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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Social Sciences

**CARE EXPERIENCES OF LOOKED-AFTER, DUAL HERITAGE YOUNG
PEOPLE**

Ufoo-Vicky Lambeth

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2009

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

**FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Doctor of Philosophy

**CARE EXPERIENCES OF LOOKED-AFTER, DUAL HERITAGE YOUNG
PEOPLE WITH ONE WHITE AND ONE BLACK AFRICAN CARIBBEAN
PARENT**

By Ufoo -Vicky Lambeth

This thesis explores the care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people with one white and one black African Caribbean parent. These young people have a history of spending longer periods in care than others and the assumption is that they experience identity confusion because they are neither white nor black. Given that very little is actually known in this domain, it has been necessary to examine their care experiences in order to unpack the myths and assumptions surrounding them. Perspectives from their carers, practitioners and, in some cases, the young people's files informed this thesis. The term dual heritage has been used throughout to refer to this group except when making reference to other people's work.

When considering placements for all children and young people, Section 22 (5) (c) of the Children Act 1989 stresses the importance of taking into account their religion, race, language and cultural background. In addition to these factors, I found that practitioners also took into account the placement family's ability to support dual heritage young people in coping with racism. In most cases, this resulted in the young people being placed in black families. Thus, the implementation of Section 22 (5) (c) can result in the neglect of dual heritage young people's 'white heritage'.

This qualitative study used in-depth, semi-structured interviews involving sixteen young people, carers, practitioners, and case files. The stories told by the young people highlighted respect as the most important factor in placement and the need to be seen as individuals with different personalities rather than labelled purely on the basis of their skin colour. Like all looked-after individuals, these young people need to be listened to, loved and cared for at all times.

This thesis found that looked-after, dual heritage young people are a heterogeneous group with diverse needs and for them; the ethnicity of their practitioners or carers is irrelevant. Although they used different terms to identify themselves, these young people were all comfortable with their dual heritage identity. They reported experiences of racism from black and white people, institutional racism, as well as racism within the family. Perhaps, given the diverse groups of vulnerable children and young people in Britain today, the time has come to re-examine practitioners' interpretation of the 'best interest' of the dual heritage young person or child under Section 22 (5) (c) of the Children Act 1989.

List of Contents

LIST OF TABLES AND DIAGRAMS	vii
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
DEDICATION	x
INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS:.....	xi
Structure of the thesis.....	xvi
CHAPTER ONE:	1
1 Dual heritage, ‘race’ and identity.....	1
Introduction	1
1.1 Defining dual heritage.....	3
1.2 The historical context.....	5
1.3 ‘Race’	6
1.3.1 <i>Racism</i>	8
1.3.2 <i>Summary</i>	14
1.4 Ethnicity	14
1.5 Fears of ‘mixing races’	16
1.5.1 <i>Racially mixed unions in Britain</i>	17
1.5.2 <i>Summary</i>	21
1.6 Identity	22
1.7 Politicised ‘black’ label.....	24
1.7.1 <i>New ethnicities beyond black/white dualism</i>	26
1.7.2 <i>The dual heritage identity</i>	28
1.7.3 <i>Summary</i>	33
1.8 Conclusion	34
1.8.1 <i>Experiences of being a dual heritage individual: complexity</i> <i>versus simplistic ways of perceiving this group</i>	34
CHAPTER TWO:	36
2 Looked-after young people	36
Introduction	36
2.1 The concept of looked-after young people in general.....	37
2.1.1 <i>General review of relevant literature on young people, who are</i> <i>being, or have been looked-after</i>	40
2.1.2 <i>Summary</i>	43
2.2 Looked-after, dual heritage young people	43
2.2.1 <i>Problems with terms used to define dual heritage young people</i>	44
2.2.2 <i>General review of relevant literature on looked-after, dual</i> <i>heritage young people</i>	48
2.2.3 <i>Summary</i>	50
2.3 Politics of placement.....	51
2.3.1 <i>Why placements with white families are contentious</i>	51
2.3.2 <i>Lessons for those working with dual heritage young people</i>	55
2.3.3 <i>Summary</i>	56

2.4	Reflecting upon the critical analysis of the research literature for this thesis.....	57
2.5	Conclusion	59
2.5.1	<i>Comparing the experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people and other looked-after groups.....</i>	59
2.5.2	<i>Summary.....</i>	61
CHAPTER THREE:		63
3	Methodology	63
	Introduction	63
3.1	Quantitative versus qualitative – passionate versus dispassionate.....	64
3.1.1	<i>A philosophy of methods</i>	64
3.1.2	<i>Postmodernism in the social sciences.....</i>	65
3.1.3	<i>The constructivist paradigm and giving voice to participants.....</i>	66
3.1.4	<i>Standpointism.....</i>	67
3.1.5	<i>Transparent methods.....</i>	68
3.1.6	<i>Qualitative methods</i>	69
3.1.7	<i>Summary.....</i>	69
3.2	Reflexivity on the part of the researcher	70
3.2.1	<i>Insider versus outsider researcher.....</i>	71
3.2.2	<i>Management of personal and professional experiences</i>	72
3.2.3	<i>Accountability</i>	74
3.2.4	<i>Summary.....</i>	74
3.3	The sample	75
3.3.1	<i>The areas where participants were located</i>	76
3.3.2	<i>Access.....</i>	77
3.3.3	<i>Methods of recruitment</i>	78
3.3.4	<i>Young people as gatekeepers</i>	78
3.3.5	<i>Why is it a challenge to gain access to young people?</i>	79
3.3.6	<i>Why was access to files denied?</i>	80
3.3.7	<i>Why was it not a straightforward process to identify and follow-up practitioners and carers?.....</i>	80
3.3.8	<i>Summary.....</i>	80
3.4	Ethical considerations	81
3.4.1	<i>Ethical Principles.....</i>	82
3.4.2	<i>Informed consent.....</i>	83
3.4.3	<i>Confidentiality.....</i>	83
3.4.4	<i>Data protection</i>	84
3.4.5	<i>Rapport, empathy and trust.....</i>	85
3.4.6	<i>Power relations between researchers and participants.....</i>	86
3.4.7	<i>Summary.....</i>	87
3.5	Research aims.....	87
3.5.1	<i>Research objectives.....</i>	88
3.5.2	<i>Summary.....</i>	88
3.6	Methods used in the study	89
3.6.1	<i>Interview questions.....</i>	89
3.6.2	<i>Qualitative, semi-structured interviews: facilitating storytelling</i>	89
3.6.3	<i>The use of the life-curve and intimacy circle as visual aids or modes of communication.....</i>	91
3.6.4	<i>Cases</i>	95

3.6.5	<i>Interview questions</i>	97
3.6.6	<i>Summary</i>	100
3.7	The data analysis process involved in interviews and case files.....	100
CHAPTER FOUR:.....		102
4	The young people's vignettes.....	102
	Introduction.....	102
4.1	Participants' interpretive accounts.....	103
4.1.1	<i>Safi</i>	103
4.1.2	<i>Amina</i>	104
4.1.3	<i>Joachim</i>	105
4.1.4	<i>Musa</i>	106
4.1.5	<i>Sue</i>	107
4.1.6	<i>Thomas</i>	108
4.1.7	<i>Rosie</i>	109
4.1.8	<i>Jude</i>	110
4.1.9	<i>Sam</i>	111
4.1.10	<i>Roger</i>	112
4.1.11	<i>Fiona</i>	113
4.1.12	<i>Josie</i>	114
4.1.13	<i>Francis</i>	115
4.1.14	<i>Adam</i>	116
4.1.15	<i>Mimi</i>	117
4.1.16	<i>Timothy</i>	118
CHAPTER FIVE:.....		119
5	Analysis of interviews and case files.....	119
	Introduction.....	119
5.1	Data analysis.....	119
5.1.1	<i>Methods used</i>	120
5.1.2	<i>The grounded theory approach</i>	121
5.2	Components of cases.....	122
CHAPTER SIX:.....		125
6	Research findings.....	125
	Introduction.....	125
6.1	The young people and their identities.....	126
6.1.1	<i>Summary</i>	128
6.2	How others identify these young people.....	129
6.2.1	<i>Pathologisation of the dual heritage identity by professionals</i>	131
6.2.2	<i>Seeing beyond the dual heritage identity</i>	133
6.2.3	<i>Summary</i>	134
6.3	Services offered and what looked-after, dual heritage young people thought of these services.....	135
6.3.1	<i>Experiences that related to being looked-after</i>	135
6.3.2	<i>Safe environment</i>	135
6.3.3	<i>Experiences related to adoption and fostering</i>	139
6.3.4	<i>Dispelling assumptions based on skin colour</i>	141
6.3.5	<i>Summary</i>	142
6.4	How can these services be improved?.....	143

6.4.1	<i>Summary</i>	143
6.5	Reasons why dual heritage young people become looked-after	144
6.5.1	<i>Summary</i>	147
6.6	Racism.....	148
6.6.1	<i>Summary</i>	151
6.7	Messages to practitioners and policymakers.....	151
6.7.1	<i>Education</i>	152
6.7.2	<i>Labelling</i>	153
6.7.3	<i>Policy</i>	153
6.7.4	<i>Summary</i>	154
6.8	Conclusion	155
CHAPTER SEVEN.....		158
7	Discussions of the findings	158
	Introduction	158
7.1	The young people and their identity.....	159
7.1.1	<i>Summary</i>	161
7.2	How others identify them.....	162
7.2.1	<i>Pathologising dual heritage identity</i>	164
7.2.2	<i>Seeing beyond the dual heritage identity</i>	167
7.2.3	<i>Summary</i>	168
7.3	Services offered and what looked-after, dual heritage young people thought of such services	168
7.3.1	<i>Experiences that related to being looked-after</i>	168
7.3.2	<i>Safe environment</i>	172
7.3.3	<i>Experiences related to being fostered/adopted by white families</i>	175
7.3.4	<i>Dispelling assumptions based on skin colour</i>	178
7.3.5	<i>Summary</i>	181
7.4	How can these services be improved?	181
7.4.1	<i>Summary</i>	185
7.5	Reasons why dual heritage young people become looked-after	185
7.5.1	<i>Parenting capacity</i>	186
7.5.2	<i>Summary</i>	189
7.6	Racism.....	189
7.6.1	<i>Summary</i>	191
7.7	Messages to practitioners and policymakers.....	192
7.7.1	<i>Education</i>	193
7.7.2	<i>Labels</i>	195
7.7.3	<i>Policy</i>	196
7.7.4	<i>Summary</i>	198
7.8	Conclusion	198
CHAPTER EIGHT		201
8	Meeting the needs of looked-after, dual heritage young people: Negotiating complexities at all times.....	201
	Introduction	201
8.1	The interpretation of Section 22 (5) (c) of the Children Act 1989 in terms of the placement of dual heritage children and young people.....	202
8.1.1	<i>Summary</i>	204
8.2	Identity confusion.....	204

8.2.1	<i>Summary</i>	206
8.3	Prevalence white mothers and absent black African Caribbean fathers	206
8.4	Racism within families.....	207
8.5	White families can provide adequate and appropriate care placements. ...	208
8.6	Conceptualisation of the ecosystems which are likely to impact on looked-after dual heritage young people.....	209
8.6.1	<i>Needs of parents</i>	212
8.6.2	<i>Child's developmental needs</i>	213
Chapter Nine	215
9	Conclusion	215
	Introduction	215
9.1	Recommendations	218
9.1.1	<i>Placement policy</i>	219
9.1.2	<i>Anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices</i>	219
9.2	Areas for further research.....	219
9.2.1	<i>How to raise expectations of dual heritage pupils</i>	219
9.2.2	<i>Racism within the family</i>	220
9.2.3	<i>Who sees ethnic matching as important?</i>	220
9.2.4	<i>Support for lone, white mothers of dual heritage young people</i>	220
9.3	Final Reflections	222

APPENDICES:	224
Appendix 1: Participant’s information sheet (for the young people).....	224
Appendix 2: Participant’s information sheet (for the young people).....	227
Appendix 3: Dissertation/Thesis Risk assessment form	228
Appendix 4: Flyer given to participants attending In care/Leaving care conference at Southampton in July 2006.....	230
Appendix 5: Interview Schedule for practitioners	232
Appendix 6: Interview schedule for foster/adoptive parents	235
Appendix 7: Interview schedule for looked-after dual heritage young people	238
Appendix 8: Social workers, carers, relatives, friends and foster parent’s information sheet.....	239
Appendix 9: Participant’s Release Form in accordance to Data Protection Act 1998.	242
Appendix 10: A covering letter.....	243
Appendix 11: Participants’ vignettes	244
Appendix 12: Examples of some raw data.....	246
GLOSSARY.....	275
LIST OF REFERENCES:	277
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	318

LIST OF TABLES AND DIAGRAMS

Table 2.1: Ethnicity of children looked-after as at 31 March 2002, compared with children in the total population in England in the national census of 2001	45
Table 2.2: Children looked-after by Local Authorities in England at 31 March 2005 by ethnicity and age	46
Table 2.3: Children looked-after by Local Authorities in England at 31 March 2005 by Mixed-race categories and age.....	46
Diagram 3.1: The life-curve	92
Diagram 3.2: An intimacy circle	93
Table 5.1: Components of the Cases.....	123
Table 7.1: Reasons for starting to be looked-after in England during the year ending 31 st March 2002, by ethnic group	188
Diagram 8.1: Section 22 (5) of the Children Act 1989 illustrates what practitioners have to take into account when seeking placements.....	203
Diagram 8.2: The interrelated ecosystems which impact on the life of dual heritage young people (adopted from Bronfenbrenner's (1979)	210

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Ufoo-Vicky Lambeth

declare and confirm that the attached is all my own work. Reference to, quotation from, and discussion of the work of any person has been correctly acknowledged within the work.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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DEDICATION

For my children and grandchildren

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS:

This thesis reviews the situation of looked-after, children and young people generally, but focuses in particular on the care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people. Identity is central to my research – i.e. how the young people identify themselves and how others, including practitioners, identify them since this has consequences for their care. Thus, part of my research aims to investigate perception and misperception amongst looked-after, dual heritage young people and the professional practitioners who work with them. The notion that these young people experience identity crisis because they are neither white nor black (Maxime, 1993) is contested (Okitikpi, 2005) but persists. Okitikpi prefers to talk of an ignorance of history and culture. A review of recent literature on the subject reminds us that practice in this context needs to look beyond the dual heritage identity. Instead, it should focus on individuals' uniqueness, and skin colour must not be used as a deciding factor when meeting the needs of this group. The assessment of a child's needs should embrace the whole of Section 22 (5) of the Children Act 1989, which states:

In making any such decisions a local authority shall give due consideration -

- (a) having regard to his age and understanding, to such wishes and feelings of the child as they have been able to ascertain
- (b) to such wishes and feelings of any person mentioned in subsection (4) (b) to (d) as they have been able to ascertain; and
- (c) to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.

I have quoted the Children Act 1989, Section 22 (5) in full since the more I embarked on this journey of enquiry, the more I discovered its significance in this domain. In my discussions with social workers I began to notice that they paid more attention on (c) but not on (a) and (b) hence the focus of this study is on the exploration of these young peoples' care experiences. This may reveal whether 'cultural' considerations under Section 22 (5) (c) are possibly being used to conceal racialised thinking.

I had not considered exploring the care experiences of this group before embarking on social work studies. My interests stemmed from lectures on anti-oppressive and anti-

discriminatory practices in which issues surrounding ‘race’ and people of dual/multiple heritage were discussed. Questions about whether my dual heritage children considered themselves ‘white’ or ‘black’, and how they identified, led me to read widely on dual heritage issues. The more I read and became interested in the subject, the more I discovered that most knowledge about dual heritage individuals is based on the wider society’s assumptions and not empirical observation. I was interested in exploring how looked-after, dual heritage young people wish to be identified, how others identify them and their view on services available in the community. Section 22 (5) (c) was a major motivation for conducting this study. I was puzzled as to why some practitioners find it problematic to place dual heritage children and young people with white families given that these young people have one white and one black parent. In common with all looked-after individuals, this group need to be loved, cared for, listened to, and respected. While the young people involved in my study disagreed with the ‘colour blind’ approach (e.g. white carers taking the view that they would treat these dual heritage individuals as their white children), they felt that too much emphasis is placed on skin colour.

The overarching aim of this study is to explore the care experiences, identities and needs of looked-after, dual heritage young people. The objective is to inform policy and practice and improve services in this context since literature in this domain is scarce (Barn, 1999). The study is dedicated to deepening our understanding of the challenges facing this group. There are three valid reasons for exploring these issues. Dual heritage children become looked-after away from their birth families at a younger age than any other group (Selwyn et al., 2004). They also have a history of remaining in the public care system for longer periods than others (Bebbington and Miles, 1989; Rowe et al., 1989, Barn et al., 1997). Furthermore, their needs are often inadequately and inappropriately met (Ince, 1998; Richard and Ince, 2000).

Recent post-war history of family placement of black and ethnic minority children has broadly revealed three phases. First, in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s white foster/adoptive parents were recruited to care for black children and young people for a series of complex reasons. Perhaps, ignorance of lifestyle meant that a generation of black families’ capacity to care was hidden from the gaze of mostly white social workers, and an assumption about the dominant skills of white carers. Second, in the

1980s, Ahmed et al. (1986) argued that such practices needed to recognise the scope of black families and acknowledge the distinctive black identity of many young people. Moreover, black children occupied a disproportionate part of the care system (Ahmad, 1990). A third phase has resulted in many creative practices and a new consciousness about the needs of young people in this context. However, my view is that, alongside changes and an improving formal and informal anti-racist stance in institutions and their practice, family placement in this domain may remain one-dimensional since colour and ethnicity may often dictate child and family placement. The continuing challenge is to manage complexity and children's needs in a broad sense, and to understand the evolving societal response to 'race', colour, religion and ethnicity.

Practice could be said to have been characterised by a fearful and defensive approach in the resulting oversimplification of identities. These perceptions lack the subtlety required for managing the complexity of cases involving dual heritage young people. Some practitioners may still perceive identity as singular and static, particularly when it concerns the placements of black and dual heritage young people. Since services offered to these individuals may be often based on skin colour, this thesis explores issues surrounding identity, 'race' and racism in the 'care' experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people — and the resultant impact on their lives.

The requirement under Section 22 (5) (c) could cause some problems in practice. For instance, whose religion, 'race' and language are to be considered: the birth parents' or the child's? Which parent's religion, 'race' and language should take precedence if different? Should the placement be based on the birth parents' genetic inheritance? Service providers may be fortunate in finding a family who look like the child in appearance but what does that actually mean? It is not always the case that, because they look the same, these individuals will share the same religion and other cultural background as the child's birth parents.

Identities — whether social or racial — are not static entities (Fook, 2001; Katz, 2001; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Song, 2003; Shih and Sanchez, 2009). The concept of dual heritage is as ambiguous and complex as that of any issues surrounding ethnicity. Although some scholars portray dual heritage individuals as marginal (Park, 1931), others have shown that they can and do make choices about their ethnic and racial

identities (Benson, 1981; Wilson, 1987; Song, 2003; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Okitikpi, 2005; Goodyer and Okitikpi, 2007). The stigma attached to dual heritage individuals both in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) stems from the way in which 'race' has been represented historically. It is therefore important to examine their care experiences and lessons that can be learnt from these cases.

Robinson (2000) believes that it is imperative to acknowledge the fact that dual heritage individuals are not simply black because they also have a white heritage. Nonetheless, others claim that, since looked-after, dual heritage individuals are considered black, placements should be with black families to reflect their ethnic origin (Goldstein, 1999; Mallows, 2003). How can this be the case when some of these young people have had no contact with black families? For example, prior to becoming looked-after, the majority of the young people in my study (fourteen) lived with lone, white mothers and had only limited contact with their black fathers. It is vital to seek the views of this group instead of basing practice on the assumptions made by professionals. Only these young people themselves can quantify the importance of ethnic matching.

It is desirable for dual heritage individuals to be exposed to both heritages as failure to do so deny them one part of their heritage. Would practitioners who believe that it is wrong to put this group with white families automatically place Chinese or Asian children with black families? We must consider the impact of placing dual heritage young people who have been brought up by their lone, white mothers with black families solely because it may help them to deal with racism. Other factors may be just as important in the lives of these young people besides strategies to cope with racism. For the majority of vulnerable young people, particularly those who have been abused and rejected by their biological families, a safe environment and stability may be high in their list of priorities.

There is a relationship between paternalism rigid categorical 'racialised' thinking and service provision which, despite the best intentions, is likely to impact negatively in this domain. These problems could be avoided by simply listening to this group wherever possible. The age at which the majority of my sample group entered care ranged from six to fifteen and none of them were asked about their preferences regarding

placements. Listening to these young people could be one way of meeting their needs adequately and appropriately — consequently improving existing services.

Children living with their birth parents do not necessarily follow the same religion as their elders. So why is it a statutory requirement to match looked-after children and young people with people who share the same religion as their birth parents? If it is agreed that looked-after, dual heritage children and young people should be placed with black or ‘mixed-race’ families, is it because society sees them as black? If so, could be equated to endorsing the ‘one-drop rule’ (Owusu-Bempah, 2005). Following Section 22(5) (c) of the Children Act 1989 in the strictest sense could lead to the complexity of dual heritage young people’s experiences being ignored.

Some practitioners may be wary of contravening legislation under Section 22 (5) (c) due to the fear of being challenged by their organisations or the courts in the event of problems. Practitioners are thus constrained by the fear of taking risks that can attract negative attention to their organisations (Fook and Gardner, 2007). Failure to match this group with families who meet the criteria set out in Section 22 (5) (c) can result in them being left in children’s homes. This may explain why looked-after, dual heritage children and young people spend longer periods in the public care system than other groups. Whose best interest is protected when children are left to spend long periods in care whilst practitioners are busy looking for perfectly ‘matched’ placement families?

The lack of these discussions in areas of policy and professional practice has contributed to unpleasant experiences in the lives of some dual heritage individuals, particularly those in the looked-after population. Considering that, in Britain, the number of people with one white and one black parent of Caribbean origin is growing (Owen, 2005; Bradford, 2006; Asthana and Smith, 2009) we must ensure that our understanding of this group is based on scientific findings and not assumptions. Issues surrounding their identity are a matter for them to decide and not for other people to dictate. This is particularly true in the case of young people participating in this study as they are the users of social service. Their views on how these services can be improved are vital to service providers. These young people could potentially help identify many problems and challenges relating to their care needs. For instance, why do some looked-

after, dual heritage children and young people succeed and others do not? This is why we need to understand the care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people.

Structure of the thesis

Chapters one and two provide a critical review of the literature. Chapter one explores the concept of dual heritage and opens with a definition of the term. It gives an historical context and explores the concept of 'race', arguing that racism is a contributing factor to the stigma attached to dual heritage individuals.

Chapter two provides a general overview of the literature regarding young people who are being, or have been, looked-after before focusing on looked-after, dual heritage young people in more detail. The politics of placement, including some assumptions relating to placing dual heritage children with white families are also examined.

Chapter three focuses on methodology and provides a rationale for the research methods underpinning this thesis. It demonstrates an analytical understanding and use of methodology by critically discussing the methods used and the reasons behind this approach.

Chapter four introduces the vignettes of the looked-after, dual heritage young people who participated in this research by providing a snapshot of each young person and their past histories, present perspectives and their unique personalities.

Chapter five describes the approach used to analyse the data and illustrates how each case was compiled. The complexities of this study called for an analytical approach which could be used at the data collection stage. A grounded theory approach was also employed.

Chapter six presents an overview and findings based on information from participants and data collected from the five case files held by the young people at the time of the interview. These files contained these young people's records and the depth of the recorded information varied (some were detailed and others were very patchy). It explores the young people's stories and the emerging themes.

Chapter seven uses the themes identified in the previous chapter to discuss this group's care experiences.

Chapter eight discusses ways of meeting the needs of looked-after, dual heritage young people based on the key themes that arose from the exploration of this group's care experiences. This chapter suggests that an ecological approach through negotiating complexities at all times is necessary in meeting the needs of looked-after, dual heritage young people.

Finally, chapter nine provides a conclusion to the thesis. It offers recommendations and suggests who are likely to benefit from this thesis. It also offers final reflections.

CHAPTER ONE:

1 Dual heritage, ‘race’ and identity

Introduction

This critical review of the literature is divided into two chapters. Chapter one critically examines the dual heritage concept and is organised into eight sections. It opens with a definition of the term ‘dual heritage’ before setting this description in an historical context. Although many scholars have explored the experiences of dual heritage and ‘mixed-race’ individuals in Britain (Benson, 1981; Wilson, 1987; Okitikpi, 1999; 2005; Alibhai-Brown, 2001; Parker and Song, 2001; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Olumide; 2002; 2005; Ifekwunigwe, 2004; Tikly et al., 2004; Owen, 2005; Harman and Barn, 2005; Goodyer and Okitikpi, 2007; Owusu-Bempah, 1994, 2005), literature on the care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people is scarce (Barn et al., 1997; Barn, 1999; Okitikpi, 2005).

Most of what is generally known about dual heritage and ‘mixed race’ individuals comes from research focusing primarily on affluent middle-class and university students from the USA (Spickard, 1992; Root, 1992; Root, 1996; Root, 2003; Wardle, 1992; Wardle, 1999; Gaskins, 1999; Twine, 1999; Rockquemore, 1999; Wright, 2000; Rockquemore and Brunsma, 2002; Brunsman, 2005; Zack, 2005; Townsend et al.; 2009; Rockquemore et al., 2009; Thornton, 2009;). The sample groups used in these studies are, of course, very different from mine, which focuses on looked-after young people who, on the whole, come from working-class backgrounds.

The starting point of understanding appropriate ways of meeting the needs of looked-after, dual heritage young people appropriately and adequately requires an epistemology that recognises the normality of pluralism and cultural difference (Owusu-Bempah, 2005; Okitikpi, 2005; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002). Furthermore, an ecological model that stresses the relations of familial, social and individuals’ self-determination within a context that interrelates with history is necessary when considering ways of meeting this group’s general needs (e.g. care, social and racial identity). Therefore, in order to bring out complex issues and generate discussions, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model

will be used for this thesis as an attempt to provide a framework that is likely to highlight various factors that can affect looked-after, dual heritage young people at several levels. The levels are the micro (e.g. the individual and the family), exo (the first ring of influences around the child, for example organisations, neighbourhood, and community institutions) and (macro e.g. cultural values and attitudes, the wider society and how it is structured, including historical and political context, and meso (the link between systems, for example, Bronfenbrenner's classic example, home and school).

Section one provides a brief definition of the term dual heritage and the reasons why it has been chosen for this thesis.

Section two outlines the historical context to illustrate how historical and political influences continue to affect this group more than any others.

Section three critically examines the discourse of 'race'. It demonstrates that socially accepted wisdom has added to varying discourses and discrimination against dual heritage individuals.

Section four examines the notion of ethnicity and the way it is sometimes used interchangeably with 'race', although the two are not synonymous.

Section five critically reviews the literature on fears of 'mixing races'. It discusses racially mixed unions, the stigma attached to them and the implication for their children.

Section six examines the notion of identity and critically reviews the literature on the dual heritage identity.

Section seven focuses on the politicised 'black label' and illustrates how the term 'black' has been used at different times for varying reasons, from derogatory meaning to affirmation and empowerment.

Section eight provides a conclusion to the chapter and focuses on the experiences of being a dual heritage individual and the 'complexity versus simplistic' ways of perceiving this group.

1.1 Defining dual heritage

Finding a relevant term to describe the group for this thesis was a challenge as I wanted to move away from assigning yet another label to these individuals. The term has not been used to suggest that every person with one white and one black parent should identify as dual heritage. Furthermore, it does not mean that this group is somehow detached from other (mono-racial) minority or white ethnic groups. Like mono-racial groups, their experiences vary (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Goodyer and Okitikpi, 2007). Furthermore, the term dual heritage has been used by the Department of Health 2000 (paragraph 2.46:46); Katz and Treacher (2005:46) and Thoburn (2005:112) when discussing individuals with one white and one black parent. I have adopted the term dual heritage throughout unless when making reference to other people's work. I have used the term simply because it provides a working definition for this thesis and avoids privileging 'race' and physical attributes. In my fieldwork, I endeavoured to allow the young people to 'self-identify'. Hence, my research aimed to address how these young people like to identify themselves.

Children of white British people married to white German or Americans have dual heritage. Although they have mixed cultural heritage, due to their phenotype, their categorisation differs from that of white/black or white/Asian — thus the problem is not the mixing but physical appearance. Much research in this area has focused on 'mixed race' and 'mixed parentage', and researchers have examined various combinations. It is appropriate to do so because other racial dynamics besides black/white exist, as highlighted above. The uncertainties around racial identities in "the current context of global changes" (Fook, 2001) means that the use of the term black to describe dual heritage individuals needs to be reconsidered.

The notion that an individual's identity can simply be transmitted from parent to child ignores other factors from both structure and people's agency. There is no one single or correct term to describe children with one white and one black parent. Nonetheless, discussions by organisations such as Multiple Heritage Project, People in Harmony and Intermix have embarked on discussions and awareness around mixed race individuals. These organisations do not merely focus on those from African-Caribbean origins but other mixed backgrounds as well.

We cannot use 'race' or parentage as the only definer of ethnicity, especially when those with dual or multiple heritages are assigned the identity of the minority parent. The term heritage encompasses more than 'race', and therefore, there is more to the term heritage than the inheritance of physical characteristic. This means that dual heritage individuals are likely to inherit more than the biological physical features of their parents. There is a tendency to think solely of biological inheritance of physical features when referring to the heritage of dual heritage individuals. In addition to physical features, dual heritage people are likely to inherit other things from their biological parents. This may include: values; language; food; religion; customs, traditions and stories or music learnt from parents or grandparents.

Focussing exclusively on the phenotype of dual heritage individuals fails to consider what else is available to them to inherit from both their heritages. Several things come to mind when we talk of heritage and it is worth noting that inheritance from people's ancestors' take account of cultural, natural and heritage due to their birthright. I shall briefly discuss these three examples of heritage:

Cultural heritage may include a country's historical buildings, national museums and their collections (e.g. the British museum). In this case heritage may be about people's recollections and things which make sense to them. That is to say how these things are perceived is likely to depend on people's experiences. For example, national heritage such as historical buildings in Britain may not bring out happy memories to everyone. The reaction may be different to people who believe that slaves were used to build these buildings.

Natural heritage include a country's natural resources, for example oil, gem stones, national parks and landscapes such as mountains and lakes.

Heritage due to their birthrights can refer to a position obtained by an individual through birth, for example being a member of the royal family. This could also refer to what people may inherit following the death of their parents. However, people's heritage may change; for example, it does not necessarily mean that people born in poverty will always be poor or those born rich will always be rich as circumstances can change.

1.2 The historical context

Although people's lives are often shaped by multiplicity of factors, including cultural and socio-economic status (SES), historical and political influences continue to affect dual heritage individuals more than any other groups. SES is often used to assess or measure people's economic and social position on the basis of their income, education, class and occupation (Davey Smith et. al., 2003). In the British context, how will dual heritage individuals fare, and what economic and social position will they occupy based on their income, education and occupation? An historical context is necessary to help our understanding. Lewis (1996:27) reminds us that, in theorising experience, we should:

...concentrate on its historical specificity and excavate its embeddedness in webs of social, political and cultural relations which are themselves organised around axes of power and which act to constitute subjectivities and identities.

