hardly any Scottish people. There are a few, not so many. I think it's more defined by our place of work. So most of us are connected with the university, either studying or working.

The community Mai referred to was very ethnically diverse and marked by its middle-class ambience. The majority of residents were middle-class professionals, of whom a relatively high proportion was non-Scottish. Staying in such a diverse area provided Mai with a sense

of ownership, partly based on a shared class status and partly based on a collective sense of being non-Scottish. Here the interplay of 'race' and class was robust: his class position effectively obscured the adverse effect of his 'race', while his 'race' in turn increased his sense of entitlement to live in this particular community. He believed that by socialising with like-minded people who were middle-class, educated and of diverse backgrounds, he could influence his children to adopt a more open attitude towards ethnicity. This would also be vital when they reach school age:

We definitely want to send them to a school that is as diverse as possible. I think the issue here in Scotland is that there is too much white homogeneity. We are not just mixed-race or mixed-culture families. We believe very strongly in having a large variety, different influences, ideas, certainly, of course, ethnicity, because both of us have ethnic backgrounds. But we like to think in school, there is a diverse student population... which will likewise, you know, be educated at school. Their children in a way are more global, more cosmopolitan, more open, accepting, and hopefully more curious about others and ideas that perhaps challenge their own. It's more like a mind-set and perspective.

Instead of using the diversity of school to protect his children, Mai adopted a more liberal (and pragmatic) discourse in which he placed an emphasis on cultivating a cosmopolitan orientation. Ethnic diversity at school became a resourceful site for preparing his children for a global mind-set. His attitude resonated with several sociological studies in which middle-class parents were observed to anticipate advantages from choosing a mixed school, in terms of resourcing and sustaining entitlements (Nast and Blokland, 2013; Byrne, 2006b). This pattern was also observed in other middle-class parents in this study: rather than directing their children to align with one particular ethnicity, these parents would provide material support to encourage their children to explore and test out different identities. In contrast, parents from less affluent backgrounds usually voluntarily gave up the control of the environment and believed in the natural growth of children.

Relating this quote to what Mai said in the rest of the interview, an overall impression I gained was that he was reluctant to acknowledge any potential influence of 'race' on his children. While he admitted that it was inevitable to mention 'race' to their children, he tended to address my questions in a more ambiguous manner by replacing 'race' with ethnicity:

Again, I think it's as important as discussing sexuality and religion. Although [his partner] and me are atheists, we still think it's important to discuss religion. I think these are things that in the time that's right, you need to talk about. So that they don't feel there is anything that is taboo. There is no boundary. So certainly the culture, you know, will be part of the many things we will discuss with them. And hopefully we will have fun and enjoy the discussion. I think that's the most important thing. I want them to think that they have the best of both worlds; nothing is lost in this. So maybe if it would be Mid-Autumn festival, we could go to Seewoo and get some mooncake. Perhaps, when they enjoy the mooncake - hopefully they find it enjoyable if you know what I mean - I will talk more about the significance of the festival and stories. So as to leave us space to talk about ethnicity.

By saying this, ethnicity was registered alongside sexuality and religion as a social dimension that needed to be addressed without addressing the social consequences that 'race' might generate. Mai also plotted the 'race talk' through cultural props and good timing, trying to engage his children in conversations by reasoning and negotiating; even the content he selected to talk about ethnicity was value-neutral. Trying to push him to talk more on the racial aspect, I raised a question about racism:

Mengxi: Are there any strategies you'd like to have in place to prepare them in the event of racism? It probably won't happen, but have you ever thought about it?

Mai: Err... I mean, I myself had the experience before, but very, very few times. That's partly because I don't look for it. Perhaps I hope that they do not recognise racism to begin with. I want them to be naïve in that sense, then I hope them to come back to talk to us about this. From there, we will just say, "Look, there are a lot ignorant people." I think racism is not something you should use lightly - just because someone says something offensive, it's not usually racism. So I can imagine when those kinds of conversation will come up in the future, they probably will have to come to us and ask what's going on here. But hopefully they will not wear their ethnicity too heavily, if you know what I mean.

Mai adopted a very reflective approach to racism. Starting from his own experience, he emphasised the individual's agency in mitigating racist encounters. He then attributed the

cause of racism to individual ignorance and relied on children's agency to identify racism. Mai's reactive attitude towards the 'race talk' may be underpinned by a belief that provided with the 'right' environment, his children would be less likely to fall victim to racism. In this sense, Mai believed a middle-class status 'trumped' racial disadvantages through strategic planning.

Conclusion of Mai's story

Mai's take on 'race' reminds me of Sandra, a white Jewish woman originating from South African and living in Edinburgh at the time of the interview. Sandra had a PhD in Information Technology and her white husband lectured at a Russell Group university. The couple together raised their eight-year-old son who was adopted in South Africa. When she talked about strategies to initiate 'race talks' and to handle 'race' issues, Sandra maintained that it was important to "keep a fine balance between completely ignoring it and raining it down". She saw racism was "happening" and wanted her son to "rise to it and know how to fight against it over time". She made a range of efforts to raise her son to have "a strong ethnic identity and take pride in it", including telling him stories about Nelson Mandela and the history of South Africa, attending African music concerts together, buying him an electric guitar, and taking annual trips to South Africa. The middle name of her son was that of a South African national hero, and she also ensured that her son's passports - British and South African - were always valid. These practices, often only possible with a higher social class background, were considered by middle-class parents to help lessen the significance of 'race'. Their interpretations of 'race' and their abilities to mobilise resources allowed them to make bold claims about what they wanted their children to become as their class position lessened the negative impact of 'race'.

Discussion and concluding remarks

At this point, the question posed at the start of the chapter, namely how parents interpret and communicate 'race' and mixedness, can be addressed. The contents and motivations of communicating racial literacy vary from one family to another. The uneven patterns were rooted in parents' life experiences and unequal access to social and economic resources. While parents with more deployable socio-economic resources are able to create spaces in which they would like to have their children grow up, parents from disadvantaged backgrounds face more material restraints and have fewer resources for their children to develop a range of identity options. Natalie, Maggie and Mai embodied distinctive social

divisions in terms of social class, ethnicity and gender, so their views on parenting were gendered, classed and inevitably racialised. This was illustrated by their knowledge of and willingness to explain cultural differences, their capacity to draw on various forms of social capital to ‘equip’ their children against potential disadvantages stemming from their ethnicity, and their ability to respond to pressures from the wider social networks including from their families. Compared with the stories of Natalie and Maggie, Mai’s experience highlighted the advantages offered by a higher social class in the process of producing and communicating racial literacy, which also offered parents the ability to exercise ‘choices’. While Maggie and Natalie believed that ‘race’ shaped their children’s life chances and social mobility, Mai was able to downplay the power of ‘race’ in certain conditions. At the heart of this discrepancy was material inequality, namely unequal access to material support and the ability to mobilise social resources.

On a different note, referring back to data from the mixed individuals’ interviews, it appeared that many participants had never encountered or were unable to recall any efforts made by their parents to prepare them for racism. The reason for this, as one informant in her 40s proposed, might be that “teaching children about racism is a very middle-class thing”. This observation points to that the organisation and implementation of family practices around anti-racism is historically grounded, class-specific and gender-oriented. Contending that it is not enough to recognise the gender and class inequalities in family practices that Morgan (2016) describes, this thesis theorises ‘race’ as another stratifying element that shapes the ‘daily mundane’ of ‘mixed-race’ families. Whilst it might not occupy the central stage all the time, it operates in the background underpinning parenting practices.

A bigger picture

Despite the differences, there were also certain common issues identified in the interviews with parents. Instead of acknowledging the existence and the harm of racism, parents often started their ‘race talk’ with a ready acknowledgement of the existence of ‘race’ in society. Such a predisposition to conceptualise a human population in racial terms formed an interesting contradiction to sociologists’ belief that ‘race’ does not exist whereas racism does. The conflicting interpretations of ‘race’ will be further discussed in the next chapter, which compares the ways in which mixedness was narrated by parents and mixed individuals.

Another common pattern observed across the generated data was that nearly all parent interviewees highlighted the ubiquity of intermarriage in multicultural societies like Britain. They gave detailed accounts of the similarities they shared with their partner regardless of ethnicity and they downplayed cultural negotiations with which they had to engage. Their intentions for doing this were arguably to 'normalise' their intimate unions and to resist the dominant views and images associated with intermarriage. Wary of the racial judgements they received in everyday encounters, the interviewees seemingly felt obliged to use the interview as a site to defy the dominant perceptions and defend their relationships. Another feature of the sample was that at the time of interview, most parents had very tentative plans and strategies for explaining 'race', and they had limited examples and vocabularies with which to describe their expectations. The emerging state of designing racial literacy was probably due to the fact that most of them had very young children under school age. While the young parent population was partly due to the selected recruitment channels of using online forums, it may also signal a social shift in Scotland, even though intermarriage was still relatively rare and has only become prevalent in recent years.

Notwithstanding the prominent role of 'race', the analysis has acknowledged the role of gender in shaping the family dynamics with the intersected lens. The gendered divisions of labour were illuminated by a differential involvement of mothers and fathers in parenting mixed children. With most parent interviewees being mothers, particularly white mothers, their engagement in organising and delivering family practices appear to be greater than that of their partners. Moreover, their social networks seemed to have a great influence in forming ethnic knowledge and understanding their children. The ways mothers weave cultural symbols and meanings into their daily interactions with their children could influence their children's early understanding of their heritages. Conceived by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1993) as the bearers of the collective and the embodiment of culture, mothers play the major role in transmitting cultural practices. Therefore, the need to recognise the intertwining of ethnic identity and the gendered identity of mothers is a prerequisite when interpreting their motivations and actions.

Lastly, one's emotions and willingness to disclose one's family life are interrelated. It was noticeable that the parents' take on the 'race' issue was marked by an intensity of emotion. For some, the research interviews worked therapeutically as they disclosed at length their personal circumstances and perspectives on 'racial relations' in society. Comparatively,

others appeared to enter the interview more light-heartedly and seemed to shy away from addressing the 'race' questions directly. It is perhaps true that those who had lived experiences of racism might be prompted to think more about the ways in which to explain 'race' to their children. They were also more likely to place 'race' centrally in their parenting agenda.

Admittedly, this chapter by no means captures the full picture of the three interviewees' lives, nor can the findings represent such a heterogeneous population of mixed families. The aim of sharing these stories was to point out some prominent concerns shared by the parent participants in designing and weaving their explanations of 'race' with their children. The three examples illustrate the ways in which 'race' plays out in different familial contexts and the varying degrees of significance it has. Their interpretations of interethnic intimacy and family orient their parenting strategies and support their moral justifications for their involvement and attitudes. This has an impact on the decision-making process with regard to housing, schooling and social-networking activities, signalling a need to take various forms of inequality into account and to avoid the dangerous generalisation of asserting 'the' parenting style.

Chapter 8 Imagining 'mixed-race': strategies of being and strategies of parenting

Introduction

Since embarking on this study, I have heard many intriguing and thought-provoking stories about being mixed or being associated with mixedness. These stories not only provide valuable insights into my interviewees' life experiences, thereby contributing to a better understanding of their identity expressions, they also prompted me to consider the wider implications of their experiences. While not having the opportunity to speak to the children and parents of the same families represented a disappointment in this study, my confidence was restored when the gathered data offered new hopes of revealing a bigger picture about 'mixed-race' identities. Although there was no single way to frame mixed identities, the interviewees created frameworks through which they could make sense of mixedness. During these processes, the interviewees interpellated themselves into wider discursive practices, a process described in Hall's suturing metaphor in Chapter 3. In this vein, one way to bring together two data sets is to examine the ways in which parents and mixed individuals employ social discourses to imagine mixedness. It requires moving beyond the specific ways in which mixedness is constructed out of kinship networks and attending instead to the broader contexts in which mixedness is situated and imagined. This not only elicits similarities and differences between and among the two groups in their various approaches to mixedness, it also reveals how the social discourses continue to be replayed and reconfigured to express one's interpretation of 'race'.

