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Mixed Experiences: A study of the childhood narratives for mixed race people related to risks to their mental health and capacity for developing resilience.

Volume Two

(appendices)

Author: Dinah Cecilia Morley

City University

School of Health Sciences

This thesis is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Community and Health Sciences Research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Recruitment Material

Mixed Experiences – *a study of mental health/emotional wellbeing of young people of mixed race*[1]

"....that's where I'll tick
Only place I can
OTHER
Why do I have to tick other and then explain my parentage?
People still making it seem like a unique small group who are often discounted
Hmm..... maybe they should consider that over 40,000 others exist
and every time we fill out application forms many of us are wondering
when the time will come for a mixed-race identity to be officially
recognised in a group of our Own."

Hyacinth Myers in *Brown Eyes,* an anthology of writings from mixed race women, points out the lack of official recognition for people of mixed race. My project hopes to influence health, social care and education bodies positively, to understand the complexities of being mixed race and to respond more appropriately to children of mixed race as they grow up.

If this is something that is important to you, please take time to read the following brief description of the project and to consider whether you could offer me further help. I am doing this research as part of a doctoral study at City University in London.

The project looks at the childhood experiences of young people of mixed race from the perspective of the emotional wellbeing or mental health, in other words how good people felt about themselves and their identity. This does **not** mean it is about mental illness. It is about the mental health that most of us enjoy in our lives; sometimes we don't feel so good physically or mentally but mostly our mental health/emotional wellbeing is good enough.

I would like to hear your story about growing up as a mixed race child. Looking back at your childhood, what was good and what was bad or difficult for you in the context of being mixed race? What people were important to you and helped you? Did your school encourage and support you? Were there other organisations in your community which you joined and felt supported by? What needs to change for children of mixed race?

As society is changing and developing so rapidly, some of the significant issues for you then may not be issues for children today. Perhaps you have some thoughts about that which you could share. Perhaps, also, you feel there are big issues which need to be tackled in this area. I would like to hear what you have to say.

If you would like to contribute further to this study, and would be happy for your answers to be used anonymously in the research, please first complete the short questionnaire in the box below:

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[1] *The term mixed race is used as most people find this an acceptable descriptor. It stands for dual heritage, dual ethnicity, mixed parentage and bi-racial identity, and to describe people who have more than two ethnic groups in their heritage. (This term accepts that we live in a racialised society.)*

Age last birthday................

Gender.................

How would you describe your racial/ethnic identity?...

How would you describe your mother's racial/ethnic identity?.....................................

How would you describe your father's racial/ethnic identity?
,,,

How many brothers and/or sisters do you have?............................

Do they all have the same racial/ethnic identity as you? Yes/no (please indicate the right answer)

If 'no' please say if they are step siblings, adopted or half siblings
...

Are there any issues which you feel this study needs to concentrate on specifically?
...
...

What questions do you think should be asked?
...
...

Further involvement with this study

Thank you for your time in completing this short questionnaire and for thinking about the issues this project raises.

If you would like to write your story or be interviewed, by phone or face to face, about your personal experience of growing up as a mixed race child please say so and provide some contact details. Ways of making contact can be adapted as we go along to suit you and to fit in with how you prefer to tell your story.

I would like to help some more with this project *(please indicate preferred method)*

  By writing my story *yes/no*

  By being interviewed *yes/no*

If you are happy to help some more please confirm your email address below. You will be sent further information about the topic and a full consent form to complete and return.

Email:..

All the material collected will be treated confidentially and will be anonymised.

Whether you wish to help some more or not I would like to **thank you very much** *for taking the time to complete the above details. Your answers will be used to develop a project which I hope will help to make some positive changes in the care of mixed race children and young people in future. Many thanks again.*

Dinah Morley

Please return this questionnaire electronically to mxex@btinternet.com

Appendix 2: Explanation of the research project

Responsible Institution:

School of Nursing and Midwifery
City University
20 Bartholomew Close
London EC1A 7QN
Tel: 020 7040 5759

Researcher:

Dinah Morley

Title of the Project:

Mixed Experiences: the mental health/emotional wellbeing of young people of mixed race

People sometimes associate mental health with serious mental illness. This study is not about that. It is about the good mental health that most people enjoy most of the time, and is looking at what affects it, positively and negatively, for children of mixed race as they grow up.

Purpose:

I am doing this research as part of a doctoral study and hope to positively influence health and social care practice through this work.   There is very little written in this specific area and so your contribution will be important in developing a body of knowledge about growing up as a mixed race young person. I will be collecting the views and experiences of approximately 30 adults over the age of 16 about the way in which their mixed race identity has affected their mental health/emotional wellbeing as they have grown up.   I am particularly interested in school and community experiences which may have been either supportive or unhelpful, or somewhere in between.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may opt out at any time. You do not need to answer any questions which you feel are too personal or difficult. If you need any further explanation or help at any point during this stage please email me on mxex@btinternet.com.

Possible benefits of the project:

This is an opportunity for you to influence the ways in which young people of mixed race experience the health, social care and education aspects of their growing up. I hope that the information which is collected from the contributions will have some affect on how people work with young people of mixed race in a variety of settings. It may also point to areas that would be worth looking into further. Any publication that follows from this project will keep your views anonymous. I hope you will enjoy taking part and feel that it is a worthwhile exercise.

Methods of the research:

I am asking you to

either
agree to two or three face to face or telephone interviews, each lasting about one hour, which will be tape-recorded and typed up to produce a hard copy for analysis and for you to see.
or

write, via email, about your childhood and growing up in relation to being mixed race. You may like to include how you made friends, whether they were also mixed race; how you got on in school and how teachers and other pupils related to you; how you felt about yourself as a person of mixed race as you grew up and at the different stages of your life; which people were good to you and for you and which were not; etc.etc

As you tell your story I may want to ask you, via email, about specific things you raise to ensure that I have fully understood you or to ask you more about what you tell me.

I will send you a copy of any draft report for you to comment on. You can ask for changes to be made if you are concerned that I have not properly represented the information you supplied. Interviews will take place at a time and place that is convenient for you.

Your interview records:

These are confidential to the researcher and only used in an anonymised form. Tapes and hard copies will be kept in a locked container at my home and destroyed, in accordance with data protection requirements, after I have completed my study.

Risks associated with the project:

I recognise that it is possible that talking about your childhood may bring up difficult feelings. If this happens in a face to face interview and you do not want to continue, or if you want to opt out of the project altogether, I will respect your decision and we will take time to talk through your feelings. If you are particularly distressed and would like on-going help I will be able to advise you on this. There are organisations which you can contact directly like MIND or YoungMinds, as well as local services which I can help you to identify if necessary.