Over time, socially accepted wisdom has added to varying discrimination against dual heritage individuals in Britain because colour has been used as a signifier of superiority and inferiority. Subsequently, dual heritage people are perceived differently from any other group in society. Categorisation of individuals in terms of skin colour justified the slave trade and the oppression of black people (Myrdal, 2001). The construction of certain groups as inferior led to a body of laws during imperial times to control people using the biology of 'race', culture and language as rationalisation (Gilroy, 2000; Stoler, 2001). Du Bois (1969:79 - 80; cited by Jones, 1973:82) wrote:

Africa and the Negro have been read almost out of the bounds of humanity. They lost in modern thought their history and cultures. All that was human in Africa was deemed European or Asiatic. Africa was no integral part of the world because the world which raped it had to pretend that it had not harmed a man but a thing.

The portrayal of Africans as biologically non-human meant that slavery could be rationalised since real people were not being harmed (Malik, 1996). Even in the twenty-first century, 'whiteness' represents all that is good while 'black' stands for the opposite

(Jones, 1973; Frankenberg, 1999) and it has gained historical meaning in the context of white supremacy (Back and Solomos, 2001) because it is often seen as symbolic of privilege (Kimmel, 2003). Connecting the colonised with primitive images was a consequence of complex historical processes that took various forms in particular colonial contexts. Europeans saw black as a colour that symbolised “sickness, death, ugliness, and the devil” (Boogaart, 1982:45). We live in a society in which skin colour continues to take primacy because some people still talk about ‘race’ as if it was something real. This, in turn, influences how people in interracial relationships and their children are treated. Dual heritage people continue to be considered black and the rigidity of this categorical thinking is apparent in the suggestion that they are more likely to be in a ‘limbo’ (Park, 1931).

1.3 ‘Race’

Both past and contemporary societies have been shaped by the concepts of ‘race’ and racism, which are constantly changing and evolving (Nagel, 2003; Van Soest and Garcia, 2003). During the age of expanding European colonies, the notion of ‘race’ changed from the physical to the cultural, and black people were described as primitive and savage in every sense of the word (Goldberg, 2001):

In the act of defining Africans as ‘black’ and ‘savage’, and thereby excluding them from their world, Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were representing themselves as ‘white’ and ‘civilised’ (Miles, 1991:39).

Although judgements made about the reality of human variability and the distinction between various groups based on a simple visual appraisal are scientifically misleading (Zack, 2005), they are real enough to those who are seen as racially inferior (hooks, 1999). One example is the degradation of the Jews by Hitler during the Second World War.

Even though the origin of the term ‘race’ is unclear, the idea of classifying human beings by their skin colour did not exist before the fifteenth century when Europeans first came into contact with black people (Boogaart, 1982; Jordan, 2001; Van Soest and Garcia, 2003). Reference to ‘race’ confuses innate traits (e.g. hair texture) with those

acquired socially, such as language (Benedict, 2001). The origin of modern 'race' relationships, which were shaped by political ideas, came from Europe when Pope Nicholas V gave the Portuguese exclusive right to explore the African Coast (Cox, 2001). 'Race' relationships were shaped by political ideas and differentiated between aristocratic families. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European physical anthropologists used 'race' to classify human beings using observable characteristics, such as the size of their skulls (Benedict, 2001).

The eighteenth century perception was that reality was ordered in terms of universal, timeless, objective, and fixed laws which rational investigation could uncover (Malik, 1996). The global expansion of European civilization brought the Europeans in contact with other human societies that did not share their phenotype or lifestyles. They used the concept of 'race' to explain differences in human beings (Mason, 2006). Throughout the era of colonialism, the colonisers ensured that images of the colonised went hand in hand with negative racial stereotypes (Back and Solomos, 2001). The colonised were equated to animals based on scientific racism, which led to racial inferiority of non-European people (Todorov, 2001). The notion of 'race', which is "complex and multifaceted", (Malik, 1996:71) was used as a means of understanding the changing relationships between society and nature (Back and Solomos, 2001). This determined the privileges that could be enjoyed by those seen as superior due to their phenotype (Kimmel, 2003; Mason, 2006).

While 'race' has no biological basis (Rex, 2001; Zack, 2005), it is widely seen in biological terms because biology has been politicised through social construction to give it meaning (Alcoff, 1999). In common with gender, class and sexual orientation, 'race' can have complex implications for people's experiences and life chances (Van Soest and Garcia, 2003; Rockquemore et al., 2009). 'Race', which shifts across space and time, is socially constructed (Shih and Sanchez, 2009), and continues to hold significant social implications globally (Rex, 1986; Miles, 1991, 1993; Back and Solomos, 2001). 'Race' may not have any scientific credibility but social groups can be significantly affected by its hierarchy and the criminalisation that accompanies it. Racial discrimination and political/economic marginalisation contributed to the 1980s' inner city problems following simmering tensions from the 1970s and 1980s.

‘Mugging’ was proclaimed by the Metropolitan Police to be a ‘black crime’; consequently black communities were heavily policed (Bowling and Phillips, 2002).

Racialisation is a vehicle through which subordination is produced and reproduced (Keith, 1993). Policy responses to difficulties faced by minority ethnic communities are often oppressive and instead of addressing tensions in these communities, they intensify the marginalisation of those who are already disadvantaged (Hall, 1982; Giddens, 1987). The causes of the 1980s riots were racialised and put down to disorderly young people, particularly perceived tendencies for violence within West Indian culture (Keith, 1993). Racialised notions were applied to simplify complex situations that occurred for multiplicity of reasons (Rowe, 1998). The identification of black people “as the dangerous classes” (Gilroy, 1982:173) was the outcome of such racialisation.

1.3.1 Racism

Racism based on social structural grouping such as class, nationality or racial labels, originates from ideologies of superiority that benefits some groups whilst oppressing others (Cose, 1997; Fook, 2007; Dominelli, 2002; Collins, 2003; McGhee, 2005). Defining racism, which changes according to social and political conditions, is difficult and complex. It has been suggested that the term, which entered the popular language for the first time during the interwar years (Malik, 1996), is designed to set groups of people apart (Rex, 1986; Romanucci-Ross and Devos, 1995). Given that racism is sustained by social relations that set in motion cycles of disadvantages, the term has shifting and often disputed meanings (Miles, 1991; Rattansi and Westwood, 1994; Feagin, 2006). For Feagin (2006), racism is behind major institutions which have been created on racial oppression and he gives an example of the USA as a country that deliberately initiated a racialised hierarchy to achieve its goal.

Racism has taken place in specific historical and political epochs and in certain societies for various reasons. Since racism can be expressed in various forms and racist motives are complicated (Wieviorka, 1994), “racism is better expressed in the plural: as racisms” (McGhee, 2007:216). People may define what they perceive as acts of racism differently and the lives of those seen as inferior are constantly affected by racism which can be overt or covert, particularly in areas of employment, housing, education, health and justice. Overt racism is familiar to the majority of people because it is easily

noticeable and takes the form of direct oppressive or discriminatory actions — for example being verbally abused or attacked because of one's phenotype. Below are examples of different forms of racism that can be expressed overtly or covertly.

Covert cultural racism can be seen in the derogatory, stereotypical portrayal of non-white groups in the media and television, particularly in the depiction of ethnic-minority cultures as problematic due to their 'difference' (Phillips, 2007). Slavery and the Holocaust both provide historical examples of overt cultural racism.

Individual overt racism often takes place in hate crimes, such as the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and Anthony Walker in 2005. Both victims were black sixth-form students murdered by white British youths. Conversely, individual covert racism is evidenced in schools that refuse to open their doors to looked-after children and young people in the belief that their admission could bring down standards.

Institutional racism takes place in cultures of different organisations and their social practices. According to Van Soest and Garcia (2003:16):

Institutional racism is hidden behind the standard practices of hard-working, well meaning white people. Institutional racism typically is not ugly. Rather than being expressed through racial slurs, it tends to be wrapped in noble proclamations of tradition, fairness, and high standards. Rather than being a rare incident, it is woven into the fabric of our historically racist society. The subtle and slippery forms of institutional racism are silently and invisibly tearing at the fiber [sic] of our schools and our society...

Institutional overt racism can take place when someone is refused entry into a restaurant or a club because of their skin colour whereas institutional covert racism could be illustrated in the allocation of houses, jobs, or entry to certain schools based on racial traits.

Racism based on phenotype or colour racism needs to be investigated together with new or cultural racism that involves ethnicity, religion and language (Wieviorka, 1994; Mac an Ghail, 1999). The latter form of racism sees certain groups containing undesirable

people who have no place in society (Stoler, 2001). Basing racisms and 'race' discourses on morphological differences (e.g. hair) ignores genetic and cultural variances.

Todorov (2001) distinguishes between racism, which he sees as forms of behaviour found in all nations, and racialism, which he describes as a Western European movement of ideas that flourished from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Racism is a conscious, oppressive force and primary barrier that blocks access to opportunity, privileges and social justice (Dominelli, 2002) depending on people's 'race', gender and class (Collins, 2003). Racism affects how dual heritage individuals are treated in numerous ways. Both practitioners and researchers often hold negative, stereotypical views based on racist assumptions derived from the traditions of western culture (Dwivedi, 2003). Racism is complicated and can take place when certain groups are excluded through the promotion of shared history and traditions (Solomos, 2003; McGhee, 2005). Okitikpi stresses that:

...although there has been a dramatic change in black people's political and social condition from the early period, the legacy of slavery and colonisation still creates a powerful impression in the minds of black people in Britain. There is a sense that each new generation of black people experience, and vicariously relive, the pain and powerlessness of their forebears (2005:62).

How non-white people experience racism may depend on gender and neighbourhood (Back, 1996) and this means contextualising these experiences differently. The lives of non-white people may have improved since 1950 due to changes in social economics. However, racial discrimination continues and, as highlighted earlier, this form of racism led to the murder of Stephen Lawrence who was murdered by white British youths as a result of hate crime. The subsequent report by Macpherson (1999), following the investigation of Stephen Lawrence's murder, stated that racial abuse and institutional racism still exist. Arguably as a nation, we have not moved on that far from the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act restrictions or politician Enoch Powell's infamous, 'Rivers of Blood' speech in 1968, which created a fear of black people swamping Britain.

The tendency to influence social policies through the identification of certain groups as a social problem is nothing new. In Britain, moral panic about people and places has existed since the age of industrialisation and urbanisation (Sibley, 1995), which is exacerbated during times of economic unrest. An example of current economic unrest or what has been referred to as ‘Dawn of new age of unrest’ (Elliott et al., 2009:1), was witnessed when construction workers in power energy and oil refinery plants across Britain, went on strike. These workers were against their employer’s decision to recruit cheaper foreign workers from Italy and Portugal and were calling for ‘British jobs for British people’ (Elliott et al., 2009). Furthermore, there is a tendency for the government, the media and some sections of society to portray all those seeking asylum in Britain as bogus people who are primarily driven by economic gain rather than dislocated groups of people (McGhee, 2005).

Racism and other forms of inequality continue to give rise to an alienated and racially unfair society, and people who form relationships outside their own groups are often subjected to disapproval from the public (Alibhai-Brown, 2001). Racism that is directed towards couples in mixed relationships may prevent them from giving positive affirmation to their children. A major contributing factor to the vulnerability of 61 percent of black, mixed parentage families is isolation (Goldstein, 2005). Again, if white mothers who have dual heritage children, encounter racism from their own families (Banks, 1996), this may explain why they turn to social services and not their families.

Dual heritage individuals experience racism in the same way as black people (Olumide, 2002) — not only from white but also from black groups (Banks, 1992; Root, 1996; Cose, 1997; Ince, 1998; Wardle, 1999; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Owusu-Bempah, 2005; Alibhai-Brown, 2001; Okitikpi, 2005). Depiction of racial distinctions based on superior and inferior ‘races’ is what Mac an Ghail (1999:7) refers to as “colour racism”. It is associated with a discourse that perpetuated the belief in fixed or essential racial characteristics. Mac an Ghail (1999) calls for a move away from the white/black dualism associated with colour racism. He believes in placing cultural and religious identities centre stage and moving away from the 1970s and 1980s ideas of racism based on phenotype.

Cultural racism against Muslims, or what is referred to as Islamophobia, has increased (McGhee, 2005, 2008; Modood, 2007). Better transparency in how we conceptualise 'difference' may help us to establish appropriate political schemes for social justice (Coombes and Brah, 2000; Collins, 2003):

Britain has to address an anti-Muslim cultural racism as Muslims become a significant feature of its cities (Modood, 2007:9).

While xenophobia may make us wary of those we see as different (Bauman, 2000; McGhee, 2008), September 11th 2001 acted as a reminder that we live in a globalised world. Subsequently, anti-Muslim and anti-western racism has potentially increased. Its eventual consequences in a global context are unclear at present. Cultural racism needs to be explored since the consequences of Islamophobia have meant that:

...the state of emergency legislation has been introduced partly to defend the UK against the potential 'Muslim threat' associated with terrorist activities (McGhee, 2005:94).

Islamophobia has reinforced the fantasy of 'whiteness' that often perceives the 'other' as terrorists (hooks, 1992). For instance, the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes, the Brazilian electrician, in July 2005 occurred because of his phenotype.

Previously, African Caribbean people were portrayed as muggers or Rastafarian drug dealers and the Asian people as law-abiding foreigners (Alexander, 2000). Islamophobia portrays everyone from the Middle East and South Asia (chiefly young men) as fanatics (Ray and Smith, 2000). Islam and Muslims are now associated with al-Qaida and these terms invoke terror. These groups and others, whose physical attributes may resemble people from the Middle East and South Asia, are made targets of suspicion. People must not be seen as alien simply because they look different and have different faiths:

...in defining nation through culture the New Right inevitably define 'different' as 'alien (Husband, 1991:64).

Unlike 'cultural racism', which is directed towards groups who have failed to assimilate the Western way of thinking (Mac an Ghail, 1999), racism towards dual heritage individuals is based on skin colour.

In a study conducted by Gaskins on the experiences of dual heritage young people in the USA between 1995 and 1998, the majority of participants reported experiencing racism that ranged from name calling to physical abuse. The stories told by participants in Gaskins's study varied. Some of her participants reported that their families dealt with racism by pretending that it did not exist whilst others talked about being exposed to black history, stories and open discussions on 'race' matters. The young people in families where 'race' issues were openly discussed reported being well adjusted and comfortable with their dual heritage identity. This view is supported by Wardle (1999) and confirmed by Wilson (1987), who found that children living in families and attending schools where issues of 'race' were frankly talked about had positive views of their dual heritage identities. Nonetheless, in a British context, the majority of dual heritage children live with their lone, white mothers (Harman and Barn, 2005). Discussions of 'race' and black history could possibly prove problematic for some of these mothers who may be shunned by both white and black communities.

Furthermore, some participants in Gaskins's study reported that certain teachers had low expectations of them and when they genuinely asked questions to clarify a point, these teachers belittled them. Gaskins (1999:137) quoted a dual heritage student aged sixteen years who explained:

Sometimes there are teachers who assume that I'm not going to be as intelligent as their white students are. If I go up and ask them a question, they'll be a little put out. They'll be like, 'Didn't I already go over that? Can't you listen?'

The above illustration mirrors some observations made by Ali (2003) who, in her work on mixed race and post race, detected that some teachers were condescending and certain schools did not know how to deal with racism. If dual heritage young people living with their biological parents face these reactions, it is likely that the situation will be far worse for those in the looked-after population.

Class, 'race' and gender may determine whether the experiences of dual heritage individuals are positive or negative (Twine, 1999; Ali, 2003). According to Ali (2003), families with comfortable lifestyles had been accepted by their community. These families aimed to ensure that their children enjoyed the same privileges because class was a shield against racism. Her indication that class and acceptance had a role to play in determining the life chances of dual heritage individuals reflected some of the participants in Gaskins's study. The majority of the young people in my research lack this protection since they do not have the power of those from middle-class backgrounds. For example, if parents from middle-class backgrounds dislike the school their children attend, they can move to another catchment area. Groups that influence 'the way things are' have the ability to manipulate situations to suit them (Fook, 2007).

1.3.2 Summary

The concept of racism has evolved over the past few centuries and is difficult to define. Racism is used to set groups apart in the belief that inferior and superior people exist. Racism, which can be expressed overtly or covertly, can be defined differently by those experiencing it and needs to be examined in context. Various factors — including class, sexual orientation, 'race', gender and religion — may determine how different types of racism impact on people's lives. Racism is more severe than setting people apart particularly when it is experienced as discrimination on the basis of physical features. Stereotypical racist assumptions held by some professionals often result in low expectations of dual heritage individuals who experience covert cultural racism as well as individual and institutional overt racism. Experiences of dual heritage individuals from middle-class families are more likely to be positive compared to those from working-class backgrounds.

1.4 Ethnicity

Though ethnicity and 'race' are used interchangeably in Britain (Mason, 2006), the two terms are not synonymous. There is no consensus amongst sociologists regarding what ethnicity means since use of the term often assumes the homogeneity of ethnic groups (Modood, 2003). The concept is favoured by some sociologists as attempts to minimise the emphasis on physical differences while shifting focus on cultural variations (Mason, 2006). Both terms are tied up with individual and social identities and invoke arguments

about (national) belonging and entitlement (Mac an Ghaill, 1999). Ethnicity epitomises social groups with a shared history, sense of identity and cultural roots that may occur despite racial difference and shapes a group's culture. Many white people do not consider themselves to be 'ethnic' or to have an ethnicity although everyone belongs to an ethnic group. Both ethnicity and 'race', which are non-scientific, are socially constructed dynamic social processes used to control people and predicated on racism (Malik, 1996; Back and Solomos, 2001). Arguably, immigration laws have developed into channels used to expose multifaceted societal fears (Malik, 1996) because:

...the widespread interchangeability of the concept of race and ethnicity in Britain is intimately bound up with the colonial roots of Britain's immigration experience, with the distinctive visibility of those who came to be seen as quintessential 'immigrants', and with the persistence of a subtext of biological thinking about human difference that experiences periodic public resurgences (Mason, 2006:105).

The recurring public obsession with the differences that exist between human beings (referred to by Mason) often occurs when the economy is in decline. In Britain, this normally results from unfounded allegations that immigrants take jobs from British people. Often the jobs open to immigrants are poorly paid or the ones that are turned down by white indigenous people, as reported after the Second World War. Since unemployment rates continue to be higher for minority ethnic groups, it could be argued that nothing has changed where inequalities are concerned. Ethnicity and 'race' are often linked to processes of border maintenance (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Mason, 2003a, 2006) to keep those seen as undesirables or misfits out. The term 'minority ethnic', which is often used to refer to those seen as different based on their physical appearance or their social lives, allows no room for self-identification. Various situations and relationships that people form with others may dictate their ethnic group, thus making ethnicity "situational and relational" (Mason, 2006:106).

In their work on young mothers and the care system, Barn and Mantovani (2006) found that problems faced by minority ethnic women are made worse by discourses of 'race' and ethnicity. The problems faced by those in ethnic minorities could be worse because ethnicity and 'race' operate as symbols that distinguish and essentialise those groups in

a degrading manner (Song, 2003). Phenotype and distinct culture are often used to set ethnic minorities apart from the perceived majority, which ignores the differences among various ethnic groups (Mason, 2006).

1.5 Fears of ‘mixing races’

The term miscegenation (blood mixing) and associated fears can be situated within certain historical and geographical milieus (Coombes and Brah, 2000; Stoler, 2001). The two countries that historically passed the most laws prohibiting racially mixed unions were the USA and South Africa (Alibhai-Brown, 2001). In the USA, the law prohibiting mixed marriages continued in some states until 1967 (Parker and Song, 2001). Societal attitudes towards mixed marriages and children from these unions have not changed much since that law was abolished (Moran, 2001). Anti-miscegenation laws were due to the fear of black blood contaminating the white ‘race’ (Rockquemore and Brunnsma, 2002; Nagel, 2003). The colonisers dreaded being outnumbered by the children from different social and cultural backgrounds who, in turn, could have polluted “their cultural legacy and the genetic stock itself” (Coombes and Brah, 2000:4). The notion of contaminating the white ‘race’ is absurd because a pure ‘race’ does not exist (Dunn and Dobzhansky, 1946).

The white supremacist ideology of racial separation was the cornerstone of the institution of slavery that endorsed a total ban on interracial relationships (Rockquemore and Brunnsma, 2002; Root, 1996; Parker and Song, 2001; Owusu-Bempah, 1994 and 2005; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Moran, 2001). Fears about miscegenation and conservation of racial purity have often strengthened debates about cultural and social intermixing (Coombes and Brah, 2000). Such fears are unfounded since mixed relationships are not a new phenomenon (Leiris, 1951) because:

Race mixture has been going on during the whole of recorded history. Incontrovertible evidence from studies on fossil human remains shows that even in pre-history, at the very dawn of humanity, mixing of different stocks (at least occasionally) took place...Mixing of at least closely related races (such as those living in different European countries) appears, however, to be biologically

desirable rather than the other way round (Dunn and Dobzhansky, 1946:98 - 99).

If the mixing of Europeans with other Europeans is desirable, it confirms that phenotype is undoubtedly the issue. In Britain, fears of miscegenation still influence society's perception of individuals in such relationships and their children (Alibhai-Brown, 2001).

1.5.1 Racially mixed unions in Britain

Racially mixed unions have existed in Britain from the time that the Romans first occupied the country (Fryer, 1984) and famous individuals such as Mary Seacole and Samuel Coleridge–Taylor were dual heritage (Fatimilehin, 1999). Mary Seacole was a famous nurse, born in 1805 to a black Jamaican mother and Scottish father. Samuel Coleridge–Taylor was an English composer, born in 1875 to a Sierra Leonean black father and a white English mother. In Britain, half of Caribbean men, a third of Caribbean women and a fifth of Indian, African and Asian men have a white partner (Modood et al., 1997). According to Devore (2001), the main question asked by families and friends of a mixed relationship is: 'what about the children?' This can be problematic from the outset and it can be damaging for some dual heritage individuals, particularly if grandparents are concerned that the grandchildren will be 'mixed' and others questions their identity (Devore, 2001). Racially mixed unions can be empowering or challenging depending on the level of support (Alibhai-Brown, 2001).

Caballero et al. (2008) believe that most people's knowledge of interracial relationships and children from these unions is based on myths, stereotyping and media representations that generally perceive this group as abnormal or dysfunctional. Although historically, mixed relationships have been viewed negatively (Owusu-Bempah, 2005; Moran, 2003; Okitikpi, 2005; Goodyer and Okitikpi, 2007), this has not stopped these unions (Alibhai-Brown, 2001; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002) and the number of people in racially mixed relationships is growing (Root, 1996; 2001 UK national census; Rockquemore and Brunisma, 2002; Bradford, 2006). In Britain, the four categories in the 2001 census identified as 'mixed' (including the respective figures) were: 'White and Black Caribbean' (237, 420), 'White and Black African' (78,911),

'White and Asian' (189,015) and 'Any Other Mixed' background (155,688), giving a total population of 661,034 (Owen, 2005:17).

Evidently, the largest mixed group is 'White and Black Caribbean'. The view that racial groups are very different, mixed relationships are fated and relationships between people of the same colour have a better chance of surviving is contested (Wardle, 1999; Caballero et al., 2008). People do not have to share the same culture or ethnicity to build successful relationships (Alibhai-Brown, 2001).

Various couples in mixed-race relationships faced the disapproval of others but felt stronger as couples when they realised that they and their children would face difficulties (Alibhai-Brown, 2001; Olumide, 2002). Although some couples may feel stronger in these circumstances, others may find the added social pressure and society's hostility too much to bear (Alibhai-Brown and Montague, 1992; Banks, 2003a). Even in situations where members of the family have married outside their own 'race', expectations for their children may vary, as was the case with the woman of dual heritage cited by Alibhai-Brown. This woman was astonished when her black father resented her marrying a white person. She reported:

...he thought I would marry a black man and bring black back in some way into the family (cited by Alibhai-Brown, 2001:4).

Some people have reported being rejected by families, friends and neighbours due to interracial relationships (Alibhai-Brown and Montague, 1992). Although various factors play a part in shaping people's life chances, acceptance by their families and the wider society is more likely to impact on their lives positively (Wright, 2000; Ward, 2003). Given the impoverished status of the young participants in my study, ways of enhancing their life chances are limited. This is particularly true for those who have been rejected by their birth families and have to rely solely on social services as a 'corporate parent'. Those looking after these young people must take this into consideration otherwise the group could be further marginalised. Despite efforts to ensure that looked-after young people are supported to achieve the same levels of success as those living with their birth families, the former still lag behind in terms of education (Barn and Mantovani,

2006). Education widens people's life choices and gives them hope for enhanced prospects (Settles, 1999, Okitikpi, 2003b).

Arguments in mixed relationships can be racialised (Katz, 2001) and, in cases where relationships have broken down, resentment towards absent partners may be directed towards children and young people. When such behaviour is exhibited, it is not unusual for those caught in the crossfire to be affected negatively. Banks (1992:33) quoted a woman who said:

...every time I look at him (the child) he reminds me of that black bastard and what he did to me. If Nathan ever grows up to be like him, I'll kill him.

This quotation is evidence that even the homes of dual heritage individuals provide little refuge from racial hatred. Nathan is not sheltered from hatred because his mother is still angry with his absent father. It is desirable that, when relationships end, parents refrain from making negative remarks about their ex-partners in the presence of children and young people. Those who exhibit emotional stability and cast their former partners positively can minimise the damaging effects of father/mother absence, which can be detrimental to both boys and girls (Hetherington and Parke, 1999). The views expressed by Hetherington and Parke could apply to any family model. Nonetheless, there is a danger of overlooking these problems in cases involving dual heritage individuals unless those working with these groups refrain from attributing them to 'identity confusion'.

Alibhai-Brown (2001) reported on the lived experiences of couples in racially mixed relationships and their children in Britain. Her study aimed to explore what she described as:

...mixed-race Britons, a community which is moving out from the shadows and heading purposefully into the light, challenging existing ideologies of ethnic and national purity and staking its claims on this nation (2001:2).

Although Alibhai-Brown's work illustrates what it is like to be in a racially mixed union in Britain at the turn of the twenty-first century, it is worth noting that she is a middle-

class journalist and not a social scientist. At the same time, participants in her study come from more diverse mixed racial backgrounds than those of white and black Caribbean origin included in my sample group. Contrary to those who impose a black identity on dual heritage individuals, the majority of the young people in Alibhai-Brown's study were happy with their 'mixed' identity. Alibhai-Brown reported that, although people's attitudes have become more accepting towards racially mixed relationships, she felt that:

...in a society where our reluctance to become 'involved' leaves tortured children at risk in their own homes and raped women lying in gutters, perfect strangers think they have the right to abuse you, your partner or your child because you have different skin colours... (Alibhai-Brown, 2001:8).

Certainly Alibhai-Brown's accounts paint a distressing picture of interracial families caving in under extreme pressure from their communities or relatives. Other scholars (Banks, 1992; Root, 1996; Olumide, 2002; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002) support the findings reported by Alibhai-Brown which state that, although relationships can be complex and stressful, external pressures can exacerbate the problem. Her work adds to the wealth of evidence indicating that this group exhibit a wide range of racial identities and is generally well adjusted (Benson, 1981; Wilson, 1987; Root, 1996; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Rocquemore and Brunsma, 2002; Okitikpi, 2005). Since these individuals are not black, it is wrong to assume a black identity for them (Alibhai-Brown, 2001). Indeed, participants in Alibhai-Brown's study included a third generation of young people born in Britain and some of them have neither visited the country of their minority parent nor spoken any other language besides English. It is therefore unjustified to impose a black identity on them simply because they have a black or Asian parent.

Negative racialisation, which is often directed at both black and white people in interracial relationships, continues. Furthermore, reports of physical or verbal abuse for individuals in those relationships are common:

...and generally I do find that a lot of white people, when realising that I have black friends, do seem to automatically think I am some how 'not very nice'.

...and if they see that I have a black boyfriend or husband...well there are some delightful names that they like to call a woman who 'goes with' black men...she is definitely immoral and dirty, for a start... (Lawrence, 2008:1).

Assuming that Lawrence is a Christian, one wonders if she would have been viewed differently if accompanied by a white Muslim man. This is a question worth posing given the way in which Muslims are perceived, as highlighted earlier. Perhaps if her companion was identified by his traditional attire the reaction could be different and based on religion rather than skin colour. Conversely, if his attire did not reveal his religion, the couple would pass unnoticed. Let us say that Lawrence's husband is a practising Muslim from Tanzania who came to Britain to study and he has now settled down with his white wife and children. His ethnicity construction in Tanzania would have been based on gender, religion, language and whether he was hard-working, lazy, trustworthy or corrupt. However, in Britain all that is set aside and he is merely seen as black. This begs the question – why does skin colour matter to individuals or to society above all other issues? What's more, should this not be the concern for people in interracial relationships and their children?

1.5.2 Summary

Although other terms could have been used to describe this group, the term dual heritage has been chosen for a number of important reasons. Eventually, dual heritage people need to determine their own identities, but I wanted a working definition that moved emphasis away from 'race'.

'Race' may be non-scientific but the way it has been socially constructed (Shih and Sanchez, 2009) continues to influence the opportunities and life chances of those perceived as the 'other'. The legacies of colonialism and imperialism linger on and the implications are that, if you are not white, then you are 'black' — hence the 'other'. These people are always seen as inferior and not quite normal. Although the use of language changes over time, the ambiguity surrounding 'race' and its definition still leaves writers and social scientists with the problem of defining dual heritage individuals (Katz, 2001).

The terms ethnicity and 'race', which continue to be used indistinguishably in Britain, assume the homogeneity of those described as ethnic minorities. Economic inequalities and social exclusion need to be addressed if societal racism is to be tackled. Various types of racism will affect diverse groups differently. For example, how different groups experience and cope with structural inequalities may depend on their class and social economic positions. Moreover, how dual heritage individuals experience and cope with name calling may depend on where they live as well as the level of support from their community and families.

Dual heritage people continue to be considered black in certain quarters and they often experience racism, which is a part of everyday life for many non-whites living in Britain. The conclusion is that resultant constructions of dual heritage people as deviant and dysfunctional have led to this group being stigmatised. Fears of blood mixing (miscegenation) led to laws against interracial relationships to prevent the 'other' from contaminating the white 'race'. Subsequently, the importance that some members of society attach to 'race' continues to influence how interracial families are treated.

1.6 Identity

Identity is not about skin colour since people may share the same nationality and phenotype but still have multiple identities. People have multiple identities in public and in personal life and for some individuals these identities are more significant than the label white, black, or dual heritage. Identity, which is flexible and contextual, is an interactive and multifaceted phenomenon (Hall, 1992; Katz and Treacher, 2005; Postmes and Jolanda, 2006) and complex to define. Identities are not informed by 'race', culture and ethnicity alone (Fook, 2001; Modood, 2007) but by other factors such as gender, class, religion, sexuality and age (Twine, 1999; Dominelli, 2004), which are "produced and reproduced in social interaction" (McGhee 2007:217). Although in psychology the term 'identity' is often used to explain the characteristics that make people unique and, in sociology, the term is used in relation to social identity, their uses are not exclusive to either discipline.