With this aim, I went beyond single-perspective accounts and started to cross-examine both data sets. The method of analysis was comparative in relation to the accounts offered by the parents and by the mixed individuals. By cross-analysing the two data sets through a juxtaposition of the parents' and the mixed individuals' accounts, this chapter also draws both sets of data together to explore the extent to which the parents and mixed individuals share common understandings. In this process, two distinct readings of mixedness gradually emerged. The first one is a 'cosmopolitan' approach, where mixedness is linked to an aspiration for post-racial colour-blindness and an entitlement to become 'world citizens'. The second orientation is underpinned by a sense of 'ethnic-absolutism', marked by an emphasis on Scottish/British values and cultural identity, which indicates a desire to fully embrace a Scottish/British heritage. Whilst the two orientations demonstrate different

ways of imagining mixedness, they were both predisposed with post-racial discourses that served to downplay the significance of ‘race’ and to dismiss racial inequalities. Nonetheless, the two approaches did not, and could not, encapsulate every specific reading of mixedness, nor could the interviewees’ accounts be neatly divided by the two identified orientations. There were occasions of overlap and movement between these categories when individuals negotiated their positions within a single interview. Therefore, a more appropriate way to conceptualise the two orientations is to view them as ‘ideal types’, where individuals may be encouraged to adopt one orientation over the other under specific circumstances. Nonetheless, distinct characteristics can be identified in each orientation. Individuals falling under the cosmopolitan orientation appear to have had experiences of living in multiple places in their lives, which provided contexts for the formation of multifaceted belonging. For those holding onto an ethnic-absolutist approach, whilst not necessarily lacking travelling experience, their interpretations of mixedness reflect a particular reading of ‘race’ arising from the socio-historical context of colonialism, where nation and culture are experienced in a hierarchal fashion.

Given the difference in the analytical scope of this chapter in relation to the previous ones, this chapter will also adopt a different structure from the previous three chapters. Instead of immediately going into a data analysis, I will start with a brief theoretical overview of the two ‘mixed-race’ orientations, namely cosmopolitan and homogeneity, and then move on to elaborate the two identified ‘mixed-race’ orientations in detail. Each orientation is treated as an analytical unit featuring two mini-stories of a mixed individual and a parent respectively. At the end of the chapter, a concluding discussion will evaluate the ways in which the identified orientations can help answer the third research question.

A brief note on terminology: ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘ethnic-absolutism’

In this chapter, the term cosmopolitan is used to imply a cluster of meanings often associated with global mobility, agency and a ‘transcending’ interpretation of ‘race’. To start with, the cosmopolitan orientation entails a ‘place polygamy’ (Beck, 2000), where migrating individuals form multiple belongings at once and produce a biography based on their transnational experience. In the context of mixedness, the multiple locations of individual biographies generate a particular set of language. This is a language that praises a global mentality, manifested by an individual’s ability to “pick and choose among competing traditions” and “to correspond to the coexistence of ways of life” (Beck,

2002:18). The barrier of ‘race’ is hence elevated. A cosmopolitan identity has the capacity to bridge questions of racial mixture and transracial solidarity by minimising the ascribed racial identity without abandoning the idea of ‘race’ (Slate, 2012). In other words, when framed by a lay version of individualisation, mixedness is used to explain one’s aspirations and employed as a catalyst for achieving individuality. Importantly, this profile of cosmopolitan individuals echoes Vertovec and Cohen (2002) conceptualisation of cosmopolitan, as a unique group of individuals who have acquired a set of unique analytical, emotional, and imaginative competencies and skills that distinguish them from others. Recognising the distinctions in the existing literature on cosmopolitan regarding the role of class¹⁵, this thesis contends that the current version identified from the study reflects a classed interpretation of mixedness. Not everyone has the same access to materials and resources, nor does everyone enjoy the same rights and opportunities to travel or migrate.

The orientation towards ethnic-absolutism, on the other hand, represents a different conceptualisation of mixedness. Perceived as a form of social capital, whiteness offers a degree of mobility to access social privileges and a means of dissociating oneself from the stigma attached to racialised minorities. It is usually conflated with an essentialist reading of the nation and perceived to be a signifier of Scottishness (McCrone, 2002a), and, to a less degree, of Britishness. In achieving the desirable white status, people obtain and internalise “culturally valorised mythologies taught in social interactions” (Hughey, 2015:220) and consequently share a common allegiance to this hegemonic whiteness (Hughey, 2010). Whiteness hence functions as a ‘normative script’ accepted as a priori reality across racialised populations in divergent social worlds over time. It offers an explanation as to why some of the interviewees voluntarily adopted or encouraged their family members to adopt a white identity. Compounded by whiteness and colonial readings of history, the orientation towards ethnic-absolutism is arguably an effort by parents to have their children fully integrated into mainstream society.

Despite the different contents and implications of the two orientations, both imaginations appear to share a partial reading of post-raciality conflated with the idea of conviviality. It also seems to be the case that both orientations are premised on a view that the current racial landscape in Scotland has been reshaped by migration and global mobility so that the

¹⁵ One school of thought, to which Beck (2002) subscribes, holds that ‘cosmopolitan’ is not classed but universal; whereas for others, such as Gilroy (2005) and Jackson and Jones (2014) (*Stories of cosmopolitan belonging: emotion and location*. Oxon: Routledge) ‘cosmopolitan’ is often associated with a particular reading of conviviality, observable in urban, working-class areas of large cities.

country now has a much more diverse population. Whilst Scotland is still very ‘white’, the ever-expanding non-Scottish population is believed to have contributed to the emergence of a post-racial society where ‘race’ no longer matters and structural disadvantage based on race no longer exist. As a result, Scotland is in the process of transforming into a convivial society where “cohabitation and interaction have made multi-culture an ordinary feature of social life” (Gilroy, 2005:xv). This over-simplified picture offered by the interviewees first of all ignores the important distinction between two meanings of post-raciality: one that views race as irrelevant and one that sees post-race thinking as a new way of conceptualising the processes of racialisation and racism (Byrne, 2011). The former is superficial and impressionistic and is in essence a political ideology (Gallagher, 2003; St Louis, 2015), whereas the latter is more of an academic attempt to challenge the status quo by destabilising ‘race’ (Ali, 2003; Nayak, 2006). Secondly, while conviviality highlights a collective sense of becoming and belonging, it neglects the extent to which conviviality could be applied to the Scottish context. As Song (2015) observes, mixedness tends to be viewed as evidence of the demise of social (and racial) barriers in a simplistic and opportunistic fashion. The interpretation of social context shared by both orientations indiscriminately considers the diversity of population as a form of racial democracy, minimising the problem of racism and denying its systemic nature (Da Costa, 2014).

A cosmopolitan orientation (with a twist)

The emergence of cosmopolitan narratives is intricately related to the nature of the sample. The vast majority of the interviewees had forged ties with migrants prior to their interview, either by being a migrant themselves or by being born to a migrant parent. Although the individuals might differ in terms of their affinities with their minority heritages, their kinship connections provided discursive resources to reflect and make sense of the interconnectedness of migration, ethnicity and ethnic mixing. The cosmopolitan discourse hence became a timely choice: it valorised these experiences and considered them as essential elements of a lifestyle unique to mixed people. Moreover, the cosmopolitan narrative appeared to have a de-racialising effect, in that ‘race’ was strategically essentialised to allow the individuals to gain a favourable position when interacting with others. In this context, the ideological and negative connotations of ‘race’ were downplayed, whereas ‘race’ itself as a label contributed to the individual-making project.

Jenny's story

Jenny is a small-framed, soft-voiced woman in her late twenties. At the time of interview, she worked at a local art institute promoting cross-cultural communication. Born to a local Chinese woman from Hong Kong and a Scottish civil servant working for the British Hong Kong Government, Jenny spent her early childhood in Hong Kong. At the age of nine, she moved back to Scotland with her family and settled down in a small town near the Scottish-English border. The early years of growing up in a vibrant environment in Hong Kong enabled Jenny to develop a vaguely cosmopolitan orientation and formed a point of reference for her being mixed. The first thing she noticed after arriving at the town was an overwhelming pressure to conform to a certain way of life:

I will never call [the town] my hometown. Everybody just, you know, acts the same, looks the same, dresses the same and talks the same. They don't like anything different. I think that kind of little bubble really makes you feel awkward, makes you feel weird. I think I am still looking for somewhere a little bit better, a little bit more interesting, and a little more connected to. Maybe that's part of being mixed-race, just growing up in different places.

Growing up in the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong, Jenny experienced the tranquillity of the Scottish town as a cultural shock. In an environment where conformity and homogeneity were the aesthetic norm, Jenny's mixedness stood out and became a source of unease. She felt more comfortable growing up in an area where there was not just one way of being and living. Struggling to adjust to this monolithic environment, Jenny left the town after high school and studied Japanese and Chinese at a Scottish Russell Group university. During her undergraduate study, she attended two study-abroad programmes and lived in both China and Japan for a period of time. This experience, in combination with her childhood experiences in Hong Kong, constituted the main body of her cosmopolitan repertoire. During her stay abroad, she consciously sought out connections with others of similar backgrounds and tried to create a lived interpretation of her mixedness:

People in Japan have a strange stigma around mixed people. They made a film about *Hafu*, the Japanese word for mixed-race people, which was basically about a meet-up for people who are mixed-race. It is quite strange that there is almost a weird connection, a kind of bond between people who are mixed race. I thought that's quite

strange when I was first there. (...) When people asked me where I was from, I wasn't quite sure what to say. But now, I am quite forthcoming to say that I am half Chinese and born in Hong Kong.

The experience of living abroad opened up possibilities for exploring different versions and receptions of mixedness. More importantly, these differential interpretations offered the right type of knowledge she needed to articulate her identity. In this regard, Jenny's travel experiences allowed her to build confidence in the process of locating a niche in the 'identity pool'. Having benefited from the overseas experiences, Jenny went on to describe how much she enjoyed travelling and engaging with people of different backgrounds:

It's quite common that you meet different types of people when travelling. A lot of time, they are from very diverse backgrounds and they are kind of travelling everywhere. It's like you don't feel you are weird, different or special anymore. It's kind of a norm, which is nice.

When surrounded by cosmopolitan travellers, the novelty of ethnic-mixing was diluted. In this context, mixedness in terms of ethnicities, countries and cultures became the new norm, where 'race' was rendered less relevant. The sense of conviviality that emerged from her travelling experiences was at the heart of her imaginations of mixedness, standing as a building block in her cosmopolitan orientation. Her embracing of a cosmopolitan orientation also appeared to explain her choice of career and location. Having stayed in Glasgow for a while, Jenny explained how the spatial embodied the convivial:

I've only been living here for a short while but I quite like the fact that everyone is relaxed, just getting on with things and not pointing out the differences between people as much. I like meeting people of different cultures from different places with different stories. So I think that's what draws me to big cities.

Glasgow was considered a more diverse and progressive location compared to the rural Scottish town she grew up in. By ascribing such characteristics to Glasgow, Jenny attributed meanings to the space within which her cosmopolitan identity could be sustained. The city created organic solidarity among cosmopolitan individuals. In light of this claim, the overall message Jenny sent out was that being mixed had positively shaped her life in

many ways. She actively engaged with ‘differences’, which were strategically transformed into advantages, as she summarised below:

I think the good thing about being mixed-race is that you already have that difference from other people. You experience a lot of different things which maybe they haven't. You see the world a little bit differently because you've got to enjoy different types of cultures, food, languages, as well as your way of thinking.

In this quote, racialised differences were reconfigured into enabling agents that allowed Jenny to distinguish herself from the crowd. Whilst Jenny seemed to attribute her cosmopolitan orientation to mixedness, the underlying factor was her experience of travelling and living in different places. It was via these experiences that she sustained multi-faceted forms of belonging and drew upon elements to build a positive picture of being mixed. As Jenny concluded, “I am quite proud of being mixed. This just makes me more interesting, more attractive, and less boring!” Her reading of mixedness echoed the experiences of some of the other interviewees who had grown up with a wealth of travelling experiences. Richard, an English-Malaysian professional in his late 20s who grew up in Inverness, noted that being mixed gave him the opportunity to travel around Asia and learn about the nuanced differences between different Asian cultures. This gave him an edge over his Scottish peers because “the advantage of [being] mixed-race is that you get to experience all of these”. These participants generally believed that their mixedness entitled them to fully engage with a particular lifestyle and mentality. They took pride in having a cosmopolitan vision and would not uphold a singular identity defined by nationality or ethnicity.

In contrast with the earlier chapters that focused more on the everyday and articulations of ethnic options, the discussion about Jenny (and those sharing a similar profile) was more about an idealised version of how mixedness accomplished a sense of self. For Jenny, difference could be strategically downplayed, as being mixed brought other traits that made her “interesting”. Therefore, it might be true that her desire to project a cosmopolitan identity was a personal strategy for negotiating racialised differences. In this sense, there were some similarities in lived experiences between the individuals reported in the first data chapter and here, although not everyone in that chapter had had the experience of travelling abroad. However, for those who were stigmatised and frequently misrecognised, like Sara, Issac or Charlene, it was hardly imaginable that they would adopt the same tone

to describe their mixedness. In this light, the ability to craft a link between mixedness and cosmopolitanism was not universal.

Sheena's story

A similar narrative was identified in the interviews with the parents. As we have seen in Mai's story, he assigned his cosmopolitanism to his mixedness rather than to his middle-class background. On the one hand, his claim highlighted the classed nature of this orientation; and on the other, it was an example of a parent ascribing agency to his children. The different perspectives resulted from different generational, cultural and social experiences. This created nuanced variations in terms of the ways in which a cosmopolitan orientation was articulated. The following story about Sheena illustrates the subtle differences between the narratives offered by the parents and those coming from the children.