You may feel worried that things you talk about will be written up in a way that will identify you. Every care will be taken to ensure that this does not happen and I will check with you as necessary.

This information will be held and used for the purpose stated. No identifiable personal information will be published. The personal information will not be shared with any other organisation.

At any time you can ask to withdraw from the project and have any materials which you may have provided destroyed or returned to you. If I am tape-recording you and you are unhappy about continuing you can ask for the tape to be turned off temporarily or permanently.

Enquiries about the research:

These can be addressed to me at mxex@btinterent.com or you can contact the School and Nursing and Midwifery at City University (see details above.)

University Complaints clause:

If there is an aspect of the study which concerns you, you may make a complaint. City University has established a complaints procedure via the Secretary to the Research Ethics Committee. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 8106. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary of the Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is: *Mixed Experiences*

You could also write to the Secretary at:

Dr Naomi Hammond
Secretary to Senate Ethical Committee
Academic Development and Services
City University
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB

Email: naomi.hammond.1@city.ac.uk

As a person of mixed race do you have something to say which you would like others to hear? If so please read on.

Mixed Experiences: the mental health of mixed race young people

In 2001 in the UK more than 677,000 people described themselves as being of mixed race. Half of these were children aged 15 and under. Very little research exists looking at the differing effects of the social environment on the emotional wellbeing/mental health of mixed race children and young people. This is inevitably a complex area but, by listening to the childhood experiences of a number of people in different circumstances, I hope to be able to contribute towards a body of knowledge about the experiences of children and young people of mixed race living n Britain.

I am undertaking this study as part of a PhD at City University, London and seeking participants through relevant websites, Intermix – www.intermix.org.uk – direct link - http://www.intermix.org.uk/forum/forum_topics.asp?FID=23, and People in Harmony – http://www.pih.org.uk/

If you are interested and would be happy to tell your story, please either use the links above or email me directly. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dinah Morley
mxex@btinternet.com
September, 2006

Project title: Mixed Experiences: the mental health/emotional wellbeing of young people of mixed race

I agree to take part in the above City University research project. I have had the project explained to me and have read the Explanatory Statement which I may keep for my records.

I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to be interviewed on two or three occasions; that the interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher or by a University transcriber; and that I will have the opportunity to see the transcription to amend or add to it. I understand that I will also see a draft copy of any report which may be produced and will be able to ask for changes to be made.

I understand that I can ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview(s), either temporarily or permanently. If I wish to withdraw from the project I can do so at any time and have any materials which I may have provided destroyed or returned to me.

Data Protection: this information will be held and processed for the following purposes:

* To inform your research degree thesis
* To inform the health and social care professions through dissemination of the findings in the appropriate press
* As the basis of a more widely published article or articles

I understand that any information I provide is confidential and that no information that could lead to the identification of me as an individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation.

I understand that the information I provide will be anonymised and written up in such a way that I cannot be personally identified.

I agree to City University recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purposes set out in this statement and my consent is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Withdrawal from this study:

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Name (please print) ....

Signature..**Date**...............................
....

Appendix 5: Brief synopses of each participant

The following section contains synopses of each of the participants' stories. These vary in length and profundity but are presented to give context to the statements which are used in the subsequent analysis. Each respondent's preferred method of engagement is coded as follows:

F = face to face interview

T = telephone interview

W = written contribution via email

In order to provide a digest for the reader, the participants' material is gathered into three groupings:

- those who grew up mainly in London (L)

- those who grew up mainly elsewhere in the UK (UK)

- those who grew up mainly outside the UK (A)

Each participant is identified by 2 figures as well as by a pseudonym, that is a gender descriptor and mode of data collection. For example the first participant is identified as Tina f/T – f to denote gender and T to indicate that her story was gathered from a telephone interview.

 From the last column of the table below it is also possible to identify the childhood location of each participant.

Characteristics of participants

name	gender	age	father	mother	data type	Area
Tina	f	56	Guyanian	Welsh	T	UK
Theo	m	29	English	Jamaican	F	A
Anna	f	46	Indian	German	F	UK
Sarah	f	20s	Guyanian	English	F	UK
Cyrus	m	30s	English	Asian	F	L
Aileen	f	22	Nigerian	English	T	UK
Noel	m	26	Irish/English	Jamaican	W	L

Rosa	f	26	Indian/Pakistani	Finnish	W	L
Suhail	m	28	Kenyan Asian	English	W	UK
Carla	f	35	Irish	Black/mixed race	T	L
Emile	m	23	Mauritian	Belgian	W	A
Clare	f	40	St Vincentian	Finnish	W	UK
Thomas	m	32	Jamaican	English/Welsh/Irish	W	UK
Tracey	f	25	American	Chinese	W	A
Louise	f	24	Jamaican	English	F	L
Kelly	f	25	White Australian	Papuan	W	A
Rob	m	21	English/Welsh/Irish	Ethiopian	W	?
Kathleen	f	45	Jamaican	Irish	W	L
Jack	m	32	Creole	French Creole	W	A
Jenny	f	35	Irish	Singaporean Chinese	W	A
Mary	f	30s	Iranian	white	W	UK
Ayesha	f	55	Pakistani	English	W	L

Growing up mainly in London

Cyrus m/F

Cyrus is a young man who runs a foundation in his mother's memory, focussed on mixed race issues. His mother was an Asian living in Africa and his father English/Scottish. His mother came from a closed community which was to a large extent unhappy about her marriage out, although this has now become commonplace in the community. Cyrus feels that his Asian family always loved him and he visited them twice in childhood, but that there was considerable pressure on his mother to return. He feels this undermined his mother's confidence. He has wondered whether she was comfortable with her children.   He knows that his mother experienced a great deal of racism earlier on in her life. His father's family was accepting of him and his mother and they seem to have been more concerned about class than race.

Cyrus grew up in a London suburb and went to a virtually white school in a white neighbourhood. His family was often host to families of different cultures and he now values his bi-cultural heritage. However he felt that they were quite isolated as a family as there was not much immigration at that time.

As a young child he was not aware of racism as such, but it is obvious that children were racist towards him. His parents came to the school when these incidents occurred and there were promises to deal with them, but Cyrus saw no action. He says it was a mixture of being bullied as a person and because of being mixed race. He cites birthday parties as difficult as he was sometimes not invited and had problems inviting people back.

He was ambivalent about his background and as he got older this seems to have been more of an issue. He feels that his parents did not help him to cope with his mixedness and that he just decided to be himself and to stand up for what he was rather than try to retaliate at those who taunted him. He feels that his parents just wanted him to be *'normal'* (white) and that having to deal with race issues was difficult for them. He felt stressed, isolated and unsupported.