The work of Cooley (1902), which was later developed by Mead (1934), is based on the idea that people's identities are moulded by the opinions of those closest to them. For

Mead (1934), nurture rather than nature has made us what we are despite our differences. Mead believes that our self-consciousness emerges from our experiences with others and we see ourselves as others perceive us. Thus, how people see themselves at any given time, whether negatively or positively, is often influenced by either real or imaginary important others (Parker and Song, 2001) such as family, culture, peers, the media and society (Wright, 2000).

For Erikson (1980), identity is not static but fluid and changes over time. Erikson believes that identity is determined by how individuals deal with conflicts in their lives and, in order to build a positive identity, people must be able to deal with difficult situations in their lives. Erikson distinguishes between the self or 'ego' identity, the personal characteristics that separate us from others (personal identity), or the cultural identity. The self is sometimes formed through comparisons with others, including "the importance of cultural or historical contexts" (Fook, 2007).

Comparison with others is one of the four main factors that Argyle (1969) believes influences identity development. Other factors include our reaction to those around us, social roles and identification. The impact of these four factors on individuals' identity development will be briefly illustrated.

Comparison with others: it is vital to promote individual uniqueness — for example, people must not be perceived as useless purely because of their inability to swim when compared to their peers. It is also important that marginalised groups are not compared negatively with others.

Reaction to others is particularly important because other people's reactions towards us can impact on our sense of worth.

Social roles: as people's identities change so do their social roles. For instance, parents often perform the role of caring for children but, when they are old and frail, these roles reverse.

Identification: society and people's social interactions will inform how identities are developed and maintained (Mason, 2006). Therefore, having positive role models with

which people can identify is important, particularly in the lives of looked-after, dual heritage children or young black people who are often portrayed negatively.

1.7 Politicised 'black' label

The presence of black people in Britain is not a new phenomenon (Shyllon, 1977; File and Power, 1981) as they have lived in this country at least since the Roman occupation (Christian, 1998). The historical impact of discourses of 'race', racism and the terms used to describe people change over time depending on the political climate at a given time and place. For instance, by the late 1950s, following the arrival of significant numbers of black and Asian people, there were claims that Britain had imported a 'race' problem (Miles, 1991). As a result, concerns about the size of the black population, which was seen as a social problem (Harris, 1988), became prominent in immigration issues during this period (Malik, 1996; Solomos, 2003; McGhee, 2005).

Researching racial attitudes in the 1950s and 1960s crystallised the ambiguity and complexity of racial categorisation in Britain, which saw colour "as the central marker of difference" (Mac an Ghail, 1999:106). Consequently, black Caribbean and Asian people united under the term 'black' to gain political unity and fight white prejudice, thus turning the term 'black' from a derogatory one to one of affirmation (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002). Black and Asian people had come from the newly independent colonies with British passports after the Second World War (Blackshire-Belay, 2001). After a long and painful history of dehumanisation during slavery and colonisation, black people were again faced with discrimination and racism. They mainly took poorly paid jobs, which were turned down by white working-class people (Alibhai-Brown, 1999; Mason, 2006). This is because a colonial society that regarded the colonised as inferior, together with an industrial and social structure which had enabled socially mobile white people to move to better jobs and social positions, existed in Britain (Rex, 1986). Nonetheless, use of the term 'black' in Britain to describe these two groups that come from different continents with different customs has been criticised (Modood, 1988).

People tend to want to belong to groups that help them to feel safe and wanted, and different ways of belonging will form their identities (Hall, 1980). People's identities, which are multiple, are formed and understood in context but can alter or even cause

conflict (Fook, 2007) with no one individual's identity being similar to the other, and each one displaying their unique assortment of loyalties (Twine, 1999). If self-identity is created and maintained by individuals, through their lived experiences and inherited features (hook, 1999; Fook, 2007; Modood, 2007); inflicting labels on dual heritage people could be perceived as taking the power to self-identify away from them and could lead to "negative consequences..." (Townsend et al., 2009:185). This could also give the impression that these people do not have the capacity to decide on their own identities. It could be argued that compelling dual heritage individuals to identify as black denies them the autonomy to choose and opt for the perceived superior white and normal identity. For example, some may wish to adopt a hyphenated identity such as British-Jamaican or British-African but they also need the freedom to self-identify. Practitioners must refrain from "social engineering" (Okitikpi 2005:61) and:

While we can all learn from the experiences and achievements of any one group, and may seek to transfer that for the benefit of other groups, no minority can be a model for all others (Modood, 2007:46).

Every white, black or dual heritage person is unique and they behave in different ways (Katz, 2001).

Terms used to define dual heritage individuals include half-caste, half-breed, hybrid, mullato or mongrel (Christian 1998; Fatimilehin, 1999; Gaskins, 1999). These exceedingly pejorative terms have association with contamination and references to animals (Root, 1996; Owusu-Bempah, 2005). Furthermore, these terms are often essentialist and exhibit bipolarity (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002). Essentialist stereotypical characteristics are often used to remove this group's white side and Owusu Bempah (2005) talks of the determination of the colonial officials to enforce these perceptions. Okitikpi makes an important point when he argues:

The way children's identities have been (mis) handled is a contributory factor to the difficulties, pain and damage these children experience (cited by Alibhai-Brown, 2001:171).

Assignment of labels to groups such as youths, old people, gay people or the mentally ill gives the mistaken impression that they have limitations and this must be challenged (Dominelli, 2004). Labels imposed on dual heritage individuals can impact on how their identities develop, as can negative language used to describe ‘racialised differences’ between family members (Banks, 1992; Gaskins, 1999; Keddell, 2006). Some participants in the study by Alibhai-Brown (2001) reported feeling pressurised to conform to the notion that they are ‘black’ even though they do not see themselves as such. Dual heritage individuals are disadvantaged because they are labelled and stigmatised (Okitikpi, 2005) on the basis of their visible characteristics. By avoiding stereotyping people, the complexities of their identities become clearer (Adam et al., 2002). Sometimes thoughtless comments may convey an impression of prejudice whether intended or not (Gaskins, 1999) — because they reinforce stereotypes and encourage discrimination.

Research methods used to measure identity development of black people such as ‘Nigrescence’ (Cross, 1971) are assumed to apply to dual heritage people since they are perceived as black (Robinson, 1997; Fatimilehin, 1999). The assumption is then made that any measures used for black people must be appropriate for dual heritage individuals. Although dual heritage individuals can have some common experiences with black people (Olumide, 2002) this approach fails to take into account the complexity of their identities. Perceiving their racial identity exclusively in the white/black dualism also denies the role that both sides of their heritage could play in their development. Dual heritage individuals do not live in isolation and since they are surrounded by others, for instance, families, schools, communities and neighbourhood, identity development should be investigated in context (Rockquemore et al., 2009).

1.7.1 New ethnicities beyond black/white dualism

Essentialism ignores complex and multiple, emerging, new ethnicities (Hall, 1991; Back, 1996; Cohen, 1999; Mac an Ghail, 1999; Modood, 2007). Essentialist notions of culture as rigid or perceptions of racial identity as a set of cultural or ethnic traits and social beliefs that are passed on from one generation overlooks the reality of multiple cultures and globalisation (Fook, 2001). Globalisation and the emergence of new technologies means that more people from different corners of the world work and live in closer proximity than ever before. It is not unusual for some of these people to form

intimate relationships and subsequently have children. These children will create new and complex identities for themselves which will, in turn, result in a transcendence of the black/white binary (Mac an Ghail, 1999) in the context of an increasingly globalised world (Fook, 2001).

In many ways, dual heritage people are the embodiment of multiple identities described as new ethnicities (Back, 1996; Ali, 2003). Although some British-born dual heritage individuals have never met their black parents or relatives, they are often compelled to choose the identity of their non-white parents. It seems politically correct to categorise those with one white parent as black but not the other way round. Such an essentialist approach fails to understand that “black people do not form a single group” (Modood, 2007:111).

It is time to move “from miscegenation to hybridity” (Phoenix and Owen, 2000:72) because the use of essentialist features such as ‘race’ culture, and language, which see identity as static, has lost currency. Perceiving culture as essentialist gives it currency and leads to ideas of fixed hierarchies of oppression and can be equated to shaping culture as it was portrayed by past colonisers and imperialists. Brah (2000) calls for definitions that unify cultures and experiences across time and space. She believes that continuity and discontinuity of cultures can be represented by cultural hybridity, which renders culture fluid — moving it away from any preconceived realities. This reflects the way culture is formed and legitimises its use in the fight against discrimination.

For Modood (2007), the decadence modernity has brought into debates of ‘race’ can be dealt with more effectively if the cultural hybridity debate is firmly placed in postmodernism since it represents the realities of diversity and difference. Assumptions cannot be made about people’s commitment to any aspect of culture, ethnicity, ‘race’ or identity because different experiences will influence the decisions they make (Hall, 2001; Keddell, 2006). The essentialist rigid representations of culture as fixed romanticise and misrepresent the challenges and ambitions of oppressed groups and silence their voices (Gilroy, 2000).

1.7.2 *The dual heritage identity*

As explained above, the dual heritage identity needs to be set within the context of the ‘new ethnicities’ approach. A totalising approach that focuses solely on physical attributes overlooks individuals’ experiences and uniqueness. Consequently, people are then treated according to the ethnic group to which they are assigned and what is particular or unique to them is disregarded. This is often the case when it comes to the dual heritage identity particularly in relation to understanding how to respond to their needs in schools, the public care system, or the communities in which they live. Since dual heritage people come from diverse backgrounds, their changing and fluid identities are more likely to be shaped by what happens around them. Yet, although the dual heritage identity is not a fixed category:

The person of mixed race is identified precisely because the observer is capable of recognising typical representatives of each race (Todorov 2001:65).

The phenomenon of ‘identity confusion’ has long been associated with dual heritage individuals. The belief that dual heritage individuals experience identity crises because they have one white and one black parent is debatable (Owusu-Bempah, 1994; Wardle, 1999; Tizzard and Phoenix, 2002) because skin colour is not a problem — even though it is seen as an issue. While there is no agreement on what contributes to positive identities for dual heritage individuals (Harman and Barn, 2005), some commentators believe that this group must identify as black to develop a positive racial identity (Maxime, 1993; Goldstein, 1999 and Banks, 1995). These people are capable of deciding how they want to identify themselves without the intervention of psychologists (Okitikpi, 2005) and they must have the autonomy to make these decisions (Goodyer and Okitikpi, 2007). Furthermore, considering the hate and criminalisation levelled at black people in Britain (McGhee, 2005), one fails to see how dual heritage individuals can acquire self-worth simply by identifying as black without tackling racial discrimination and prejudices that blight their lives.

Ascertaining how dual heritage individuals want to be identified requires respect and consultation with them and their families. Their identities are oversimplified by asking them to identify as black instead of looking at contradictions and other complexities (Phoenix and Owen, 2000; Kirton, 2000; Rockquomore et al., 2009). Some dual

heritage people may have problems or even concerns about where they belong, but this should not be attributed to identity confusion. These concerns are more likely to be different for each dual heritage person. Furthermore, if derogatory terms are imposed on them based solely on their phenotype, it is unsurprising if some express concerns, particularly if they have been rejected by their birth families and moved around different homes. There is no evidence to suggest that dual heritage individuals develop their identities differently from others (Wilson, 1987; Fatimilehin, 1999; Olumide, 2002; Okitikpi, 2005). Although such evidence does not exist, Tikly et al. came across some teachers who believed that this group experiences identity crises, as the quote below illustrates:

...there are some [mixed-race] pupils in this school who have confused feelings about their identity (2004:50).

The belief that dual heritage individuals experience identity confusion needs to be abandoned. For example, the golfer Tiger Woods caused uproar by announcing on the Oprah Winfrey TV show that he was Cablinasian. Due to Tiger Woods' self-identification he was immediately perceived as confused (Gaskins, 1999). He was expected to be content with the category African-American but he rejected such white/black polarisation. Tiger Woods stated that, whenever he had to complete forms at school, he ignored the routine of ticking one box and always picked African-American and Asian (Gaskins, 1999). His reaction highlights the phenomenology of such encounters in the lives of dual/multiple heritage individuals. Tiger Woods' assertion and refusal to be pigeon-holed is not a sign of confusion, but of someone who is proud of his multiple heritage and unashamed of displaying them to the world.

Tiger Woods and other many successful dual and multiple heritage individuals are examples of how dedication and self-determination can contribute to the success of this group and defy the notion that dual heritage individuals are confused underachievers. Two recent examples that have further highlighted that dual heritage people are not confused underachievers are Lewis Hamilton, a son of a black father from Grenada and a white British Mother, who won the 2008 Formula One World Championship and Barack Obama, a son of a black Kenyan father and a white American mother, who won the 2008 USA elections and became America's first African-American President. These

dual heritage individuals have illustrated that skin colour is not a barrier to success. Nonetheless, although it is a myth that dual heritage people are often confused (Wardle, 1999), myths are not easy to discard because individuals can “internalise them” (Treacher, 2000:100). The recognition of dual heritage individuals as a group meriting their own identity was demonstrated in the inclusion of the category ‘Mixed Race’ in the USA and UK national census in 2000 and 2001 respectively. Even so, social scientists are urged to think again about the way in which they determine how ‘race’ and racialised categories are measured and for what purpose (Rockquemore et al., 2009).

Early social scientists such as Park (1931) and Stonequist (1937) perceived a dual heritage individual as a ‘marginal man.’ This notion still lingers on today in the USA and Britain, and Owusu-Bempah (2005:29) reminds us that:

Culturally and socially, marginal persons were said to live in limbo. Psychologically, they were believed to experience torment, to experience psychiatric and emotional problems, low self-esteem and identity-confusion....

Stereotypical generalisations and myths are not only grossly inaccurate but the perceptions they generate are invariably unhelpful and misleading (Phillips, 2007). Dual heritage individuals are not born innately confused, but what appears to take place in the lives of some of them depends on where they live and whether or not they are accepted.

Often there is a tendency to see the values held by non-whites as inferior to the values held by the host country and sometimes there is pressure to conform to the values that are considered to be the ‘norm’. I find it difficult to understand what is actually considered to be the ‘norm’ as those who see themselves as powerful because of their whiteness tend to think they know what is best for all non-white people globally. The majority of people who come into contact with social services are more likely to be experiencing some form of social problems. This is particularly true for the young people who are the focus of my study. Therefore, if practitioners assume that identity is the overarching problem in the lives of these young people, the underlying issues in their lives may be overlooked.

In a study (1990-1991) that explored the assumptions underlying policies on the placement of dual heritage children with black or racially mixed families, Tizard and Phoenix (2002) reported that different contexts determine the social positions of this group. For example, in a racist society where interracial marriages are viewed negatively, children from these unions are more likely to be perceived negatively. Conversely, in other societies, such as some countries in Africa, children from interracial marriages are perceived as blessed since they can draw from both heritages. In the British context this notion of being doubly blessed goes unnoticed in many parts of society. Possibly the stigma (Goffman, 1968) attached to those perceived as belonging to an inferior 'race', nation or religion can infect the whole family and may lead to some families being socially isolated.

Tizard and Phoenix (2002) reported that their study explored the views on ethnic identities of 180 male and female participants aged 15 - 16. A total of 58 out of them were mixed parentage young people from working — and middle-class families who lived with their biological parents. From their study, Tizard and Phoenix stressed that:

...it is difficult to generalise about the mixed parentage young people in our study...some were proud of their mixed parentage...some thought of themselves as black, others as 'mixed' or brown...some had many black friends...others lived mainly in white society and culture...Their gender, social class, the type of school they attended...were all significantly related to their identities and experiences (2002:232 - 233).

Tizard and Phoenix found that dual heritage young people were more likely to report experiences of racism compared with those who have two black parents but they had different experiences. They reported that experiences of a dual heritage girl in a middle-class girls' school differed greatly from those of a dual heritage boy in a predominantly working-class school. Those brought up in an inner city ghetto and in an impoverished working-class neighbourhood are more likely to have different experiences, values and beliefs (Hill, 2001). Given their different experiences and multiplicity of factors which contribute to the formation of their racial, cultural and social identities (Katz, 2001; Townsend et al., 2009), it is desirable that fixed notions of identity should be abandoned (Fook, 2001; Dominelli, 2002; Townsend et al., 2009).

Evidently, dual heritage individuals brought up in affluent white, middle-class suburbs are likely to share many of the attitudes and beliefs of those with whom they socialise (Clarke and Clarke, 1996; Twine, 1999). It is therefore important for researchers and practitioners to take the context into consideration. Asking these people to identify as black is likely to be unhelpful and confusing, particularly if they have had limited contact with black people. Others support the notion that dual heritage individuals, like any others, are not a homogenous group with exactly the same experiences and terms of reference (Rockquemore and Brunσμα, 2002; Caballero et al., 2008; Townsened et al., 2009). According to Olumide, (2002:90):

Mixed race...is always a highly exploitative construct and its dishonest association with ambiguity has unsettling consequences for those so racialised. Their construction as 'intermediate', 'neither one thing nor other', 'mixed' or 'half-castes' attempts to suspend their social legitimacy in ways that enable those defined as mixed or mixing to be redefined for alternative social purposes.

Undoubtedly, each different set of life experiences and circumstances would lead to differing experiences in terms of sense of self, culture, religion and ethnic identity. Experiences of most dual heritage people born and brought up in some parts of Africa, where light skin still depicts superiority due to the legacy of imperialism, may differ from those born in the USA or Britain and will be of a privileged nature. The question of privilege is not trivial as this goes hand in hand with class. Tizard and Phoenix (2002) reported that the larger part of their sample (61 percent) came from middle-class families and half attended independent schools. Middle-class status has helped some dual heritage young people to acquire white status (Twine, 1999). The importance attached to phenotype has meant that some dual heritage people have passed as white. This is not necessarily because these people hate being black but so that they can benefit from the privileges enjoyed by whites (Song, 2003; Zack, 2005). Others pass as white because they want to fit in so they look for shared commonalities (Piper, 1992; Rockquemore and Brunσμα, 2002). Racial identity is important to everyone regardless of ethnic origin (Department of Health, 2000; paragraph 2.42:44) and “often changes over the life course” (Rockquemore et al., 2009:21).

1.7.3 Summary

Identity is a complex concept that is not static but fluid and changes over time and place. People do not hold one but multiple identities that are interactive and are not informed by 'race', culture and ethnicity alone. Other factors (including age, class, sexuality and gender) contribute to individuals' identities. Globalisation and new technologies have meant that increasing numbers of people across the globe are working closely together and, in some cases, these individuals form intimate partnerships. Some of these relationships may produce children who, in turn, will form new and complex identities for themselves. Dual heritage individuals have complex identities that can be described as embodying new ethnicities. In this sense, there is a need to move away from the black/white dualism. Failure to do so give currency to essentialism, which sees identity as unchanging and ignores the fact that people's lived experiences and their social interactions will form and maintain their identities. Where possible, dual heritage individuals should be encouraged to learn about both their heritages, but imposing a black identity on them is unlikely to achieve this goal.

There is no homogeneity in how dual heritage individuals identify. Their experiences do not differ greatly from those of black or white young people. The process of developing positive or negative identities is not linear and stage models used as tools to measure identity development for black people are commonly used for dual heritage individuals. These are often inappropriate since they are not designed for dual heritage people. Suggestions that these people experience identity crises due to their heritages are naïve and irresponsible in describing a group that faces rejection from both white and black people (Olumide, 2002).

Inflicting identities on dual heritage individuals is likely to deny them the autonomy to self-identify and to learn about their history. For instance, it should be possible for those choosing hyphenated identities to have a positive identity. Despite the lack of consensus on what forms positive racial identity for dual heritage people, some believe that it is necessary for them to identify themselves as black. Often essentialism and polarised meanings have been behind terms used to describe dual heritage people. Such essentialist, stereotypical characteristics are often used to remove their 'whiteness'. Essentialist notions of culture result in ideas of fixed hierarchies of oppression similar to those created during colonial and imperial times. Essentialist views should be replaced

by cultural hybridity, which sees culture as fluid. This is because the representation of culture as rigid misrepresents the ambitions of oppressed groups as well as making their voices unheard. Dual heritage individuals do not want separate status from other ethnic groups, nonetheless many would like their experiences included in policies, guidelines and in the school curriculum. In Britain, practically nothing is reflected in policies, guidelines, and school curriculum when it comes to dual heritage individuals.

In the USA, the term black, which has been politicised over the years, was turned from a derogatory meaning to one that united people during the civil rights struggle. The affirmation of Caribbean and Asians under the umbrella term 'black' in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s gave them political clout against racism. However, use of the term 'black' to describe all non-whites has been criticised due to their differing cultures and history.

1.8 Conclusion

1.8.1 Experiences of being a dual heritage individual: complexity versus simplistic ways of perceiving this group

This chapter examined what is known as dual heritage and deconstructed the prevailing view that this group experiences 'identity crises'. Dual heritage individuals are disadvantaged because of the way in which they are labelled and stigmatised due to their skin colour. This chapter has examined the concept of 'race' and how racism has unfolded and developed historically to help us understand how dual heritage individuals are perceived today. Concepts of 'race' and racism continue to influence how those perceived as inferior due to their phenotype are treated. Although the term 'race' has no biological basis, it continues to be seen in those terms. The ambiguity of defining 'race' has left social scientists and writers with the added problem of defining dual heritage individuals.

Furthermore, the notion that some 'races' are inferior to others has led to miscegenation or 'blood mixing' being blamed for identity confusion and disruption in dual heritage people. Slavery, which has particular relevance to dual heritage individuals due to the mixing between white slave masters and black women, has been examined. Although slave owners saw no harm in having sexual intercourse with their black slaves, the

children born as a result of these encounters were seen as black. 'Racial purity' — on which social, economic and political systems operate in the West — is a myth. The complexity of racialisation calls for a critical examination of cultural stereotypes and assumptions made about gender, 'race', sexuality and class. Although dual heritage people may share some commonalities, the rhetoric surrounding this group ignores the fact that the experience of being a dual heritage individual is unique to each individual.

Ascertaining how dual heritage young people want to be identified, particularly those in the looked-after population, requires respect, co-operation, consultation and collaboration with professionals, the young people themselves and their families. In order to ensure that their needs are met adequately and appropriately it is important to ensure that these young people are respected and listened to at all times.

The next chapter will examine matters associated with looked-after young people generally, and focuses on specific issues concerning dual heritage young people in the looked-after population.

CHAPTER TWO:

2 Looked-after young people

Introduction

This chapter presents the second part of the critical review of the literature. The first section of this chapter examines the concept of looked-after young people in general. Then it explores three problematic areas in the literature concerning looked-after, dual heritage young people. First, focus is on looked-after, dual heritage young people because evidence suggests that they are overrepresented in the looked-after population compared with other groups (Barn et al., 1997; McVeigh, 2008). Second, it explores how the needs of dual heritage young people are often inadequately met (Ince, 1998) because professionals do not acknowledge the complex identities of this group (Okitikpi, 2005). Third, this chapter examines the lessons we can learn from their care experiences, the perspectives of their carers and practitioners (e.g. placement vulnerability, ethnic matching, and family links).

There is a need for “rethinking of the black-white dualism” (Mac an Ghail 1999:5) associated with dogmatic practice in relation to looked-after, dual heritage children and young people. Often the placement policy does not match the experiences and identities of this group. The notion that black or interracial families provide the ideal placement for dual heritage individuals (Ince, 1998) overlooks complexities and differences that can exist in one family. Focusing on what could be seen as appropriate or same ‘race’ placement has resulted in prolonged delays (Selwyn et al., 2004) despite evidence that some black/dual heritage children and young people, who have been placed with white families, have had positive experiences (Gill and Jackson, 1983; Bagley, 1993). In the case of children and young people in this domain, it is unclear whether placement dilemmas lie with practitioners or dual heritage young people and their families. The chapter is organised into five sections.

Section one gives an overview of young people in the looked-after population.

Section two focuses on looked-after, dual heritage young people. This group shares the feelings and experiences of other looked-after groups. However, additionally they have to deal with racism and the stigma attached to being a dual heritage individual.

Section three examines the politics of placement. Some assumptions relating to the placement of dual heritage children and young people with white families are examined to illustrate how the needs of this group are potentially more complex than those of 'single-race' individuals. I shall suggest that, since most dual heritage individuals have one white and one black parent and the majority of them live with their white mothers, it is immaterial if they are adopted or fostered by white families.

In section four, I shall reflect on the critical analysis of research in this domain and section five offers conclusion to the chapter.

2.1 The concept of looked-after young people in general

The needs of children and young people who cannot be looked-after by their birth parents are met by social services under the Children Act 1989. For children or young people to be looked-after, they have to be:

- placed in the care of local authority by a court (under a court order)
- given accommodation by local authorities social services departments for more than 24 hours.

Local authorities have a duty under Section 17 of this act to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area. Additionally, they may look after children under Section 20, and in some circumstances, compulsorily under Section 31. This chapter is particularly concerned with those children and young people who are looked-after, or have been looked-after, under Sections 20 and 31, which also entitle these children and young people to services into adulthood.

For various reasons, local authorities fail a number of looked-after young people in delivering a discrete and personal service (Butler and Payne, 1997; Barn et al., 2005; Barn and Mantovani, 2006; Department for Education and Skills, 2006). Evidence suggests that this group is not given explanations for their predicament (Biehal et al.,

1992, Garnett, 1992; 1995; Heath et al., 1994; Broad, 1999 and 2003) and is viewed negatively (Lees, 2002). Furthermore, there are concerns that the health needs of looked-after children and young people are inadequately met (Butler and Payne, 1997). Moreover, looked-after individuals are a diverse group with complex needs (Thoburn et al., 2000; Okitikpi, 2005), although some practitioners tend to view them as a homogeneous group (Department for Education and Skills, 2006). For example, just because children and young people are being, or have been, looked-after does not mean that they will underachieve academically.

Whilst the majority of young people manage problematic phases with satisfactory parental support, young people in the looked-after population suffer indifferent support (Dominelli et al., 2005). When young people are separated from their families, it is not surprising if they question their self-worth in the process of trying to work out why they are living away from home. Such turmoil will apply to most individuals in the public care sector regardless of their heritage as they try to come to terms with feelings of rejection. Managing multiple changes is particularly traumatic for individuals who feel that they have been rejected by their parents (Caparara and Rutter, 1995). According to Howe:

...the distress experienced by children who suffer the dilemmas posed by neglect, abuse and emotional maltreatment places them at increased risk of a large number of developmental consequences (2003:199).

Every aspect of the positive development of children and young people into adulthood is greatly influenced by secure attachment, which is characterised by a responsive and trusting relationship between children and primary care givers (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Based on Bowlby's fusion of the psychoanalytic and the ethological (Bowlby, 1980), attachment has a strong application for this group of young people. We can expect that young people in the looked-after population may show a disproportionate range of attachment disorders as a result of disrupted childhoods. This is because social and emotional patterns developed by individuals (positive or negative) will be determined by whether they were securely or insecurely attached (Howe, 2003). Some individuals can make up for early separation if they are adopted or fostered as early as possible (Selwyn et al., 2005). Subsequently, they will have fewer behavioural and emotional

difficulties compared with those moving into placements at an older age (Thoburn et al., 2000; Bell et al., 2002). Furthermore, if they are placed at a younger age, they are more likely to form secure attachments and trust in other social relationships (Heatherington and Parke, 1999). The idea of attachments and a secure base as vital for individuals' cognitive and social development (Howe, 2003) is a powerful, contemporary paradigm for practitioners and researchers in the human services.

The Social Exclusion Unit (2003) has urged teachers and other professionals to take action with regards to fostering well-being in looked-after children and young people. Looked-after children and young people often experience similar issues, for example the majority of them feel abandoned, rejected and a sense of loss. They also often feel unloved and ignored (Walker, 2002). Given the above themes, taking these young people seriously will assist in building their confidence through approval and acceptance (Wright, 2000). They also experience instability, lack of continuity with their social workers and poor educational attainment. Furthermore, looked-after people experience disruption at key times in their lives, such as when they are completing their GCSEs and A-levels. Additionally, they often have problematic contacts/links with birth parents, lack of continuity of care and no family support. The majority of young people may require even more support and nurturing from their birth parents during this period. Similarly, young people in the looked-after population may require more input from their 'corporate parent' when they are at these crossroads. Most young people living with their birth parents do not have to leave home at a given time. Even when this happens they often have the option of returning if things go wrong. This option is more problematic for 'looked-after' young people, who are expected to make transitions at very crucial periods in their lives. The Children Act 1989 guidance states that:

*...many young people leave care without adequate preparation...
(Department of Health 1991, Vol.3:98, paragraph, 9.55).*

Looked-after young people require more emotional support than is available currently (Sinclair et al., 2003). Others comment on the patchiness and inadequate support given to those in the looked-after population (First Key, 1987; Rowe and Lambert, 1993; Triseliotis et al., 1995; Broad, 1994, 1998, 1999; Colton et al., 2001). It is important to support looked-after young people (Jackson, et al. 2003) because the majority of them

are lonely and depressed (Voice for the Child in Care, 2004) and have more health problems than others (Jackson et al., 2000).

2.1.1 General review of relevant literature on young people, who are being, or have been looked-after

It is desirable that any decisions relating to looked-after young people should involve them as well as their carers and birth parents whenever possible. Such decisions need to be clarified, consistent, transparent and in keeping with the wishes of the young people and their families (Dale, 2004). The lives of the majority of looked-after individuals are blighted by chaos, instability, substance misuse, problems with the police and so forth (Clayden and Stein, 2002). They have experienced abuse and neglect from their families consequently — more specialised help is essential as they present greater challenges to their carers (Sinclair, 2005). Overall, looked-after young people achieve poor education results when compared with those living with their birth families (Stein, 1994; Biehal et al., 1995; Simon and Owen, 2006).

Abuse and neglect are the main reason for most young people entering the public care system (Department for Education and Skills, 2006). It is therefore fundamental to enhance the lives of these young people because, if damage inflicted on children and young people in their early years is not addressed at an early age, it is difficult to repair later in life (Emler, 2001). Thoburn et al. (2000) reported that during placements, 51 percent of the group of 297 had emotional problems, 46 percent had behavioural problems whilst 36 percent had been institutionalised because of long stays in residential care. Ince (1998) talks of damages inflicted on young people who spend long periods being looked-after. Depending on the ages of the children and the young people, their needs could be met more effectively if they participated in the processes of assessment and planning. A catalogue of policies and legislative frameworks promotes young people's participation in planning ways of meeting their needs. In addition to the Children Act 1989, there is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) among other legislations. Although the UNCRC contains many articles relating to all aspects of children and young people's rights, Articles 12 and 13 are significant in stressing that:

1. State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

(Article 12 UNCRC).

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media or the child's choice.

2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others, or

(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals

(Article 13 UNCRC).