Born in South Africa, Sheena moved to Scotland a few years ago and settled in a small seaside town in the east of Scotland with her family - her husband, who is "through-in and throughout Dutch", and their seven-year-old son. Before meeting Sheena in person, we had several rounds of email exchanges via Gumtree mail. Knowing a little about the complex demographic profile of South Africa, I was trying to pin down her 'race' in order to measure her 'fit' for the study. However, for fear of using the word 'race', I asked her to explain her ethnic background. The first answer received from Sheena was "South African". Trying to spell out the difference between nationality and ethnicity, I asked her again. Shortly after sending my email, I received Sheena's response:

You asked me to confirm my nationality and that of my husband. I have done so in the initial mail, but here it is again: I am South African, my husband is Dutch.

It appeared that for Sheena, ethnicity and nationality were the same concept. Believing that she did not intend to confuse me on this matter, I decided to stop chasing her for the answer and included her in the sample anyway. It was not until we met that she explained her background:

My days, back in the Apartheid years, it would be classified as Cape Malay. But it's not necessarily a Cape Malay, it's more dating back from when slaves came over to

South Africa. And a lot of slaves were from the islands of Java, Malaysia, Indonesia. I would say I was more what is termed 'coloured'.

I was overwhelmed by the huge amount of context-specific information included in this explanation. "Cape Malay" and "coloured" were brand new terms to me but apparently formed part of Sheena's racial vocabularies. Growing up in a working-class community in a "coloured" part of Cape Town, ethnicity was a novel concept - or a polite way of saying 'race' - for her. She told me that in her childhood community, "racial blending" was common. One way to determine one's 'race' was through the 'Pencil Test'. The so-called 'Pencil Test', according to Sheena, was a classification system operated in Apartheid time to determine one's 'race'. If one's hair could hold up a pencil stuck inside a knot, one would be categorised as 'coloured'. Based on specific rules outlined in the Pencil Test, she considered herself of Indonesian descent despite the dark pigment of her skin. The reification of 'race' pervading her account was particularly evident when she discussed how a certain 'race' should look, citing physical features, such as shade of skin, texture of hair, size of body. The complex classification system originating in a deeply racialised society explained her reluctance (or inability) to inform me of her ethnicity in the first instance. For her, the whole topic of ethnicity was too intricately linked to 'race' not to go into detail. Her knowledge of 'race' and ethnic identification was largely shaped by the social-historical context of the South Africa in which she grew up.

Working in the marketing and sales industry in South Africa, Sheena gave up her job after giving birth to her son. She subsequently began a life in which she was constantly on the move in order to accommodate her husband's work as an IT freelancer. Having lived in Germany, the Middle East and several other countries, Sheena had met people from different backgrounds and had numerous racial encounters in which people had treated her differently just because of her 'race'. Sheena cited her globalist experiences as being a means for her to differentiate herself and to overcome racial disadvantages. The confidence she developed was brought into her interactions with the other Scottish parents she met at her son's primary school:

They don't know me, so I tend not even to look at those things. I know I am different. I stopped looking at those things a long time ago, because for me, it's just... "Whatever! So what!" Sometimes you do get those comments once in a while, but I

said to myself: “You know what? That’s not me with a problem. That’s you with the problem, so you need to sort it out, or live with the way you are.”

Being different implied a more sophisticated way of life which differentiated Sheena from other Scottish mothers. Compared to most mothers who “stay in their own world”, Sheena utilised her experiences as a means of downplaying her racial disadvantage. By formulating such a contrast, Sheena’s extensive experiences of travelling and living abroad stood out and yielded fruitful psychological resources with which she could shield herself from taking racial prejudice and biases personally. These advantages were later translated into the parenting strategy she adopted to teach her son about mixedness. As we discussed the significance of ‘race’ in children’s everyday interactions, she quoted the global citizen discourse and argued that ‘race’ no longer played a central role in defining who he was, at least at his current age.

So clearly I have seen that from children at school: they don’t see the divide between white, black and brown. They rate you more on “Oh, you can only play this if you are eight!” you know. So it’s nothing to do with race. And the thing is, when we ask our son “So what would you say you are?” He will say: “I know I was born in South Africa but I am not Dutch really, and I wasn’t South African really. I am a global child.’ (Mengxi: Did he say that!?) That’s the thing. You are the world citizen and that’s what you are. We are all intermingling with each other, and you are always going to find people who want to keep things the way they are, from the social aspect, from the religious aspect, the cultural aspect. They want to keep things as it is. But that’s not how the world is, not how things are working.

Outlining her cosmopolitan vision, Sheena suggested that in the children’s world, skin colour did not play a decisive role in determining the dynamics of play-groups. Another attempt she made to neutralise the role of ‘race’ was by rejecting the assumed relationship between ethnicity and nationality. With the ambition to raise her son as a global citizen, Sheena went to great lengths to explain why the qualities of a global citizen were desirable in the current context, despite the fact that she did not offer any concrete ‘strategy’ for achieving this. Her emphasis on raising a ‘global child’ was echoed by the other parent participants who had had ample travelling experiences. Charlie, a former asylum-seeker from Congo married to a white English woman, described his strategy for raising their daughter in line with the values gained through his experience of living in multiple

locations over the past three decades, including Congo, the US, Sweden, the Netherlands and finally the UK. He was taught to appreciate different values, such as respect for the elderly in African culture, and he was keen to weave these values into their parenting practices. By politicising the importance of ‘intermingling’ and fusing cultures, those parents were able to utilise their experiences as a powerful tool for negotiating the negative effects of ‘race’ on their children.

That said, although Sheena was clearly against any forms of essentialism based on religious and cultural grounds, she claimed there was a certain paradox: while she recognised there were people who “don’t want to lose the culture”, she pointed out the absurdity as that was “not how the world is”. Taking into account that in her immediate surroundings the desired conviviality was never readily available, her cosmopolitan vision could be seen as a mitigated response to the adverse situation of being part of a racialised minority as well as a way to negotiate the racialised stigma brought by her ‘race’.

Despite the paradox, Sheena was proud that she had created opportunities for her son to cultivate a global identity early on. To make her point, she spoke highly of her son’s adaptability to different environments:

He has lived in Berlin, he has lived in Dubai, and now he is living here. He is adaptive. I can take my son anywhere and he will adapt. So you can easily move him and he will adapt to the change. So for that I am very thankful that we have done that in an early age, because it makes better for him in the future when he has to move about or when he wants to move about. Give him a taste of wandering around and go, because he doesn’t want to stay in one place for the rest of his life.

Sheena believed that her son was in the process of becoming a global citizen. Being exposed to such a lifestyle from an early age allowed her son to develop stronger adaptability, a transferrable skill that could bring him intangible benefits in the future. Interestingly, Sheena did not refer to any possible influence of Scottish identity here, even though her son was largely socialising with local children from the typical Scottish town she lived in. Perhaps she wished to see her son fully embracing a cosmopolitan view rather than being tied to an identity determined primarily by location; or perhaps this was her strategy to prepare her son for questions that challenged his ethnicity. Towards the end of

the interview, Sheena emphasised how her parenting strategies were based on her interpretations of individualisation:

We raise him more in a sense of 'you'. You are only as good as you want to be, no matter what you want to accomplish. You are different, but not in a race sense yet, more in a sense of culture.

The picture of individualisation Sheena painted placed a strategic emphasis on cultural capital and individuality. She articulated her hope that her son would treat 'race' and culture as two separate issues. The cosmopolitan orientation generated a powerful repertoire to reconfigure 'race', alluding to an increasing power of agency against the structural constraints associated with 'race'.

Discussion: the cosmopolitan orientation

Albeit in different shapes and forms, Jenny's and Sheena's stories reflected a shared sense of cosmopolitanism that places an emphasis on the cultivation of a world-citizen vision and an egalitarian approach to differences. It also appeared that neither of the two elaborated their cosmopolitan visions based on either a Scottish or a non-Scottish heritage. Instead, they held a more progressive standpoint that transcended national and racial boundaries by abandoning their Scottish/British and non-Scottish heritages all together. In doing so, they refused to be defined by their ascribed identities but reinterpreted the significance of mixedness based on their racialised differences in general.

On the other hand, there are subtle differences between their approaches to constructing cosmopolitan narratives. It was observed that a reactive attitude was more likely to be adopted by the mixed participants whilst a proactive attitude was favoured by the parents. In other words, mixed individuals acquired a cosmopolitan orientation over the course of their identity negotiations. It was essentially a learnt ability rather than a predisposed one. However, parents appeared more readily to weave this discourse into their daily conversations as part of their parenting practices in line with their parental agendas. The second difference lies in the ways of dealing with the issue of 'race'. The mixed individuals holding a cosmopolitan orientation dismissed the centrality of 'race', despite experiencing various forms of racialised encounters. The parents, however, were more inclined to avoid initiating 'race' talk for fear of introducing 'race' too early to their children. This was because they had lived experiences of being a racialised minority or

witnessing the power of ‘race’ in shaping their life opportunities. What they did instead was to utilise kinship connections and other available ethnic resources to facilitate the formation of a positive social position. In this regard, the parents’ accounts were more focused on creating the necessary conditions and providing the required guidance to achieve this. The differential tendency could also be observed in the second approach to mixedness, namely the ethnic-absolutist orientation, which I will come to now.

An ethnic-absolutist orientation

Marked by a tendency to de-emphasise the role of mixedness, the ethnic-absolutist orientation epitomises the interplay of national identity (Scottishness) and racial identity (whiteness). The previously overlooked Scottish identity in the cosmopolitan vision regains its centrality in this discourse. The ethnic-absolutist narrative is premised upon a paradoxical logic, according to which the imagined Scottishness is on the one hand thought to be an inclusive, progressive and forward-looking identity that facilitates assimilation (Meer, 2015; McCrone, 2002b). On the other hand, it promotes a particular set of values and practices associated with whiteness, which essentially contradict the proclaimed inclusive identity. The ethnic-absolutist orientation entails a complex logic of passing, where being ‘mixed-race’ provided partial access to a Scottish identity. In order to claim a full Scottish membership, one needs to subscribe to a particular set of norms and values approved by the majority of the society. In this orientation, an underlying anxiety around the alleged claim of being Scots was sensed from the interviewees; this anxiety disguised a preference over whiteness and it implicitly sustained white privileges. In the upcoming discussions, I will delineate this orientation and thus reveal how the ethnic-absolutist orientation is deeply imbued with the prevalent ideas about nationalism, colonialism and whiteness.

Fred’s story

Born in the 1970s, Fred was one of the older generations of ‘mixed-race’ individuals growing up in Scotland. His experience was rather typical of the age group he represented: born to a British father and a mother from the former British colonies who met overseas and then later moved back to Britain. These individuals’ early memories were inevitably influenced by cultural dynamics characterised by unequal power relations and a lingering colonial legacy of the Empire. In Fred’s case, his mother was of Indian descent, born in the then British Guiana (now Guyana). She met Fred’s father, a white English man twenty

years her senior, when he was serving in the British Army in Guyana. After they got married in the West Indies, they returned to the UK and settled down in the Scottish Highlands.

The interview with Fred took place in a small café in central Edinburgh on a bright Sunday afternoon. Coming back from tennis training, Fred was in a good mood and he opened up rather quickly. In his self-introduction, he spelt out the way he perceived himself: “I sort of identify myself as Scottish, but obviously with my heritage, I am mixed-race.” It appeared that being mixed was something he felt obliged to acknowledge on this occasion rather than something he wanted to foreground. As I soon found out, despite his reluctance to address his mixedness, Fred’s interpretations of mixedness were deeply rooted in his reflections on his relationships with his parents - particularly with his mother - and his current relationship with his partner, a white Scottish woman who “went to a private school”. The intimate relationships he forged with significant others offered valuable information for making sense of his experiences.

Our conversation started with his parents’ marriage. In his view, his parents conformed somewhat to the stereotype of ‘a British man marrying a foreign bride’. However, his mother’s cultural identity placed her in a situation where she was simultaneously an insider and outsider of the local community:

When my father came back [from Guyana], there was a lot of resistance against him because he has taken a... err... non-local girl, a non-British woman. Not necessarily because of the fact that my mother wasn’t Caucasian, but you know, the fact that she wasn’t from the United Kingdom. There were a lot of British men who met local girls and then took them back. But then again, she was a Commonwealth citizen, so she was sort of accepted. I mean she’s got naturalisation without any problems at all.