He had a particularly hard time from one black boy as he, Cyrus, refused to take a radical black approach. Cyrus feels that he couldn't do that as that was not what he was. He talks about the stressful experience of having a white parent and hearing black children say racist things about whites.

Cyrus's sister does not seem to have been as conscious as Cyrus about being mixed race although they have the same skin colour which he describes as '*on a continuum to Mediterranean'*. He feels current tensions for mixed race people are greater outside London where communities are less trusting of one another. Where communities are polarised there is more pressure to identify yourself as one or the other, whereas he stresses that the important thing is not to deny the other part of you. You can't be in denial about yourself. He sees colour rather than culture as the root of the prejudice against mixed families.

He is pleased about the availability of mixed race as a category now and feels that the white community needs to pay attention to the mixed grouping as these children are part of the country and their issues need to be understood.

Noel m/W

Noel grew up in an inner city multicultural area of London and has always seen himself as black politically and mixed race culturally. His mother is from Jamaica and his father from Worcestershire. His parents are still together and his mother has suffered from mental problems. He has one younger sister and many mixed race friends. He and his sister never discussed being mixed race. He believes there are many lonely people of mixed race and he finds that some have never spoken to their families about being mixed race or about identity.

He says there were tensions in his family as a result of his parents' mixed relationship. In school he wanted to fit in and did not always identify with the group preferred by his parents – in terms of their aspirations. He says there was no sense of community amongst the mixed race young people as there was for white, black or Asian young people.

He felt he was treated prejudicially, as were all the black boys, because he was seen as black, for example all the black boys were thrown out of class because the teacher could not distinguish between them, an experience that had a profound effect on Noel.

Noel was involved in a number of outside activities with varied experiences. He felt disadvantaged as a black child and rejected as a mixed race child by those he expected to stand by him. He was always treated the same as a black person and often treated differently from a white person.

However Noel now likes being different and found that mixed race boys were very popular with the girls. Popularity was everything. He now works in an anti-racist organisation.

<u>Rosa f/W</u>

Rosa was brought up as a Muslim but spent her early years in a predominantly Jewish environment. She is fair skinned, her mother is Finnish and her father Pakistani. She feels her Pakistani family didn't communicate with her because she looked white and 'passed for white'. (Olumide 2002) Her Jewish friends thought she was Jewish.

She didn't know she was related to her Pakistani cousins until she was 14. Her Asian London cousins envied her her white mum as they felt she had more freedoms as a result. She was able to communicate with her mother's family as her mother spoke to her in Finnish. The issue of difference seemed to be language and not race. (See Kelly's account below)

Rosa felt very popular in junior school but less included in high school where her friends started to identify with specific groups of which she could not be a member, for example black or Jewish groups. It didn't occur to her that she was mixed race until she went to high school as she looked white and 'enjoyed the benefits' of being white.

She now appreciates her mixed heritage as being interesting and different as well as a window on several traditions, cultures, religions etc.

<u>Carla f/T</u>

Carla says she is one of the many forgotten ones who do not look mixed race in the traditional sense. Her mother is mixed race Jamaican with Jewish, Scottish and native-Canadian blood, and her father and stepfather are both white. Her birth father is white Irish but she stopped seeing him when she was 4. She thinks his family was quite racist and opposed to his partnership with her mother. Her stepfather's family comes from Yorkshire, a very white area, and Carla feels fully accepted by them.

Carla is fair skinned and 'passes' for white. She would like to be darker to fit in more with people of mixed race or black people. She clearly feels out on a limb and talks a great length and in a circular way about this dilemma for her.

Her mixed race mother strongly identifies as a black woman and Carla's own daughter is dark skinned, which causes people to believe that they are not related. She has also heard prejudiced comments about her daughter from health professionals who think they are not related.

Carla says that having a step dad was more of an issue as she grew up than being mixed race. She lived in a very cosmopolitan area but says there were no mixed race pupils in her school, only Turkish, African and Asian. She was identified as white and felt English. She did not have a group to feel comfortable with. She says *'I don't feel white'* and *' I don't feel black.'* Carla was unhappy and difficult in school, and angry at the lack of black history. She left at 16. She has gone on into the health service and into teaching childcare.

Her Jamaican grandparents moved to live in Britain and were also light skinned. She feels they might be angry that she and her sister have become more 'black', that is they have married black men. Although she grew up in a mixed area her family were quite western – *'it wasn't really black culture'.*

Carla's daughter is sometimes the only black child in a group and Carla wonders how she'll cope. This was not an experience that Carla had as she was always taken for white. She thinks it will be harder at secondary school going by the experiences of friends' children.

Taken for white and mixing with white groups Carla hears comments that she feels would not be made in front of her if people realised she was mixed race. It heightens her feeling of not fitting in anywhere. She finds that some people are genuinely interested in her heritage and she is increasingly proud of it.

She feels the idea of mixed race is still very narrow and has not included those with more complex mixes.   She is now glad to have had the teaching of her mum and feels sad when mixed children clearly have no idea of their black roots and when their white parent does not look after their hair and skin appropriately either. She says there should be literature to help them with this, but also says it is hard to find the right hair products for mixed race people whose hair is different from black. She grew up thinking she had '*funny hair'*.

Her sister seems to think that if you don't look mixed race then you're not. Her other sister also fits in with white people and is even more fair skinned. Carla seems to be the only sibling positively identifying as mixed.

Louise f/F

Louise is a 24 yr old woman who is training to be an art therapist but has recently worked on a study of mixed race youth. Her mum is from the UK and her dad is a Jamaican living in London. She was brought up mainly in the white suburbs of south London though has recently spent a short time in inner south London with her dad. Most recently she has been to Indonesia as a teaching assistant volunteer which she describes as her best experience so far. She was 3 years in Liverpool at university and felt there was a lack of black presence in academia there, unlike London.

Louise comes across as quite confused about her identity and sexuality. She is keen to mix more with black youth in order to become more familiar with that side of her culture but clearly feels more comfortable with whites and has a white, though not English, boyfriend. She says she has negative perceptions of black people and admits that she was scared of black young men when she was at university. She says she was very angry between the ages of 18 and 21 which she

identifies as being to do with being mixed. She hated her appearance, her hair mostly. She feels she is shy because of her darkness and felt really disgusting at that age.

Her parents divorced when she was 3 years old but she keeps contact with her dad. Her mother remarried when she was 8 to a Scot who is part Maltese – this gave them their mixedness in common. She has an older brother who looks quite like her but was diagnosed with dyslexia and had a very troubled school life.