If young people in the looked-after population are to have positive experiences, it is necessary to ensure that they are supported (Stein, 1997; Colton et al.) and listened to (Sinclair and Hai, 2003). In this way, lessons can be learnt from them regarding what is important in their lives as well as what can make a difference. Listening to them may even result in reducing costs since resources could be better utilised, thus cutting down spending on projects that may not serve their needs.

As part of his survey documenting the experiences of young people who were no longer looked-after, Broad (1998) reported that nearly a quarter (24 percent) of 46 local authorities surveyed across England and Wales had no policy on young people who were no longer in care. Where policies existed, they were very comprehensive and gave good guidance to workers as well as the young people. Although the involvement of young people themselves in the implementation of such policies was unclear, continuing participation by young people was reported. Looked-after young people have indeed expressed the wish to have people listen and understand them (Sinclair et al., 2001; Connolly et al., 2006).

Broad (1998) expressed concerns that monitoring service delivery was inconsistent. He believed that coherent monitoring would assist in updating local authorities on the numbers of young people who have ceased to be looked-after and their whereabouts. Commenting on the management of services offered to this group, he noted disadvantages rather than advantages of contracts and partnership agreements. The study indicated that contracts are being used to drive down costs instead of maintaining service levels.

A total of 508 (or 19 percent) of the young people in the sample were continuing with further education, but were not helped by reductions in financial support. There were also concerns that young people moving away from foster care to live independently were unlikely to continue with further or higher education. Broad (1998) believes that, if these young people have taken the trouble to enrol at college, they should be supported and encouraged to complete their studies. Broad's survey showed that some progress has been made and the delivery of services for young people who were no longer looked-after has improved gradually over the years.

Broad's study aimed to explore how issues surrounding professional development and policy for looked-after young people had changed since the implementation of the Children Act 1989. He claims that a great deal remains to be achieved because familiar problems experienced in the past have not disappeared, such as the very high levels of unemployment and the overrepresentation of black young people in the public care system. Although Broad's study, which examined the looked-after population generally, broadened my understanding of problems faced by people in these groups, it was not

very helpful in informing my thesis on looked-after, dual heritage young people. Empirical evidence in this domain is essential in order to provide policymakers and professionals with useful proposals and a way forward.

2.1.2 Summary

Challenges faced by children and young people who are looked-after away from their birth families have been illustrated in this section. Under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a duty to look after children and young people in need in their area. Although abuse and neglect are often the main reasons for their departure from familiar surroundings; the reviewed literature has revealed that this predicament does not end once social services are involved. Social services could be perceived as failing in their parenting role. Recognising an individual's uniqueness is vital. Furthermore, adequate support and training is necessary to equip these young people during the transition to adulthood. Inter-professional and collaborative working with them is fundamental in order to ensure justice for all (Wade, 2003; Sinclair et al. 2001; Hai and Williams, 2004; Department for Education and Skills, 2006), particularly in terms of managing the complex needs of looked-after, dual heritage young people (Ince, 2003).

2.2 Looked-after, dual heritage young people

In addition to sharing the feelings and experiences of other looked-after groups, looked-after, dual heritage young people have to deal with the stigma attached to their racial origins. This is attributed to society's attitudes towards interracial marriages and children from such unions that stems from the social and biological construction of this group's identities (Katz, 2001). Most problems faced by looked-after, dual heritage young people are aggravated by rigid practice amongst those working with them (Owusu-Bempah, 1994, 2005). Payne (1991) urges workers to re-examine and re-evaluate the theories underpinning their practice and "to listen reflectively, with empathy" (McGhee, 2007:119). The failure of practitioners to understand the dynamics of racism, particularly in the lives of dual heritage individuals, constrains their ability to offer effective and appropriate services (Dominelli, 1988), for example:

Although mixed parentage children and youngsters encounter the problems faced by most minorities, they also must figure out how to reconcile the heritage of both parents in a society that categorises individuals in single groups (Robinson, 2000:8).

The situation of looked-after, dual heritage young people is made worse because practitioners and society in general do not expect anything positive from them as a result of the stigma and pathologisation of this group and their families (Ince, 2003; Owusu-Bempah, 2005).

2.2.1 Problems with terms used to define dual heritage young people

From the time that non-whites first came to Britain, there have been problems in determining what to call these groups. In the 1950s and 60s, the term ‘coloured’, which is still used by some people, was applied to anyone who was discernibly non-white and seemingly of ‘foreign’ extraction. The term did not distinguish between those of African, Caribbean, Asian origin or those of dual/multiple heritages. Similarly, the term ‘black’, which is often used for all non-white people, does not differentiate the experiences of these groups, and how they are defined often stems from discrimination (Alibhai-Brown, 2001).

Consequently, the terms used to define young people in this domain often impact on the services provided for them. Identifying them incorrectly is more likely to result in their needs being inappropriately and inadequately met, and meeting these needs is inextricably linked in with recognising the complexities of their identities. At the same time, the category ‘mixed race’, used in the 2001 UK national census, ignores the complexities of individuals’ backgrounds (Sinclair and Hai, 2003). Thoburn (2005:113) asserts that:

...although the 2001 census and DH/DfES statistics have now replaced the single category of ‘mixed’ with four categories, the Sinclair and Hai study is a reminder that official statistics still fail to report the complexity.

Still, the category ‘mixed race’ is significant because, at long last, this group is officially recognised (Parker and Song, 2001). The ways in which dual heritage

individuals are identified by professionals tend to result in particular forms of practice (Owusu-Bempah, 2005; Goodyer, 2005). Commenting on the ethnicity of children looked-after in 2002, Selwyn et al. (2004) reported that young people who were of mixed and black parentage were overrepresented in the looked-after population. Establishing the actual numbers of looked-after, dual heritage young people in 2002 was difficult and problematic as table 2.1 below illustrates. One problem is lack of data on how many of those classified as ‘mixed parentage’ are of dual heritage.

Table 2.1: Ethnicity of children looked-after as at 31 March 2002, compared with children in the total population in England in the national census of 2001

Ethnicity (where recorded)	% of children looked-after	% of total children’s population
White	82%	86%
Mixed parentage	7%	3%
Asian or Asian British	2%	7%
Black or black British	7%	3%
Chinese	<1%	<1%
Any other ethnic group	2%	<1%
All ethnic groups	100%	99%

Source: Selwyn et al (2004:30)-Adopted from Children Looked After in England Year Ending 31 March 2003, Table C (DH, 2003a); Census 2001 National reports S101 (ONS, 2003a).

Note: Percentages do not always sum to 100 percent.

Ethnicity may not be properly recorded because some local authorities fail to record the racial, cultural and ethnicity of the people in their care. Marsh and Peel (1999) reported that some workers know the ethnicity of the people they provide services for but do not record this information on the whole. This information could be of greater benefit to service providers and those using these services.

Clearly, the collection of data on ethnicity is improving, as tables 2.2 and 2.3 (overleaf) show. Department for Education and Skills reported that, out of 60,900 children looked-after in England, approximately 5,000 children who came under the category ‘mixed’ were looked-after as at 31 March 2005. The tables highlight two significant points, first that, on average, higher numbers of young people (regardless of their ethnicity) enter care between the ages of 10 to 15 (table 2.2). Second, the results support the view that, even when compared with other mixed groups such as white and black African or white

and Asian, looked-after, dual heritage children and young people still remain overrepresented in the looked-after population (table 2.3). Others believed that the overrepresentation of this group in the public care system has been exacerbated by the racist ‘one drop rule’ (Okitikpi, 2003a).

Most of these young people are likely to enter care because they may have been failed by the system, society or their neighbourhood. For example, it is difficult for parents in isolation to cope if they are also ostracised and lack the support of family members.

Age group	White	Total Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Other ethnic groups
Aged under 1	2,100	350	-	180	50
Aged 1 - 4	6,800	980	210	550	100
Aged 5 - 9	9,900	1,100	310	740	100
Aged 10 - 15	21,500	1,900	730	1,900	410
Aged 16 & 17	7,700	660	450	1,500	430
Aged 18 & over	30	0	-	0	0
Total	48,100	5,000	1,800	4,900	1,100

Source: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000646/vweb01-2006.pdf Table.

It should be possible for service providers to disaggregate the meaning of the term ‘mixed’. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 show a significant improvement on recording.

Age group	W/Black Caribbean	W/Black African	W/Asian	Other mixed
Aged under 1	100	40	60	160
Aged 1 - 4	330	110	160	380
Aged 5 - 9	420	90	150	420
Aged 10 - 15	840	130	260	700
Aged 16 & 17	250	70	80	260
Aged 18 & over	0	0	0	0
Total	1,900	440	700	1,900

Source: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000646/vweb01-2006.pdf Table.

It is hoped that departments and organisations that are still assigning all individuals of dual or multiple heritages under the category 'mixed' will start differentiating between different ethnic combinations. The Department of Health (1991) stated in the 'Patterns and Outcome' report that, if numbers of looked-after children and young people are unknown, then it is unlikely their needs will be appropriately met.

Marsh and Peel (1999) expressed the difficulties in trying to ascertain the ethnicity of those described as 'mixed parentage' to investigate the involvement of family members in the lives of looked-after young people. Their sample of 87 people was made up of 39 males and 48 females and two of the three organisations that took part were unable to give the researchers information relating to the heritages of the participants based on cultural and ethnic background. Marsh and Peel (1999:34 - 35) reported that:

Where this information was supplied, heritage was often described in wide and imprecise terms, for example young people were described as of 'mixed parentage' or 'Asian' without further elaboration...it was therefore not possible, with certainty, to collect data relating to young people's heritage from case files.

During Victoria Climbié's inquiry, Lord Laming (2003) stressed the importance of accurate recording. Victoria Climbié, who died in February 2000, was an eight-year-old girl, brought to England for a better life because her parents had "hopes that she would receive a better education in Europe (paragraph, 1.13:2). However, Victoria Climbié died after suffering serious cruelty and neglect in the hands of her great-aunt Marie Therese Kouao and her boyfriend Carl Manning. Lord Laming pointed out that even though Victoria Climbié was known to twelve different services, which included four social services departments, two hospitals, and two child protection teams, none of them took steps to protect Victoria from the abuse that led to her tragic death. It was reported that these agencies failed to record her injuries as well as working together to identify the full extent of Victoria's abuse and neglect. Lord Laming stressed that it is crucial that, in the process of 'protecting the child', their feelings and hopes are not left out of the equation. Their feelings and hopes should also be recorded because, as well as supporting these people and giving them a voice, the recording can offer them protection (Butler and Williamson, 1994). It can also help to monitor their progress.

Looked-after, dual heritage young people have different experiences of discrimination. Similarly, their perceptions of how others identify them, or how they want to be identified by others, differ. Therefore, it is imperative for carers and professionals to take this into account when dealing with this group.

2.2.2 *General review of relevant literature on looked-after, dual heritage young people*

Literature relating specifically to looked-after dual heritage young people, as defined in this thesis, is scarce. The dearth of written work on this group may reflect the low priority given to them or the notion that their problems are due to the dual heritage identity. In her study 'White Mothers, Mixed parentage Children and Child Welfare', Barn (1999) talks about the scarcity of written work on looked-after, dual heritage young people and reports that:

...with the exception of one major finding highlighted by researchers, that is the high representation of mixed parentage children looked-after, scant attention has been paid to exploring the circumstances under which these children come to be represented in the care system (1999:270).

The scarcity of literature on a group that has a long history of being looked-after causes concern since it is crucial for policymakers to have an idea of numbers and hear the views of these young people to address their needs. I believe that my study will make some contribution in this area.

In her qualitative study involving ten young black people who had ceased being looked-after, or were about to do so, Ince (1998) found they had not been prepared to integrate fully in the outside world. Her sample was made up of six females and four males. Five out of the ten were of mixed parentage whilst the others were of African or Caribbean origin. Ince argued that it is a myth to suggest that black children and young people do not like to be placed with black families and believes that efforts must be made to find black adopters/foster carers. She claimed that failure to do so disengages this group from the black families and communities. It is not clear how many of those five young people defined as mixed parentage in Ince's study had one white and one black parent. She clearly grouped mixed parentage young people under the banner 'black' and

stressed that their needs would have been more appropriately met had they been placed with black families.

Ince's study makes a much needed contribution to broaden our understanding of how looked-after, non-white children and young people are let down because their care needs continue to be determined by the black/white binary thinking. Nonetheless, perceiving all non-whites as 'black' may get in the way of ensuring that the needs of those with dual and multiple heritages are appropriately and adequately met. The use of the term 'black' to depict all those from ethnic minorities, who are non-white conceals distinct needs for diverse, minority ethnic groups (Selwyn et al., 2004).

A study on 'Life After Care', carried out by Barn et al. (2005), looked at the life experiences of 261 young people from different ethnic groups (116 of whom were from minority ethnic groups). The findings suggest that, in addition to spending longer time being looked-after, dual heritage young people experience severe disruption in placements and, consequently, they are educational underachievers compared with other groups. Factors that may contribute to the underachievement in education of most looked-after children and young people include bullying, discrimination, low expectations and exclusion from mainstream school (Jackson and Sachdev, 2001; Social Exclusion Unit, 2003).

Barn et al. (2005) examined the effect of ethnicity on social exclusion experienced by young people who have been looked-after. They were interested in investigating the outcome of these young people in a variety of areas, such as education, housing, employment and training. Barn et al. reported that half of all groups explained that they did not remember being given help or advice on matters such as housing, careers, benefits, budgeting skills and cooking. Their study has offered a better understanding of the experiences of young people from different minority ethnic groups who have been looked-after, including those of 'mixed parentage'. Barn et al. found that those of Asian and African origins were least likely to have been involved with the police. Nonetheless, those from 'mixed parentage' and young people from the Caribbean reported a high level of police involvement and it would be interesting to explore the reasons further.

There is a real need for social workers to engage honestly and sensitively with issues concerning the number of young people in this domain encountering problems at school or work. Underachievement in education may ultimately limit these young people's economic independence (Ince, 2003). Education is also important in other aspects of people's lives, for example:

...education gives access to one of the major sources for the development of our identity and the quality of our life – the friendships we make amongst our peers (Hudson, 1999:200).

Given the importance of education and the knowledge that young people in ethnic minorities are often excluded from school due to racism (Britton et al., 2002), it is crucial to ensure these issues are addressed. Practitioners, allied professionals and policymakers need to know how to deal with racism. It is necessary to avoid stereotypes and myths (Katz, 2001) and rely on empirical evidence instead. Hopefully the findings from my research will contribute to a deeper understanding of this group, consequently enhancing the services on offer. Failure to engage with this group has contributed to flawed understanding, inappropriate explanations and wasted resources (Department for Education and Skills, 2006). It is unlikely that looked-after, dual heritage young people experience problems at school or fail to find well-paid employment because they are less intelligent than other groups.

2.2.3 Summary

Due to the scarcity of literature on looked-after, dual heritage young people, I have relied heavily on the volume 'Working with Mixed Parentage Children', edited by Okitikpi (2005). Those who contributed to Okitikpi's volume were interested in dual heritage people and their work has enhanced the understanding of looked-after young people from this group. Poor educational attainment for most looked-after young people diminishes their chances of entering the labour market, which could be exacerbated by the stigma attached to being looked-after. This may be particularly relevant for looked-after, dual heritage young people who may be discriminated against on the basis of their skin colour.

2.3 Politics of placement

Does skin colour still matter when considering placements? Under current policy, placements continue to be based on skin colour. When this is used in relation to dual heritage children and young people, is it a way of avoiding responsibility? Do practitioners weigh up the cultural impact in relation to this group? The implementation of the Children Act 1989 took place at a time when dual heritage individuals had not been officially categorised as ‘mixed race’. Although these individuals are not black and there is now an official category for dual heritage individuals, some practitioners continue to place young people from these groups with black families. These practitioners base their decisions on Section 22 (5) (c) of the Children Act 1989 and believe that white families are unsuitable because they cannot understand racism.

The identification of the paramountcy of the child (The Children Act 1989, Section 1) in court proceedings and other matters does not validate the principle. It may not imply an over-simplistic approach to placement on the basis of colour. Arguably, insisting that dual heritage young people should be placed with black families is denying them exposure to their white families. As previously explained, the majority of young people who are unable to live with their birth families are more likely to experience all sorts of mixed emotions, including feelings of loss, rejection, anger and being unloved. To refuse them placements due to perceived ‘ethnic’ or ‘cultural’ mismatches may leave some young people feeling that no one cares or loves them and lead to a further sense of rejection on the basis of their skin colour. Although it is desirable that looked-after, dual heritage young people have exposure to both black and white heritage, placement decisions should not be based on phenotype alone but on how best to meet the complex needs of this group of people.

2.3.1 Why placements with white families are contentious

The term ‘trans-racially placed’ should only apply when placing white children with black families or black children with white families. However, given that service providers often view dual heritage individuals as black, the assumption is that placing them with white families equates to placing them trans-racially. Placing dual heritage children and young people with white families remains a contentious issue in Britain. However, this has been an issue since the arrival of non-whites into Britain (Kirton,

2000). A few unwanted children from unions between black and white people at the time were placed in homes run by 'white' voluntary organisations and were not differentiated from black people (Kareh, 1970). In the 1980s, the political landscape changed when black activists started making their voices heard, consequently the politicisation of adoption policies led to the removal of black and dual heritage children from long-term foster homes. These activists included David Devine, the former Assistant Director of Social Services in Camden, at the time, who argued that placing black children (including those of dual heritage) with white families amounted to " 'stealing of children' from the black community" (cited by Tizard and Phoenix, 2002:69). Yet, if these children are placed in residential homes, the carers are likely to be mostly white (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002). The idea that most carers are white has led to the argument of 'identity stripping', which according to Ince:

...was a process defined as a method whereby racial and cultural needs were not met; racial identity was 'stripped' through neglect and did more to serve the interest of professionals and white carers...(2003:162).

We do not hear of black people fostering/adopting white children. Perhaps black parents are only equipped to take care of black children whilst it is accepted that white parents are suitable for looking after black and white children. African Caribbean and Asian families can adopt children from their respective backgrounds but social workers find it difficult to place dual heritage children (Barn et al., 1997). Historically, black people have successfully looked-after white children (e.g. in South Africa) without negative effects on these children's culture. Could the reverse also be true?

Practitioners' reluctance to place dual heritage children and young people with white families has resulted in this group spending longer periods in residential homes. Stability is good for all children and finding a stable, loving environment for young people would be more beneficial than leaving them in residential homes simply because of perceived cultural and ethnic mismatches with prospective carers.

Adoption and foster placements offer stability to children and young people who are unable to live with their birth families (Department of Health, 1998; Sinclair, 2005) and lack of stability impacts on educational achievement for those in the looked-after

populations (Hayden, 2005). In his foreword in the Green Paper - 'Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care', the former Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Alan Johnson, stresses that:

...our goals for children in care should be exactly the same as our goals for our own children: we want their childhoods to be secure, healthy and enjoyable – rich and valuable in themselves as well as providing stable foundations for the rest of their lives (Department for Education and Skills, 2006:3).

The needs of looked-after children and young people are not dissimilar from others and so are the factors required to meet their needs. These factors include a safe environment, stability, love, support, education and encouragement (McAuley, 2006), which most caring and loving parents wish for their children.

If adoptive parents ensure that cultural roots are valued and respected and, where possible, birth parents are involved in the lives of these children, it would help them to form positive racial and social identities (Rodriquez et al., 2003; Thoburn, 2005; Goodyer, 2005). Attention in fostering and adoption must not focus on peripheral issues such as phenotype, food or hair care (Peart et al., 2005) but on racism, particularly institutional racism, as it reinforces stereotypical myths. It is taken for granted that black parents must have experienced racism and are therefore better placed to assist their children in dealing with those issues. However, this is not necessarily true and depends on where the black person was born. For example, before moving to Britain I had not experienced any racism, therefore it would have been wrong to assume that I was equipped to help my children in dealing with racism.

In adoption, 'blackness' is singled out above all else (Cohen, 1994) in placing dual heritage children. Alibhai-Brown (2001) cited a case in Liverpool in the late 1990s where a white mother had a dual heritage child who looked white and was placed with white foster parents. The same parents applied to adopt the child, with the birth mother's approval but the council felt that placement should be with a black family, since the child's great grandfather was black. Given that black people differ in their cultures, class, experiences and religion, those assumptions ignore many issues. For

example, the needs of a Black Muslim child would not be met if a black Christian family adopted/fostered him/her solely on the basis of phenotype.

When middle-class families adopt working-class children, we could also ask if any consideration is given to class. Fundamentally, when looking for suitable placements, all factors that could impact on the children's well-being, including smoking habits of adoptive/foster parents, should be taken into account (Jackson et al., 2000). Moreover, focusing on placing dual heritage children and young people with black families so they can develop a positive racial identity ignores differences in families. People in one single family can display numerous, varied cultural values with shifting ideas (Crichton-Hill, 2004).

Those who oppose placing dual heritage young people with white families (Maxime, 1986; Morgan, 1999; Goldstein, 1999) assume that matching children's physical characteristics to those of the adoptive parents should ensure the success of the adoption and formation of a positive black identity (Banks, 1995). However, Goodyer (2005) believes that this should be reconsidered because it ignores the uniqueness of individuals and it is sometimes unsuccessful (Kirton, 2000). For instance, although many of the Caribbean participants in the study by Barn and Mantovani (2006) lived with families who shared their racial and cultural identities, they did not seem to have a secure racial identity. These researchers reported that ethnic matching was not always successful and argued for reassessment of the issues around ethnic matching since the majority of dual heritage young people lived with their lone, white mothers prior to entering care. They called for a more sophisticated approach to address the needs of children from minority ethnic groups, ensuring that sufficient consideration is given to risk and vulnerability in later life.

Moreover, it may not always be possible to find placements for looked-after young people that meet the cultural, religious and linguistic background of their parents because it is not always easy to match these characteristics (Selwyn et al., 2004). Even so, efforts should still be made to enable the child to experience the culture of the minority ethnic parent. For example, if young people are to be placed with Christians, arrangements could be made for them to be taken to church and the same could apply to Muslim young people by taking them to the mosque. This requires commitment,

willingness and creativity from carers, which may depend on their beliefs, social economic position etc. Likewise, the success or failure of placements may depend on whether or not carers have children of their own. For instance, their birth children may feel discriminated against or ‘invaded’ by these young people as well as a loss of their parents’ attention (Watson and Jones, 2002).

There is no evidence that the attitudes of dual heritage young people to their ‘race’ and self-worth are connected (Tizard and Phoenix, 1994). If it is accepted that dual heritage individuals should identify with their black heritage, then identification and attachment to their white heritage should be unproblematic (Wardle, 1999; Owusu-Bempah, 2005). Using political or ideological reasons to deny children placements may result in them being psychologically affected (Dale, 1987). There are families in most communities who could adopt/foster children from different racial backgrounds and they must not be discouraged (Day, 1979).

2.3.2 Lessons for those working with dual heritage young people

Those working in this domain require greater understanding of both structural and psychological factors that may prevent this group from developing to their full potential. Assessment, as used to plan care, is an ongoing process in which service user’s participate and the objective is to understand people in relation to their environment (Coulshed and Orme, 1998). For Ince (1998), recognising the cultural backgrounds, racial differences and experiences of this group would help to improve their psychological well-being (Ince, 1998). Nevertheless, practitioners cannot achieve this alone — therefore, commitment to enhance the lives of this group must come from all those involved in policies and the wider society. Fundamentally, practitioners must avoid myths and stereotypes and focus on respecting diversity and difference. For the Department of Health et al. (2000, paragraph 2.28:26):

...practitioners have to take account of diversity in children, understand its origins...the interaction with parental responses and wider family...

Understanding the complex nature of ethnicity is not easy; conversely, assumptions and generalisation are unhelpful. It is important to ensure that future generations of this group are not failed in the same way as the previous generations. Problems in this

domain result from several interrelated factors, exacerbated by professionals' ill-informed responses. The Audit Commission and Social Services Inspectorate (1998) reported that most Social Services departments lag behind in addressing ethnic, cultural and religious needs of those in their care. Basing practice on stereotypical definitions may result in inaccurate diagnosis that often ignores individuals' uniqueness (Dominelli, 2004). Still, the assumption that the cultural needs of dual heritage individuals can be met in the same way as those of black people because they are seen as black (Owusu-Bempah, 2005) needs to be abandoned because "these children are not black" (Dutt, 1999:32).

When society and those working with dual heritage children and young people acknowledge that they are not black, it is likely to help this group develop psychological completeness (Robinson, 2000). Furthermore, such an acknowledgement will go some way in assisting society and professionals to move away from the notion of identity confusion, which seems to be the main characteristic associated with this group. Lack of awareness on the part of some practitioners, or a focus on 'political correctness', renders essentialism an easy option (Katz, 2001). It is important to carry out some work urgently to identify why it is difficult to find suitable placements for this group. Findings from such research may influence policy decisions.

2.3.3 Summary

This section has explored issues around the politics of placement and has shown that meeting the needs of this group appropriately is possibly more problematic than those of 'single race' individuals. Focusing on finding placements that match individuals' phenotype or ethnicity is unsatisfactory because this approach ignores other factors. For instance, an individual may have a Nigerian father and a white British mother, and this could be used as criteria to place these young people with a Nigerian family. However, this may be the wrong placement if the individual concerned has never met his father let alone visited Nigeria. Sweeping assumptions and generalisations need to be avoided, thus treating each case on merit and refraining from putting emphasis on 'ethnic-matching'. Problems of finding appropriate placements may result in young people from this group remaining in residential homes for longer periods than others. In relation to placements with white families, adoptive parents could assist by ensuring that the cultural roots of this group are valued and respected and, wherever possible,

involve birth parents. This group has already experienced rejection, therefore they may be more troubled emotionally and psychologically if white families wishing to care for them are refused adoption/fostering. Given that one part of their heritage is white, it may be very confusing if they are informed that their racial identity needs will be better met by black families.

2.4 Reflecting upon the critical analysis of the research literature for this thesis

Although there is an abundance of literature on looked-after children and young people generally, there is shortage of specific data in relation to dual heritage individuals in this context. Phrases used to describe this group were unhelpful because different writers and practitioners use different terminologies to describe dual heritage individuals. There is often no breakdown by ethnicity and, when reference is made to ‘mixed race’, this encompasses a wider range of groups than those explored in this thesis. There are likely to be a myriad of possible reasons why there has been less attention paid to young people of dual heritage in the literature. For example, this could stem from the fact that often research is carried out by dominant white people and these young people are neither dominant nor white. Furthermore, organisations or people who fund research may see this group as a low priority. Cultural and colonial politics which may result in rendering this group invisible could be another explanation. Since dual heritage people are perceived as black there may well be a loose impulse to generalise assumptions and research findings conducted on black people in general can apply to this particular group in question.

It is hoped that given the scarcity of literature in this area this research will contribute to practitioners understanding of this group and their complex needs. This study will demonstrate to practitioners that different factors at micro, exo, macro and meso levels are likely to impact on the lives of this group and their identities. The study will shape the way professionals perceive this group through the realisation that these young people are not homogeneous, but diverse and so are their needs. Most important it makes a case to help practitioners to move away from the tendency of ‘otherness’ and to essentialise culture, a tendency that sees these young people as the ‘other’ and the white culture as the norm.

The findings from research literature in this domain indicate that problems faced by this group are caused by ignorance of the complexities surrounding their multifaceted identities and experiences. A fuller and more critical understanding about identity and cultural history of dual heritage individuals is needed. For individual, cultural, institutional and structural discrimination to be addressed, the well-established myths surrounding them must be abandoned. Structural patterns and fairness in terms of the distribution of services within a given system may result in discriminating against or oppressing certain groups (Harlow and Hearn, 1996; Feagin, 2006). In order to oppose discrimination, it is necessary to confront oppression (Thompson, 1993 and 1997). However, challenging well-established attitudes and practices requires training, confidence, awareness, as well as courage.

During anti-oppressive/anti-discrimination lectures, some white colleagues claimed that they felt afraid to comment honestly if refugees, asylum seekers or 'race' and ethnicity were discussed as they feared being labelled racist or insensitive. Conversely, non-white people may sometimes lack confidence or be too angry to participate — feeling that nobody listens to their views. Awareness and co-operation from the media, politicians, society, educators, practitioners and allied professionals is needed. Educators and policymakers may endorse anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practices but they are difficult to enforce while class inequalities remain widespread. So, for dual heritage individuals (including those in the looked-after population) to be socially included, it is necessary to examine inequalities based on class and people's phenotype. In general, it has been noted in the UK, class structure is reproduced across and between generations (Mason, 2006) and how, as a result, SES amongst individuals of black and dual heritage is predominantly marked by social and economic inequalities which are complex and multifaceted (Nazroo et al., 2007).

Treating everyone equally is not simply treating everyone in the same way, but it requires an awareness of individuals' needs and a commitment to ensuring that they are met (Thompson, 2000). Equal treatment for all does not mean that individuals' uniqueness is overlooked. The concern should not be about how equally one is treated, but how fairly people are treated. It is insufficient to treat everyone in the same way since equal treatment may itself result in discrimination. Fair treatment means providing equal opportunity for individuals, for example a person with disability wishing to go

upstairs will be denied an equal opportunity if access is not provided. This results in unfair treatment. The unthinking acceptance of white, male, middle-class cultural values and norms, and its assumption that disadvantaged people should aspire towards such socially idealised norms, should be challenged (Dominelli, 2004).

In an ideal world, young people should be able to choose whether they want to live in residential homes, with members of their families or with carers. While this is not always possible (Doolan et al., 2004; Department for Education and Skills, 2006), changes can occur through commitment and negotiations. Although it does not happen consistently, good quality, culturally sensitive practice takes place in various local authorities and courts (Thoburn et al., 2005). The core values underpinning social work include mutual respect, empathy and collaborate working (Trevithick, 2002). From the available literature, I felt that these values seemed to be lacking in some practitioners. Such values are needed to help practitioners support this group and influence the decisions that are made about their needs (Goodyer, 2005).

2.5 Conclusion

2.5.1 Comparing the experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people and other looked-after groups

Disruption, abuse and educational underachievement appear to be common in this group of people. Most young people are often ill prepared to cope once they cease being looked-after (Ince, 2003). Good practice means that young people are involved in decision making as this can assist in intervention and planning needed to ensure that services offered to them are appropriate and adequate (Everitt, and Hardiker, 1996; Cashmore and O'Brien, 2001; Department for Education and Skills, 2006). The Children Act 1989 emphasises the importance of education for every child and, in line with Part 1 Section 1 (3) (b), the court is obliged to consider children's physical, emotional and educational needs and has been granted the power to intervene if school-age children are not 'being properly educated'. Despite this, looked-after children and young people often seem to lag behind in relation to their emotional maturity and educational attainment (Sinclair et al., 2001). Furthermore, assumptions that dual heritage individuals experience identity crises may lead to them being ignored or overlooked if attention is focused on their identities. Overt and covert racisms, which

are prevalent in the lives of dual heritage individuals and ethnic minority groups (particularly those in the looked-after population), are more likely to impact in other areas of their lives, such as employment and housing. Meeting their needs effectively requires awareness of the insidious effects of individual and institutional, as well as other forms of racism. It must also recognise the complexities and multiplicity of factors that contribute to the identities and experiences of dual heritage people.