In describing the pressure that the local community imposed on his mother, Fred tried to position his mother in relation to different categories, including ‘local’, ‘British’, ‘Caucasian’ and ‘Commonwealth’, which often generated different connotations and blurred the categorical boundaries between regional identity, nationality, ethnicity, and ‘race’. He intentionally avoided framing his mother in a racialised way in order to highlight her ability to ‘integrate’, which was illustrated by her quickly being able to adopt British values and practices thanks to her colonial background. It is worth noting that

whilst he tried to downplay his mother's otherness, a colonial reading of racialised subjects was evident in his account. First, he assumed that there was a similarity between the colonised and the coloniser, which allows the former to be accepted by the latter. Then, he drew out a distinction between the two, suggesting that a naturalisation process is required of the colonised in order to be accepted by the coloniser. In addition to this fundamentalist reading of culture, he cited the popular yet derogatory image of interracial unions between British men and foreign brides, although he quickly dismissed the stereotype in the case of his parents' marriage. In short, we could sense an assumed hierarchy between British and non-British people, and the placing of the Commonwealth as an 'almost British' category. Furthermore, there was an implicit value judgment made on which cultures were 'inferior' and which were 'superior'.

Interestingly, Fred was only born after his parents settled down in the Highlands. This meant that the reported incidents would have taken place before Fred was born. This naturally led to a suspicion regarding the source of the story and the purpose of telling it. That said, we could be almost certain that in the process of digesting and presenting this information, Fred positioned himself as someone who was entitled to make comments on one's eligibility to be British. It was also revealed by this quote that mixedness was irrelevant to the discussion because it was the 'culture' rather than one's ethnic background that defined group membership. This belief became even more evident later on, in his account of schooling experiences. Once again, a conflated standard was applied to draw out a boundary:

In my primary school, there were a few Indian classmates, whose parents came from the Sub-Continent. I think because, you know, my parents are effectively Caucasian, and because there weren't many other ethnicities, it's hard to see my mixedness as a threat. Nobody saw that was an issue.

In this quote, the Indian students were clearly perceived as 'other' because of their foreign parentage. Thanks to his "effectively Caucasian" parents, Fred was able to distinguish himself from his Indian classmates, who were viewed by the class as outsiders. In this case, he indicated the significance of mixedness by foregrounding his British heritage, a cultural association that saved him from being seen as a 'threat'. By consciously deploying the white privileges of his English father and the culturally subordinated identity of his mother,

Fred clearly appreciated the symbolic value of whiteness and was positive about a white identity that allowed him to distinguish himself from the culturally isolated others.

As our conversation unfolded, an ambivalent emotion towards his mother slowly emerged. This ambivalence opened up possibilities to further explore Fred's stance to his mixed heritage as he divulged more details about his mother. According to Fred, his mother never initiated any talks about her own heritage, nor did she ever visit India or Guyana once she had moved to Scotland. Explaining the reasons for this, Fred opined, "She never felt a need to keep her culture because she was an immigrant, so she might as well just leave it all behind". Seemingly approving of her detached approach to Indian culture, Fred appeared appreciative of the monolithic 'white' environment in which he grew up. As a result, he was "never that curious about her culture".

As he made these comments, Fred expressed subtle contempt for his mother. He emphasised his mother's "unsophisticated lifestyle" and found her speech a constant source of embarrassment. Her lifestyle was contrasted with that of his father, who "wasn't going to make a big deal about things to keep the smile". In the transcript excerpt below, Fred chose a politically charged topic to illustrate the different sets of cultures represented by his parents as well as to imply his emotional closeness to his father:

I think she seems to show some signs of hostility towards immigrants to Scotland who are from accession states. She is certainly not broad-minded like my father was. I am sort of mid-way in between in terms of attitude, but I think my upbringings sort of, you know, my father was open to all people and I have some elements of that. I am not alarmed. I see the need for people to come to Scotland. You know that even if Scotland is a prejudiced place, it's not to that extent. I don't mean insidious really, but I think most people in Scotland, you know, are fairly tolerant.

In saying this, Fred was not only showing his disapproval of his mother's xenophobic attitudes, but he was also revealing a cultural identification with his father, who embodied a liberal form of whiteness that was about being 'colour-blind' and 'open-minded'. It appeared that in making these specific comments about immigration, Fred was adopting a particular discourse that superficially framed Scotland as being inclusive and embracing diversity, ignoring the counter-narratives that racism also existed in Scotland. In highlighting his mother's different opinion on this issue, he was distinguishing his father

and himself from his mother, who was not a Scot. Towards the end of the conversation, he reviewed his relationship with his mixedness, which summarised the essence of his ethnic-absolutist narrative:

I am proud of being a mixed-race, but I don't think I have a superiority comfort. It's not sort of a key fact in my daily life. I think it's not strong in me culturally, so effectively it's just my ethnicity. I don't see it as a source of life, it's just part of life. I don't really see that as part of my life.

In contending that being mixed was “an element” rather than “a source” of his life, Fred proposed an interesting separation of ethnicity and cultural identity, a case he had been trying to make throughout the interview. This separation illuminated how he viewed mixedness through a two-dimensional framework: as an ethnicity and as a practice. Mixedness, on the one hand, was a prerequisite for achieving a white identity, as his white heritage offered solid evidence to support his claim of being ‘white’. On the other hand, by claiming that it was the particular values and culture to which he subscribed that made him an authentic Scot, his mixedness became irrelevant. This dissociation of mixedness marked a hybridised form of identification: it was a strategy of downplaying the role of ‘race’ and highlighting other cultural identifiers, such as value and attitudes towards immigration. Indeed, it has been noted elsewhere that racialised referents may have less salience as a Scottish national identifier (Virdee et al., 2006).

Before moving on to the next story, it is perhaps helpful to foreground the colonial imagination emerging from Fred's accounts. The way he spoke of migrants from accession states was different from the way he described her mother, a Commonwealth migrant. In his view, the colonial linkage to the ‘mother nation’, Britain, entitled his mother to a firmer claim to be British. With his father being a retired army officer, Fred's narrative came with a lingering, if not nostalgic, feeling about the Empire and a sense of pride in being British. In studying returnees retired from service in the British Empire, Knowles (2008) observes that the British Empire still contributes to the construction of British/English whiteness, and that the colonial history has a continued relevance to the imagination of ‘race’. The colonial importance entails “privilege, secure borders and racial homogeneity” (ibid., 179). Reading Fred's story retrospectively, his indifferent attitude toward mixedness reflected a voluntary adherence to racialised expectations of what it means to be white and Scottish. There was no doubt that his attitude resulted partly from an imbalanced cultural import and

from intentional efforts to oppress his heritage; it also demonstrated an implicit ethnic selection of whiteness.

Amy's story

Born and bred in Poland, Amy migrated to Scotland in 2008 and had been living there ever since. She lived in a seaside house with her Nigerian husband and their two-year-old daughter. Amy's husband worked full-time, and Amy was on maternity leave when she was interviewed. Our interview took place before the EU referendum, but Amy's experiences illuminated the ways in which the growing public debate revolving around EU migrants influenced her parenting concerns. Not long into our interview, Amy was keen to differentiate national identity from ethnic identity. Having gained an undergraduate degree in Ukraine, she explained how an intra-ethnic boundary was drawn through reconstructed social networks and language choices:

I am more Eastern European than Polish. I don't speak my language that much. I know it's very bad to say, but our grammar is very difficult, and if you don't use grammar for many years it starts to get confusing. I don't have Polish friends here, well maybe one or two. But we don't speak that much. I don't know how to say that but I am not very into my country, like, I am not very into Polish cooking or going to native shops or local Polish community things like that. And it is the same with [her partner], so I think it's just maybe both of us are a little bit different.

This claim set the tone for the interview. Instead of identifying with being a Pole, Amy demonstrated a clear preference for the pan-ethnic identity of an Eastern European. Perhaps aware of the potential criticisms she might receive for rejecting a Polish identity, she touched on her husband's similar indifference to Nigerian culture in that hope that this would neutralise her rejection of Polishness. While it was evident that Amy was unwilling to be associated with Poland, her account suggested that she was very concerned with her nationality. To explain that her rejection was not groundless, she went on to explain why she was keen to withdraw from the Polish community: “[Poles] don't want to associate with other people. They call people names. For instance, if somebody is Muslim, they call them ‘terrorists’.”

To explain why she thought of the majority of her co-ethnics as racist and xenophobic, Amy recalled an unpleasant incident where she had become the target of racism from fellow Poles.

So one day I went to [a shopping centre] with my daughter and there was a Polish couple walking next to us. I don't think they suspected that I was Polish so they were having a conversation in their language. The girl, who was his girlfriend or sister said: "Oh look at that baby." And the guy replied, "oh it's a f***ing n****!" (She laughed nervously).

Amy quickly turned to the couple and replied in Polish, "Well, at least she is not going to be as ignorant as you." Although Amy recounted this incident in a joking manner, she was clearly traumatised and felt victimised for being in an interethnic relationship. Perhaps because of incidents like this, Amy felt that Scots and Britons were generally more tolerant to ethnic mixing compared to the exclusive and racist Polish community. Further explaining why she thought of Scotland as a better place than Poland for mixed families to thrive, she said: "There is a lot of things going on about foreigners coming and taking jobs, but if it comes to children, I've never come across someone who is not happy because my child is that different or mixed." In this sense, she favourably presented Britain (and Scotland) as a salient contrast to the more racist context of Poland. Whilst acknowledging the somewhat hostile stance towards immigrants in the UK, Amy was convinced that it was still a place of "freedom and tolerance". In illustrating the progressive milieu in the UK, she cited her Polish gay friends who had settled in the UK to suggest that this freedom was "not necessarily about race". In doing so, she associated racialised minorities with homosexual minorities to formulate a sense of collectivity based on their disadvantaged situations in Poland. On this basis, she was less concerned about the racism that her daughter might encounter:

I don't think she would have this kind of issue in the UK or America. Here, children from the beginning will see different ethnicities around. If they see dark-skinned people they won't be surprised.

Although Amy later acknowledged that her daughter might have to face racism, she emphasised that she did not think it would happen much. Tolerance was imagined as a relational concept here. By accepting the multicultural agenda in Britain, Amy

acknowledged the ‘effect’ of the proclaimed multiculturalism. In fact, she was not the only parent who felt this way. It was not uncommon to hear parent interviewees saying that an ethnically-diverse society would combat racism itself and that their children would be better off when growing up in a diverse society. In Amy’s case, the discursive representation of Britain was relationally constructed in opposition to Poland, a nation that represented intolerance and exclusion. This showed how ‘race’, when situated in the national context, could be temporarily and spatially reconstructed. The weight of racism was measured in a relational fashion internationally at a specific historical moment. In this vein, Britain’s recent decision to leave the EU inevitably prompted new discussions among EU migrants like Amy, an issue that will be discussed more extensively in the conclusion of this chapter. In this respect, while it was fair to say that Amy was also ‘cosmopolitan’, given her family profile and her rationale behind selecting a community, we need to further contextualise her story within its specific socio-historical context.

Returning to Amy’s story, like Amy many migrant parents showed an awareness of the importance of being able to ‘fit in’. They adopted the view of natural growth of accomplishment by Laureau (2011), implying that their parental priority was to ensure their children did not exclusively socialise with co-ethnic children. What they would do instead was to encourage their children to ‘branch out’ and acquire values and normative practices shared with other Scottish children. Commenting on her approach, Amy was keen to promote the importance of integration:

When you live abroad, you should integrate. I am abroad doesn’t mean I have to associate with somebody just because he or she is from the same country as me. There are people you can’t associate with even if you are back home. It’s either because they have different thinking, or they are not well educated, or they have different interests. So that’s the whole idea: if you live somewhere, you should learn more from local people about traditions and things but not necessarily stick to your own group.

Amy’s message highlighted a keyword of the ethnic-absolutist approach: integration. Prioritising the need to assimilate, Amy stressed the importance of integration, arguing that immigrants need to integrate into the British society. The problematic issue of integration, according to Garner (2012), is that it often demands subscribing to putative norms by conforming to a set of cultural norms. In other words, for Amy, whiteness served as the

point of reference and as the unspoken register of behaving and living. When Amy reiterated the importance of “learning traditions and things”, she was responding to (and complying with) the political agenda that placed ‘British values’ above other immigrant cultures.

Interestingly, her claim was premised upon the belief that Scottish society was a civil, open and aspiring place, where her daughter would be protected from discrimination. Her daughter should first fully immerse in the Scottish way of life and eventually she would become a Scot. In doing so, Amy was willing to give up the opportunity to pass on her Polish heritage or her husband’s Nigerian heritage. As she justified her decision, she highlighted that neither she nor her husband was keen to encourage their daughter to identify with their heritages. Her firm intention to have her child ‘fit in’ with Scottish society was first reflected in her decision not to teach her Polish:

I am not concerned about her ability to speak Polish. She can decide in the future if she wants to go and live in Poland, but I don’t think she would. And I think if I was from a country whose language is spoken in other countries, for instance France or Germany, I would put more emphasis on the language. It’s more useful. But Polish is just one country and it only gives you one option.