Her mother trained as a social worker when Louise was 14. Louise thinks her mother has the social work political correctness and sees race in a more political way than she does herself. Louise says she celebrates her mixedness whereas her mother sees it as a difficulty. However her mother has encouraged her to talk about the issues and does see her mixedness positively. Louise feels that her mother may have seen any criticism of her (Louise) as being because of race.

Louise says she never tried to fit in with the black scene and used drama and acting as a way of not having to fit in anywhere. Later she admits to wanting to be black for a period in her later teenage. She says her brother protected her from bullying at school and she had lots of friends. At times she admits to feeling there was an undertone and she admits to being racially verbally abused. When she was younger she didn't really understand or challenge this, but as an older young person she did. There was a time when teachers tried to talk to her about her mixedness and aspects of the black culture. She says she only knew what they knew from documentaries. She was asked to say whether she identified as black or white but she replied '*I dunno, I'm both, I'm me'*.

Her birth father's family had a mixed reaction to her and her mother, her grandmother was welcoming but an aunt was very hostile. She has three stepsiblings. Her mother's mother was close to her but Louise seems to steer clear of her mother's family currently as there have been

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misunderstandings which her mother and grandmother don't seem to have sorted out between them. Louise currently lives at home because there is space and it is familiar. Although she got on with her birth father, with whom she lived for a while, she found his living pattern too difficult for her to cope with.

She has visited Jamaica with her dad but was left with an uncle she did not get on with. She would like to visit again and there is a family property there. She sees little of her mother's family although some cousins live only 10 minutes away.

At school she admits to being difficult at times and to there being one teacher who really despised her. However other teachers were inspirational. At college she related to a gay male teacher and has had close friendships with gays subsequently. She seems to find these relationships less threatening although she says she is clear about her own sexual identity.

She found it hard at university that no plays were non-European. Although she acknowledges there is more profile for mixed race people in the media it is not something she is really affected by. She believes there should be more in the school curriculum about black and mixed race people and issues.

She says it takes a lot of confidence to be mixed race because you are quite often speaking things that nobody shares with you. Many of her friends whilst interested in her mixedness tend to politicise this and she feels this is treating her as a statistic and not *'me'*.

Kathleen f/W

Kathleen is a woman in her late 40's, born in Notting Hill to an Irish mother and a Jamaican father. Mixed relationships were uncommon and generally frowned upon at that time. She did

not understand that she was different until she was 5. Her parents' explanations sufficed until she went to secondary school which she describes as a nightmare. She was the only mixed race child in the school for the first 4 years and was treated differently by teachers and pupils. Her black best friend at primary was not her friend at secondary as she (Kathleen) was too white. The white children didn't want to play with her because she was black. She did a stint as class clown, a way of attracting friends used by other participants, which worked for a while.

She had mixed messages from teachers relating to colour, in that she was expected to do better than the black children but on the other hand doomed to failure because of her mixed heritage. A close cousin rejected her when he married a white girl.

She found relief in belonging to brownies and guides where she says there seemed to be no colour.

Her black, paternal grandparents lived with the family and her grandmother was the mainstay for Kathleen. Although not mixed race herself she had seen how mixed race people were treated. Kathleen says *'a little part of me died too when she did'. She said "no child should walk alone" and "the Lord never gave you a burden that was too heavy to carry." Every mixed race child needs someone like my gran'.* (f/W)

At secondary school she was bullied and began to hate who she was. She wanted to be white and later she needed to be black. She was difficult in school, objecting to *'white'* history, until she got a mixed race teacher who encouraged her to be true to herself. From that time the *'real me'* began to emerge.

Kathleen accepts that things have changed today in that being mixed race is fashionable and all the young black guys want to date mixed race girls. This had not been her experience and she

made a vow not to do this to her kids. She has married a black man and her children identify clearly as black.

Kathleen is now a strong and confident woman and she thinks that maybe being mixed race made her strong. She now does equal opportunities work and points out that most people with Caribbean roots will have white in them somewhere (John Small 1988). She does not believe there is such a thing as pure black but *'the black kids don't see you as the same as them'.*

Ayesha f/W

Ayesha is a 55-year-old woman whose mother is English and father Pakistani. Ayesha says that she has suffered over half a century of racial abuse as have her siblings.   Whilst she believes it built her resilience she is very aware of the harsh realities that mixed race children still have to face and says there is no safe haven for them.   Although she says that the '*urge to merge'* may be a positive move for mankind she feels things are worse now for mixed race people, here and in other countries.

She grew up in south London on a newly built council estate where her family was the only one of mixed race. She has little knowledge of her father's heritage as he has not wanted this to be evident. She was raised in a strange *'no mans land'* aping a culture she was not allowed to be part of because of her darker skin. She has visited his relatives in Pakistan as an adult but none really remembered much about him.   Her father disobeyed his own father by coming to Cambridge to study when his father wanted him to go to medical school in India.

Ayesha went to a state primary at age 10 when she was made to feel an outsider for all of her school life and possibly beyond.   She is now a teacher herself. Teachers and fellow pupils were hostile.

She suggests that there is a very real fear of the *'other'* embedded in the human psyche. Her mother tried to make her *'proud to be Pakistani'* but this doesn't seem to have helped. The fact that her mother was white was not accepted either. Although she sees her mother's family regularly, though perhaps not frequently, her mother has never been able to talk to her about her own relationship where there were clearly family difficulties. She is also aware of her siblings having problems being mixed race. Ayesha has recently sought the help of a deep trance chaneller.

Ayesha describes a sad, besieged childhood describing *'many desperately unhappy times'.*

Being Mixed Race in London

Significantly different experiences are described by those growing up in inner and outer London, from feelings of isolation in the suburbs to a sense of not fitting in in the inner city, not being black enough. The sense of being an outsider, with no-one who is exactly the same as you to share your experiences with is a very frequent finding from all the above accounts. Whilst many of the participants, particularly those living largely outside London, see living in London as a much more comfortable option than living elsewhere in the UK, the sense of isolation and being the only one persists. This experience is undoubtedly affected to some extent by the age of the participants, but this ranges from 24 – 55 and is not therefore a robust explanation.

Growing up mainly elsewhere in the UK

Tina f/F

Tina is a 55-year-old woman whose mother is Welsh and father Guyanian. She has grown up mainly in Wales but has spent periods in London as a small child and later in Africa. Her father was talented and famous painter and mother was Welsh speaking and articulate and creative.

Mother, who was orphaned at an early age, had been married first to a soldier and became pregnant by a black man whilst her husband was away, producing a daughter. After a divorce she '*needed to marry a black man'*. She subsequently had four more daughters.