The General Social Care Council (2003:1.6) stresses the importance of respecting diversity, different cultures and values. Appropriate interventions necessitate working positively across differences and adequately trained practitioners and carers who are skilled in meeting the needs of this group. Processes used by dominant powers to categorise people must be challenged because negative labels may also contribute to the growth and inequality of those concerned.

Clearly, dual heritage individuals are not black or white and care services should reflect these differences. In addition to a sense of belonging, caring and love, which every person needs the diversity and multifaceted identities of dual heritage individuals must be acknowledged and respected. This group is often affected by racism because practitioners and researchers tend to hold racist assumptions derived from the traditions of western culture. This has implications for social work, which is charged with identifying inequality, promoting social justice and working to enhance people's life chances. It is more likely that the 'colour blind' approach in child placement can act as a stumbling block in discussing issues around 'race' openly. This could result from apathy and a lack of respect or confidence in some practitioners with excessive case loads.

The majority of dual heritage individuals living with their birth families are comfortable with their racial and ethnic identity (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Barn and Brug, 2005; Goodyer and Okitikpi, 2007). There are concerns that those placed with white families in predominantly white communities do not have positive racial and ethnic identities (Ince, 1998; Barn, 1999). This group is better placed to articulate how they want to be identified and whether or not the ethnicity of their carers or practitioners is relevant. It is important to identify who holds power, and, in particular, who decides how to identify or describe a dual heritage person. Who decides whether the placement is with a white,

black or 'mixed-race' family? Ultimately, are these decisions made on the basis of political correctness or in the best interest of the child? It should not be the role of service providers to ascertain the best description or placement for looked-after, dual heritage children and young people.

Okitikpi (2005) has argued that dual heritage individuals are more than capable of determining their own identities and what they need above all is the autonomy to self-identify. Where those in the looked-after population have the capacity to dictate this, they should influence the types of services and placements they would prefer. However, it is important to recognise that this is not a homogeneous group and their placement preferences, experiences and how they wish to identify are likely to vary. Although dual heritage individuals are not black or white, as pointed out earlier, some may choose to identify as white or black. Others may have strong feelings either for or against placements with white or black families. Clearly, what may be better for one looked-after, dual heritage young person may not be the same for another young person in a similar situation. Nonetheless, looked-after, dual heritage young people need space for their voices to be heard and the use of qualitative, semi-structured interviews in my research will help them to achieve this goal. Given the scarcity of literature in this domain, the key contribution of this study is to document the perceptions, needs, concerns and care experiences of this group.

2.5.2 Summary

The literature review confirmed the scarcity of literature about dual heritage individuals in Britain (Alibhai-Brown, 2001; Song, 2003), particularly those in the looked-after population (Barn 1999; Chase et al., 2006). The notion that dual heritage individuals experience identity crises (Maxime, 1993) is disputed (Owusu-Bempah, 1994 and 2005; Okitikpi, 2005). This simplistic way of describing people of diverse and multiple ethnicities requires the confidence of these individuals to challenge such notions. As highlighted in the introduction to the study, this group has a long history of entering the public care system at a younger age than others and staying there for longer periods. It is important to conduct research in this area to understand issues around their identities, their care needs, and how these needs can be met adequately and appropriately. It is important to value service users' experiences, including their fears and hopes (Hartman, 1994). 'Race' and ethnicity, which are often used as though they are the same, are

socially constructed to create racial distinctions between different groups of people. The lives of those assigned inferior positions or status in society due to their phenotype are often blighted by various types of racism. Section 22 (5) (c) is difficult to implement in this domain; hence my research may help to identify whether or not the importance policymakers and practitioners attach to this policy when meeting the needs of this group is relevant.

CHAPTER THREE:

3 Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approach used in this thesis in the identification of ‘cases’, data collection and analysis. Research focusing on looked-after groups of people may result in long-forgotten emotions being brought to the surface. Additionally, this could be worse for looked-after, dual heritage young people, who are stigmatised for being in care, as well as having a dual heritage identity. As highlighted earlier, there is a gap between how practitioners and looked-after, dual heritage young people perceive identity. This chapter set out to discover appropriate ways to investigate the care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people.

Having explored the most suitable methodology for this thesis, I opted for methods and ethical approaches that require theoretical sensitivity and ways of eliciting rich data from participants. The aim was to use an approach that would improve our knowledge of the key concepts in this thesis, namely ‘dual heritage’ and ‘looked-after, dual heritage young people’. Similarly, another aim was to draw on some of the principal values underpinning social work, specifically empowerment, to broaden our understanding of the forces oppressing this group. Ethical dilemmas are also explored.

Section one discusses the production of knowledge and different ways of understanding. The philosophy of methods and earlier philosophical perceptions about knowledge creation, are also explored in this section.

Section two focuses on reflexivity on the part of the researcher. Some exploration of how both personal and professional experiences can be appropriately managed within the research process, as well as issues of accountability, will also be addressed.

Section three discusses the sample group in terms of geographical location, methods of recruitment and access issues. This section will also discuss barriers to gaining access.

Section four focuses on ethical considerations and principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection. The section touches on the importance of rapport, empathy, and trust in the interview process as well as power relations between researchers and participants.

Section five provides an overview of the aims and objectives of this research.

Section six explores methods used in the study and interview questions that were posed. It examines the effectiveness of qualitative, semi-structured interviews to facilitate storytelling. The adoption of the life-curve and the intimacy circle, which have been used as modes of communication, as well as visual aid images are also explored.

Section seven examines data analysis and provides an overview of the stages used to analyse the data.

3.1 Quantitative versus qualitative – passionate versus dispassionate

3.1.1 A philosophy of methods

Early philosophers such as Comte and Durkheim, believed that methods used to study physical science should be applied to the social sciences (Gordon, 1991). They believed in one universal truth and took the view that science should be objective, rather than subjective (Williams and May, 2000; Fook, 2007). These early philosophers argued that science could offer explanations, predictions, or generalisations that are common and allow no room for intuition or behaviour, which is not observable (Barnes, 1974). Studying human behaviour, which is developmental and transformative, presents us with challenges that defy simplistic perspectives and requires a wider range of methods to examine how people's lives are constructed from the stories they tell (Mason, 1994; Schwandt, 2000). Therefore, researchers are urged to use what Higham (2001) calls an interactive approach, which accords with the current philosophy of bringing together different research methods. Similarly, researchers' experience, which they can bring to the research question, should be valued (Stanley and Wise, 1997). Bias can be overcome by ensuring that researchers look at themselves and their social location critically (Harding, 1991; Fetterman, 1998).

Increasingly, researchers acknowledge paradigms that embrace critical reflexivity between participants and themselves (Fook and Gardner, 2007). They endeavour to expand on work already completed (Gilbert, 1995), building on the strengths and learning from the weaknesses (Bryman, 2004) while searching for new ways to combat new challenges (Gordon, 1991). There is no end to the quest for new ideas and approaches (Benton and Craib, 2001). The modernist tradition that gives priority to quantitative over qualitative research must be reconsidered since there is a role for both methods (Sherman and Reid, 1994). In order to understand the world around us, we need to appreciate the repercussions of what we take as our reality, and recognise that our methods are not universally shared and other ways of knowing exist (Foucault, 1980; Hart, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Traditional methods ignore the experiences of marginalised and oppressed groups (Tuhiwai Smith, 2000). Conversely, feminist, anti-discriminatory, participatory and action-oriented methods are inclusive and empowering (Harding, 1991; Heron and Reason, 2001; Tuhiwai Smith, 2002; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). The impact of globalisation and postmodern approaches requires us to embrace Foucault's way of knowing and use methods that challenge the source of our knowledge (Fook, 2007).

3.1.2 Postmodernism in the social sciences

Foucault (1980), who argued for the empowerment of the silenced, famously challenged the modernist position. He believed that there is no one absolute truth, which people need in order to exercise power. For Foucault, the world should be understood in context and truth-seeking is a form of understanding that grasps the limits and historical nature of knowledge (Rabinow, 1991). Foucault, who argued against superior knowledge, opposed all forms of enlightenment as he felt that there should be criteria on which to judge things as these are always relative (Crow, 2005). Foucault (1988) pointed out that people have a need to understand the truths about themselves and they should be helped to achieve this. Methods most suitable to the subject need to be sought since they will influence the knowledge (Hart, 2001). For Everitt (1998:108):

...it is important to be critical, not only of professional practice, but also of research and of knowledge and to be mindful of the ways in which some explanations and understandings come to be thought of as 'true'. Such truths

may serve to maintain the status quo and to continue and strengthen oppressive practice.

Postmodernism has many strands, including the rejection of modernity and a questioning of our reliance on scientific rationality. This puts greater emphasis on a pluralistic range of styles and practices. Furthermore, postmodernism provides a greater understanding of cultural diversity and emphasises the importance of subjective experiences as well as different responses to common situations (Harvey, 1990). This leads to an acknowledgement of different realities and intense suspicion of one truth or totalising discourses (Fook and Gardner, 2007), which can be powerful and oppressive. Postmodernism interrogates the authority of 'experts' and places greater value on giving voice to all and valuing the resultant views (Gilligan, 1982; Chambers, 1997). A crucial point is:

The idea that all groups have a right to speak for themselves, in their own voice, and have that voice accepted as authentic and legitimate (Harvey, 1990:48).

Postmodernism opposes the role played by structure and control in creating knowledge. It focuses on the power of knowledge (Foucault, 1980) and it values and embraces difference.

3.1.3 The constructivist paradigm and giving voice to participants

In any research, priority must be given to the phenomenon being studied (Schwandt, 2000; Charmaz, 2006). Having decided to focus on looked-after, dual heritage young people, my research approach demanded sensitive examination of their care experiences. In contemplating a suitable method for this study, I recognised the unsuitability of approaches used by early philosophers such as Comte and Durkheim that seek tangible, concrete findings. These early philosophers' approaches work against the concept of giving voice to participants by enforcing one form of understanding (Tuhiwai Smith, 2002), which would not have been grounded in the young people's care experiences. Hence, a qualitative, descriptive and exploratory approach that valued their subjectivity and interpretations was chosen.

Children and young people are often active agents in the construction of their lives and the people around them (James and Prout, 1990). A more holistic interpretive, constructivist approach, commonly associated with Chamarz (2006), was chosen to complement both the requirements of my research and the aim of empowering the young people involved. This paradigm was considered to be most appropriate because it supports the epistemological understanding of human phenomenon (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). For Sherman and Read (1994:1):

The element of judgement, choice, interpretation and naturalistic setting associated with qualitative research are co-terminous with the major elements of direct practice in social work.

My social work training, and the nature of my study, demanded an epistemological approach that sustains the inter-active and inter-subjective nature of human relations. It was important that such an approach concentrated on participants' perspectives (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) and the relationship between us. The constructivist paradigm conceptualises children and young people as active individuals who are able to engage in meaningful negotiations relating to their lived experiences. This paradigm is founded on the ontological and epistemological concepts of construction and interpretation (Rolfe et al., 2001; Gray, 2004). It embraces the postmodern perspective that seeks to understand how and why we look beneath the surface for explanations instead of guessing the causes or identifying why one account carries more weight than the others (Fook, 2007).

3.1.4 Standpointism

Standpoint feminism, which stresses that what we do affects our knowledge, is 'woman-centred research' that focuses on giving voice to silenced voices and overlooked 'objects' (Harding, 1991). Feminist researchers are encouraged to move out of their "ivory tower" (Mies, 1993). Drawing on the personal experience of researchers is a way of knowing people and establishing relationships (Oakley, 1981). Feminist researchers challenge the domination of patriarchal epistemological notions that disregard gender differences between men and women (Usher, 1996; Stanley and Wise, 1997). The feminist standpoint values the experiences of research participants (Harding, 1987 and 1991; Oakley, 1974). If this was to be followed, researchers would have to consider

whether the best approach is for women to be interviewed by women, men by men and black people by black people in view of their experiences. Nonetheless, the notion that men have something to offer to feminist research is not disputed (Harding, 1987).

The standpoint feminists focus on gender differences with the belief that knowledge is socially situated. Thus, for Beresford and Evans (1999:672):

...instead of endorsing the traditional 'scientific' research values of neutrality, objectivity and distance, which 'evidence-based' inquiry has re-emphasised, it has questioned both their desirability and feasibility. It values people's first hand direct experience as a basis for knowledge.

Methods used in research must not depend on researchers' preconceived ideas but their effectiveness in addressing research questions (Everitt et al., 1992; Flick, 2002). The methodology should be transparent, ensuring that methods used are made explicit (Blaxter et al., 2003). This is important to enable others to replicate the work and to review findings in the light of the methods employed.

3.1.5 *Transparent methods*

Throughout the research process, I endeavoured to provide space for participants to articulate their stories in their own terms and from their own perspective. The intention was to set issues in context and generate data that was meaningful to them as well as making the research transparent. This meant taking their stories seriously and treating them as credible informants. Knowledge is situated and contextual — therefore, it is produced and reconstructed by bringing context into focus (Mason, 2003b). I was aware that, if the knowledge based on the care experiences of this group was to be reconstructed and their social relations explored, a level of interaction with the young people, their practitioners and carers and myself as a researcher was crucial.

The intention was to use participants' voices to bring about social change by paying attention and 'giving voice' to the changes they desired (Lee, 1993; Hartman, 1994; Park, 2001). This required a holistic understanding and reflectivity (Healey, 2001). Evidence of giving voice to oppressed groups can be found in the progress and contributions made by the disability movement (Oliver, 1990) and feminist research

(Stanley and Wise, 1997). Considering the nature and sensitivity of this study I felt that knowledge or expertise on how to bring about that change had to come from the young people themselves (Taylor, 1997; Rolfe, et al., 2001). Any approaches used were grounded by ethical safeguards that took into account the sensitivity of the study (Lee, 1993). This ensured that the young people's recollections of their care experiences were the main source of data.

3.1.6 Qualitative methods

Research strategies must be appropriate and in sympathy with the research project (Gilbert, 1995; Williams, et al., 1999; Powell, 2005). Research that focuses on giving voice to disadvantaged groups is often used to challenge existing knowledge (Lewis, 1996). In this study, participants' unique viewpoints were respected and their concerns taken seriously (Back, 1996; Fetterman, 1998). This was achieved by providing space for them to tell their unique stories thus deepening understanding in this domain. Overall, a qualitative approach is non-numeric in character (Sherman and Reid, 1994) and could result in:

...findings and insights which will disturb the status quo, while at the same time the methods employed make it impossible to claim credibility on grounds of objectivity (Finch, 1986:197).

Disturbing the status quo should not be viewed negatively, particularly if research findings can inform practice and policy. It is impossible to claim credibility on the grounds of objectivity because our own interests and social history motivate us (Clough, 1995).

3.1.7 Summary

This section explored suitable methodology and ways of knowing adopted by earlier philosophers who took the perspective that authentic knowledge can only come from proof of theories through rigorous scientific approaches. The philosophical approach which these earlier philosophers took was that genuine knowledge could only be obtained through observable and measurable phenomena. The philosophical approach taken by earlier philosophers like Comte and Durkheim was considered inappropriate

for this thesis because it tends to ignore the knowledge and experiences of those taking part in research on the grounds that such knowledge is subjective. Instead postmodernist and feminist standpoint approaches were chosen because of the emphasis on involving participants and valuing their voices. Foucault (1980) and feminists such as Oakley (1981, 1974), Harding (1987, 1991), and Stanley and Wise (1997) stress the importance of researchers giving value to the voices of participants because they are better placed to talk about their experiences. These approaches were chosen for this thesis to ensure that this group was able to articulate the changes they wanted to see. The methodology which took the form of qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, involved the young people, their practitioners and carers.

3.2 Reflexivity on the part of the researcher

Although I am a black parent of dual heritage children, I see my children and myself in the minority and different from the majority of dual heritage people who have white mothers (Barn, 1999). Nonetheless, my identity could have posed various challenges depending on the experiences of this group and whether they saw me as an outsider or insider (3.2.1). Given my identity, reflexivity on my part was crucial at all times to aid data interpretation as well as dealing with the familiar and the unfamiliar (Flick, 2002; Back, 2007).

The importance of reflecting on my identity and how I conducted myself throughout this research journey could not be overemphasised. There could have been occasions when the stories of the young people may have brought back memories of incidents that had happened in my own life or those of my children and family. The skills gained from my social work training and practice helped my own interactions with participants and how I dealt with new and unexpected situations. These experiences informed my methodology but did not overwhelm it. I had embarked on this research journey prepared to recognise the impact of my own experiences and to be surprised.

Although I aimed to be dispassionate, I was passionately involved because of my identity and interest in the research question. While I strove to be a “sensitive and perceptive data gathering tool” (Fetterman, 1998:31), I was watchful at all times because there is no such thing as “unbiased data” (Wallace and Rees, 1988; Clough,

1995; Hammersley and Gomma, 1997) and I was aware that my identity was likely to affect my findings. I took comfort from the views of Oakley (1974) and Reinharz (1992), who believe that the 'cultural self' researchers take into their work is a resource. Research is effectively influenced by researchers' own motivations and values because there is no such thing as objectivity in science (Becker, 1967; Harding, 1991; Hammersley, 1993; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Flick, 2002; Blaxter et al., 2003). There is nothing wrong with researchers investigating causes close to their hearts (Stanley and Wise, 1997) and to conduct research effectively, dedication is required (Hammersley, 2003). Fundamental to my interpretation of the data has been what Hammersley (1998) believes should be clear analysis of the implications and meanings of human actions. Based on Fetterman's views (1998), my role could be described as that of generating data from the 'emic' insider perspective and analysing it, non-judgementally, from the 'etic' outsider perspective. Crucial to the data analysis process was whether the views represented were the accurate perceptions of the participants or filtered through my eyes as a researcher.

3.2.1 Insider versus outsider researcher

Non-whites could distrust researchers perceived as 'outsiders' (Gwaltney, cited in Andersen, 1993). This does not mean that these groups cannot be researched by white researchers, but their research must be carried out in a way that challenges white privilege (Andersen, 1993). I could have performed the role of both an 'insider' and an 'outsider' (Sands and McClelland, 1994). I could have been an 'insider' since I am a mother of dual heritage children. Although my children have not been looked-after away from home, they may have had experiences that are common to those faced by my sample group, such as racism and discrimination. The possibility of someone being an 'insider' based purely on shared identities is debatable (Jones, 2002). Considering the problems and difficulties involved in researching young people, being an insider or having shared interests may not be sufficient (Bennett, 2003).

Thus, as Gray (2004) suggests, the position of an 'insider' is not static because it varies and, depending on the context, one can be an 'insider' and an 'outsider' at the same time (Sands and McClelland, 1994; Phoenix, 1998). I could have been an 'outsider' because I have never been looked-after and I do not have a white mother. The possibility of being seen as an outsider meant finding ways of locating me in the research. Although I

could have been an outsider, I was not totally unfamiliar with experiences of racism and discrimination. This further complicated my identity and raised the challenge of submerging 'the self' sufficiently in the research whilst remaining an 'objective' researcher. Even though commonalities may have existed between myself and the young participants, there may also have been differences and, therefore, the status of either an 'outsider' or an 'insider' is incomplete and partial. For Bhopal (2000:74):

...when the research and the researched operate from shared realities, there may be a tendency to take too much for granted...Familiarity with the phenomena under study... risks blindness to certain details that may be important.

Feminist ethics predominantly recognise that researchers are central ingredients of the research process (Stanley and Wise, 1997; Oakley, 1974). I was aware that any choices I made could have influenced the findings of this thesis because of my personal investment in the project. Others believe familiarity or shared experience pave the way for access into the field (Malbon, 1999; Merriam et al., 2001).

3.2.2 Management of personal and professional experiences

The sensitivity of this research called for some observations about the nature of social work. Intrinsically, social work training developed my professional skills and helped me to become familiar with the private and social worlds of participants. Embedded in the practice are:

- the management of projection and challenging behaviour
- engagement skills
- interpersonal sensitivity
- managing and balancing the gaining of information and the responsibility to protect
- weighing what is to be achieved and its impact, level of distress
- when to intervene and when to leave.

There are many different approaches to social work which, coupled with my own experiences, enabled me to draw conclusions from different perspectives. Professional

practice as a social worker and use of reflective practice helps in research (Powell, 1996). Given my background and the reasons behind my interest in this research, I could not get away from the role played by 'the self'. Nonetheless, my intention was to be open and honest with participants otherwise participants may be misled into giving information they might otherwise withhold (Bennett, 2003). I was aware of the importance of combining critical reflection with being honest and open about every action I took as well as acknowledging my experiences. My reflective journal, which is a device recognised by scholars such as Rolfe et al. (2001), was a constant companion that proved invaluable in reflecting on how I reacted to, or experienced certain encounters. This included analysing whether my reaction to participants' failure to turn up for interviews, as well as feelings and emotions, were a hindrance or a help. I believe that my multiple identities were a strength and not a limitation.

As highlighted in section 3.3.1, participants for this study were located at different parts of the country. This meant long train journeys and sometimes over night stays. On these journeys and in lonely hotel rooms, I used my reflective journal as a friend during reflections on the events of the day and my reaction to them. The reflective journal was used during the fieldwork, at the writing up and analysing stages. I often referred to it in order to remind myself whether what I had written or the views I was presenting were those of participants or not. For example, I returned to Safi's fieldwork notes and then those of her personal adviser and social worker. I had noted in my journal that Safi appeared white although she had described herself as 'dual ethnic' to me. Safi had also told me that she was proud of having two heritages although she presented herself as white to those who worked with her. As a result they had been surprised when asked if they had discussed with Safi how she felt about her dual heritage. The entry on my journal read: *Oh dear, it is going to be hard to work out how researchers know whether they are being told things as they really are –Vicky, welcome to the world of researching real people and focus on telling the story as given by your participants.* Safi's note was one of many which taken together formed a growing picture of multi-ethnicities. A key feature of the journal was that of jolting my memory as I jotted things down on my way from interviews. I often used the time in the train reliving the interview process and the journal acted as my silent friend.

There were concerns that, as a black person, I was likely to face different reactions, depending on the experiences looked-after, dual heritage young people encountered when dealing with black people. There were also concerns about whether their perception of me as a black person and an older woman may have influenced the data gathered. Similarly, other concerns centred around whether the data could have been influenced by my identity as a black mother of dual heritage children. Conversely, it is important that a non-white researcher conducts work in an area that is predominantly dominated by white researchers.

3.2.3 Accountability

I endeavoured to be accountable to the principles of qualitative research as well as the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), who funded my research, my supervisors and the University ethics committee. As well as being accountable to the young people involved in the study, I had to be accountable to my own personal values (Rossiter et al., 2000) and my personal research ethics as a social worker. I was guided by social work values and skills that focus on enhancing the well-being of the most vulnerable in society (Banks, 2004) because the role of social work is to improve the welfare of the vulnerable (Wallace and Rees, 1988; Adams, et al., 2002).

A key priority was to ensure that the young people involved did not feel exploited. For Skeggs (1994), the issue of exploitation does not arise because participants do derive benefits, such as enhanced self-esteem, through their involvement in the research. Although I was aware that participation in the study would provide space for these young people's voices to be heard (Skeggs, 1994; Dickson-Swift et al., 2007), I also wanted to give them a thank you gift. After discussions with my supervisors, it was agreed that I could pay them an honorarium for their time in recognition of their contribution to the research.

3.2.4 Summary

This section has highlighted the importance of reflexivity on my part as a researcher and has explored advantages and disadvantages of an insider versus outsider position. Critical reflection on my part was necessary, although my multiple identities were strength. Considering the sensitivity of this project, the management of personal and

professional experiences has been explored. Although it was not possible to be prepared for all eventualities, it was important to remain calm in all situations and my social work training ensured that I worked with all participants as sensitively as possible.

3.3 The sample

The study targeted looked-after, dual heritage young people of both sexes, aged seventeen to twenty-four. This group was chosen because, under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, local authorities are obliged to continue supporting young people until they are twenty-one or if they are still receiving help with education, training, or employment which extends beyond their twenty-first birthday (Section 24B). The study focused on those aged sixteen and above to negate the need for consent from parents and the sample was restricted to those living in England rather than across the UK for practical reasons. With the permission of the young people concerned, participants also included practitioners and carers. This provided additional perspectives and highlighted carers' and practitioners' needs, such as training and general support.

Participants were chosen on theoretical or purposive criteria (Flick, 2002). Purposive sampling is:

...essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling (Bryman, 2004:333 - 334).

Purposive sampling, or what Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to as 'theoretical sampling', made sense given the nature of this study, which was to understand and shed light on the data generated rather than predicting it. Furthermore, the richness of the data was very important and Mason (2003b:124) informs us that:

...theoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position and analytical framework, your analytical practice, and most importantly the argument or explanation that you are developing. Theoretical sampling is concerned with constructing a sample (sometimes called a study group) which is

meaningful theoretically, because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which help to develop and test your theory or your argument.

I was aware that such a sample would not be representative and generalisations must not be drawn. Nevertheless, even though the sample should only reflect and represent the views of participants in this research, it provides insights to some of the challenges facing looked-after, dual heritage young people. The findings are more likely to resonate elsewhere and offer a foundation for further research involving this group.

3.3.1 *The areas where participants were located*

Group one: this was based in the East Midlands where I located one young person (**Safi**). The interview took place in Safi's home which she shared with her white boyfriend and their 18-month-old baby. With Safi's permission, I contacted her personal adviser and social worker. They both agreed to be interviewed and offered their description in relation to their work with Safi, and the interview took place in their offices.

Group two: this was based in south London where I interviewed two siblings (**Amina and Joachim**). They lived independently from each other in flats provided by their local authorities. The older of the two siblings was waiting to be allocated a personal adviser, but she gave me permission to meet her last social worker who worked with her young brother and knew the family history. The interview with the social worker, who is white but not British and has children of dual heritage, took place in her office.

Group three: this was a 'leaving care' team in inner London where the population was primarily black and I interviewed four young people (**Musa, Sam, Sue and Thomas**). All four lived semi-independently and were undertaking training in independent living skills. The interviews took place in the 'leaving care' team offices. Two of these four young people were no longer with their foster carers and did not have their contact addresses. Nonetheless, they gave permission for me to interview their social workers and these interviews were conducted in their offices. The other two young people felt that the interview should focus on their perspectives alone and should not involve anyone else.

Group four: this was a voluntary-run sheltered accommodation for young homeless people in East London where I interviewed **Fiona**. With her permission, I was able to contact her birth father and social worker. Both informed me that they were too busy to have face-to-face interviews, but were prepared to take part in telephone interviews.

Group five: this was based in the south east of England and I was able to interview three young people (**Timothy, Josie, and Francis**). All three young people lived semi-independently and wanted the interview to be carried out in their homes. Two were siblings and both gave permission for me to meet their practitioners but the third one declined. However, practitioners working with the two siblings refused to participate because the young people were aged 16 and over.

Group six: some interviews in this group took place in the south of England (**Jude and Rosie**) whilst others were carried out in the south west of England (**Mimi, Adam and Roger**). These interviews were conducted in the homes of the young people and their carers, where permission was given.

3.3.2 Access

The process and time spent negotiating access was lengthy, and frustrating at times, and I had not anticipated the difficulty involved. Initially, some organisations and practitioners appeared quite keen and expressed the importance of undertaking such a study. However, the majority of them later responded, with apologies for failing to identify anyone who could participate. I knew that without access to participants, I would have been unable to conduct my research, and this realisation caused some anxiety. However, these problems did not discourage me because I was aware that refusal to grant access meant that people were denied the opportunity to put across their views. Whether access was granted or not depended on those in charge as well as the target group's willingness to participate (Morrow and Richards, 1996). The length of time taken to negotiate access proved problematic for a lone researcher constrained by limited resources in terms of time and money.

In some cases, access may be denied to help protect vulnerable individuals. There may also be concerns that participants could feel obliged to take part and negotiating access through organisations or practitioners may put undue pressure on prospective

participants. In preparing for these interviews it was important to ensure that the young people, their carers and practitioners were fully informed about the research and they could stop the interview or refuse to answer questions at any stage (Appendices: 1, 2, 6, 8 and 10).

3.3.3 *Methods of recruitment*

Professionals are often cautious of research involving ‘race’ and sometimes they deny or block access (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002). I approached local authorities, individual practitioners and carers who were involved with this group to identify young people who met my research criteria. One particular organisation and some senior practitioners were very keen to help in the beginning but they subsequently challenged the focus of my research — suggesting that I should widen my sample group to include Asian people and Asylum seekers. When I explained the reasons for my research focus, they informed me that the sample was too narrow for looked-after children demographic in their organisations. This was frustrating from a personal perspective.

Gaining the approval of the University of Southampton’s Ethics Committee was another lengthy process, but this process helped me to focus my research question. Some committee members were concerned that my identity may have biased the data but this proved unfounded. Presumably, participants perceived me solely as a researcher. This shows that sometimes unnecessary barriers can be created by our own perceptions.

During the ‘In Care/Leaving Care Conference’ that took place at the University of Southampton in July 2006, I distributed a flyer that created some research leads (Appendix 4). Some practitioners who attended the conference were able to identify and recommend looked-after, dual heritage young people who were keen to participate in the research. They informed me that provided the University Ethics Committee had given approval, they were content for me to conduct the necessary research in their organisations.

3.3.4 *Young people as gatekeepers*

Gaining access can also be made difficult by the young people involved as I discovered when I sought consent to gather multi-perspective stories from wider social networks.

As explained elsewhere, the aim of adopting this approach was to build a case using data from multiple sources. Some young people blocked access to their carers or practitioners. The young people proved hard to reach from all angles and, even when they had agreed to participate, it was not unusual for them to miss appointments.

3.3.5 *Why is it a challenge to gain access to young people?*

Gaining access to young people can often be a challenge because one has to go through various gatekeepers, some of whom hold different views (Cieslik, 2003). If those controlling access do not see the merit of the research and it conflicts with their own ideologies, then gaining access is almost impossible. This can lead to the voices of vulnerable young people not being heard (Jones et al., 2003). For young people to participate, they need to be well informed about the purpose of the research (Emond, 2003). Therefore, gatekeepers need to present research positively (Wigfall and Cameron, 2006). Access is sometimes refused as a way of either protecting or excluding people (France, 2007). Nonetheless, harm to participants can potentially be minimised if access is gained via gatekeepers and ethics committees (Cutcliffe and Ramcharan, 2002). Furthermore, young people are often busy and participating in research projects may not be high in their list of priorities. For Cieslik:

...at its simplest, one may have the classic situation of the lone researcher conducting empirical research in the changing situation of young people's lives, whilst the young people themselves are just getting on with living their lives (2003:3).

Cieslik's comments bring to mind some of the cases of young people who initially agreed to participate in this project and changed their minds at the last minute. There were also difficulties in recruiting other participants (e.g. to recruit carers and practitioners required the consent of the young people). These young people's lives were already chaotic because of their experiences. Perhaps some of them felt that they had been over-researched and nothing has come from previous research. Hence, they could not see the benefit of participating in further work. Even if access was granted by others, such as practitioners, the young people could dictate how they could take control (Emond, 2003). This could include not turning up for interviews or walking out in the middle of the process.