In a rather pragmatic tone, Amy assessed the usefulness of speaking Polish before dismissing its importance, despite the fact that Poland accounted for the single largest source of migration in Scotland, as well as in the UK (CoDE, 2014). Her decision to abandon Polish education was possibly part of her attempt to minimise the Polish influence. Elsewhere, she revealed that both her parents and her siblings spoke English fluently, so there was no need to teach her daughter the language for the purpose of communicating with her family. All things considered, Amy’s decision was motivated by a complex set of factors: an apathetic attitude towards Polish culture, a conscious detachment from the stigmatised Polish migrants, a fear of rejection from the Polish community, and a desire to downplay her daughter’s mixedness while highlighting her Scottish element. These concerns differentiated Amy’s ethnic-absolutist approach from the previously reported cosmopolitan approach, where the former foregrounds one dimension of the identity with the intention of downplaying the other. These concerns led to a seemingly ‘hands-off’ attitude when it came to the cultivation of a cultural identity for her daughter:

I would just give her a hint of everything and then she can decide if she's got an interest in any particular area. I can spend more time exploring or explaining to her. But if not, there is no pressure. Also, I will show her as many aspects of each culture, each country as I can. And then, it would be up to her to establish her own identity.

While this quote appeared to be rather liberal at first sight, it did not suggest a complete 'let-go' attitude from Amy. It implied an expectation that her daughter would eventually achieve the desired identity of Scottishness. Throughout our interview, Amy was not comfortable with directly addressing the fact that her daughter was not 'white'. Her account implied a temptation to make her daughter 'whiter'. Towards the end of the interview, Amy eventually remarked on her daughter's appearance and shared what she understood as the relationship between one's skin tone, social acceptance and social status:

I think mixed children are more likely to be accepted by the dark-skinned side of the family or community. People would perceive them as more beautiful according to the beauty standard in those communities and countries. So, the whiter the skin, the more privileges it will give her.

Being physically 'white', Amy was aware of the symbolic power and privileges associated with whiteness. She envisioned these privileges in a relational fashion. Through interactions with her peers in Poland and via her limited contacts with her husband's side of the family, Amy had developed a more nuanced interpretation of 'race' that depended on the context. However, as a white migrant from Poland, she was also conscious of her racialised identity as a Pole. The intricate messages involved in the concept of whiteness suggested a hierarchy within the white population. A study by Fox (2013) on Eastern European migrants in the UK suggests that these 'white' migrants tended to mark, evaluate and rank differences in racialised ways to secure both social-psychological and material benefits. In this sense, it was possible that whilst she was physically white, she did not consider herself entitled to full membership in Scottish society. Her ethnic-absolutist approach was reflective of an internalised view that she was a cultural outsider and peripheral to British society. Therefore, her decision to let her girl grow up Scottish was an informed one based on the recognition of the inter-racial boundary between black and white but also the intra-racial one between 'Polish Whiteness' and 'Scottish Whiteness'. Her decision not to invest culturally or emotionally in her heritage was hence possibly out

of fear that her cultural input would interrupt her daughter's journey to acquiring the desired whiteness.

Discussion: the ethnic-absolutist orientation

Amy's story made me wonder whether Fred's mother would say similar things. Although I never had a chance to speak to Fred's mother, it seemed that she shared with Amy a voluntarily subordinate status in relation to British/Scottish culture, which led to a particular parenting strategy that recognised and perpetuated the symbolic power of whiteness. In seeking their own recognition from the majority and in securing membership for their children, they hoped that adopting the white norm would facilitate the process. Their subordinate cultural identity also resulted in their hesitancy to explain to their children about their non-Scottish heritages. The same argument can be extended to the cases of Natalie and Maggie in the previous chapter, whose less advantageous social positions in terms of social class and 'race' left them at a loss when trying to locate strategies for raising their children.. Once again, this shows that parenting decisions are usually an outcome of balancing material resources and structural constraints deriving from individual experiences and social location.

Considering Fred's and Amy's stories, we could perhaps suggest that mixed individuals' decision to downplay their mixedness was partly driven by the racial logic they were exposed to and partly down to their ability, inherited from their parents, to claim Scottishness. Family practices revolving the cultivation of a white identity were essentially designed and carried out by these parents, who intentionally reduced their children's access to their non-Scottish/British heritage and encouraged them to 'integrate' by socialising with other white children. However, the fact that Amy was white and that Fred's mum, as a colonial subject, was 'almost white' gave these individuals a stronger claim to Scottishness for themselves as well as for their children. Growing up in such an environment, mixed individuals were less capable or willing to attribute significant meanings and values to mixedness. They either involuntarily subscribed to the white norm due to a lack of understanding of their other heritage, or voluntarily downplayed their heritage for fear of being associated with racial stigmas.

Concluding remarks

By the time I started revising this chapter, it was seven months since the EU referendum had taken place. A Brexit Department has been set up by the UK Government, and the UK Parliament has passed the bill to officially trigger Article 50. Newspapers and social media channels were full of coverage of racist incidents targeting European migrants, as well as other, more ‘visible’ migrants. This reminded me of those white mothers from the EU who had taken part in my study during the Scottish Independence referendum in 2014 - Amy and Maria, from Poland and Linzi, from Germany - who were proud of their EU citizenship, which gave them the same rights as UK citizens. Keen to highlight their European identities, these European parents expressed a certain pride in their close cultural ties with the UK in comparison with their non-European, non-white counterparts. This assumed cultural similarity, in their views, almost guaranteed their children easy access to a Scottish/British membership. However, I do wonder whether they would still feel the same if I ever had a chance to interview them again. With the rise in xenophobia and public racism, their orientation for raising mixed children would probably have changed. They might have felt less confident in making claims and start sharing concerns with parents who were less secure in terms of immigration status. Alternatively, with the majority of Scots voting to remain in the EU, they might have felt more comfortable expressing their views of the growing racist incidents in England.

In relation to the two orientations specified in this chapter, while these approaches reflect two distinct ways of imagining mixedness, both of their arguments are premised on growing minority ethnic populations in Scotland by mobilising this ‘post-racial’ context to negotiate the space that mixedness occupies. The cosmopolitan approach imagines mixedness as an enabling agent that leads to a different lifestyle in accordance with individual choices. In this approach, racialised differences are mediated and turned into strategic advantages, provided that the economic and cultural resources are available. In the cosmopolitan repertoire, mixedness serves as a discursive device to mobilise the meanings attached to mixedness. Those who follow the ethnic-absolutist orientation, however, do not actively seek to forge meaningful links between mixedness and other dimensions of identity. They appear content with a singular identity - primarily defined by nationality – and downplay the role of ‘race’. The way they sustain their identity claim is by practising whiteness and internalising racialised expectations of being white. In this process, a mixed heritage creates a space for negotiating potentially conflictual relations between national and racial identities, making it possible for those born to a white parent to

gain membership to the 'honorary white' group and offering parents the possibility of 'whitening' their children. However, adopting these languages means ignoring the unequal relations between British and non-British identities. The continual circulation and adoption of post-racial discourses masks the operation of racism and silences the structural inequalities experienced by the disadvantaged.

In terms of the differential perspectives as expressed by parents and by mixed individuals, it is argued that different social roles have different effects on conceptualisations of mixed heritage. While both parents and mixed individuals seek to establish political and ideological orientations that justify their interpretations of racial orders, parents try to achieve their purpose by using mediated channels to control the disclosure of information. Meanwhile, mixed individuals evaluate the centrality of mixedness based on the information they receive through everyday interactions. The fundamental difference between parents and children lies in their experience of mixedness. The way parents experience mixedness is through association; it is about being related to yet not living through. Their approaches to mixedness are hence proactive, as illustrated by the ascription of meanings and the assignment of identity to their children. Whereas for mixed individuals, their understandings of mixed heritage are acquired over their life course and subject to change. Although their interpretations are inevitably influenced by the family practices they are exposed to early on, the relationship is not linear.

As pointed out at the very beginning of this chapter, the two typologies are ideal types that allow space for the interviewees to move between. The two orientations presented here reflect some of the most prominent features that emerged from the parents' and mixed individuals' data sets. They highlight the implications of the wider social discourses as well as their interactions with intimate others. In this sense, this chapter complements the previous three by addressing both the immediate and the wider social contexts that influence the understanding of mixedness.

Chapter 9 Concluding discussions

1. Restating key findings in relation to the research questions

With the overarching aim of presenting a theoretically informed and empirically grounded account of ‘mixed-race’ experience in Scotland, this thesis has explored the formation of identities of mixed individuals and the role of family in this process. The life stories presented in the four data chapters have shown what mixedness meant for mixed individuals and parents, how these meanings were generated, and why these meanings were produced within certain contexts. Employing mixedness as a lens, this thesis has shown how private tales of ‘mixed-race’ experience reflected the operation of racial ideologies and social inequalities.

The first question was designed to examine the ways in which mixed individuals generate meanings for their identities. This thesis has observed that ‘mixed-race’ identities are forged out of social relations and they are shaped by interactions with intimate others. Depending on individual circumstances, mixed individuals have varying capacities to construct identity repertoires that allow them to negotiate racialised differences. The study found that the individuals who framed mixedness as central to their identities usually had privileged access to material or symbolic (or both) resources. With sufficient discursive resources at hand, namely knowledge about their mixed heritage, they were able to negotiate an otherwise stigmatising non-white identity. In contrast, the individuals who viewed mixedness as a peripheral attribute were more likely to have been brought up under a singular identification where their non-Scottish heritage was either devalued or ignored. The way they made sense of their identities was to ‘divest’ themselves of mixedness and to seek alternative routes to foreground other identity dimensions. In many cases, Scottishness was the alternative identity. Moving beyond a simplified reading of mixed identities (either ‘being stuck in-between’ or ‘having the best of both worlds’), this thesis contends that the actual identification process is often contingent upon and shaped by structural constraints and relationships across the life course.

Recognising the relative centrality of mixedness for mixed individuals, this thesis has extended its investigative scope to ‘mixed-race’ families to uncover the ways that families influence one’s identity. Taking a parental perspective, the second question considered

how parents of mixed children interpret the meanings of mixedness and consequently weave these meanings into their family practices. Viewing 'mixed-race' families as contested sites where unequal 'race', gender and class relations come into play, this thesis has shown that parents have different forms of concerns and priorities when they assess the necessity of delivering the 'race talk'. Factors such as personal experiences of a 'mixed-race' relationship, the availability of social support and resources, and interpretations of racial hierarchies and racism, contribute to their understandings of mixedness. Consequently, these understandings are translated into the everyday organisation and delivery of family activities, shaping children's early knowledge and attitudes towards their heritage.

For the third research question, the thesis has sought to bring together the perspectives of parents and mixed individuals in order to examine the extent to which both parties share a common understanding of 'mixed-race'. This question has moved beyond the specific processes in which these meanings are produced to pay greater attention to the influence of social discourses and individuals' positionalities. Among the parents and mixed individuals of this study, one common practice was to draw on linguistic elements that allude to the idea of post-raciality and individualisation. Relating to both of these two discourses, albeit in different fashions, it was argued that the reported cosmopolitan orientation and the ethnic-absolutist orientation could accommodate the interviewees' asserted choices. Nonetheless, parents and children achieved their understandings via different routes due to their differential relations to mixedness. Parents imagined mixedness as 'a state of being associated', as opposed to 'a state of being' that is occupied by mixed individuals. The different states explain the nuanced differences in interpreting the significance of mixedness.

Overall, this thesis offered a sociological investigation into the formation of 'mixed-race' identities. Attending to the micro dynamics of everyday interactions and to the wider social structure that situated individuals in differential social locations, this thesis has revealed that not all mixed identities are created equal. A mixed identity can only be understood in relation to its sociality, living out collectively and relationally. Doing mixed identities is a conflictual, complex and cross-categorical process that emerges from the dynamics between the assignment and the negotiation of stigmatising labels.

2. Discussions of the findings

‘Mixed-race’ is a lived experience. Whether it is the negotiation of ethnic options, the decision to conduct the ‘race talk’, or the situational imagination of the ‘mixed-race’ experience, individuals’ motives are always underpinned by their positions in society. ‘Race’, together with other forms of social stratification, structures individuals’ decisions to pursue one form of identity over another. By conceptualising identity as a reflexive process, this thesis brings the workings of ‘race’ to the fore: with different upbringings, individuals experience racialisation in different ways. Depending on the availability of resources, ‘race’ can either be social and/or cultural capital or a stigmatising attribute, which prompts individuals to craft language to describe their (or their children’s) experience.