Tina's parents moved to Africa when she was 6. Whilst living there she experienced some implicit racism against her and also felt her father to be a tyrant. All her life she has felt her father rejected her. Tina says there was very little love in the family. She felt ostracised and was frequently sent away to stay with other relatives. She says her father did not acknowledge her, although she was named after his mother. Tina sees this as a way of putting his past behind him. She had a number of possible psychosomatic complaints as a child and one aunt told her she was too sensitive.

The family returned to Wales, and after a short stay her parents went back to Africa with the two youngest children. The three older girls were '*dumped'* with relatives. Her mother came back and spent some time with them and during one of these periods her father left Africa with a younger woman and returned to Guyana where he lived the rest of his life as a respected artist.

From that time the family was very poor and Tina's mother was depressed from the age of 48 until she died aged 84, a depression Tina describes as induced by factors such as being in debt and the house being repossessed. One sister went into a psychiatric hospital.

Tina is highly intelligent but lacked confidence and failed her A levels. She moved away to go to college and survived. She is now married with 4 children and is still living in north Wales. She has some difficulties with her children and says that the boys do not want to have anything to do with her as they want to be normal (? white). She has written about her experiences but her material has been *'stolen'* by her younger sister. Most of the siblings seem to have had their problems and there have been some very poor outcomes for the half siblings children, such as suicide and mental health problems.

Tina talks about her family dividing across a 'colour line', with some siblings being seen as white and others as black. She variously describes herself as being on the white side, her two more attractive siblings being designated to her father who got '*whatever's good'*. It seems that her siblings strive hard to keep a positive memory of their father alive and that she is seen as undermining this. Tina says she is telling how it was.

Tina talks about people seeing her as different, when she is the same. Mixed race people are seen as different, but she sees the sameness with others not difference.

Her father validated their family as he was obviously talented and respected and could support them comfortably. When he left their validation ceased and they became poor and pried on by the local community. They had very little experience of other black or mixed race people other than one Barnado's boy came to know them and two black women who worked at the station. Tina describes the family as being terribly isolated. She has early memories of wanting to be like the white children in the street and admits to not really knowing what a genuine friend is. She had some supportive teachers in her time, one of whom turned out to have a mixed race heritage unknown to both of them at the time she was teaching Tina.

Tina identifies the two sides of being mixed race as exotic and revolutionary. She talks about feeling both isolated and the centre of too much attention at school, causing her to feel tense all the time because of these two ways in which she was seen. She describes people of mixed race as having no nation, '*they can't honestly say that this piece of land they stand on is their own'*.

Tina is an articulate and educated woman but carries a huge resentment against her father and family. In her view her siblings seem to work together to prevent her doing unacceptable (in their eyes) things. Her story is one about personal experience of racism, overlaid with a tragic family story culminating in poor relationships with her siblings and some of her children.

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<u>Anna f/F</u>

Anna is a woman in her 40s whose mother is German and father Indian. Her parents met as pen pals and her father came to England for work, was joined by her mother, married and had three children. Anna is the eldest.

Anna has had a difficult childhood. Although she was born in London and spent 6/7 years there she was brought up for the most part in Hampshire in a predominantly white area, living above the restaurants where her father worked. The family was quite isolated with few friends. She was very aware of being Asian and clearly felt that was the dominant home culture. Her (non-Asian) mother often wore a sari. She had a poor home, where violence occurred frequently, her father attacking his wife and sometimes the children. Her father was a diabetic and an alcoholic, spending time in hospital and much of his leisure time in the pub. He died when Anna was 16. It was a great relief to her when her father died.

After her father's death she was taken into care, separated from her brothers, and her mother went into a hostel. She felt that her mother had purposely abandoned her although this was not the case. Her mother had simply acquiesced to what the authorities had suggested. Anna's brothers remained close by their mother, one suffers from schizophrenia and the other seems to be in total denial about his mixed racedness, having become one of the local lads and married to a white woman who seems implicitly racist. He has changed his name to sound more English. Anna has a poor opinion of Social Services for their treatment of her in terms of a care placement and her removal so far from her mother.

Anna is in infrequent contact with her mother and siblings. She speaks very admiringly of her mother, the bravery of her parents in getting together at the time they did, and she is grateful to them for her birth. But she would caution a mixed race couple to think twice about having children because of what she went through, although she is proud now to be who she is.

Anna was badly racially bullied at school, although she did have some friends. She also feels that teachers were racist. In her late teens she seems to have become more friendless and a loner, going away to gigs, usually in London, taking risks with relationships and generally behaving quite dangerously. Only one teacher seemed to realise that something was going on at home as well as in school.

Anna is bisexual and finds that she doesn't discuss her mixedness with any partners, although this is an important part of her. As a child she desperately wanted to be white and like everyone else. Now she enjoys her mixedness and feels unique. **People In Harmony**[2] seems to have been a godsend to her in terms of finding people like herself, although not exactly the same mix. She wishes it had been available to her as a child and young person and says it's mostly the young kids who are using it. She finds London easier to live in than the area in which she grew up.

Anna is an artistic and creative person who still seems unsettled by her earlier experiences. She is happy now about her identity, although people largely identify her as Mediterranean.

Sarah f/F

Sarah is a young woman in her 20s whose mother is white and whose father is Guyanian. Until she was 9 she lived in London in a very mixed neighbourhood. Apart from once being referred to as 'half caste' and having to ask her mother what this meant, Sarah never thought about race or being mixed. Her family then moved to a small town in Yorkshire where, again, Sarah did not

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[2] People In Harmony is an organisation for mixed race people. See Methods section.

experience any racism although her family was one of only two non-white families in the town. Looking back she thinks her parents may have protected her from any racism in these early years. When she was young she does not remember knowing any other mixed race family.

Things changed when she went to secondary school which was predominantly Asian and white. The school was cliquey and Sarah found herself obliged to be part of the white group. When Sarah was 13 years old her family moved to York and she changed schools, where similarly there were few other non-white pupils. She was keen to fit in but felt uncomfortable when her white friends forgot that she wasn't white. In her teenage years she wished for hair like her white friends and found it difficult to cope with her hair which *'went frizzy'*.

Her parents' mixed marriage has not been an issue for the extended families, both of which seem to be quite cosmopolitan. Sarah and her brothers have been brought up to be proud of who they are and Sarah acknowledges they have a really strong family. Much of their socialising is within the wider family.

Her younger brother seems to have experienced more racist bullying as a small child. Both her brothers now have Afro hair styles and the younger one identifies more as black. Sarah says this is because he has spent his teen years in London. (The family returned to London when Sarah was 18 when she went straight to a provincial university.) Sarah says that she identifies less with the black community than her brother because she has not lived in it the way he has.