3.3.6 *Why was access to files denied?*

In some cases, the young participants gave permission for me to examine their files but practitioners refused. This could have been connected with data protection legislation. Practitioners may also have been concerned about whether their practice would be scrutinised.

3.3.7 *Why was it not a straightforward process to identify and follow-up practitioners and carers?*

It is not easy to explain why the process of identifying and following up practitioners and carers was not straightforward. In order to gain access to carers and practitioners, permission had to be given by the young people. There may be numerous reasons to explain why permission was refused. Hence, the process proved problematic. For example, some participants:

- may have felt that the interview was focused on their experiences and they did not see why other people should be involved
- wanted their stories to be heard and not to be contaminated by different perceptions from other people
- may have thought that going back to their foster parents or birth parents meant re-living long-forgotten experiences that they would rather forget
- may have felt that they did not want their social workers or personal advisers to know that they had been talking to a researcher.

3.3.8 *Summary*

This section provided details of the targeted sample group in my research project and has highlighted problems faced by those conducting research with young people. The targeted sample proved very hard to reach and access was controlled by gatekeepers (organisations and practitioners) as well as the young people themselves. Permission was sought to view the young people's files and interview their carers and practitioners. Although the young people gave consent for the files to be examined, practitioners blocked these requests. The young people also proved to be gatekeepers in their own right and, without permission from them, access to their carers and practitioners was impossible.

3.4 Ethical considerations

As a researcher, I was aware that long-forgotten emotions could have traumatised this group. For this reason, participants' needs were dealt with sensitively during the research process and afterwards. Participants were free to refuse to answer any questions they considered too personal or distressful. After the fieldwork, participants were reminded of the services available to deal with any emotional issues that could surface long after the research had been completed. This included arrangements for counselling or referral to other agencies. Support networks for both researchers and participants should be in place when researching emotional topics (Warren, 2001). Issues surrounding 'race' can be quite sensitive, thus causing discomfort and stress to researchers as well as participants. Therefore, ongoing monitoring of the researchers and participants' behaviour is crucial at all times.

Social work practice and research require explicit argumentation in ethical decision-making (Osmo and Landau, 2001). Ethics in social science research involves moral deliberations, choices and accountability on the part of the researcher at different stages of the research process (Blaxter et al., 2003). Different parts of the research process raised various ethical dilemmas and, undoubtedly, what was required at the fieldwork stage may well differ from what is needed at the dissemination stage (Shaw, 2003; Becker and Bryman, 2004). For instance, Sue, who lived in semi-independent accommodation, looked lethargic and confided in me that she took drugs regularly as her coping strategy. When the manager of the home asked me how the interview had gone, I commented that it had gone well although Sue was sleepy and appeared tired. I wondered later whether it was ethically right to have kept that information to myself. What if she needed help? Perhaps I should have let the manager know, but would that have impacted on services available to Sue? There was also the question of confidentiality (section 3.4.3). However, I had informed Sue that I would have to disclose certain information — such as abuse. I did not consider taking drugs to be one of those issues — particularly as I did not see her take them.

Ethical considerations for this research project included acknowledgement and compliance with data protection regulations, accurate referencing of literature and an accurate portrayal of these references. They also covered guiding principles outlined in

the course handbook and ethical principles directly relating to social work research and practice. As a social work researcher, I endeavoured to comply with research ethical guidelines (Butler, 2002). I followed the health and safety policy and completed a risk assessment form with my supervisors (Appendix 3). My understanding of research ethics was informed by anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices. Other key concepts that informed my understanding were participants' involvement and power relations. Ethical issues are crucial in research (Homan, 2004) and, for this reason; I followed the ethical principles set below from the outset.

3.4.1 Ethical Principles

- gaining access
- informed consent
- avoidance of harm to participants and researcher
- engaging participants in the research process
- anonymity and confidentiality
- trust and honesty
- enabling looked-after, dual heritage young people to self-define
- sensitivity of the discussion for participants and researcher
- dealing with participants' needs during the research process and afterwards
- consulting with and informing participants about the research outcomes
- addressing power relations
- keeping a check on the conduct of the researcher and participants' behaviour
- seeking ways of disseminating the findings.

The ethical principles detailed above were examined extensively by the University of Southampton's Research Ethics Board and were guided by the ESRC code of ethics. The methodology chosen has helped me to address ethical dilemmas.

The ethical issues for dual heritage individuals have emerged from a history of being researched by people who can hold preconceived ideas about them (Owusu-Bempah, 2005). How others identify dual heritage individuals may differ from how they want to be identified. Any research ethics involving human beings should go beyond issues of consent and confidentiality and the key is to ensure that all participants are respected.

3.4.2 *Informed consent*

I was aware that, from the ethical point of view, it was not sufficient to obtain consent but to ensure that this was granted from an informed perspective (Gray, 2004). This can be difficult because it is unclear as to what extent some participants understand the notion of informed consent. Nonetheless, I understand that participants should be involved in research only if they are content to take part (Homan, 2001). It was made clear to the young people that, at any time during the interview, they could end the discussion without any consequences for their care. Once the nature of the research was explained to participants, they were given contact details so they could raise any issues or concerns. I also outlined the grievance process in case they had a complaint (Appendices 1 and 8).

I felt that it was crucial to establish what informed consent entailed from the outset. I specified how the data was to be stored and for how long (Appendix 9). I also made sure that participants were content with these arrangements. It was made clear that, if there was any intention to use the data at a later date, permission would be sought. I followed the advice given by Gray (2004:59) who stresses that informed consent should include:

- the aims of the research
- who will be undertaking it
- who is being asked to participate
- what kind of information is being sought
- how much of the participant's time is required
- who will have access to the data once it is collected
- how the anonymity of participants will be preserved.

Informed consent forms were attached to participants' information sheets (Appendix 2).

3.4.3 *Confidentiality*

Gatekeepers were made aware that the confidentiality of the research data was important to participants as well as their organisations (Jones, 2002). This was necessary because sometimes gatekeepers may think that, if access is obtained through

them, they have the right to the data generated or “the interpretation of findings...” (Bryman, 2004:518). In order to ensure confidentiality, the identities of participants have been protected through alteration of certain biographical details (Bryman, 2004). All participants were also given an opportunity to use pseudonyms.

Participants were informed at the outset that some issues would have to be disclosed, including sexual or physical abuse (Appendices 1 and 8). Nonetheless, as highlighted in section 3.4, issues of confidentiality raised ethical considerations about whether or not researchers should disclose certain information. Confidentiality is crucial because participants may hold back on important information if they thought that certain information could be passed on to third parties (Hallet et al., 2003). Failure to respect participants’ confidentiality could also affect other researchers, for example, some carers who had a bad experience with a journalist had this to say:

But remember we do not want our names in print. We were betrayed once by this journalist who was doing some work on adoption and, although she promised us that our anonymity was to be protected, that was not at all the case (Jude’s foster carers).

These carers found the experience rather upsetting. Their story serves to explain why people often refuse to participate in interviews.

3.4.4 Data protection

The data generated from interviews with participants has been used solely for the purpose of this study. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, participants were given release forms that clearly stated how the information was to be used, stored and retained (Appendix 9). After they read the form, I asked participants to sign the document only if they were happy with the contents.

The data has been securely stored in my computer in a folder that can only be accessed by myself through a password. The written field notes, transcripts and taped interviews are kept securely in a locked desk in the office. The data will be securely stored for ten years in compliance with the University of Southampton’s guidelines and all material will be destroyed after this period.

3.4.5 *Rapport, empathy and trust*

The establishment of rapport, empathy and trust between participants and myself as a researcher was crucial in dealing with the sensitive issues raised by this project (Jones, 2002). Empathy is fundamental to social work practice (Connolly et al., 2006) and my social work skills equipped me to serve as an empathetic listener throughout. My identity and lived experiences as a mother of dual heritage children may have given reassurance and put the young participants at ease as they saw me as someone who could empathise with them. Neuman (2000:356) equates this to:

...moving beyond understanding to empathy – that is, seeing and feeling events from another’s perspective.

This approach is likely to enhance rapport between researchers and participants since we are informed that:

...access will be shaped by the cultural and ascriptive [sic] differences between the field researcher and the researched. Where these differences are minimal, access and even acceptance are likely to be enhanced, but where differences are large, participation opportunities may be constrained severely and even eliminated (Shaffir and Stebbins 1991:26).

Shaffir and Stebbins may have a valid point and, in my case, with each contact (e.g. writing to seek informed consent, talking about the interview, and sending a thank you gift), a relationship was formed. Yet others believe that:

...the better the rapport and closer the relationships, the more likely people will feel used when the researcher starts to leave the scene or disappears altogether (Taylor, 1993:244).

Despite theoretical objections from feminist researchers (Stanley and Wise, 1997), Taylor could have a valid point in discouraging close contact. This means researchers ought to maintain a level of detachment (Melrose, 1999). I established my role and status from the outset. The young people were aware that I was not their friend, but a researcher, which created a degree of detachment.

3.4.6 Power relations between researchers and participants

Involving participants in research is one way to address the power imbalance, between the interview and the interviewee (Christiansen and Prout, 2002), particularly if the latter group is given space to express themselves (Skeggs, 1994). Although it is impossible to eliminate the power imbalance completely, since ownership of the findings remains with researchers (Dominelli, 2005), sensitivity to participants' needs must be shown at all times. As interviews are fluid encounters, the power dynamic may shift at different stages of the interview situations, thus, sometimes power may be with participants and other times with researchers (Cotterill, 1992). Participants also have other powers, such as the ability to pull out at any time during the course of the research. In my study, participants were informed from the outset that their participation was voluntary and that, at any stage, they could discontinue with the interview or refuse to answer questions if they felt uncomfortable (Appendix 2). Thus, participants were empowered because I clearly informed them about the framework for discussion (Emond, 2003).

The role of research is to encourage and give voice to the marginalised or repressed (Clough, 2002). Clough's view is supported by feminist researchers, who believe in giving power to powerless groups (Oakley, 1974; Stanley and Wise, 1997; Dominelli, 2005). My aim was to ensure that the young people were socially included and, in order to do so, I adhered to the examples of these scholars. I ensured that their stories were told from their own perspectives and for their own purpose — not for the benefit of researchers, policymakers or those who fund research projects.

It is important to develop a fuller and more critical understanding about identity, care needs and cultural history of looked-after, dual heritage young people. These people are better positioned to identify what is important to them. Indigenous methodologies, which tend to see people's values, cultures and behaviour as a fundamental part of methodology (Tuhiwai Smith 2002), could be used to achieve this because:

...to assume in advance that people will not be interested in, or will not understand, the deeper issues is arrogant...(Tuhiwai Smith, 2002:16).

The notion that knowledge lies with experts such as researchers rather than participants or that the latter may not be interested in taking part is highly debatable (Tuhiwai Smith, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). My aim was not to present myself as an expert but as someone who could learn from participants in my study.

Throughout this project, my ultimate aim has been to ensure that the research is conducted within an acceptable ethical framework. I endeavoured to ensure that my approach did not impose my own understanding or views on participants (Becker and Bryman, 2004). In the explicit choices that have been made throughout this study, reflective practice has played an important part in considering the rationale and the professional values and assumptions underlying the decisions taken (Powell, 2005). This does not mean that my personal values were completely abandoned, but I have ensured that those values have been made transparent.

3.4.7 Summary

This section has indicated that ethics in social sciences requires principled deliberations on the part of researchers at different stages. Ethical considerations for this sensitive research project have been outlined. The importance of being prepared for the emergence of forgotten emotions has also been emphasised. The need for support frameworks to deal with any distressing feelings for both researchers and participants has been stressed. As a social worker, I adhered to social research ethical guidelines (2003). I was also guided by the ESRC ethics and the University of Southampton's research ethics. Anti-discriminatory/oppressive practices, participants' involvement and power relations informed my understanding of research ethics. In all research activities, informed consent, confidentiality, data protection and respect are critical. The importance of rapport and trust has been discussed and the need to address the power imbalance between researchers and participants.

3.5 Research aims

The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge on:

- how dual heritage individuals like to be identified
- how others identify them

- what services are offered to these individuals
- what people from this group think of services offered to them
- how the existing services can be improved.

It is intended that findings from this research will contribute towards the provision of better services regardless of how this group self-identify. They may identify as black, white, mixed race or dual heritage as a result of where and how they have been socialised (Rockquemore, et al., 2009). Their experiences differ and this may contribute to the identities they choose for themselves (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002). They may stay longer in the public care system due to difficulties of finding them suitable placements (Barn et al., 1997). Yet, what is unclear is whether the suitability of finding them placements is based on the practitioners' or the young people's perceptions.

3.5.1 Research objectives

My aim was to provide an overarching picture of services available to looked-after dual heritage young people and to:

- deepen our understanding of looked-after, dual heritage young people's experiences
- provide evidence that can be used to inform policy and practice.

3.5.2 Summary

This section has looked at the aims and objectives of the study; indicating that very little is known about dual heritage individuals, particularly those in the looked-after population. The prevailing view is that this group experience identity crises, and one way of verifying this is to talk to people from this group. They tend to spend longer periods being looked-after away from their birth families than others and their care needs are often inadequately met, as highlighted in the previous chapters. Research in this area will help to develop our knowledge about this group. Findings from this study may highlight ways of reducing the numbers entering the public care system.

3.6 Methods used in the study

3.6.1 Interview questions

In order to achieve the aims of this study, I formulated questions that covered different aspects of looked-after, dual heritage young (Appendix 7) such as:

- how they identify themselves
- how others identify them
- what services are offered to them
- what they think of the services offered to them
- what changes to the current services would they suggest

3.6.2 Qualitative, semi-structured interviews: facilitating storytelling

Due to the nature of this study, an in-depth qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews was used. This approach, which helped to explore the perceptions, opinions and views of this group, revealed their care experiences and needs as well as issues around their identities. It also highlighted how this group's identities have impacted on their efforts to deal with, and overcome, racism and discrimination. Eder and Fingerson (2001:181) believe that:

...one clear reason for interviewing youthful participants is to allow them to give voice to their own interpretations and thoughts rather than rely solely on our adult interpretations of their lives.

Semi-structured interviews, which ensure some standardised data across the sample, help to generate a two-way conversation, which means that feelings and opinions can be explored as participants tell their life history. This approach provided space and time for participants to express themselves in their own individual ways. It helped to address the power imbalance since, as the interview progressed, interpersonal relationships were established (Taylor, 1993).

In addition to providing a thematic and topic-centred approach, semi-structured interviews offer flexibility for both researchers and participants (Flick, 2002). In contrast, structured interviews often create hierarchies in which the researcher is

dominant — reflecting a power imbalance. Giving participants this freedom may amount to granting them a licence to talk about anything (May, 2001). To safeguard against this, prompts were given at appropriate times and participants were guided to ensure that the overall format was followed. This meant that participants did not discuss issues that were completely outside the realms of my programme.

Semi-structured interviews provide a chance to adapt the wording of specific questions to take into account different use of vocabulary by participants. However, there is a danger that participants can tailor their statements to fit what they think the researcher wants to hear. Nonetheless, this approach gives researchers opportunities to take ‘cues’ from participants about what to ask. It helps to generate conversation that prompts spontaneous responses about their experiences (Seale, 1999; May, 2001).

Listening attentively to the young participants encouraged them to tell their stories and enabled me to explore their views and care experiences. The data has therefore been generated from the ‘grassroots’ rather than from theoretical perspectives even though I had to facilitate, guide and encourage their stories. This group can be relied on to provide accounts of their lived experiences and should be supported in these efforts. As a result, my role has been to help looked-after, dual heritage young people express themselves, which has emphasised their role as the central focus of this research. Considering the social construction of this group’s identity, and how negatively they are sometimes viewed by society, a sensitive approach was required at all times. This should be a requirement for anyone dealing with ‘politicised’ issues and Dunbar et al. (2001:284) believe that:

Given the growing sensitivity to race in interview research, it is imperative that we examine how the racialised subject can be understood by way of interviews.

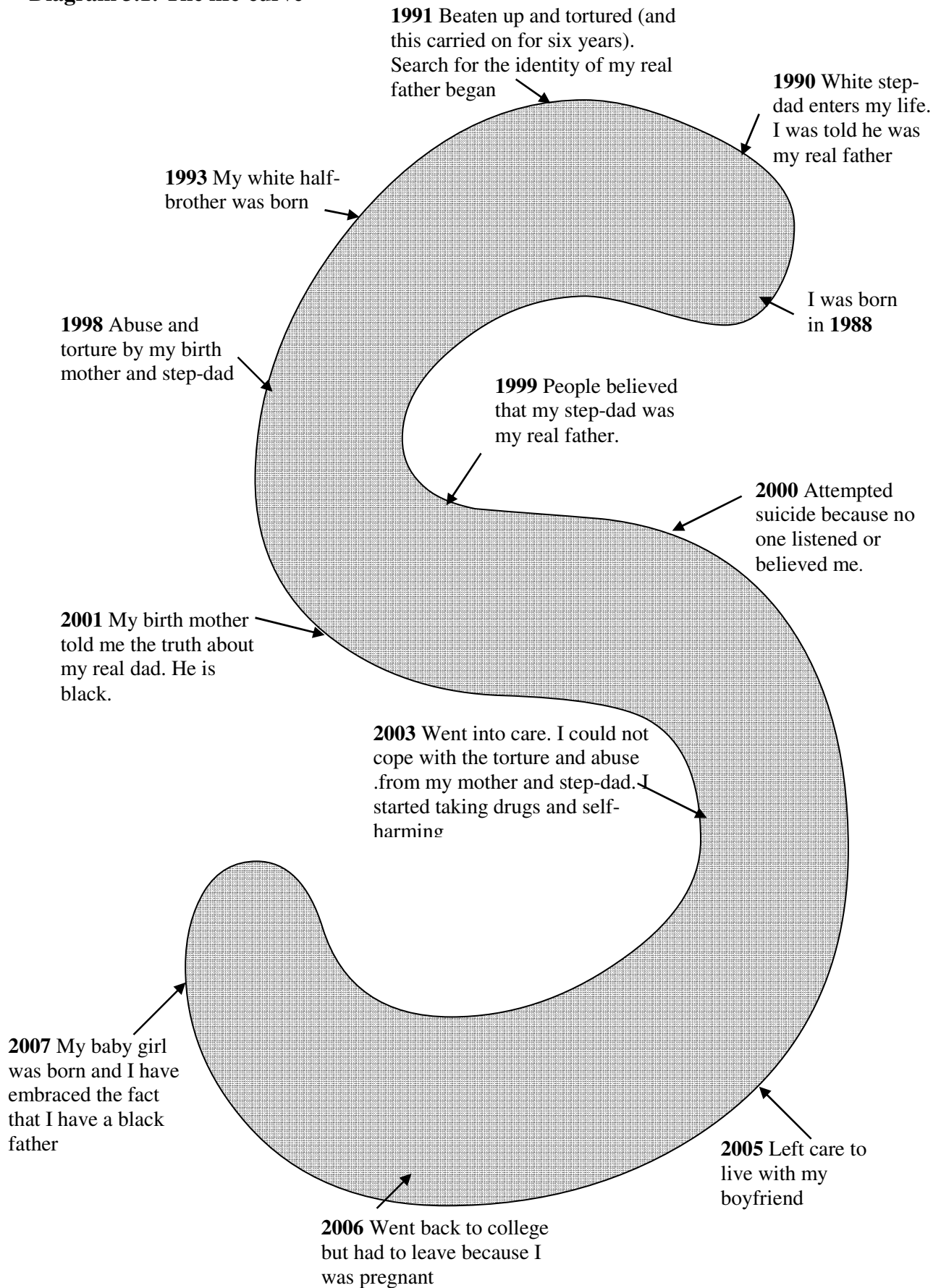
How I represented the lived experiences of dual heritage young people who are being, or have been looked-after, has been helped by reflexivity (Flick, 2002). Considerable thought was given to the methods used to gather, analyse and present the data. I adopted the life-curve and the intimacy circle as ways of involving the young people, thus introducing an element of partnership in our relationship during the interview process.

3.6.3 The use of the life-curve and intimacy circle as visual aids or modes of communication.

Time lines or eco-maps are often used as ways of initiating conversation with children who have been hurt and consequently withdrawn into themselves (McMahon, 2005). I chose to use the life-curve and the intimacy circle in my study. Whilst the life-curve facilitated recollections of important events in these young people's lives chronologically, the intimacy circle helped them to identify those individuals who were significant to them.

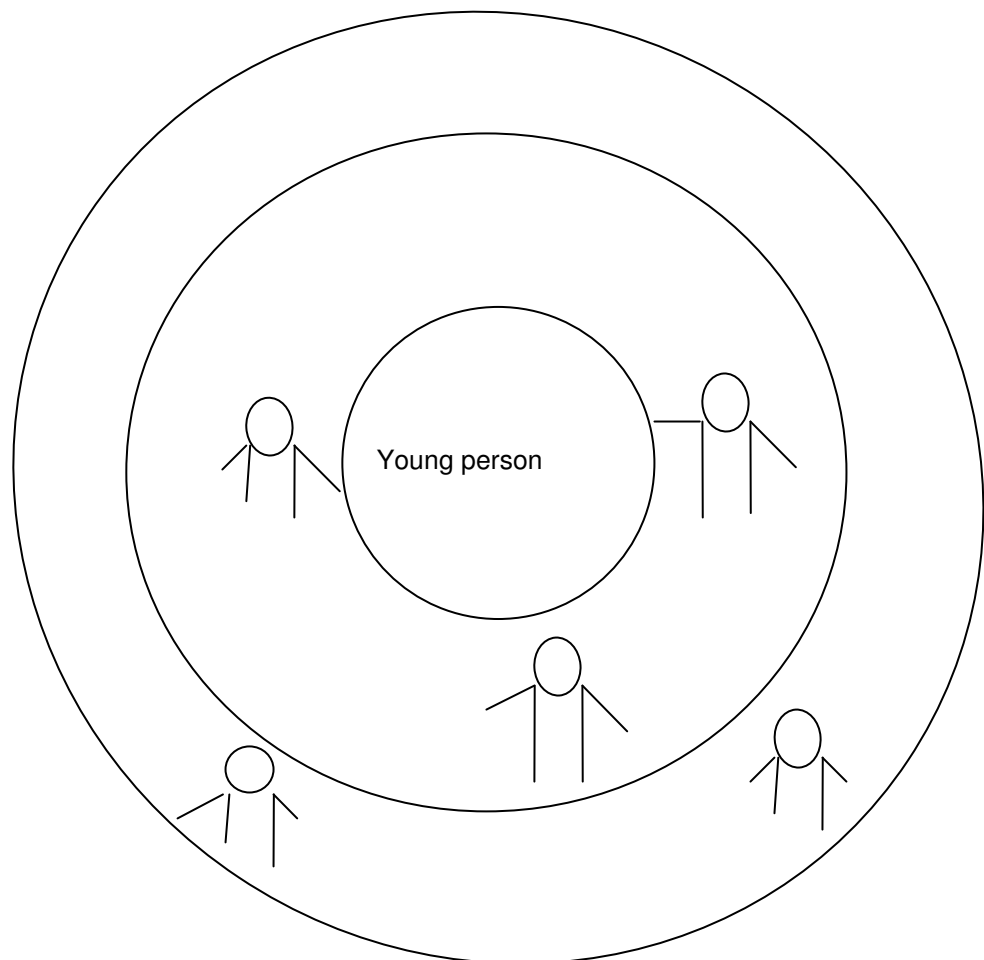
Both methods acted as ways of collating data and helping participants to immerse themselves in the research process. These methods provided the young people with a more interactive role for the young people enabling them to engage in a two-way process rather than answering questions from me throughout the interview. They gave the young people an opportunity to formulate their experiences on their own terms, which was empowering. These methods often helped to validate what had been said verbally since the use of visual aids can sometimes reflect what is not verbalised (McMahon, 2005). However, I realised in the course of the interviews that, although these methods are innovative and creative, they do not suit everyone. Though they assisted in engaging with young people, who experience problems in communicating, they have limitations for some young people with poor literacy skills. The following example (see diagram: 3.1) shows how the life-curve was used by a fictitious participant to recall her significant life events chronologically.

Diagram 3.1: The life-curve



The use of an intimacy circle (see diagram: 3.2) generated a great deal of descriptive data about the young people's relationships and social networks. These young people positioned themselves in the centre with other key figures in their lives at various points around the circle.

Diagram 3.2: An intimacy circle



In addition to involving and engaging the young people, these devices acted as a way of establishing rapport and trust, which is important in research (Cieslik, 2003) and is discussed in section 3.4.5. As participants recalled these events and talked about important people in their lives, they became less anxious because they were involved in the interview process. This provided an opportunity for researcher and participant to work together and address some of the power imbalance discussed in section 3.4.6.

My intention was to ensure that the young people in my study were fully engaged in the interview process. I thought that one way of achieving this would be a participatory action research but I soon discovered that was not an option. This idea was soon abandoned as it was not deemed appropriate for a PhD project. Apparently it would have been perceived as a joint venture and there would have been questions around the authorship. My aim was to find tools which would emancipate participants from oppression, hence the use of social work 'tools' (the life-curve and the intimacy circle) for research purposes. I wanted my research to be meaningful and empowering to the young people in my study. I believe the use of these social work 'tools' achieved this because the young people felt valued and respected when they were given a piece of paper and a pen to write down themselves what they perceived as significant events in their lives chronologically. Furthermore, this was a way of demonstrating to them that they were the expert and I was there to learn from them.

Use of these tools, which created a form of reciprocity and trustworthiness, was appreciated by several young people, who reported to their social workers that I had treated them as intelligent individuals. This demonstrated that how researchers work with research participants was important for the quality of relationship during the research journey and undoubtedly for the quality of the data created. The experience of seeing the smile of the young people, for example, as they proudly put down the names of people who had played an important part in their lives as close to them as possible was amazing. It was also fascinating to watch them as they put the people they disliked including, in some cases, their relatives, or birth parents as far away as possible from the circle. Some of the stories which emerged around the use of these tools would not have been possible without them.

These tools worked very well for the majority of the young people in the study (13). However, one young person expressed preference to the use of a straight line instead of a life-curve so he drew a line down his A4 paper and wrote down his life story chronologically. Two other young people were unable to use the life-curve because of their poor literacy skills, but they participated in the intimacy circle. With regard to the above example, the use of these tools revealed data which did not fit in with what the two young people had told me earlier (that they were able to read and write).

3.6.4 Cases

The research process involved sixteen young people (seven female and nine male) aged between seventeen and twenty-four. It also involved seven practitioners and six carers. The young people were at different stages in their paths to adulthood and all had black fathers of Caribbean origin. My aim was to ensure that the research process did not fragment the stories told. Skates (2005) makes a distinction between intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies. Where the interest of the researcher is focused on issues or processes within a case(s), and the aim is to enhance our understanding of the external interest, he calls this instrumental and collective interest. For example:

The case still is looked at in depth, its context scrutinized and its ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps us pursue the external interest (Skates, 2005:445).

The ‘external interest’ in my study is focused on the care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people. The aim has been to gain a deeper understanding by bringing together data gathered from different sources that focused on the care experiences of this group. Although in some cases it was not possible to interview carers and practitioners or examine the young people’s files, this type of information contributed to the richness of the data or what Geertz (1973) refers to as ‘thick description’. This thick description came from the multi-perspective stories generated through interviews with the young people’s carers and practitioners (Flick, 2002) as well as data from case files. For instance, stories told by the young people’s carers and practitioners revealed how the views held by these key people could determine whether their experiences were positive or negative. Furthermore, these stories highlighted areas where training or other forms of support were needed. A review of the files also revealed some gaps in how the young people’s background, including ethnicity and religion, were recorded. In some cases, records were inconsistent and this is a concern given that failure to keep correct records may impact on service planning.

I chose a methodology that embraced elements of description, exploration and explanation, and focused on the ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions (Yin, 2003). This approach offered me a chance to focus on a particular situation and ascertained different forces at play (Bell, 1999; Patton, 1980). Such an approach provided rich and

meaningful data as it enabled me to listen to participants' stories and complexities (Sherman and Reid, 1994). Kvale (1996:4) believes that:

The interviewer wanders with the local inhabitants, asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world, and converses with them...

My interest was in key events in this group's lives and I looked specifically at whether dual heritage had been a celebration or a hindrance to these young people in terms of being accepted, access to placements, placement disruptions, schools and educational achievement. Furthermore, a case enquiry approach that relies on numerous sources of evidence helped to explain complex life events and surveys or experiments would not have achieved this (Yin, 2003). This approach also helped to ascertain how different views were established and warranted.

A qualitative ethnographic approach was used at the data collection stage in this thesis. Ethnographic methods are associated with social anthropologists who spend long periods in the field generating data through participant observation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Bell, 1999; Brewer, 2000). In contrast, I did not have the resources, in terms of money and time, to spend long periods on each case and so my approach differs from social anthropologists in this regard. Nevertheless, it shares the social anthropologist's desire for researchers' total involvement in the quest to understand people in their context and how they construct reality and their social worlds by applying qualitative, interpretive research (Geertz, 1973). This approach looks for ways to lessen the impact of the research process on participants and increases our understanding of contextual influences on behaviour (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). An ethnographic approach demands what Fetterman (1998: 19 - 23) calls:

Holistic perspective, contextualisation, emic perspective and multiple realities, etic perspective and non-judgemental orientation...Ethnocentric behaviour - the imposition of one culture's value and standards on another culture, with the assumptions that one is superior to the other - is a fatal error in ethnography.

Three main features make ethnographic methods attractive and beneficial to this study. First, these methods involve multiple data sources that help to derive findings from

different approaches and provide a basis for triangulating data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). These methods bring different perspectives to the study and, by drawing on a wide range of sources; this can offer a more rounded and balanced view. Ethnographic methods enable researchers to see issues from the perspective of participants (Denscombe, 2000). Second, they offer flexibility, which is an attractive feature because it gives participants, as well as the researcher, autonomy and various ways of responding to questions. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:143) stress that:

...within the boundaries of the interview context the aim is to facilitate a conversation, giving the interviewee a good deal more leeway to talk on their own terms than is the case in standardized interviews.

Third, these methods allow for reflexivity and Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:21) believe that:

...reflexivity provides the basis for reconstructed logic of inquiry ...By including our own role within the research focus, and perhaps even systematically exploiting our participation in the settings under study as researchers, we can produce accounts of the social world...

Engagement with this group enabled them to feel valued through their contribution to knowledge building. Similarly, the young people in this study have been able to take control of their lives as they saw themselves taken seriously enough to be asked to take part in research and to have their stories heard. In this respect, their involvement could be seen as an opportunity to voice their grievances or what they see as injustices (Skeggs, 1994). Clearly, the approach adopted was ideal for this study given the generation of rich and meaningful data, difficulties in terms of access and the limited resources of a lone researcher (Blaxter, et al., 2003).