Notably, the internalisation of the symbolic values of whiteness, of the discourses of post-raciality, of the norms attached to Britishness/Scottishness, and of the cultural representations of ethnic minorities is part of the wider racialisation process that the mixed individuals and their family members went through. This constitutes a racialised mode of knowing the self and others, which prompts individuals to draw out boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and to project a hierarchy of belonging in relation to locality, nationality and ethnicity. In this vein, expressing ‘private’ identities is a social decision.

The rest of this section serves two purposes: it first evaluates the theoretical framework in relation to key themes and maps out the interrelationships between ‘race’, identity and family. Second, it considers the broader significance of examining ‘mixed-race’ identities. Connecting the findings to the rest of the chapter discussing the thesis’ contributions and implications for future research, this section reiterates the usefulness of the theoretical approach in revealing the way ‘race’ operates at both individual and social levels.

2.1 Rethinking the self through the interactionist and intersectional lens

The theoretical approach delineates the sense-making process from the standpoints of the interviewees. The dual focus on both micro- and macro-sites addresses a set of dialectical relationships arising from the individuals’ accounts of identity. These relationships include collective meanings versus individual interpretations, being connected versus being independent, and being different versus being integrated. Each implies a tension that demands negotiation, justification and authentication from social actors. The resources

required to address the tension often lie in the cultural symbols, practices, norms and values that circulate in society, whereas one's ability to access and mobilise these resources should be understood in relation to their social locations.

The interactionist approach, as is widely discussed in the relational self literature (Mason, 2004; Smart and Shipman, 2004; Jackson, 2010), helps explain the process of how mixed individuals obtain, reconstruct and reconfigure symbolic materials. It stresses the importance of learning about arrangements, conventions and agreements but also emphasises the role of others, particularly family members, in allowing a 'mixed-race' self to slowly surface. Even for those of the 'lightest shade', speaking about their mixedness demands a recognition of their dual-heritage, which leads to the strategic deployment of collective meanings. Family is a site for developing these understandings; in other words, families actualise mixed identities.

As for the intersectional lens, it explains the varying capacities to make sense of symbolic materials. Not all the parents and mixed individuals viewed 'race' as being central to a sense of self, nor did they share the same skill to 'seize the category' (Bulmer and Solomos, 1998:825) that enabled a resistance against the negative meanings attached to racialised differences. Complementing the interactionist perspective, the intersectional lens more explicitly addresses 'race' as a form of social stratification and reveals the underpinning issue of inequalities that shape the individual experience (Anthias, 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2010). It explains the diverse interpretations of the significance of 'race' and the varying capacities of the interviewees to generate and interpret mixedness.

Notwithstanding the reflexive, fluid and contingent tactics used to construct identities across the globe (King-O'Riain et al., 2014; Edwards et al., 2012), this thesis identified an underlying anxiety among interviewees about securing a sense of selfhood. Mixed individuals sought to establish bonds with others by exploiting associations, relations and connections. The purpose of doing this, as encapsulated in Hall's words, was to "sleep well at night" (Hall, 1991:43). Notably, belonging is a multidimensional experience rooted in the everyday (May, 2011). Resonating with the observations of scholars such as Aspinall and Song (2013) and Ifekwunigwe (1999), mixed individuals were found to experience manifold, even contradictory, senses of belonging; they expressed multiple forms of attachments ranging from ethnicities (e.g. Scottish, Chinese or Lebanese) to geographical locations (e.g. Glasgow, Scotland or Britain). The multifaceted belonging not only

illustrates their hopes to belong somewhere, but it also shows their deployment of what May (2011) calls “micro-resistant tactics” (p. 370) to defy the negative connotations attached to their racialised differences.

2.2 ‘Race’, nation and family

Whilst there was a continual reliance on the dominant meaning and language of ‘race’, this thesis contends that ‘mixed-race’ has demonstrated the potential to contest the operating ideologies on ‘race’ and ethnicity by delineating differential processes of racialisation. In investigating how the interviewees identify themselves ethnically, the thesis found that a national mode of identification was often used interchangeably with an ethnic/racial mode of identification. The intertwining nature of national and ethnic identity revealed the racialised assumptions, tension and connotations associated with the meanings of these categories. As Scottishness (and Britishness to a broader extent) was framed in a racialised fashion to determine what performance could be considered ‘good’, ‘normal’, and ‘authentically Scottish’, ethnicities were also found being ‘colour-coded’. As a result, the process of negotiating identity was also the process of negotiating a list of meanings associated with ‘race’. It was also in this process that the operating racial ideas were reified and reproduced.

In relation to the broader field of the sociology of ‘race’ and ethnicity, explorations of ‘mixed-race’ identities foreground the contested nature of racial and ethnic categorisation. Individuals’ techniques to negotiate their differences uncover the often-blurry boundaries between and across ethnic and national categories. Moreover, the dynamic process of articulating, resisting and authenticating one’s ethnic and/or racial membership reflects the interplay of power, racism, and difference. To this end, studying mixed identities helps reveal differential forms of racialisation, exposing the way ‘race’ works in different contexts. It also situates individual articulations of identity against the backdrop of the wider structural inequalities stemming from ‘race’.

Returning to the concept of nation, the desire to prioritise a Scottish identity was evident in the study. When asked with which country they most identified, all the mixed interviewees provided a mediated reply that emphasised their deep connection with Scotland before acknowledging their non-white heritage. “Born and bred in Scotland” was the most common answer and served as a natural justification of their membership. Even for those who were not recognised as Scots by general others, Scottishness was interpreted as an

open category if they knew how to mediate the significance of 'race'. In this scenario, negotiating racialised differences led to the emergence of hybridised forms of identity, where nationality and ethnicity interacted with one another. The conflicting discourses associated with Scottishness, namely being 'conservative and exclusive' and being 'progressive and inclusive', demonstrated the potential to accommodate different identity claims in different contexts. Nonetheless, Scottishness remained the underpinning 'normal' way of living and behaving for the interviewees in this study. The racialised modes of living and behaving like a Scot embodied a sense of normative white orientation that often demanded an effort to integrate (Kiely et al., 2001; Netto, 2008). The internalised 'white' standard profoundly shaped the individuals' experiences of interactions with others, thereby impacting upon the ways they made sense of themselves and were perceived by others.

Finally, the thesis contends that the family is a micro-site where messages about 'race', ethnicity and nationality are communicated and reproduced. Researching families revealed the 'in-house' reproduction of or resistance to a racial hierarchy, and exposed the operation of racial thinking in everyday settings. The operating ideologies of 'race' and nation were often implicated in the parental strategies adopted for teaching their children about their mixed heritages. However, parents do not simply comply with the dominant rules; depending on the available resources, they craft ways to resist or reproduce the racial logic. After all, family remains a key site for shielding children from racism and providing emotional security.

Furthermore, the examining the interplay of 'race' and class within a familial context unravels the selective cultivation of middle-class whiteness by parents. It appears that when mediated by mixedness, the adoption of 'white practices' offers the opportunity for mixed children to achieve upward social mobility. The inclusion of the mixed element creates a particular allure in the capitalist society, which provided mixed children with a more advantageous position in the social hierarchy. However, this white schema is not open to all; only parents of a middle-class background have the power to 'activate' this combination. For those of working-class backgrounds, their children might embark on a rather different journey in society.

Whilst this thesis has elaborated in detail the dynamics involved in mixed families, we should also recognise that most of the time, these parents are just 'ordinary' individuals with the same general concerns as all other parents, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds

(Edwards et al., 2010). Granted, there were moments when ‘race’ was brought to the fore, but it would be dangerous to assume that ‘race’ was the most prominent issue at the heart of everyday family life. Therefore, beyond the ethnic mixing, mixed parenting is not just about mixedness.

2.3 Implications of studying ‘mixed-race’ identities

For most people, “Who am I?” is not a question they ask themselves on a daily basis. Individuals are not trained to think sociologically through categories of ethnicity, gender and race, or to relate their own experience to the wider social structure (Richardson, 1990). This poses the challenge for sociologists of how to study identities when most mixed individuals and their parents do not seem to consider anything beyond their immediate surroundings. The theoretical framework employed by this thesis demonstrates its value by paying attention to the “shifted, negotiated meanings” rooted in the “lived actualities of everyday life” (Jackson, 2010:125). At the heart of the analysis, as shown in the data chapters, should be what interviewees considered most significant in their lives. Recognising that the act of constructing autobiographic narratives is an identification practice in itself (Ahmed, 1997), we could then work out an individual’s identity through their complex involvements with others (Bulmer and Solomos, 1998) and by identifying critical moments and turning points (McAdams, 1993; Holstein and Gubrium, 2000).

Borrowing Brubaker (2013) distinction between identity as “a category of practice” and a “category of analysis”, this thesis has considered mixed identity as a category of practice in that the interviewees used mixedness to “identify [themselves] and to identify others” (p.2). The mechanisms by which individuals identities could be formulated and contested point that the lived experience of being mixed cannot be understood in a simplistic fashion. The findings have shown that ‘mixed-race’ Scots are by no means a homogeneous group; instead, the dynamics in the process has delineated how the category of ‘mixed-race’ is intricately intertwined with racialised categories such as White, Scottish, and so on.

3. Contributions of the thesis

As the first qualitative sociological study of ‘mixed-race’ identities in Scotland based on empirical data gathered via in-depth interviews, this thesis has brought together perspectives of both parents and mixed children. The introduction of ‘mixed-race’ families stands as a key feature distinguishing this study from many others in the field. Departing

from the preceding discussion, the thesis has made a fourfold contribution to the broader literature.

Firstly, this thesis substantiates the British scholarship on 'mixed-race' identities with a defined approach to identity. Instead of treating ethnic identity as a fixed, close-ended outcome, this thesis views identity as a process of doing and making as presented in individuals' autobiographies. The question of identity can be therefore tackled on two fronts: it is understood through the meanings generated from social interactions, and it is also interpreted from individual's social positions constructed along various axes of differences. The adopted approach considers identity in terms of its sociality, attending to the wider structural constraints and power dynamics in the construction of identities. Meanwhile, the framework also explores the fluidity of identity taking place in the 'micro' context of the everyday without neglecting the dynamics stemming from the interplay of structural factors. With this defined approach, this thesis substantiates the existing research on 'mixed-race' identities by offering a more comprehensive way to configure the complex relationships in which identities are produced and negotiated.

Secondly, the thesis expands on the concept of ethnic option (Waters, 1990; Song, 2003) by discussing the extent to which multiple ethnic options could be applied to 'visibly mixed' Scots. Through the interactionist and intersectional lens, the findings suggest that ethnic options are shaped and constrained by the social matrix that mixed individuals inhabit; the identity options made available to each individual are hence both constrained and constituted by the social. By engaging creatively with the resources at hand, mixed individuals deploy and reappropriate their racialised differences via different routes. Social location and social relationships underpin the process of constructing and articulating ethnic options.

Thirdly, this thesis addresses the gap in knowledge between the sociology of 'race' and the sociology of family relationships. It explicitly examines the ways in which 'race' shapes individual and family experiences by integrating 'race' into the research agenda of everyday family lives. The thesis interrogates how 'race', together with other forms of social stratifications, impacts upon the design and delivery of family practices.

Lastly, the thesis further develops the concept of racial literacy (Twine, 2004). It expands on the original black-white 'mixed-race' typology to consider a broader 'mixed-race' population. It also introduces family practices as an analytical tool to reiterate the role of

the everyday practices and experiences of family members. With the aid of the theoretical framework, the thesis argues that the formulation and delivery of racial literacy should be understood contextually. Whilst 'race' remains a major concern for most parents, their differential priorities lead to different approaches to communicating 'race' and 'mixed-race'. In this sense, parents' techniques and motivations to communicate racial literacy vary.

4. Limitations of the study

As reflected in Chapter 4, my initial research design was to use families as analytical units to examine multiple perspectives on 'mixed-race', especially concerning the delivery and reception of racial literacy. This approach would have allowed me to develop arguments on intergenerational differences and similarities in interpreting the significance of 'race'. Due to the difficulties in recruiting interviewees as a whole family, this plan was replaced by the current design that treated parents' accounts as a 'separate' set of data. Although the current analysis maintained the original focus on family, the obtained data was insufficient to cross-examine the intergenerational differences and socio-historical contingencies associated with the meanings of mixedness. Consequently, this led to both a revision of the research questions and an adjustment of analytical scope.

The second area that was not elaborated on in this thesis is how 'race' shapes couple dynamics and their strategies for parenting children. While most parents downplayed the role of 'race' in their current relationship and denied experiencing conflicts arising from different racial/cultural backgrounds, the accounts related by the mixed interviewees revealed a very contrasting picture. For those whose parents had separated early on in their lives, 'race' was often cited as the main cause of the unhappy relationship. The contrast between the ways in which the parents and the adult children interviewees presented their views of interethnic marriage undoubtedly contributes to our understanding of how mixedness is understood and perceived. Yet without the support of strong, clear data, any claims made about this will risk being speculative. As Ahmed recounts from her personal experience, the role of 'race' as "a way of questioning the legitimacy of what is given hovers in the background" (Ahmed, 2014:93); background racism exists between couples as 'race' always lurks in the shadows and emerges whenever things are not going well. Another issue emerged from researching family dynamics was that although the role of gender within families was acknowledged, insufficient effort was made to address whether

there are any differences in parenting practices by parents of the same gender and different ethnicities, e.g. a non-white, non-Scottish mother and a white Scottish mother.