Her family is evidently middle class and Sarah sees that this could have an impact on her experience of mixedness and racism. She suggests that her father's senior position in the local authority protected the family. As she grew up she did receive racist comments but felt able to dismiss them as products of ignorance.

Aileen f/T

Aileen, a 22-year old, grew up in a working class west Yorkshire area. She was one of a few mixed people in her school but she was very aware of her difference. There was a significant degree of racism locally associated with BNP activity.   Aileen had a number of white friends and did not see colour as an issue with them although there were times when racism occurred, for example she was called Paki but didn't fully understand what that meant.   Her parents did visit the school once or twice following racist incidents, and Aileen feels that the school was receptive. However she did not identify with any other person at her at school.

Her parents are still together, her mother is from Yorkshire and her father from Nigeria. She had plenty of access to her mother's family but not to her father's. However he was involved in a Nigerian community group in Bradford and Aileen had lots of access to this.

She believes she would have experienced less racism in cities where there were more black and mixed people, she specifically cites London where she visited to see friends and family when she was 16. She felt the London environment had a big effect on her confidence, a huge contrast to her earlier years. Aileen has been working in the Midlands for the last 2 years and says that mixed children would feel fairly comfortable there too.

She went to Nigeria once aged 4 with her family. She has not been since but occasionally meets Nigerian relatives when they visit the UK. Both families seem to have been completely accepting of the mixed marriage.

Her sister is more involved with the church and not so involved with the Nigerian community. She (the sister) doesn't see her race or culture as a big thing. Aileen definitely identifies as mixed race. Her sister has the same skin tone.

Her brother has had a harder time, although he was a high achiever. He was seen as a trouble maker in school but managed to work through this and get to university. He may not have considered it racist says Aileen but he felt picked upon because of the colour of his skin.

Aileen went through primary and secondary school with the same group of friends. She was involved in brownies and guides and in sports. She became very interested in black hair at 15 and went to a black hair college in Bradford for work experience. Aileen feels people noticed her when she began to do different things with her hair.

When she went to university she joined the Afro-Caribbean society in an effort to make black friends particularly as she felt she didn't really engage with the middle class people in her hall. From here she developed an academic interest in mixed race. Although she says she felt ugly growing up, except for when she visited London where she felt beautiful, she received a great deal of male attention at university. The Afro-Caribbean group made her see that racism and misunderstanding comes from both sides. She could not identify as black. She says it can be a huge shock if you are rejected by the side of the family you choose to identify with.

Suhail m/W

Suhail, who is 28, was brought up in a mainly white suburb of Leeds. His mother is from a traditional Yorkshire farming family and father is east African Asian. Suhail saw very little of his father's family, who mainly lived abroad, and was not brought up to speak his father's languages.

Suhail says he wasn't bullied at school and had lots of friends. However he was very aware of his difference and was aware of racist abuse, saying he couldn't imagine why it would be directed at him. School was a very supportive environment where Suhail feels he had many opportunities. He is now a teacher. His best times were school trips to France where he gained confidence and felt free to be who he wanted. He was sad to leave school. He did feel disadvantaged being

mixed race but reflects that many of the school pressures were more to do with needing to be part of a group rather than skin colour.

As a teenager he was worried about being accepted and thought the girls would not go out with him. He feels that this caused him to develop a stronger personality. He tried to be popular by being the class joker and would do anything to be accepted in the group, sometimes wrong things. At work he found that people started to ask about his origins.

Suhail comes across as a confident young man with a good job and young family. He feels that mixed race people are special in a world that is intent on categorising people. He also speaks of the courage of his parents and his gratitude to them for being here himself. He says that with '*certain ethnicities we can make a judgement but mixed race throws up an element of doubt.*'

Clare f/W

Clare is 40 yrs old. Her mother is Finnish and her father from St. Vincent. She was not told of her father's ethnicity until she was 20 and was allowed to think he was Portuguese. People accepted that she was Portuguese. She grew up mainly in Berkshire. Clare did not experience any problems in relation to mixedness as she identified as white. As a young person she was involved in a number of community activities and says that *'friends were friends regardless of ethnicity.'*

Clare grew up in care until she was 11 when she returned to live with her mother. She believes that it was these experiences that affected her, not her mixed ethnicity. She says she had low self esteem and was disadvantaged by having a single parent mother with at least three jobs bringing up 3 teenagers. Clare has three sisters (the youngest of whom was adopted at a young age and who now classes herself as black).   Her oldest sister classes herself as mixed race, as Clare now does, and her younger sister classes herself as white.

Clare says more publicity and awareness is need about mixed race. She has sickle cell trait and had to ask to be tested as the doctor said she was white.

She has changed her name to be more Finnish and has traced her father, meeting him three times. She now feels proud of her mixedness and proud to be a unique person. She writes and performs poems on mixed race issues.

Thomas m/W

Thomas is a 32-yr old male who grew up in Liverpool. He did not know his Jamaican father and was brought up in a white lower middle class environment. He feels that Liverpool is not necessarily a racist city but it is a place which expects you to belong, something which he has struggled with over the years. He was brought up in a mainly female household and, after four years away, has just returned to live with his grandmother in the same house. Although his mother has siblings he is the only grandchild. At one point during his childhood his mother brought her boyfriend to live with them. Thomas found him a mainly positive addition but he was violent towards Thomas and his mother and eventually left after three and a half years. Thomas lost some respect for his mother at this time as he felt she allowed herself to be abused by this man. However the boyfriend did introduce Thomas to different parts of Liverpool, to art and cooking and martial arts. His experience with his mother's boyfriend has left him wary of black men who he describes as having *'an energy and boldness which he does not have.'*

Thomas describes himself as a quiet person who was fond of learning. He got along well with his friends and, as a young child, was admired by older people when out shopping with his mother. As he moved into adolescence this affection seemed to him to be more superficial and he experienced a number of nasty, dangerous racist incidents directed at him and his mother. On one occasion a black boy picked an argument with him over his *'white'* tone of voice. Boys would sense his diffidence and difference and pick fights with him.

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Although he has never wanted to be anyone else he describes the sense of being a visitor to the street he grew up on. He had a reputation for keeping calm which friends admired but this seems to be related to being on the outside and looking in, being a dreamer. At school he tried to make himself popular by being the centre of attention. Thomas now moves from one dead end job to another and describes his lack of achievement as due to a lack of mental space, of having too much to bear which is how he hears other black and mixed race people talk in the UK

He seems to take the line of least resistance in arguments or disagreements, wanting desperately to stay in the group. At the same time he feels he is alone *'for I and many other mixed race people there is no us, only our individual selves.'* Although mixed race young people are becoming Britain's largest minority he does not see any support for himself or others. Black and mixed race people were a strongly negative presence in his childhood.