3.6.5 Interview questions

Questions focused on the factors that contributed to participants becoming looked-after away from their birth families; their care experiences; how they self-identify; how other people identified them and whether they were comfortable with the dual heritage identity. Questions also explored the time participants had spent being looked-after,

contact with birth families, relationships and educational achievements. Additionally, participants were asked how existing services could be improved. In the interviews with practitioners and carers, I explored their experiences of working with looked-after, dual heritage young people and how they supported people in their care.

Open-ended questions enabled participants to explore issues in a way that was most relevant to them (Bryman, 2004; Noaks and Wincup, 2004). This approach limited the chances of imposing my ideas on the group and offered them more freedom and control of the interview situation. Primary research data was derived from the young people's stories and the importance of storytelling is emphasised by Hollway and Jefferson (2000:32) who assert that:

...the focus of our analysis is the people who tell us stories about their lives: the stories themselves are a means to understand our subjects better...story telling stays closer to actual life-events than methods that elicit explanations.

The framework for assessment set out by Parker et al. (1991:77 - 105) was adopted when designing the interview schedules for practitioners and carers (Appendices 5 and 6). This helped to ascertain whether those looking after the well-being of this group took a holistic view during the assessment process. Practitioners and carers were contacted after obtaining permission from the young people and before setting out to interview them. They were each sent an interview schedule, a release form, consent form and a covering letter (Appendices 2, 5, 9 and 10). When exploring sensitive topics, it is crucial to ensure that participants are given adequate time to understand what is involved and whether or not they wanted to participate. This is because:

They may be asked to reveal a great deal about themselves, perhaps at some emotional cost and there is no guarantee that they will realise before an interview begins what they might reveal, in what ways, or what risk (Lee, 1993:103).

This research project involved a degree of self-reflection, which plays a role in advancing research and ensures that researchers review their methods and consider their influences on the research process (Kincheloe and MacLaren, 2005). Through

reflection, the outcome of any enquiry is enhanced since it enables researchers to review the tools use to generate data (Reinharz, 1992). Furthermore, reflection helps researchers to develop a deeper understanding of participants than would be achievable from observation or other methods (Olesen, 2005).

Some of the preconceived hunches I had were that how this group is perceived stems from stereotypical assumptions. Another hunch was that practitioners' dogmatic practices may have stemmed from their experiences of working in children and families in the 1970s and 1980s. Both hunches were confirmed during my field work. For example, Sue's social worker, Kate was adamant that dual heritage people are confused. While some practitioners believed that dual heritage children and young people should be place in dual heritage families, the response below from a social worker when asked why he refuses to place dual heritage young people with white families confirmed my second hunch when he said:

I know you see this as dogmatic. I was working in Liverpool in the late 1970s when this whole issue first started. The trouble is that there were two lists of foster parents in the city up until 1989 - one who would take black children and one who would not!! This openly racist policy was only the tip of the iceberg. The other experience child care workers had (I was one of them at the time) in the city was finding young 8-12 year-old black/dual heritage children who were placed with white British families trying to wash their dark skins away with bleach!! This was very common at the time, and probably still occurs to this day, and so the reaction of social workers was to prevent this happening by trying to find same race placements. In the play about Dual Heritage mental health issues that was shown as one of the workshops at the National Delivering Race Equality Conference three weeks ago there was a scene where the white British Grandfather of the dual heritage young boy made racist comments to him and kept saying it was only jokes! This was based on reality and is also a fairly common experience (Anita, Fiona's worker).

I was surprised that some practitioners would choose to live children and young people in care homes simply because they consider placement with white families unacceptable based on experiences that happened almost four decades ago. I was even more surprised

when some practitioners informed me that there is no way they would place a child with one white and one black parent with a white family. These practitioners reported that care homes were more appropriate than placements with white families, who lacked experiences of racism.

3.6.6 Summary

This section has explored the methods used for data generation and the benefits of using the life-curve and the intimacy circle. It has explained the type of interview questions posed, how they were designed and why qualitative, semi-structured interviews were considered appropriate for this study. Problems encountered have been outlined as well as challenges involved in gaining access to this group, their files, carers and practitioners. Various reasons could have contributed to practitioners' refusal to provide access to the young people and their files, such as the protection of vulnerable groups. In the case of files, organisations may be reluctant to share certain information with non-employees or they could be constrained by issues surrounding data protection. Some young people may have refused access to their carers or practitioners because they considered the interview should be focused solely on them and not anyone else. Involving their carers and practitioners may have brought to the surface issues they wished to forget.

3.7 The data analysis process involved in interviews and case files

This section outlines the process taken to analyse the data. In qualitative research it is possible to pre-code expected themes prior to data collection whilst acknowledging unexpected ideas that could be raised by participants. However, analysing qualitative data in this way may lead to the presentation of findings that reflect researchers' theoretical views rather than those of participants (Charmaz, 2006). Consequently, this goes against the whole thrust of qualitative research and data may be discarded merely because it does not accord with the researcher's expectation. We are warned that:

...doing 'qualitative' research should offer no protection from the rigorous, critical standards that should be applied to any enterprise concerned to sort 'fact' from 'fancy' (Silverman, 2006:58).

Stage one of this process involved transcribing editing, anonymising, managing and familiarisation with the empirical material. This meant reading and re-reading the data and then identifying categories and the links between them. It also entailed interrogating the data systematically in the form of coding or categorisation in segments. Once key issues were identified, a set of categories was used to code the data set for individual interviews. The aim was to identify patterns related to existing theories and knowledge.

Stage two focused on generating analytic codes or categories in reference to the stories told and data from case files. The iterative process of coding and generating themes continued throughout. The coding scheme was used for the entire data set and then each theme was explored across all cases. New themes that emerged during the analytical process were incorporated into the coding framework. After each interview, a vignette of the young people was compiled to ensure that this thematic analysis did not lose sight of individual situations. The analytical process will be fully discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER FOUR:

4 The young people's vignettes

Introduction

This chapter includes the vignettes of the young people who participated in this study (Appendix 11). This short chapter, which gives their interpretive accounts, presents a picture of these young people's past histories, current perspectives and their unique personalities based on the stories of each individual. Although the interviews took place in different locations (see section 3.3.1), any identifiable information from the verbatim transcriptions has been removed. The use of verbatim quotes has been deliberate as an attempt to retain the authenticity of the research.

The focus of the interviews was on these young people's care experiences. In addition to contributing to our understanding of the lived and care experiences of this group, the aim was to address the potential gap between how practitioners perceive the dual heritage identity and assumptions that dual heritage individuals experience identity crises because they are neither white nor black. Given that the majority of looked-after children experience a sense of loss and rejection, it is not surprising that some of them display behavioural problems. Nonetheless, it is surprising that, in the case of looked-after, dual heritage young people, their identity is perceived as part of the problem.

In cases where two or more participants were siblings I presented their recollections as individual accounts. Although these participants share the same parents, they have different characteristics and, in some cases, their route to care was different. The vignettes have been presented in the order in which the interviews took place.

4.1 Participants' interpretive accounts

4.1.1 *Safi*

Safi, who is the eldest and an only child from the relationship between her birth parents, has other half — and step-siblings. At the time of the interview, Safi lived in a predominantly white, deprived area with her white boyfriend (whom she met when they were both looked-after young people) and their baby aged two. Safi was brought up by her white mother and other members of her mother's extended family and, from the outset; she was made to believe that she was white. Due to her very light skin, Safi had no reason to think differently. She blames some of the trauma in her life on the lies from her mother and close family members who insisted that the man who entered her life at the age of two and was beating her up was her real father. By the age of thirteen, the situation at home was so bad that Safi attempted to commit suicide. Her mother revealed the true identity of her birth father when she was fourteen and she met him the following year. She talked about being very angry when she learnt the true identity of her father and said she would have preferred to have known the truth from the beginning. Safi told me that, following a long history of problems, she became looked-after voluntarily under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Safi, who was allegedly raped by a neighbour from the age of six to ten, ran away from home soon after the identity of her birth father was revealed because the abuse from her step-father intensified. She reported incidents of racism from people she had viewed as friends but as soon as they learnt that she had a black father, these people's attitude changed and they would shout '...you black bitch...' Initially, social services housed her temporarily in a flat with two males aged seventeen and twenty-one. Safi talked about the horrendous sexual abuse she encountered regularly from these males who expected her to have sex with them as a form of repayment for sharing the flat. Safi moved to another flat and eventually she was put in a residential home. Safi told me that she sees herself as dual heritage, but her social worker and personal adviser believed that she presents herself as white. Safi has performed well academically and intends to work when her baby is older. At the time of the interview, both Safi, who was twenty and her boyfriend were unemployed.

4.1.2 Amina

Although Amina, who was nineteen, is the oldest child born to both her parents, her mother gave birth to another daughter when she was herself a looked-after young person. Amina reported that she has never met her older sister, who was adopted at birth, but she has met the step-siblings her father had before meeting her mother. Amina, who was born and brought up in a predominantly white environment until the age of seven, lived with both her birth parents and seven siblings until the age of ten when her parents separated. Following her parents' separation, Amina's mother formed a relationship with a white partner whom she refers to as step-dad, although they are not married. Amina told me that her mother has three boys with the new partner and she has a good relationship with him and these half-siblings.

There has been a great deal of social work intervention in the family, but Amina informed me that she did not become a looked-after young person until she was fourteen when her mentally ill mother was struggling to cope. Amina talks about the importance of finding the right placement for children and she stresses the importance of matching the attitudinal characteristics of the carers with those of the young people and not necessarily ethnic matching. She believes that it is important to offer placement choices to young people who have the capacity to choose and stresses that social workers need to consider many factors:

...they shouldn't just assume that the person will be better with a black foster carer and stuff. I think that social workers when they are putting dual heritage people in care, they tend to put them with black foster carers. And I think that some fostered children might want to go with white foster carers.

After running away from her foster care and staying with friends for two weeks, Amina went back to the foster home. She stayed there for three years until she moved to her flat where the interview was conducted. Amina described her last social worker as supportive and caring. She puts her achievements down to the way in which her social worker encouraged her and negotiated study time with her foster carer who sometimes felt that Amina devoted too much time to her books and neglected housework and other chores. Amina was described by her social worker as determined and single-minded.

4.1.3 Joachim

Although Joachim, and Amina are siblings, their routes to becoming looked-after young people differ. Joachim, who became looked-after at the age of eight, says that, he lived with his mother and siblings for a short period, following his parent's divorce. However, Joachim's mother got involved in a relationship and the situation changed when his mother's white partner moved in. Joachim resented the fact that, in addition to this man taking his father's place, he started abusing him physically. He recalled how he was always 'bashed' and lost a sense of belonging as well as doubting whether he was loved. Although Joachim does not get on with his mother's partner, he describes the relationship with his birth parents as good and visits his father, who is in a residential home, regularly. Joachim's experience of racism was name calling on account of his father's ethnicity. Both parents have mental health illnesses and Joachim believes that this contributed to his parents' divorce. He reported that:

...my mum left my dad because my dad is a manic depressive so he kept coming in and out of like mental homes and then one time my mum must just, have decided that she couldn't take any more and yeah, so my dad moved out and he now lives in a residential home for mentally ill people...

Joachim, who was seventeen at the time of the interview, identifies as both white and black. He reported taking pride in both his heritages. He experienced many placement disruptions and school exclusions because, as he put it, he was very disruptive and 'mischievous'. He explained that he wanted to be with his birth family and not in a residential home so he did everything he could to ensure that his placements failed. Joachim's social worker reported that he has always fulfilled a caring role for his mentally ill parents with whom he enjoys a close relationship. Joachim reported enjoying school when he was in year six and he thought that this was due to being in a good, small class and having a good teacher. He described a good teacher as someone who did not shout all the time. Currently, Joachim, who lives in his own flat, is attending college and hopes to become an actor. His social worker believe that being in his own flat and at a college where he has one to-one-teaching, has made a huge difference in Joachim's life. Joachim, who could not praise his current social worker enough, agreed with this view.

4.1.4 Musa

Musa, who is one of two children, was born and brought up in an inner city with a large black population. He has an older dual heritage half-brother. Musa told me that he had always thought they shared the same parents but this changed at the age of fifteen when he discovered that his older brother was actually his half-brother. The two do not get on but Musa reported that, although the relationship between them is fraught and they fight most of the time, they will always support each other. Musa does not classify himself as black, but he takes pride in being British:

I am born British I believe. I am mixed race of black and white, but I am still British...

Musa lived in one foster care home throughout the time he was being looked-after and both carers were black, but the ethnicity of these carers did not matter to him at all. Musa informed me that he was abused by his first foster carer and he described his care experiences negatively. Allegedly, the foster carer used to beat him and his brother. Musa reported how he was made to have sex with different men in order to raise money to support his foster carer's drug addiction.

Musa, who was nineteen at the time of the interview, described his care experiences as 'sheer hell', believing that his needs were neglected. However, he stressed that this was not connected with his heritage. When I asked him to explain how his needs were neglected, Musa claimed that his social workers did not, for example, train, or prepare him before he moved out of his foster placement. He reported that:

...half the stuff they were meant to do with me, they never really done it. When I was older, they were meant to teach me and stuff before I moved out, and they never done that, with me and my brother, they never done it...

Musa, who did not perform well academically and is unemployed, was described by his social worker as polite and considerate. Currently Musa is learning literacy skills.

4.1.5 Sue

Sue, who was nineteen at the time of the interview, has an older brother and a dual heritage half-sister. When she and her brother started being looked-after, Sue was five years old whilst her brother was seven. They both became looked-after because of neglect and abuse from their white mother and lived with the same foster carer until the age of sixteen. Sue, who describes herself as 'mixed race', told me that she has not experienced racism. She has had no placement disruptions,, which has contributed to stability and continuity in her life. Sue described her social workers as useless and, when asked to clarify, she stated:

...the ones who just prolong everything, if you ask them to do something for you, if you ask for help, they have got excuses for everything. They don't help you with nothing. That is what I think anyway.

Sue and her brother have never met their black Caribbean father and they know virtually nothing about him. Sue said that her mother has never talked to them about their father. She told me that the nearest person she would describe as a relation would be her foster carer whom she refers to as 'Nan'. Sue explained that she calls the foster carer, who is sixty-one, 'Nan' because she brought her up. Sue has no contact with any relatives on either side of her biological family.

Sue recounted times when she used to get very depressed, but reported that these feelings are all behind her now. She told me that, at the age of five, she was aware of the family trauma and although the intervention of social services proved positive eventually, it was a huge loss to be separated from her birth mother. According to her social worker, by the time Sue and her brother became looked-after they had suffered immensely at the hands of their mother, who was a prostitute and a drug addict. Sue reported that her mother does not talk about her family and, for this reason, she has no affiliation with that side of her heritage and she does not know anything about her father's background or relations. Sue leans towards the black side of her family more because her black foster carer looked after her from the age of five. Sue, who did not perform well educationally, is now training to be a decorator but her social worker described her as unmotivated and she misses classes too often to benefit from them.

4.1.6 Thomas

Thomas, who was twenty at the time of the interview, reported that his black father, who was a heroin addict, died when he was nine years old. Thomas informed me that, two years before his father died, his white mother had run away with another man taking the children with her. After a while, Thomas's relationship with his mother's black partner whom he referred to as step-dad, was not good and he was looked-after from the aged of twelve. Thomas's experiences before entering the public care system were not at all pleasant, as the quote below illustrates:

...at first I was living at home with my pops, me and my brother, and my dad was a heroin addict at the time...and he used to beat my mum, so my mum kind of like asked me and my brother if she should go off with this other guy, and I said 'yes'.

For Thomas, who had experienced abuse and neglect at the hands of those who were supposed to love and protect him, being looked-after was somehow a positive experience. He stated:

...it taught me how to be who I am today, a stronger person...we always used to interact with each other, go out, watch cinema, go ice skating, you know or go for a meal and have that family kind of feel, and that was good...

Thomas who did not perform well academically and is unemployed, describes himself as of mixed parentage, although some people see him as Turkish and he reported experiencing racism primarily from white people. Thomas described social workers as being inconsistent and unreliable. He reported that they did not help him a great deal and often ignored him. At the time of the interview, Thomas was housed in semi-independent living accommodation where he is learning skills that will hopefully equip him to live fully independently. Thomas's aspiration is to become a musician one day. His social worker believes that, for Thomas to achieve his dream he needs to be more focused and address issues around his misuse of drugs.

4.1.7 Rosie

Rosie, who has always lived in a white area, informed me that her birth mother gave her up soon after she was born. She went through four foster placements before being adopted at the age of three by a white family. Rosie told me that she had always longed to find her birth parents and her adoptive parents had always supported her search. She eventually traced both her parents, who were living in two different parts of the world. Her mother, who had married, lived in the north of England and informed Rosie that she didn't want any contact. Rosie reported that her birth father, who had also married, lived in Jamaica. She felt that, although the family in Jamaica welcomed her, it later became clear that they did not really want her to overstay her welcome and she reported that:

The rejection from my white mother and my black father was hard to take at first, but I do not regret finding them because, after learning about my history and background, I settled and I was no longer asking the question - who am I?

Rosie cannot praise her adoptive parents and their children enough for their love and support, particularly when she set off to find her birth parents. According to Rosie, this longing was so intense (particularly in her teenage years and before sitting her A-level exams); she felt that finding her birth parents was a priority. Although Rosie is comfortable with the dual heritage identity, she worries about her son who has a white father and wonders how he will identify. Rosie, who reported experiencing racism at school, spoke of immense support from the social worker who dealt with her adoption. Rosie's adoptive parents spoke of her hard work and determination. Conversely, Rosie informed me that, without their support, she could not have done so well and, commenting on her achievement, she reported:

I had eight GCSEs and three A-levels at grades A, B and B. I did surprise my teachers who had thought I was dull and thick.

At the time of the interview, Rosie, who was twenty-three, had just qualified as a social worker and she told me that her goal is to listen to the people under her care.

4.1.8 Jude

Jude, who was brought up in a semi-rural setting, talks painfully about her experiences of early childhood. She told me that she finds it hard to understand why some people have children. Jude and her brother were referred to social services by a neighbour who witnessed their mother abusing them when Jude was aged seven and her brother three. Jude sees herself as half-British and half-Jamaican. According to Jude, the memory of these experiences will always haunt her, particularly the times her mother used to leave them alone at night and left them for days without food. Jude said that she still bears visible scars left from the beatings, and the invisible ones caused by the verbal abuse, particularly when her mother told the children that they were stupid and she hated them both. Jude said:

I used to think that my brother and I were really bad and that is why she would come in and beat us then say she hated us and we were no good.

Although Jude reported experiences of racism, her care experiences were positive and she said that being fostered was the best thing that had happened to her. Jude told me that she gets on well with her foster carer's children. She told me that, since the only thing she had known was rejection, it took time to believe that she was actually loved and accepted. She also pointed out that her foster carers led a very different life to the one she was used to but she felt loved.

Jude did not have any contact with her birth parents and no affinity with either side of her heritage. She informed me that besides her brother, her only living relation was the mother who hated them. Jude went on to say that given the names her mother used to describe her birth father, one would have thought he was the worst monster ever born. Jude's foster carers spoke highly of her and she had just moved out at the time of the interview to go to university. Talking about significant things that had played a part in Jude's life, her foster carers believed that their support and enforcement of boundaries were important. However, her foster carers always gave reasons for any actions or decisions. Commenting on drugs, Jude's foster carers echoed her views that much depends on whether or not one is influenced by others. They stressed that, if a child simply copies others, then even a good family may not protect them when they are outside the home. At the time of the interview Jude was twenty.

4.1.9 Sam

Sam and his half-brother were looked-after from the age of two and one respectively due to abuse and neglect. Sam, who was twenty-one at the time of the interview, reported that he and his brother do not know the whereabouts of their respective black fathers. Due to drugs and prostitution, their white mother was unable to support her sons and social services intervened. Sam, who had no recollections of meeting either of his parents' relatives, describes himself in the following way:

I don't describe myself as black, but I know I am in a way; I am also white ...I am me and what other people think is not important.

Sam informed me that, at one time his mother's behaviour was so bad that she was put into prison and for a while social workers used to make arrangements for Sam and his brother to visit her in prison. This stopped because his mother used to cancel the supervised visits at very short notice. Sam said that, at times, he has wondered whether he could have done anything else to ensure continuing contact with his mother. Sam explained that, although they tend to fight a lot, he and his brother love each other and:

My brother is my blood relation isn't he and he is the only one I have got since we do not see our mother any more.

Sam recalled numerous incidents of fighting due to racist name calling.

Unsurprisingly, given the age he left his birth home, Sam's recollection of his mother was limited and his memories of visits to prison to see his mother are blurred. Sam talks about being physically and emotionally abused by his foster carer and he feels that social services need to be more vigilant. If social workers had been more vigilant in his case, Sam's care experiences could have turned out differently. Sam believes that the fact he had no biological family to support him did not help his situation. He said no one cared whether, or not, he attended school and his truanting was not challenged. Sam, who did not perform well academically and is unemployed, feels that it is important for social workers, schools and foster carers to work together. He felt that, if they had done so, his educational achievements may have been different.

4.1.10 Roger

Roger, who was twenty at the time of the interview, is the oldest of three siblings and his younger brothers, who were aged three and one respectively, were adopted around the same time he was fostered at the age of five. Although the three brothers live long distances from each other, they keep in touch and have a close relationship. Roger explained that he is very lucky because his foster carers and their children are very involved in his life. He describes their relationship as solid and, although he has moved out, they still keep in touch. Roger explained that they treat him as family and still send him birthday and Christmas presents. Due to Roger's previous history, he told me that it was difficult for him at first because he was not used to living in a well-ordered and loving family.

Roger, whose foster carers are white, believes that it is generally better for children and young people to live with their biological families. However, he believed that he was fortunate to have foster carers who loved and cared for him. He also thought that stability was important and his situation may have been different if his placement had been disrupted, as is the case for some people. I wanted to explore with Roger (who mainly came into contact with white social workers and lived in a primarily white environment) whether this meant that his black side was neglected. His view was:

I know nothing about my black side of the family and I am always with white people. My mother is an only child so I do not have aunts and uncles and my grandparents died before I was born.

Roger who passed ten GCSEs and four A-levels is now at university studying politics and social policy and attributes his achievement to the support from his middle-class foster carers and the school. He stressed that he was lucky because his foster carers took a genuine interest in him and also worked hard. When asked about his experiences in a primarily white environment, Roger believed that he was well sheltered. He said that his foster dad, who was a very rich businessman and a respected member in his church, was a pillar of the community and he believed that this must have helped.

4.1.11 Fiona

Fiona, who was seventeen at the time of the interview, is the eldest of two girls. She reported that her parents divorced when she was three years old and her fourteen year-old sister is looked-after in a residential home. By the time she was five years old, Fiona's white mother (who was a looked-after individual herself) did not want her so her black father (who had married a white woman) was granted custody. Fiona reported that she became looked-after at the age of eleven when her father was unable to cope with what he saw as her wild behaviour. Name calling has been Fiona's experiences of racism. Currently, Fiona is living in sheltered accommodation for young homeless people because she ran away from her last placement and moved in with her uncle (her father's brother) when she turned fourteen. However, two years later Fiona and her uncle were evicted because they were living in her father's house without paying rent. Fiona, who did not perform well academically because of truanting and placement disruptions, believed that her uncle did a good job of calming her down:

He did a good job with me. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have gone to school. He made me go to school and I don't know, he just taught me good things. He spoke and not shouted...my dad always shouts and uncle sits down and talks...

Fiona describes herself as black and this annoys her mother. Fiona described the relationship with her mother as fraught but they are in contact and her mother has started visiting her. She has had six different placements and described her care experiences as horrible. She believed that too much emphasis was placed on dual heritage people learning about their black rather than their white history. Fiona, who was six months pregnant at the time of the interview, was no longer with her boyfriend. She described her care experiences negatively and believed that, whatever the circumstances, it is wrong for parents to give up on their children. She was very angry with her parents because she felt that, if strangers could tolerate her, there was no reason why they could not. She informed me that pregnancy was the best thing that had happened to her and she was looking forward to the birth of her baby. Although she had split up with her boyfriend, Fiona vowed not to give her baby away.

4.1.12 Josie

Josie, who was seventeen at the time of the interview, reported that his parents divorced when he was five years of aged and he chose to live with his father and paternal grandmother. According to Josie, his father (who has never been employed) drank heavily and was abusive towards him. Josie reported being constantly beaten by his father and one day, during sports, the bruises were noticed by teachers. Josie told me that, although he begged the teachers not to say anything, they had no choice but to refer the matter to social services.

Josie described his childhood as chaotic and unstable even prior to his parents' divorce. He informed me that the family used to move around quite a lot during his childhood. Josie's parents had twelve children between them and, apparently, as the family grew bigger, they kept moving to larger houses. Josie, who describes himself as a mix of both black and white, told me that his father's side of the family sees him as black whilst his mother's side describes him as white. He reported that, although his friends see him as 'mixed', most people outside the family tend to call him names such as 'nigger' and 'black bastard'. Commenting on placements, Josie reported:

they very rarely put mixed-race children in white families...I wanted to be put with a white foster carer, but I didn't get a choice...my black carer hated me.

Josie talked about both sets of grandparents being against his parents' marriage. He reported that his paternal grandparents were against the union because his mother was white and his maternal grandparents were against the marriage because his father was black. Josie, who was working as a bar attendee at the time of the interview, informed me that his dream is to be a chef and to own his own restaurant one day. Josie was of the opinion that consistency in terms of interaction with social workers is vital to help build relationships and understanding. He believed that, where social workers change constantly, this can impact negatively on young people. Josie, who was on anti-depressants from a very young age, felt very strongly that it is wrong to put children and young people on anti-depressants to calm them or numb the pain.

4.1.13 Francis

Francis, who became looked-after at the age of five, and Josie are biological siblings. Although they both suffered neglect and abuse, their ill treatments and routes into care differed. As noted earlier, Josie was removed from the care of his father when the school noticed bruises on his body. Conversely, Francis, who had chosen to live with his mother, was eventually taken away because she was unable to cope. The mother had three other, older children from a previous relationship and Francis reported that, shortly after the divorce, she resorted to drinking and taking drugs as a coping mechanism. Eventually, she was unable to look after her four children. All four were taken to different foster homes, which Francis found very unsettling because he had previously enjoyed a good relationship with his siblings. Francis described his care experiences as negative and blamed practitioners, carers and other professionals who tended to focus on his identity rather than what was happening in his life. Francis was asked whether he had tried to put his case across and his response was:

They had already formed their opinion and, in most meetings or reviews, they would say things like, 'Francis need identity work and his problems will continue if he keeps denying his black identity'. They failed to see that I have never denied my black identity; I have always told them I have two heritages but, because I choose not to go along with their ideas, then they see me as confused.

Francis, who was eighteen at the time of the interview, was adamant that the ethnicity of practitioners or carers is neither here nor there and insisted that the most important element for him is respect for his views. Francis, who did not perform well academically, believed that his life would have turned out differently if people had paid attention to what he said and did. He sometimes complained to his social workers about his foster carers not attending parents' evenings. He also complained to his foster carers about his teachers but none of them took any action. He felt that if his concerns had been taken seriously, his foster carers would have picked up on his truanting and his school work would not have suffered as much.

4.1.14 Adam

Adam, who was twenty-one at the time of the interview and in the final year of his degree in engineering, became looked-after at the age of three when his white mother gave him up for adoption. Adam is an only child from his biological mother, but he has an adopted dual heritage older sister and the two get on well. Apparently Adam's mother was a rebel and was thrown out by her parents when she was thirteen and had Adam at the age of sixteen. Adam described his care experiences as positive and he considered himself very lucky to have been adopted otherwise his life would have turned out very differently:

I was given up for adoption when I was three years old as I told you. Reading from my file I consider myself very lucky to have been adopted by my mum and dad. Perhaps things would have been different if I had gone into a children's home or moved from pillar to post.

I asked Adam what he had read in his file to make him come to that conclusion. Adam gave me permission to read his case file, which explained why he found it difficult to talk about his birth mother. Some aspects of his mother's childhood were horrendous. Adam's mother slept rough when she was thrown out and lost contact completely with her parents. She did not know who Adam's father was because she was a prostitute when he was conceived. When Adam was born, she was accommodated in a mother and baby unit but, before he was three years old, she was back on the street taking drugs and engaging in prostitution.

Adam has had no contact with his birth mother although she attempted to contact him through the school when he was aged eleven. Apparently no one was able to ascertain how she managed to trace Adam. Nonetheless, the school contacted Adam's adoptive parents who ensured that the episode was never repeated and this pleased Adam, who reported that he has no intention of meeting his birth mother. Adam informed me that he is proud of both his white and black identity but he would not necessarily use the term 'mixed race' to describe himself, saying that 'I am me'. When asked how others describe him, he told me that friends, family and people who know him tend to see him as him but, if pinned down, they would refer to his 'mixed parentage'.

4.1.15 Mimi

Mimi, who was aged twenty-four at the time of the interview, is an only child from her birth parents and became looked-after at the age of four months when her lone, white mother was unable to care for her. Mimi, who never met her maternal grandmother, was then cared for by her white, maternal grandfather who had seventeen children. Apparently her grandfather was often in prison for burglary and other offences. During his time in prison, Mimi stayed with his common-law wife who sometimes resented this responsibility; consequently Mimi spent some time with foster carers. Mimi failed to understand how social services allowed her violent grandfather to keep her despite his threats. For instance, on one occasion he told social workers that they would have another 'Jasmine Bedford case in their hands' if she was left with him. Mimi believed that considering her grandfather's long history of abuse and violence, it was a form of abuse to leave her with him just because he was blood relative:

Letting me go back to my grandfather, who was a known criminal and a violent man who had abused his own children, was a form of abuse... they can't ever justify why they would make that decision but I think the decision was made because he was family and that was seen to be most important...why would you put a child in such danger...he's got seventeen children, none of whom he's managed to look after...

Mimi reported how her birth mother would sometimes want her back and then change her mind. Apparently, social services would set up half-day meetings and quite often her mother did not turn up. She explained her disappointment at being told that she was being put up for adoption at two and a half years of age. Mimi's mother had promised that she was going to find somewhere for them to live but that was the last she heard of her. She spoke painfully about how her mother's failure to make a decision and to consent to the adoption prolonged the process and made it really difficult for her adoptive parents. This meant that two and a half years were wasted as the adoption did not go through until Mimi was five years old. Mimi's relationship with her adoptive parents and brother is good. She reported that initially, although her Nan struggled with having dual heritage grandchildren, she is now proud of them.

4.1.16 Timothy

Timothy, who was nineteen at the time of the interview, is the younger of two siblings. Both siblings went into care when they were aged six and eight respectively. Prior to that, Timothy and his sister lived in different temporary accommodation with their lone, white mother. According to Timothy, his mother (who had herself been looked-after) was a manic depressive and found it very hard to look after her two children. Timothy and his sister were placed with a black foster carer and lived in the same foster home for two years. However, his sister's behaviour was so challenging that the foster carer threw her out. Timothy was eight years old at that time and attempts were made for him and his sister to live with their mother. With support from social services, the siblings lived with her for few months but it did not work out. Apparently, she drank heavily and took drugs and the situation was made worse because they lived in a unit where alcohol was prohibited. Timothy said:

My sister told staff that my mum was smuggling drinks in and this got my mum into trouble and we were taken back into care.