Finally, with regard to the analytical focus on autobiographic accounts, it is always useful to remember that life stories are always selective as they only tell us about the ways individuals wish to be seen (Ahmed, 1997). The generated accounts are centred upon what matters most to the narrator and upon what enables or constrains their life choices (Mason, 2004). This means the researched identity, rather than occurring naturally, is instead something produced within the specific interview context. Researchers do not, and cannot, obtain a full picture of the life experiences of the individuals in question. In addition to this subjective presentation of life stories, the use of empirical material was also a subjective process. My positionality and understanding of each story underpinned the whole interpretation process. In other words, the reconstructed life stories only present what I considered relevant and significant. This also means that in the process of ‘trimming’ the data, some details were inevitably - and regrettably - left out.

5. Emergent questions: now what?

Mixedness has a particular allure for contemporary society. It entails the potential to reframe ‘race’ as something banal and to re-appropriate racialised differences to sustain one’s identity claims. It was not uncommon to hear the mixed interviewees say that they were proud of being mixed because it made them more open-minded, accepting and appreciative of other cultures. By studying the formation of mixed identities in Scotland, this thesis has expanded our understanding of Scottish ‘mixed-race’ experiences; meanwhile, in a transitional moment like now, researching mixed identities opens up new possibilities to explore the interrelationship between power, politics and the significance of mixedness.

One possible area for future research is to explore whether there is an emerging sense of collective identities associated with mixedness, and, if so, what they are. The point of departure is to recognise what Ali (2012) terms “the situated politics of mixedness” (p.169). She raises questions concerning forms, purposes and purchases of a generalised ‘mixed-race’ politics that champions a universal mixed-race identity. Furthermore, she challenges the existence of identity politics based on mixedness. For her, this task requires critical engagement with the structural inequalities and recognition of the ongoing problems of racialisation and cultural absolutism. Given the increasing levels of mobility,

both geographically and socio-economically, among racialised groups (Winant, 2006), what counts towards a sense of collective mixedness requires further investigations.

Second, whilst the focus of this thesis is to identify the relationship between family and identity formation, the interview data frequently pointed to the significance of schooling experiences. One potentially fruitful site for future investigations is schools, which not only function as a key arena in which children interact with others but also arguably constitute a key phase during which informed difference and exclusion among children start to emerge. There was a consensus among the parent interviewees that schools should be responsible for teaching pupils to understand differences and to appreciate diversity, and most parents appeared to believe that schools were capable of doing so. To this end, the implications of studying the schooling experiences of mixed children are twofold. Firstly, the findings of these schooling experiences will complement the existing knowledge on parenting mixed children at home. Secondly, empirical studies that look into the process of how 'race' is taught and framed in the school context can generate more nuanced knowledge about the (re)production of racism.

In this study, the discussion of personal relationships in helping to construct identities was limited to families, meaning that the roles of significant others, e.g. friends, siblings and partners, were less central. Hence, a third way to expand the current study is to explore how mixed identities could be understood in a wider range of webs of relationships. It is worth investigating how significant others might influence the identity-formation process and to what extent the influence of intimate others might differ from that of parents.

The last implication concerns the use of racial terminology and the silenced language of racism. Given the widely observed tendency to frame one's experiences in terms of 'culture', 'values' and 'differences', the thesis suggests that there is a salient contrast between the public erasure of the language of 'race' and the private experience of being part of the wider racialisation process. This contradiction, wherein an evident discomfort in articulating 'race' clashes with an internalised mode of racial thinking, has real consequences in everyday life: while the circulation of post-racial discourses uncritically celebrates ethnic diversity, dismisses the relevancy of skin colour, and silences the language for describing racism, 'race' continues to stratify society. This contrasting pattern underlines the need to uncover the reasons for the resilience of folklore racial discourses and to ask ourselves whether it is possible to produce alternative language that recognises the tension between the lived reality of 'race' and the lack of knowledge addressing the

'race'. It is my hope that the findings presented here will succeed in opening up new possibilities for reimagining 'race', but at the same time we would then have to ask ourselves the difficult question: how can we actually move beyond 'race' when dealing with a world that is becoming ever more defined by racial division?

Appendices

Appendix 1: Information sheet for ‘mixed-race’ individuals



Thank you for expressing interest in participating in this interview. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with me if you wish. If there is anything that is unclear to you, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Study title and Researcher Details

The research project you are invited to take part in is titled “Exploring ‘mixed-race’ identities in Scotland” and is carried out as part of a PhD project at the Sociology subject area, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow. My name is Mengxi Pang and I am the PhD researcher for this project. I am supervised by Prof. Satnam Virdee and Dr. Roona Simpson¹⁶. You will be given my contact information at the end of this document.

What is the purpose of the study?

While there is an increasing number of ‘mixed-race’ people growing up in Scotland, little is known about their life experiences and their experiences in the family. My project will address this gap by speaking to people come from ‘mixed-race’ backgrounds. I am interested in talking about your experiences of growing up in Scotland as a ‘mixed-race’ person. I am also interested in hearing how you think your experiences have been shaped by your family and other places such as school, friends and local community. If there is anything you think might be relevant, I am also happy to hear about it.

Why have I been chosen?

As you identify yourself as a ‘mixed-race’ person, you are a suitable person to participate in this research. Your opinions are very important to the project, because they allow me to gain insights into your life experiences and to understand any issues that you are concerned with.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to participate. If you agree to take part in this research project you do so voluntarily, and so are free to withdraw from the discussion at any time without giving reason. You do not have to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with. If you wish to remove/revise some of your comments after this session, please do not hesitate to get in touch and I will ensure your comments do not to appear in the draft.

¹⁶ Following the early retirement of Roona, this field was changed into Dr. Matt Dawson who became my new second supervisor. This rule applies to the rest of appendices.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part in this research, I would like to conduct an interview with you at a mutually convenient time. This will take about one hour and would take place at a location where you are comfortable with, such as your home or a quiet public place like a library. With your permission, I would like to record our conversation to transcribe it afterwards.

Before conducting the interview I will explain the study to you and answer questions you may have about the research. I will provide a consent form, which has to be signed by both of us.

After the interview, I will transcribe our conversation, though your name and details will be removed in order to protect your identity. I will use a false name to refer to you (if you like, you can choose which name you would like to go under). You are free to get in touch to request the interview transcript, and to add/change anything you want.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Everything about you and our conversation will be kept strictly confidential and will be anonymised by using a false name. Only I will have access to the notes and the recordings of the interviews. Your data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Glasgow and on a password-protected office computer to which only I have access.

While every effort will be made to keep your information confidential, in cases where you reveal details of harm towards yourself or others, I have an ethical obligation to pass this information on in order for you to receive the appropriate support. Additionally, any information you give me is not legally privileged; this means that the police/courts may be able to request the research data if such a situation (however unlikely) arises.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research study will be published in my PhD thesis, submitted at the University of Glasgow and examined by my supervisors and external examiners. I am happy to provide a written summary of this study at your request.

Unless a post-doctoral project, or forms of publication such as conference papers, books and academic journals, arise from this research, all data about you will be permanently destroyed after submission and completion of my Ph.D. thesis. Although the University requires that the research data (including our conversation record and my final thesis) will be retained for ten years after the completion of my PhD project, the data will be stored securely and only accessed by authorised person(s) for administrative, legislative, operational and regulatory purposes. Once the data retention period is reached, all research data will be permanently destroyed.

9. Who is organising and funding the research? (If relevant)

This PhD is proposed and organised by myself, while the project is funded by the China Scholarship Council, which is an independent third party funder that has no influence on the project design or the results.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study is reviewed and approved by the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow.

Contact for Further Information

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any questions and concerns you might have regarding my research project using the details below:

Mengxi Pang

McGregor Building

Western Infirmary, Dumbarton Road

Glasgow G11 6NT

E-mail: m.pang.1@research.gla.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project you can contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer by contacting Dr. Muir Houston, College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk.

Appendix 2: Information sheet for parents of mixed children



University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

Thank you for expressing interest in participating in this interview. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with me if you wish. If there is anything that is unclear to you, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Study title and Researcher Details

The research project you are invited to take part in is titled “Exploring ‘mixed-race’ identities in Scotland” and is carried out as part of a PhD project at the Sociology subject area, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow. My name is Mengxi Pang and I am the PhD researcher for this project. I am supervised by Prof. Satnam Virdee and Dr. Roona Simpson. You will be given my contact information at the end of this document.

What is the purpose of the study?

While there is an increasing number of ‘mixed-race’ people growing up in Scotland, little is known about their life experiences and their experiences in the family. My project will address this gap by speaking to people come from ‘mixed-race’ backgrounds. I am interested in talking about your experiences of raising ‘mixed-race’ children in Scotland. I am also interested in hearing how you think your experiences have been shaped by your family and other places such as school, friends and local community. If there is anything you think might be relevant, I am also happy to hear about it.

Why have I been chosen?

As you identify yourself as a parent of ‘mixed-race’ children, you are a suitable person to participate in this research. Your opinions are very important to the project, because they allow me to gain insights into your life experiences and to understand any issues that you are concerned with.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to participate. If you agree to take part in this research project you do so voluntarily, and so are free to withdraw from the discussion at any time without giving reason. You do not have to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with. If you wish to remove/revise some of your comments after this session, please do not hesitate to get in touch and I will ensure your comments do not to appear in the draft.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part in this research, I would like to conduct an interview with you at a mutually convenient time. This will take about one hour and would take place at a location where you are comfortable with, such as your home or a quiet public place like a library. With your permission, I would like to record our conversation to transcribe it afterwards.

Before conducting the interview I will explain the study to you and answer questions you may have about the research. I will provide a consent form, which has to be signed by both of us.

After the interview, I will transcribe our conversation, though your name and details will be removed in order to protect your identity. I will use a false name to refer to you (if you like, you can choose which name you would like to go under). You are free to get in touch to request the interview transcript, and to add/change anything you want.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Everything about you and our conversation will be kept strictly confidential and will be anonymised by using a false name. Only I will have access to the notes and the recordings of the interviews. Your data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Glasgow and on a password-protected office computer to which only I have access.

While every effort will be made to keep your information confidential, in cases where you reveal details of harm towards yourself or others, I have an ethical obligation to pass this information on in order for you to receive the appropriate support. Additionally, any information you give me is not legally privileged; this means that the police/courts may be able to request the research data if such a situation (however unlikely) arises.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research study will be published in my PhD thesis, submitted at the University of Glasgow and examined by my supervisors and external examiners. I am happy to provide a written summary of this study at your request.

Unless a post-doctoral project, or forms of publication such as conference papers, books and academic journals, arise from this research, all data about you will be permanently destroyed after submission and completion of my Ph.D. thesis. Although the University requires that the research data (including our conversation record and my final thesis) will be retained for ten years after the completion of my PhD project, the data will be stored securely and only accessed by authorised person(s) for administrative, legislative, operational and regulatory purposes. Once the data retention period is reached, all research data will be permanently destroyed.

9. Who is organising and funding the research? (If relevant)

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Who has reviewed the study?

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Contact for Further Information

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E-mail: m.pang.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Telephone: 0141 211 6213

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project you can contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer by contacting Dr. Muir Houston, College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk.

Appendix 3: Interview guide for ‘mixed-race’ individuals

General opening questions

- Could you briefly introduce yourself?
- How long have you been living in Scotland?
- Could you tell me what interests you in this study?

Theme 1: everyday ‘mixed-race’ experiences.