He describes his most insightful conversations as a boy as being with his grandfather who held racist views before Thomas's arrival, an event which changed the grandfather's perspective deeply. His grandmother was, and still seems to be, inherently but unconsciously racist.

He feels his eyes were opened by his three years down south.   He never felt odd in London although he was often alone. He seems unclear about his sexuality and has not had a sexual relationship. He yearns for brotherhood but is daunted by the idea of romantic attachment. He cites music as a great comfort and does not put all his difficulties down to being mixed race, although he says he has spent too much time trying to be 'normal'.

Mary f/W

Mary is a married woman in her 30s with 2 children. Her mother is from Yorkshire, where she grew up, and her father is Iranian, living now mainly in the United States. She has a few Iranian cousins in London but rarely sees them. Her father has been in prison for various drugs related offences.

She was taken to Iran when she was a baby for a short time where it seems her mother realised that her father was heavily drug addicted. After some difficulties they both returned with Mary to the UK but did not stay together. Her parents were never married and Mary found growing up on a council estate with an unmarried mother difficult. Her mother's sisters married black men but all these marriages ended in divorce. Mary wonders if this has to do with mixedness.

Mary has no memory of her father being around but knows she saw him when she was 8 years old for the last time. She has been several times to visit his family and friends in the United States, where he now lives, but she has not felt she wanted to see him. On one visit, when Mary was 18, she spoke to him on the phone but felt he was not there for her. She has had more contact with his mother and uncles who seem more interested in her. She discovered, via her grandmother, that she has two half sisters. She seems to have found his very difficult and a planned three-month visit to the United States to her Iranian grandmother only lasted three weeks. Mary was obviously very fond of her grandmother.

Growing up in a predominantly white area she was frequently called racist names but never had a proper conversation with her mother about her mixedness other than to be told to ignore racist remarks. Her behaviour at secondary school was disruptive and she was put in a class away from her friends which was a bad experience. She grew up thinking she was ugly and hated herself.

She now sees her self as a very resilient person but at the time felt disadvantaged as a mixed race child feeling that nobody understood what she was going through. Despite these bad school experiences she now works at the same school. There was one teacher who had confidence in her and encouraged her to go to college where she trained in counselling. She says that this is still a fairly monocultural school.

Recently her son was racially verbally abused and this brought her childhood memories back. She says she has had to explain about her mixedness and hated being classed as white which she was in Leeds, although being seen as different in Harrogate. She says that the *'part of me I've had to explain most is the part of me that's been missing...'*

Being Mixed race in other parts of the UK

Whilst most of the above accounts reflect feelings expressed by all participants, most of the people in this group feel that life is/would be much more comfortable for them in London. The data suggest that they have experienced more racism and isolation, but this is not a consistent finding as their lives are affected by class and family cohesion.

Secondary school experiences have been difficult for most and the evidence suggests that siblings experience similar upbringings very differently. Other factors such as broken families, single parenthood, time in public care must be unrelated to geographical location, although it is tempting to conjecture that the isolation of these families could have been a contributing factor.

Growing up mainly outside the UK

<u>Theo mF</u>

Theo was brought up mainly in Grand Cayman. He is in his late 20s and has been in the UK for eleven years. He was born in Jamaica and moved to Cayman when he was 3 years old. His mother is Jamaican and his father English. His parents met when his father was teaching at a college in the south of England. Theo has two older sisters, both living in Jamaica and both lawyers, married and with families.

Theo describes Cayman as being British but populated by multi generationally mixed families. He was the exception in that he was first generation mixed, but this was not seen as '*any big deal*.' In Jamaica he was seen as white and in the UK as black.

Theo did fairly well but not outstandingly at school, he says he had no problems but he didn't like his prep school. He was at university in Hull, which he says was a tough place to go to university, but he had a fantastic time. He socialised with both black and white groups although being seen by both as black, which he thought strange at first until he '*looked in the mirror'*. Theo identifies strongly as mixed race and not as black. He says he would not have thought about what race he is before he came to UK.

He found being in the UK a totally different experience from Cayman, although he had visited UK infrequently during his childhood to see relatives. He feels more at home in the UK now and can see how he has changed when he goes home, and suggests that the UK is a more plural and liberal society and that Cayman is no longer for him.

Theo talks about his Jamaican grandmother as amazing and very accepting. He was always close to the Jamaican side of his family which he found very welcoming. He describes those family members as '*really amazing people'*. Families on both sides seem to have been accepting of his parents' marriage and the children, although the UK parents cautioned re any children, apparently in terms of location. They were from Liverpool which Theo said is not the friendliest place for race relations (A point debated by another participant who grew up there. See 'Thomas' above.)

Theo feels more relaxed in London as he sees people who are like himself but he says that mixed race people are mostly younger. His flat mate (white) considers him to be black but his response to that is '*whatever'*. He gives the impression of a secure young man who is not concerned overmuch about his mixedness, rather he feels it doesn't matter and has no impact. He doesn't

feel much racism in the UK but says that English people can say one thing and mean another in relation to race.   He has certainly had racist remarks made about and at him, although he thinks he probably experiences less racism than black people.

Theo talked about race and colour in Jamaica, saying the lighter skinned people had the power and wealth. He believes that class plays a part, irrespective of skin colour.

Theo described mixed race as perhaps the acceptable face of multiculturalism, demonstrating a level of integration. He thinks it would be *'insane'* to deny that mixed race children are half white and finds it interesting to see how other people try to define him. He feels that to be identified in the wrong way could create problems and that it makes no sense that mixed race celebrities identify, or are identified, as black, for example Halle Berry.

<u>Emile m/W</u>

Emile is 23 and grew up in the Flemish part of Belgium. His father is from Mauritius and his mother is white. He describes himself as light skinned but obviously mixed race.

His parents did not talk to him about his mixedness, he thinks because they wanted to protect him, but he was racially bullied at school and beaten up by skinheads as a teenager. He also heard his father being racially abused.

He began to hate every white drop of blood in him and rebelled against everything white including his mother and family. He started learning about black radical politics and got into hip hop culture where he found refuge.

He says he is more or less at peace with himself now but still has difficulties. *'I'm too white to be black and too black to be white'.*

Tracey is a 26yr old describing herself as an Hapa[3] (half white/ half Chinese) who was brought up mainly in a middle class part of western USA. This area was very white and she found herself 'passing' as white, which she says made her feel cheapened and lessened the authenticity of her mixed background. She now lives in China and experiences being seen as a foreigner. She does not speak Cantonese and has to explain her Chinese ancestry. She is angry that her father did not want Cantonese spoken at home and feels that her mother's culture was subordinated.

Her mother came to the USA aged 16 and her father was born in California. Tracey has an older sister and younger brother who have both visited her once in China but appear to have no further interest in their Chineseness. Tracey says she has been the *'black sheep'* of the family.

Tracey grew up in a circle of friends of dual heritage and mixed with other half Chinese girls as she grew older. She sees language as a defining factor. For example if you speak a Chinese language then irrespective of appearance you can be seen as Chinese.   As she grew older she

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[3] In the Hawaiian language, **hapa** is strictly defined as: portion, fragment, part, fraction, installment; to be partial, less. It is a loan from the English word *half*. However, it has an extended meaning of "half-caste" or "of mixed descent". This is the only meaning of the term in Hawaiian Pidgin, the creole spoken by many Hawai'i residents.

Used without qualification, *hapa* is often taken to mean "part white", and is short hand for *hapa haole*. The term can be used in conjunction with other Hawaiian racial and ethnic descriptors to specify a particular racial or ethnic mixture. Examples of this include:

- *hapa haole* (part Caucasian/white)
- *hapa kanaka* (part Hawaiian)
- *hapa popolo* (part African/black)
- *hapa kepani* (part Japanese); the term *hapanese* is also encountered
- *hapa pilipino* (part Filipino)
- *hapa pake* (part Chinese)
- *hapa kolea* (part Korean)
- *hapa kamoa* (part Samoan)
- *hapa sepania* (part Spanish)
- *hapa pukiki* (part Portuguese)

(Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hapa)

wanted to be seen as American Asian and felt that '*people hung out with her as it was PC'* to be seen with someone of mixed race.

She says she more or less saw herself as white prior to going to university. The family did not really seem to value the Chinese culture although they went to Chinese functions within the extended family. Her father seems to have derided these and Chinese customs were seen as a bit of a joke in her family. Her mother's parents had been opposed to the marriage and Tracey never really knew them as they did not speak English. Her Chinese cousins seemed to have seen themselves as white as she did. She says that the white side of her family viewed them as exotic and she has never experienced any outright hostility from them in relation to race.

Tracey had positive experiences in primary school, feeling proud when her mother and a librarian wrote all the class names in Chinese. However one recollection from her high school was a teacher talking about Chinese artefacts which were in use in her home as something *'weird'*. Tracey found this a blatant assault on her Chineseness.   Tracey went to college in East Los Angeles where there is a much greater awareness of race but she was seen often as Latino.

She speaks of being brought up in a secure family but accepts that she had major confidence issues as a young person. She thinks this is because her father was a rather overbearing person and made them all feel they could not speak up for themselves.   She says the Chinese are petrified of losing face and she thinks this may also be a factor.

She and her siblings and mother have been variously ethnically labelled. She finds herself describes sometimes as 'half' and says that being mixed race you never get full membership into any group. She sees colonial and gender imbalances in being Hapa and wishes she had been more exposed to her Chinese heritage.

Currently, after three years in China, she seems consumed with her identity and the ways in which it is misinterpreted by others in different settings.   She feels her mother suppressed/sacrificed a lot of her culture in raising her children in the USA and Tracey is unhappy about this.

Kelly f/W

Kelly is a 25 year old woman who currently lives in Australia. She was born and brought up in Papua New Guinea. Her mother is a Pacific Islander and her father Australian Caucasian.

She describes her childhood as normal, as being mixed race is common in Papua New Guinea. Her parents' experiences would have been different, as prior to Independence in 1975 interracial unions were frowned upon.

When she came to Australia to go to boarding school Kelly became acutely aware of her skin colour. It had never been an issue before and she had never experienced racism. Her first experience of this she says is forever ingrained in her being. Her skin colour became almost a burden and she constantly wondered what people were thinking when they looked at her.

She is now comfortable with her identity as an adult but still has worries about her daughter who has recently started school in Australia. She feels schools can only do so much and that the onus is with the parents to support their children.

She believes that her difficult experiences as a young adult have developed her strength (i.e. resilience).

Jack m/W

Jack is a 32-year old man who describes himself as French Creole. Three of his four grandparents are of French descent. He is mixed French, British and Indian but this was never a

major factor in his upbringing. He was seen as a light-skinned black. In Chicago he was always considered black. Although his parents are similarly fair skinned they both grew up as black. He had little contact with other races, describing himself as an *'aristocrat'*, a group that *'tend to cut themselves off from everybody'*. His white family members in Tennessee lived separately from his *'mulatto'* family.

As a child he related to African Americans and was ignorant of his own cultural heritage. He had mixed school experiences but two teachers in particular gave him very positive support. He was involved in several community activities and never felt disadvantaged as a mixed race child.

He wishes he had known his white relatives sooner in his life but seems to have gone through some sort of metamorphosis in the last two years when he has obviously been exploring and adjusting to his real identity.   However growing up unaware of his multiple heritage he feels shielded him from its complications. He says that Loving vs Virginia case[4] changed EVERYTHING (his caps).

Being mixed race outside the UK

Most of the participants in this group have experienced living in more than one country. They describe being seen as black in some places and white in others. Theo and Kelly were both brought up in places where being mixed was the norm and only experienced being seen as

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[4] In 1967 Mr. Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion of the Court on a mixed race marriage in the state of Virginia. He said: 'This case presents a constitutional question never addressed by this Court: whether a statutory scheme adopted by the State of Virginia to prevent marriages between persons solely on the basis of racial classifications violates the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment. For reasons which seem to us to reflect the central meaning of those constitutional commands, we conclude that these statutes cannot stand consistently with the Fourteenth Amendment'. http://www.ameasite.org/loving.asp

different on going to other places for education. The accounts of this group act as an important reminder of the way that ethnicity and skin colour play differently in different societies.

<u>Rob m/W</u> *(Location unknown)*

Rob is a 21 yr old man with a white (English Scottish Irish) mother and an Ethiopian father. He used to see himself as being neither black nor white but now realises he is both which he finds positive and empowering. He describes his skin as lighter than his father's and his features less stereotypically African. He feels that he tried to pigeonhole himself but is glad that he failed to do so and as a result recognised who he was.

He has lived in black and white areas since he was seven years old and found that not having a relationship with anyone who was mixed race left him feeling isolated. He has experienced much racist name calling from a *'nigger'* to a '*white boy".* He says that no-one came to help him and that his mixedness was never recognised in school.

He was very influenced by *Raiding the Gene Pool* (Olumide 2002) as was Cyrus, and strongly believes that *'we need to stop being counted as black'* and '*we need our own figure heads, not to separate ourselves but to empower our children and educate them about the history of mixed race.'*

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