- a. University experiences (for those who attended/attending university)
 - What subjects are/were you studying at the university? Why did you choose this subject?
 - Who do/did you usually hang out with? Where are they from?
 - How do/did you find your university experience?
 - Is it different from your previously schooling experience?
- b. Pre-university experiences
 - You mentioned your earlier experience before going to the university; do you want to tell me how the school was like? Who were the main student body?
 - How did you find your schooling experience?
 - Have you ever changed schools?
- c. Locality
 - Where do you live now? Are you living with your parents or with friends?
 - How is the community you used to live like before going to the university? Who are the residents there?
 - How do you find living there?
 - Have you ever moved? (if yes) Is there any particular reason that made you want to move?
 - Have you ever travelled outside Scotland? What was the experience like?
 - Do you behave differently in different contexts?
 -

Theme 2: Family

- What is your family like? Who are the family members?
- Do you speak more than one language at home? (if yes) Are you good at all of them?
- Have you ever visited the country where your dad/mum was originally from? How did you find the trip?
- Can you remember any forms of effort that your mum/dad tries to bring to you regarding your dual heritage? Have you ever discussed ‘mixed-race’ with your parents or other family members? Have they spoken to you about this?
- Has your father/mom experienced racism?
- Do you have any siblings? How do they feel about your shared background i.e. being ‘mixed-race’?
- Why do you think there is such a difference/similarity between your sibling and you, in terms of the attitude towards your heritage?
-

Theme 3: internal and external identifications *[the following questions will only be asked when these answers are not implicated from the previous conversation]*

a. Experiences of misrecognition

- Have you ever been asked where you are from?
- How did you reply?
- How did others usually react after your answer?
- Do you feel that you are treated as though you must ‘take a side’?

b. Interpretations of ‘mixed-race’

- So would you say you are of mixed ethnicity?
- Could you tell me what it means to you?
- Is it important to you?
- What sorts of terms usually come to your mind when you think of the idea of ‘mixed-race’?
- Was there a time when that (being mixed) meant more/less to you? Why?

- Would you consider yourself as 'black'? Would you feel sympathy with people of minority backgrounds?
- In which context do you think you are more affiliated with the white/minority side?
- Do you think it is important to recognize the mixed group? Like assign a collective meaning to them?
- Do you ever feel disadvantaged by your dual-heritage background?

Appendix 4: Interview guide for parents of mixed children

General Opening questions

- Could you briefly introduce yourself?
- How long have you been living in Scotland?
- Were you born in Scotland?
- Could you tell me what interests you in this study?

Theme 1: Parent migration history (following the third question in the opening questions)

(for non-native participants)

- Do you want to tell me when and why you came to Scotland? How did you find the overall experiences of living here?
- What did you do before you came to Scotland?
- What do you do right now, in terms of being employed or self-employed?

(for native-born participant)

- Were you born in Scotland or somewhere else in the UK (e.g. England/Wales/Northern Ireland)? Where were your parents/grandparents originally from?
- (*If born outside Scotland*) when did you move to Scotland? Do you find it different from ** (the birthplace)?
- (*if born in Scotland*) how was it like to grow up in Scotland? Do you think it's different from the rest of the UK?

Theme 2: Raising 'mixed-race' children

- How many children do you have? How old are they? What are they doing?
[For parents of adult children over 18 years old]
- Are they always around?
- What would you do when they are home? Would you cook something special for them?
- What language do you use when you speak to them? (if non-English) Are they good at it?
- Are they still in touch with both sides of their grandparents?
[For parents of dependent children]

- Was it exciting when they were born?
- Did your parents come over here to meet them?
- Are they able to speak yet? Have you tried to teach your language at home?
- Have you/ are you planning to take them back to the country where you/or your partner is originally from?

Theme 2: Communicating ‘race’ in the family

- Is there any particular issue related to raising your children, or your expectation to the process, that you would like to share with me?
- Do you think it is important to inform children of their both sides of heritage?
- Have they ever asked you any questions about their background? How did you respond?
- Do you think it is necessary to discuss the ‘race’ issue with your children? Why/why not?
- Have you ever mentioned the idea of ‘mixed-race’ to your children?
- What technique did you use to get this idea across? Do you think it worked?
- Do you think it can be a different experience to raise children in Scotland, compared to somewhere else, say England, or any other countries that you can think of?

Theme 3: Personal life and social context

- Do you know others who also have ‘mixed-race’ children among your friends?
- Have you talked to them and share your experiences of raising children? Do you think you face some common issues?
- Do you have any contact with the ** [country of ancestry] community?
- Have you consciously introduced your children to the community?
- I guess having children can be a significant change in one’s life, how do you think?
- Have you communicated this feeling with your partner? Does he/she feel the same?
- Were you aware of any kind of help that are available to you when you raised the children?
- Do you think it is easier/harder to raise ‘mixed-race’ children now in Scotland, compared to when your first child was born?

Additional questions:

- Which side do you think your children identify themselves with? Why do you think is that?
- Do you want to see your children marry to a Chinese/South Asian/West Indian partner?
- How did you parents react when they knew that you were to marry your partner?
- How did you name your children? Is that a very Anglo-Saxon name or with some elements of your home cultural in it?
- Do you want to teach them about the hardship of racial inequality in this society?

Appendix 5: Consent form for all interviewees



Consent Form

Title of Project: Exploring 'mixed-race' identities in Scotland

Name of Researcher: Mengxi Pang

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. I have also been informed that after the interview, I may add or withdraw my information by editing the transcript by an agreed date. I may also ask for a written summary from the research.
3. I understand that every possible effort will be made to protect my identity during the research. I will be given a false name in any publications arising from this research project. However, if I reveal details of harm towards myself or others, the researcher has a legal obligation to pass my information on.
4. I understand that my contribution to this study will be used for preparing a PhD thesis and other possible future academic publications.
5. I understand that my personal data will be securely handled and protected by the researcher, and it will be destroyed after the completion of this research. The research data will be securely stored in the University of Glasgow for ten years and accessed only by authorised persons.
6. I confirm that the interview will be recorded with my consent. The data will only be used for the stated research purposes.
7. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

1 for subject; 1 for researcher

Appendix 6: Participant recruitment advertisement



‘Mixed-Race’ Identities in Scotland - Research Participants wanted

I am a PhD student in Sociology at the University of Glasgow conducting a research project exploring ‘mixed-race’ identities in Scotland. A recent study shows that one in every six households of two or more people in Scotland are of mixed ethnicities. There is however little information about the experiences of ‘mixed-race’ people and their families. I am keen on listening to your everyday experiences of being ‘mixed-race’ or being a member of a ‘mixed-race’ family. If you are a ‘mixed-race’ individual aged over 18 growing up in Scotland, or the parent(s) of ‘mixed-race’ children and currently living in Scotland, and may be interested in taking part in the study, or simply want to know more about it, please do get in touch for more information. I am also interested in interviewing ‘mixed-race’ families living in Scotland, including parent(s) and adult children over 18 years old.

The research will be conducted in the form of face-to-face interviews, lasting about one hour. All information will be treated confidentially and personal information anonymised. Simply reply to this message and I am happy to answer any questions if you would like to know more!¹⁷

¹⁷ The version posted on Gumtree and Netmums sties did not contain my contact method. Potential interviewees could directly reply to the advertisement with the on-site messaging function.

Appendix 7: Interviewee information overview

'Mixed-race' individuals

Name	Gender	Ethnic makeup (mother-father)	Place of Residence	Age	Occupation	Information about their parents	Date of Interview	Recruitment Route	Relationship status	
Nancy	F	Singaporean Indian-Scottish	Glasgow	mid 20s	Student/part-time English Tutor	Mother worked as a teacher	Jul 2014	Snowballing	Unknown	
Jenny	F	Hong Kongese – Scottish	Glasgow	late 20s	Administrator of a local art organisation	Dad once a civil servant in British Hong Kong	Jul 2014	Snowballing	Have a white Scottish boyfriend	
Lily	F	Lithuanian-Indian	Glasgow	late 20s	Medical student, musician	Dad worked for Royal Mail	Aug 2014	Snowballing	Single	
Richard	M	Malaysian Chinese-English	Glasgow (born in Inverness)	late 20s	Marketing specialist	Dad worked for oil company	Aug 2014	Snowballing	Girlfriend Malaysian Chinese	
Jon	M	Indian-Scottish	Dumfries	late 30s	Self-employed	Mum once worked as a nurse in the Middle East	Aug 2014	Snowballing	Married to white Australian with two children	
Haifa	F	Lebanese-English	Edinburgh	early 30s	Public sector employee	Dad academic, mum teacher	Sept 2014	Gumtree	Partnered with a white Scottish man	

Georgina	F	Scottish-Pakistani	Glasgow	late 40s	Self-employed	Dad bus driver, mom self-employed	Sept 2014	Newspaper	Ex-husband American	
George	M	Scottish-Hong Kongese	Glasgow	early 20s	University student	Dad professional, mum teacher	Oct 2014	Snowballing	Girlfriend from Hong Kong	
Sophie	F	Scottish-Chinese ('mixed-race' mother) - Chinese	Glasgow	early 20s	University student	Dad runs several takeaway restaurants	Nov 2014	Snowballing	Single	
Ian	M	White Canadian-Pakistani	Edinburgh	late 30s	Helper at a local NGO	Parents running their own business	Dec 2014	Gumtree	Separated from a 'mixed-race' Scottish woman with two children	
Fred	F	Indo-Guyanese-English	Edinburgh	late 30s	Professional	Dad served for the British Army before retirement	Dec 2014	Gumtree	Middle-class white Scottish girlfriend	
Shab	M	Scottish-Pakistani	Glasgow	late 20s	Self-employed	Dad run his business, mother florist	Jan 2015	Gumtree	Unknown	
Nayla	F	Scottish-Yemeni	Glasgow	mid 20s	Ferry crew	Dad a doctor but growing up with her Scottish mother	Feb 2015	Gumtree	Single	

Sara	F	Scottish-Ugandan	Edinburgh	mid 30s	Customer representative	Mother nurse	April 2015	Gumtree	Partnered with an African male	
Charlene	F	Scottish-Pakistani	Edinburgh	mid 20s	Self-employed, husband works for Scottish Rail	(adopted) Dad business man, mom senior civil servant (biological parents unknown since she was born)	May 2015	Gumtree	Married with three children	
Camilla	F	Mozambican-Irish	Edinburgh	Early 30s	Administrative role at a Russell Group university	Father academic, mother teacher	Jan 2016	Gumtree	Not disclosed-possibly single	

Parents of 'mixed-race' children

Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Place and date of Interview	Ethnicity of partner	Age	Migration history	Place of Birth	Occupation	Marital status	Recruitment Route
Fo	M	Hong Kongese	Glasgow Jul 2014	White Scottish	40s	Hong Kong- England- Moved to Scotland 9yrs ago	Hong Kong	Chef	Divorced	Snowballin g
Vicky	F	Chinese	Glasgow Aug 2014	White Australia n	40s	China- Australia- Scotland	Mainland China	Unemployed	Married with one child	Snowballin g
Liz	F	White Scottish	Glasgow Sept 2014	Pakistani	Late 60s	N/A	England	Nurse	Separated	Newspaper
Natalie	F	White Scottish	Glasgow Oct 2014	Nigerian	Early 20s	N/A	Scotland	Cleaner and customer service	Married with one child	Gumtree
Kat (and Charlie)	F (joint interview)	White English	Glasgow Oct 2014	Congoles e	30s	Kat moved to Scotland 10yrs ago; Charlie was in Congo, Sweden, the US, England before coming to Scotland	Yorkshire	Media professional	Married with one child	Snowballin g

Mai	M	Singaporean Chinese	Glasgow Dec 2014	White English	30s	Educated in England, moved to Scotland after married	Singapore	Researcher	Married with two children	Snowballing
Cathy (and Malik)	F (joint interview)	White Scottish	Glasgow Jan 2015	Libyan	40s	Cathy used to live in Japan for a while	Scotland	Administrative role in city council	Married with one child	Netmums
Sandra (adoptive mother of a black boy from South Africa)	F	White South African	Edinburgh Jan 2015	White English	40s	Born in SA, got her PhD in Scotland	South Africa	Lecturer	Married with one child, adopted one black boy from South Africa	Netmums
Amy	F	Polish	Edinburgh Jan 2015	Nigerian	30s	Born in Poland, educated in Ukraine, then moved to UK	Poland	Undisclosed but said she was on maternity leave	Married with one child	Gumtree
Linzi	F	German	Glasgow March 2015	Pakistani	20s	Moving to Scotland 5yrs ago as an au pair	Germany	Receptionist at a hotel	Married with one child	Gumtree
Jasmin	F	White Scottish	Edinburgh April 2015	Moroccan	40s	Met her ex-husband in NY, USA,	Scotland	Unemployed	Divorced, raising their child on her	Gumtree

						then Canada finally back to Scotland			own	
Sheena	F	Cape Malay	Edinburgh May 2015	Dutch	30s	Was in South Africa, Germany, UAE, the Netherland before moving to Scotland	South Africa	Once marketing executive	Married with one child	Gumtree
Maggie	F	Scottish Chinese	Irvine May 2015	Nigerian	30s	N/A	Scotland	Administrator	Separated with one child	Gumtree
Maria	F	Polish	Edinburgh June 2016	Nigerian	30s	Moved to Scotland 10yrs ago	Poland	University student, worked as an admin assistant before at a local psychiatric hospital	Married with two children	Mixedracefamily blog post
Katie	F	White Scottish	Glasgow June 2016	Nigerian	30s	N/A	Scotland	Photographer	Divorced with one child	Mixedracefamily blog post

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