Timothy reported that he had a foster placement whilst his sister was placed in a children's home. According to Timothy, things got progressively worse for him and he had several placement disruptions, which impacted on his education. He reported that he hated his foster placement so much that he planned to run away but his aunt, who used to visit him regularly, came to his rescue. Timothy told me that, during one of her visits, he did not want her to leave without him. He said that eventually a plan for kinship care was put in place and he lived with his aunt from the age of eleven to seventeen. At seventeen, Timothy (who shared a room with his two cousins) had to move out due to overcrowding. Timothy reported that he benefited from being looked-after. He stressed that, had he remained on the council estate with his mother, he would have turned out like some of the young black people in the news 'with guns and killing each other'. Although Timothy is proud of his dual heritage, he identifies with his father's side more closely and he put this down to his aunt's influence. Currently, Thomas lives semi-independently and attends college where he studies performance art.

CHAPTER FIVE:

5 Analysis of interviews and case files

Introduction

Through their own interpretive accounts, the previous chapter has looked at each dual heritage young person who participated in this research. The following chapter looks in detail at different aspects of each case. Considering the complexities of this study, I used the grounded theory approach to focus on ways in which social scientists order and code their qualitative data (Denscombe, 2000) and I have included the components of cases to illustrate how they were compiled (see table 5.1). The findings and discussions chapters will follow on from this.

5.1 Data analysis

In order to gain clear field insights and to clarify social and cultural patterns, it is important that data analysis and collection occur simultaneously in qualitative research and must not be left until completion of the data generation (Hamersley and Atkinson, 1995). This process is significant as it enables researchers using qualitative methods to reflect on ideas and key themes from the data, and it informs successive research actions or questions. Due to the amount of textual data generated through this approach, a systematic method of segmenting the data into themes or units is required (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Charmaz, 2006). Data analysis began whilst undertaking the fieldwork. The process was carried out systematically by coding all the data from each young person, followed by information from their files, carers and practitioners to build up an individual young person's case.

It was clear to me that this process would be laborious as well as exhilarating. I moved back and forth between generating and analysing the data. Although it is important to review themes that emerge from the data with participants for the purpose of verification (Miles and Huberman, 1994), I was unable to go back to participants to run through common themes. Involving participants would have helped them feel valued and respected. This would have proved useful for people who often think that nobody listens to them or takes them seriously.

Nonetheless, I realised very early on that going back was not an option after attempts to do so in the first couple of interviews revealed the young people themselves were not keen on taking part in follow-up work. Furthermore, practitioners and carers had made it clear that their participation was a one-off due to heavy work commitments. However, I did make valiant attempts to involve all concerned in these follow-up activities.

5.1.1 *Methods used*

Interview transcripts provided a huge amount of data and this had to be organised before analysis began. Biographical details were altered and pseudonyms given to ensure confidentiality (Bryman, 2004). Where anomalies occurred in relation to notes and transcripts, I went back to the taped interviews again. After minimising errors to the best of my ability, I created a database of information from all the participants in the study and coded the data systematically. The coding process is part of organising and categorising data to enable researchers to identify sections with specific research questions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This helped to identify themes as well as interpreting some of the participants' views. Coffey and Atkinson (1996:30) believe that:

...coding generally is used to break up and segment the data into simpler, general categories and is used to expand and tease out the data in order to formulate new questions and levels of interpretation.

My aim was to identify common themes and differences within participants' accounts. Common themes were grouped together to support theoretical perspectives. The main aims of the thesis were revisited at all times during the data analysis to ensure that I did not deviate from my objectives (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Mason, 2003b). Various elements of this research were informed by anti-discriminatory practice in recognising that some looked-after, dual heritage young people may be more articulate than others. At the heart of this is the need to pinpoint whose voice is being heard and whose voice is being silenced (Humphries et al., 2003). Therefore, I strove to ensure that all participants' views were given equal emphasis. The primary method used for analysing qualitative data is grounded theory, developed by Glaser and

Strauss (1967) and exemplified by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This approach was used to analyse the data generated from all of the cases in this thesis.

5.1.2 *The grounded theory approach*

When the grounded theory approach is used to analyse qualitative data, the data is analysed and conclusions are drawn on an ongoing basis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The process involves reading and re-reading the data and then identifying categories and their links (Charmaz, 2006). In my study, this meant creating analytical codes or categories in reference to the stories of the young people and those closest to them, such as practitioners and carers. For instance, in order to explore issues of abuse, the transcript segments were initially coded under 'abuse'. This code was then divided into sub-codes around what participants perceived as 'abuse'. Then the main code was linked to connected codes such as 'beaten', 'locked out', 'thrown out', 'self-harm', 'bashed' or 'rape'. The grounded theory approach appealed since it aims to develop theory about social behaviour from the data rather than from preconceived concepts held by researchers (France et al., 2000; Denscombe, 2007). This ensures that important data is retained and not discarded purely because it does not fit researchers' perceptions. Charmaz (2006) sees this process as iterative since it involves constant comparison, contrasting and conceptualisation. For Gilgun (1994:115):

...the findings of grounded theory fit the realities of practice because they are steeped in the natural world, the world of multiple variables and multiple meanings...of the consciousness and cognitive and emotional space of those who practice social work.

Making sense of the stories told by participants has not been an easy task. However, interrogation of the data systematically in the form of coding or categorising in segments has helped with this task (Gilgun; 1999; Charmaz, 2006). For example, in instances where the young people talked about abuse, one could find out whether this happened at home or school. It was also possible to analyse the properties of these categories (i.e. how long the abuse lasted and why). The inductive process of developing theory has helped to understand the social environment from the perspective of looked-after, dual heritage young people. I began by drawing out key points from the data collected. Appendix 12 includes excerpts from the interviews

(examples of some raw data) and demonstrates how the data was collected and analysed. The interrogation of the data took several stages (see Appendix 12) followed by a creation of analytical compartments according to the source of the data. For example, Safi, followed by broad categories (e.g. passing for white) and this process was repeated for each participant. Each analytical compartment contained coded extracts of the data. For instance, Safi's analytical compartment consisted of codes such as identity, fear of rejection, reasons for going into care, care experiences, education, and racism. Inside each of these codes there were a large number of codes. For example, codes inside racism consist of: forms of, place, reaction, and level of support. Participants' representations of their experiences were then compared to deliberate conceptual ideas and hunches produced from the data (Charmaz, 2006). By mapping out the conditions under which certain young people in the study thrived while others did not even though their routes into care were similar. Comparisons made at each analytical level enabled me to link the success of these young people to an ecological approach compared to their counterparts whose workers and carers took a simplistic approach to assessment. Through scrutinising what was happening at the micro, meso and macro levels some workers and carers were able to ascertain the ways in which the education system, social, political, neighbourhood, family and home contexts impacted on the lives of this group. Examples of conceptual ideas that have been derived from the data include the significance of:

- identity
- ethnic identity
- pathologisation of the dual heritage identity
- negotiating complexity at all time
- 'race' and racism

5.2 Components of cases

The research design enabled me to examine the care experiences of the young people from their perspectives and those of practitioners and carers. The initial aim was to interview all of the young people's practitioners, carers and, where possible, examine

their files. However, this was not possible in every case. In some cases, where permission had been given, some practitioners, carers and birth parents refused to participate. Seven practitioners, three adoptive parents, two foster carers and one birth parent were interviewed — bringing the number of interviewees to twenty-nine. Five files were examined, enabling me to generate data from thirty-four different sources.

The five case files were in possession of the young people at the time of the interview and they were more than happy to disclose this information. Some social workers refused to take part — citing work commitments or the fact that the young people were over the age of sixteen, as the reason for their refusal. Although some young people gave permission to contact birth parents, this was not fruitful in two cases because it was felt that the experience would have been unpleasant for the birth mother. Table 5.1 overleaf outlines the components of each case.

Table 5.1: Components of the Cases								
Source of data								Total sources of data
Cases	Young People	Social worker	Personal advisor	Foster carer	Adoptive parent	Birth parents	Files	
1	Safi	yes	yes				yes	4
2	Amina	yes						2
3	Joachim	yes						2
4	Musa	yes						2
5	Sue	yes						2
6	Thomas							1
7	Rosie				yes			2
8	Jude			yes			yes	3
9	Sam							1
10	Roger							1
11	Fiona	yes				yes		3
12	Josie						yes	2
13	Francis							1
14	Mimi			yes	yes		yes	4
15	Timothy							1
16	Adam				yes		yes	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>34</i>

The cases were compiled after a thorough examination of the data. Whilst the primary source of data was the stories told by the sixteen young people, data was also collected from seven practitioners and six carers. The data gathered from the young people's five files provided background information. From the outset, the intention was to build up a case by gathering data about this group in conjunction with those working closely with them but it was impossible to interview all of the practitioners and carers of the young people who participated in this study. Furthermore, as stated earlier, I did not have the opportunity to examine the files of all sixteen young people. Failure to access all the young people's practitioners, carers and the files was disappointing because it meant that I drew on fewer perspectives than anticipated initially. I also wondered whether I could have reframed the question regarding permission to contact the young people's carers and practitioners to encourage wider involvement. However, I respected the fact that some young people wanted to focus solely on their stories and did not want me to contact others around them.

CHAPTER SIX:

6 Research findings

Introduction

The field work was conducted over eighteen months between 2006 and 2008 and this chapter reports on significant findings produced from this study. Although there were similarities in the stories told, differences were also identified. The young people's routes into the public care system varied. The way in which dual heritage individuals are socially constructed and politicised has already been discussed. The chapter, which is structured according to the main themes, of the thesis is organised into eight sections.

Section one focuses on the young people and their identities. How they identify themselves and, whether or not they are comfortable with their dual heritage identity, is outlined in this section.

Section two focuses on how other people identify dual heritage individuals. The impact of pathologisation of the dual heritage identity by professionals is discussed. The importance of seeing beyond the dual heritage identity is also highlighted.

Section three explores the services offered to this group and their views. It reports on experiences related to being looked-after.

Section four examines how these services can be improved. Whether young people consider that services are adequate and appropriate is examined.

Section five explores the reasons why dual heritage young people become looked-after away from their birth families.

Section six recounts the lived experiences of racism, as told by the young people involved in this study. The comments these dual heritage young people made about racism are also highlighted in this section.

Section seven records the messages that the young participants and their carers want to send to practitioners/professionals and policymakers.

Finally, section eight offers conclusion to this chapter.

6.1 The young people and their identities

It was absolutely clear from the young people in this study that, although some professionals and others may see them as ‘being in a limbo’; they had no problems with their identity. Professionals, including practitioners, may look at the dual heritage identity primarily from the perspective of ‘race’. However, dual heritage individuals see the perspective of a ‘race’ identity and the whole perspective on their experiences. All except two of the young people interviewed had lived with their lone, white mothers prior to being looked-after. Although all of them were born in Britain, they identified themselves in different ways. Only three out of the total number interviewed reported visiting their black father’s country of origin. Others had no knowledge of the paternal side of their family and reported that even the information in their files was contradictory. For example, Mimi reported that although her file revealed the true identity of her father as black Caribbean, the information about him varied and the name field was left blank. Below is Mimi’s response to the question ‘*what ethnicity is your birth father?*’

Presumably not white ...I’ve got my file here ... but it kind of changes throughout. It says sometimes that he was black African-Caribbean and sometimes that she didn’t know, sometimes he was a black doctor, so I’m not entirely sure that we know for definite and it doesn’t say on my birth certificate.

Similar comments were more or less retold by most of the young people interviewed. In the majority of cases, although the records had shown that their birth fathers had originated from the West Indies, the specific islands were unknown and it was unclear whether or not the young people’s fathers were living in Britain. There was also no information about their social economic or employment status. A review of the available five files confirmed the stories told by these young people and revealed that

the information about their black fathers was very inconsistent. Nonetheless, the young people were adamant that they wanted to embrace both their black and white heritage.

Although some of these young people had been looked-after by white carers in primarily white communities, they did not deny their black heritage or view their identities negatively since these carers were non-pathologising. Instead of pathologising the dual heritage identity, these carers respected the young people they had adopted or fostered. Most of the young people (fifteen) were comfortable with the terms they chose to describe themselves. Some of the young people reported that even though they were comfortable with their dual heritage identity, they were often pressurised by relatives or carers to identify as black or white. These revelations highlighted the complexities around the autonomy for this group to self-identify. Others reported ticking the category 'mixed race' when completing forms but not using the term to describe themselves. Those who disliked the term mixed race believed that it could give an impression that they were 'mixed up' and preferred to describe themselves as brown. The young people were asked about how they identified themselves before being asked about how other people identified them. In response to the question, '*how do you identify yourself*', participants said:

Case one:

Sue: Mixed race.

Case two:

Safi: Mixed ethnic.

Case three:

Amina: Dual heritage.

Case four:

Roger...I am me.

Case five:

Mimi: If I was to describe how I identify myself...I'd talk about my family, I'd just say that I'm part of this family, that I have this job, these are my aspirations, this is what I love to do, this is who I am. I want to change the world, I want to do this and that...these are my plans in life, what I like doing. Like that's my identity, that's what makes me what I am. Um, so yeah, that's what I would talk about.

Case six:

Joachim: I am both white and black.

Case seven:

Timothy: British-Jamaican.

Case eight:

Adam: My racial identity is multiple and changes...

Cases five and eight confirm the fluidity of identity and, as stated earlier, these people's identities are likely to be influenced by those around them. Adam's adoptive father reported how Adam changed the way he identified completely when he visited Jamaica to see his real father's birth place. He disclosed:

...And so for a lot of years Adam had the Caribbean flag on the wall in his bedroom and...used Caribbean as his password online and that sort of stuff...he wouldn't call himself black now. What he would say now is 'my racial identity is complex' (Adam's adoptive father).

Plainly this quote illustrates how dual heritage individuals can develop comfortable multiple identities. This is a significant finding of the study as it challenges the essentialist views that portray identity, culture and ethnicity as unchanging. Often an essentialist perspective sees ethnic groups as people who share similar fixed characteristics (Phillips, 2007).

6.1.1 Summary

The looked-after, dual heritage young people involved in this study used diverse terms to describe themselves and they were all comfortable with their identities. Contrary to the belief that, if dual heritage individuals grow up in a primarily white environment there is a danger of them denying their black heritage, those brought up with white carers who were non-pathologising embraced both their black and white heritage. These young people had a clear understanding of how they wanted to identify themselves. Complexities only arose when their chosen identity conflicted with the views of those around them.

6.2 How others identify these young people

Opinions of how others identified these young people varied – some believed that society ought to acknowledge that they are white as well as black. Others felt that the whole issue was irrelevant. Some carers felt that practitioners use the term ‘black’ for the sake of political correctness. These carers were also against the use of the term ‘dual heritage’ because it implied that people’s identities are formed by their birth families. They believe that people’s heritage is formed by their environment and socialisation and not necessarily by biological parents. Some young people argued that their identities are as multiple as those of any other groups and failed to see why they should be categorised simply on the basis of their skin colour alone. The young people concerned found that other people’s descriptions of them were often derogatory. Reactions often depended on the form of racism used. In most cases, the young people were cast as abnormal. In response to the question, ‘*how do other people identify you?*’, the young people replied:

Case one:

Josie: Golliwog.

Case two:

Musa: ‘nigger’ - all sorts of names.

Case three:

Thomas: They think I am Turkish.

Case four:

Jude: Mixed race.

Case five:

Rosie: Black

Case six:

Sam: Coon or yellow face.

Case seven:

Francis: F*****nigger or other nasty names and being told to go back where I came from...

Case eight:

Fiona: Mixed race.

Clearly, the way in which dual heritage young people self-identify differs from how other people identify them. These young people are comfortable with their dual heritage identity, although other members of society think differently and this appeared to be a point of contention. The terms used continue to be the source of some debate – not just regarding the labels themselves but also who has the right to determine what these young people should be called. Most of the young people felt that it is unsatisfactory for others to impose labels on them, particularly when these labels are negative and contribute to feelings of exclusion. The sudden realisation that one is unwanted by both sides can be quite traumatic. The following quotation from the account of one young participant highlights the problems faced by dual heritage people in terms of people's perceptions.

...there was this black gospel choir that had come from a school in London. They all happened to be black. I don't think it was a black school but the members of this choir were black, all of them, and they came to sing at our school coz it was really musical...I was like chatting to them and it was really nice...having these people walking round the school with my friends who were all white and then one of my friends said, 'oh, do you think you're black?' to me. So I had...a group of black people and a group of white people and I (said):... 'I don't know, well I'm half-black and um... half-white, so I don't really think I'm black' and the black people went 'She's not black' and then the white people went, 'Well she's not white' and I said, 'brilliant' 'excellent', well I'm just nothing then...'Yeah, I am not in either group. So I think there is something about being in between (Mimi).

This quote highlights how the notion of 'race' can be applied to cluster together people who are perceived by others as belonging to the same 'race' on the basis of their phenotype. People appear unable to move away from using 'race' in categorical, rigid terms. In this example, both the black and white students used skin colour as a marker of the boundary between them and the dual heritage young person. The young person was faced with the knowledge that she was neither white nor black enough to belong to either group — she was left feeling in 'between'. Until then, being black or white had not been an issue for this young person and she had been happy and comfortable with her perception of being 'half-black and half-white'. However,

unexpectedly Mimi's peers saw her as a misfit. Both the white and black students perceived her as culturally and visually different from them — consequently they saw her as the 'other'.

6.2.1 Pathologisation of the dual heritage identity by professionals

Stories told by the young people indicated that some teachers believed that they had identity problems. Similar views are held by some psychiatrists and counsellors, who believe that dual heritage young people displaying any signs of depression or mental illness are confused about their racial identities. The majority of the young people told stories of pain and frustrations, particularly when carers perceived their identity as a problem:

...one of my foster carers told me I had issues with my identity and 'to go to hell because that is where all you gay people deserve to go' ...my social worker did not believe me when I told her what the foster carer had said. She said to me: 'I think you are making that up' and I said, 'no, not at all...'
(Josie).

Undoubtedly Josie viewed his identity from the whole perspective of his experience whereas the carer saw it solely from the perspective of 'race'. Josie's carer implied that the challenges he faced were linked to his dual heritage identity and sexual orientation. Perhaps some carers and professionals find it easier to blame the dual heritage identity for any challenges faced by this group rather than examining the underlying issues. Practitioners' failure to believe young people in this group may stem from the perception that dual heritage individuals are 'dysfunctional'. Tackling issues affecting this group is crucial given that people in interracial relationships and their children often experience negative attitudes in Britain.

Some practitioners feel that dual heritage young people are in limbo due to the lack of contact with their black culture. These practitioners believe that identity work would assist this group in coming to terms with their black heritage. How some practitioners pathologise looked-after, dual heritage young people is clearly highlighted by the case of Sue's social worker. When asked about her experience of working with dual

heritage young people in this domain, the social worker leapt straight to 'identity crisis' as a recurrent theme:

Vicky (researcher): Do you mind if I ask you if you have experiences of working with dual heritage young people?

Kate (social worker): Sometimes you do find that dual heritage people have a confusion imbalance...with most dual heritage young people...you find a lot of them have identity crisis...because sometimes they are placed in placements outside their borough...When they have to return back to live, they find it quite difficult...because they were living in white surroundings. They identify more with the white culture than they do with the black culture...

Vicky: Is that identity crisis though?

Kate: For some people, it is an identity crisis...some of them don't feel comfortable with who they are...and can't identify with the black culture...or the food, stuff like that. It is an identity crisis because some young people don't know who they are.

Vicky: Do they actually say they do not know who they are?

Kate: I had an experience of a young person who had an identity crisis, so you kind of find ways of dealing with them... sometimes it is about re-educating them and stuff like that, do you know what I mean?...Sometimes these young people do not know whether to follow the black side or the white side...

Kate's views reflect those of many practitioners who regard the dual heritage identity principally from the perspective of 'race'. These practitioners blamed the practice of placing dual heritage children and young people with white families. They claimed that white families are unable to equip these young people to deal with racism and are incapable of talking about 'race' issues. Consequently, the young people placed in their care grow up believing that they are white and they lack a sense of belonging particularly when they look different from their parents. However, for some young people having parents who looked like them was not as important as being safe. For, instance, some young people who were placed with white families reported that had they been left in the care of their birth families, they would have died before their

eighth birthday and they considered themselves lucky to have found carers who were caring and loving.

Five out of the seven practitioners interviewed did not look beyond skin colour and believed that there was no justification for placing a dual heritage child with a white family. For instance, Sam's social worker was asked how she would react if she was unable to find a suitable placement with a black or 'mixed-race' family and her response was:

...it would be insane to consider placements with white families...such placements result in these young people thinking they are white. They are black and the sooner they accept this fact the better...placing dual heritage children with white families will result in them thinking they are white when we know they are black...

Another young person interviewed, Fiona, had experienced several placement disruptions. Her social worker declined a face-to-face interview, but was willing to talk on the telephone. When I asked her whether she had considered placing Fiona with a white family, her response was:

I always consider placing mixed-race children with white families as the last resort. These children are black and Fiona is already confused anyway so a placement with a white family will confuse her even more.

The social worker's response indicated that she had not taken the trouble to see Fiona as a person first before theorising over her identity. Fiona was one of the young people who questioned the emphasis on dual heritage individuals learning about their black rather than white history.

6.2.2 Seeing beyond the dual heritage identity

Some practitioners told encouraging stories about the profound impact their work had on the young people's life chances. In cases where they could see some young people were troubled, these practitioners often realised that telling them to calm down was not going to work. Instead they worked together to find the cause of their distress, and

in some instances, they succeeded in helping traumatised young people come to terms with their painful life experiences. Workers who achieved this did not focus on the dual heritage identity but worked with the young people concerned to bring about change in their lives. They also recognised the key role played by the young people themselves in achieving success.

Reports from practitioners who had worked with young people from different cultural backgrounds claimed that there was no difference between looked-after, dual heritage young people or those with two black or two white parents. Others believed that the young people's life experiences, and how they reacted to the support offered to them, can play a role in determining their life chances and every individual's case is different. Sam's social worker reported:

...of course it is important to give them support, but some accept it while others do not...some young people have had quite difficult times but they are determined to succeed and appreciate the support you give them.

Evidently, in addition to the support given to this group, a great deal depends on their self-determination. It is vital to explore why some young people fail to achieve their full potential. For instance, people could be perceived as lacking self-determination but, at that particular time, they may need to talk about their experiences or time to adjust, depending on the challenges they have encountered.

6.2.3 Summary

People's perceptions of this group were often contentious and their views affected feelings of inclusion and exclusion. The young people themselves often found that the labels imposed on them were negative and differed hugely from their own perceptions. They resented the pathologisation of the dual heritage identity, which implied that they experienced identity crises or confusion merely because they are neither white nor black. Nonetheless, some practitioners saw beyond the dual heritage identity and this greatly affected the life chances of some of the young people.

6.3 Services offered and what looked-after, dual heritage young people thought of these services

6.3.1 *Experiences that related to being looked-after*

The young people interviewed were asked how they would describe their care experiences or their views on the services available. Some reported that, although they do not perceive black people negatively, they would have preferred to have been placed in white families because their friends were all white. Most of those who had successful, positive care experiences were the ones who believed they were respected and listened to. These young people had experienced encouragement and support from practitioners, carers and teachers.

In instances where teachers were unsupportive, the intervention of adoptive and foster parents made a difference. Such interventions ranged from confronting the school, paying for private tuition or sometimes moving to a different area or changing schools. Clearly, some of these options were not open to those on low incomes. Consequently, positive care experiences were generally reported by young people who had supportive, white, middle-class parents. These young people reported that, even though they lived in predominantly white communities, it did not impact negatively on their racial identities. As highlighted earlier, all the young people in my study had come from working-class backgrounds. However, some of these young people had acquired middle-class status as a result of being adopted or fostered by white middle-class families.

6.3.2 *Safe environment*

After lengthy experiences of abuse and neglect, some reported that they found it difficult to adjust at first when they were placed in safe environments, although their care experiences were positive. For example, Jude was asked about her relationship with her foster carers' children and she reported:

Jude: We got on very well and we still do. We have a fantastic relationship and we are just one big family – just like brothers and sisters, although it was a bit strange at first.

Vicky: What do you mean by strange?

Jude: When the only thing you have known is rejection and abuse it takes time to believe that you are actually loved and accepted unconditionally....Being among posh people was an all new experience and strange to us.

This view was also shared by Jude's foster carer who said:

I think it was more difficult for Jude than it was for us, you know, to come into a new environment and social class...and also not having many black people in this area did not help much. She can hold her own though and we tried our best. It had always been our desire to adopt but we wanted our own children to reach an age where we could talk to them about giving someone else a home...

Difficulties in adjusting to life in a safe environment were experienced by young people in white as well as black adoptive/foster families. Some felt very fortunate because they did not experience any placement disruptions and lived with their carers until they left either to go to university or to pursue a career. Nonetheless, some of the young people did not have positive care experiences. Some did not like living with strangers and they only wanted to live at home with their families. Consequently, their placements were often disrupted as they either ran away or did everything within their power to be expelled or excluded from school or their residential home, as in Joachim's case:

Vicky: And when they kicked you out was it for any particular reason?

Joachim: Out of the residential home or school?

Vicky: The residential home.

Joachim: Yeah, coz I made this little bomb thing, I put it off in the bathroom.

Vicky: Why?

Joachim: ...I wanted to be home with my mum.

These sentiments echoed the views of many young people who ran away from their placements as they wanted a 'normal' life at home with their parents rather than strangers:

Vicky: How would you describe your care experiences?

Fiona: Horrible. I don't like it. I want to be with family, children are meant to be with their parents, not with strangers. It's not right to be shifted from one place to another.

Vicky: How many foster carers did you have?

Fiona: Five to six in a space of less than two years...parents shouldn't give up on you, no matter how much work you are, you are their children...

Some young people questioned whether their dual heritage identity contributed to them becoming looked-after. This was particularly true in cases where young people did not have any contact with extended families from either side of their heritage. These young people felt that they must have been abnormal otherwise they would not have been disowned by both their black and white families. Those who felt that this could be linked to their dual heritage identity were desperate to find out about their history and backgrounds. Root (2003) believes that these feelings are not unusual in a society where dual heritage individuals are constantly asked, 'where do they come from?', or what are you?' Nonetheless, sometimes reunions with birth parents can be painful, as Rosie's case illustrates:

Vicky: Did you have any contact with your birth parents?

Rosie: No. But just before my A-levels I wanted to find out about them...

Vicky: Mm

Rosie: My mum and dad did not mind and helped me through the process although they were concerned that this may impact on my A-levels...It was not straightforward but a good experience, which was short-lived.

Vicky: Aha, what do you mean short-lived?

Rosie: After the arrangements to meet them were finalised, we met my birth mother first and she made it very clear to me she had a new life now...I promised to leave her alone if I could find my birth father...

Vicky: Yeah

Rosie: My birth father informed me that he was very pleased to learn that I had expressed the wish to meet him. He told me that he left England soon after my birth due to racism...

Vicky: Did you believe him?

Rosie: ...I believed that he was telling me the truth but I did not understand how he just ran away without giving any thoughts to the daughter he left behind.

Vicky: Yeah

Rosie: ...I was invited to Jamaica...my birth dad had his own family and did not really want me around. Although my half-sisters and brothers were very warm towards me, they did not want me to be a permanent fixture in their lives either. I had always appreciated my adoptive parents but, after my brief encounter with my birth parents, I appreciated them even more realising that they must have adopted me because they genuinely loved and wanted me. Rejection is hard to deal with and to realise that the two people I was keen to find rejected me yet again, I had to come to terms with that loss but very grateful to have my mum and dad...

Although some of the young people who became looked-after at a very young age did not have placement disruptions, they reported negative care experiences. These experiences involved being beaten up and forced to have paid sex with different men to support their foster carer's drug addiction. In one instance, this abuse persisted until the foster carer remarried following the death of his first wife. His new wife, who was described as strict but caring, could not tolerate his behaviour, and she asked him to leave:

Vicky: Who was beating you up?

Musa: My first carer.

Vicky: What age did you become looked-after?

- Musa:** I was one and my brother was two.
- Vicky:** And you both stayed with this foster care...
- Musa:** Yeah, until his first wife died.
- Vicky:** And?
- Musa:** The new wife did not like the fact that he was beating us so she kicked him out.
- Vicky:** What did social services say about him beating you?
- Musa:** We didn't tell them because he used to tell us that, if we told anyone, then we would end up in a children's home.

6.3.3 Experiences related to adoption and fostering

Although all of the young people who participated in this study had white birth mothers, most of their foster carers were non-white. Those who had become looked-after in their teenage years felt that they should have been involved in decisions concerning their lives. They all stressed that the ethnicity of the practitioners or carers was irrelevant. This is a very significant finding considering the emphasis placed on finding placements that match children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Additionally, being listened to and respect for their views were prevalent themes that emerged frequently. Most of the young people interviewed reported 'being able to fit anywhere' and were comfortable to engage with people from different walks of life and backgrounds because of the way their carers had brought them up. This is very well illustrated by Adam:

...I feel that I can fit in with any community that I want to, you know, I'm comfortable in a completely white community, I'm completely comfortable and feel at home in a black community and, in fact, I have taught myself Chinese, and I have a Chinese girlfriend and I lived in Hong Kong over the summer and felt completely at home there.

Although Adam was adopted by a white family, his carers took an active role in equipping him with cultural skills that will assist him for life in a globalised world.

This is evidence that positive racial identity for dual heritage individuals is possible if these young people are placed with white families.

Some carers questioned the strong emphasis placed on children's cultural and racial backgrounds when considering placements. There is possibly no harm in seeking cultural backgrounds related to looked-after children and young people, but the emphasis should be on the creation of positive care experiences. The following examples illustrate what some young people felt about the notion of ethnic matching:

A baby doesn't know what colour it is...a baby's got absolutely no idea – it is only society that makes it an issue (Sam).

I am glad my brother and I were fostered by them because they are the best mum and dad. People tell me that my hair is beautiful so no lasting damage was done. I think there is much more to meeting the needs of dual heritage young people than managing their hair or skin care, which is often given as an example by those against placing us with white families (Jude).

Placing mixed race children with white families works and I think people who say it does not need to think again or come up with better reasons than the one that white families will not be able to help non-white children and young people cope with racism. I have known people who have lived with foster carers who shared their ethnicity and it has been disastrous (Roger).

This thing about same race placement is not important to me...I think what is important is not the ethnicity of carers but whether they respect me or not (Musa).

The perception that white parents are unable to expose dual heritage children and young people to their black culture is debatable. Given the differences between those defined as black, it is a fallacy to assume that the needs of this group will best be met if they are placed with black families.

6.3.4 *Dispelling assumptions based on skin colour*

Most young people's experiences of being looked-after were positive because they had left abuse and neglect behind. Nonetheless, assumptions made about this group based on their skin colour could be misleading at times. Some carers and young people believed that, since society as a whole perceives dual heritage individuals as black, they should learn about their black heritage. However, they often neglect this group's 'whiteness'. Other young people failed to see why they are encouraged to learn about their black rather than white heritage:

...They don't think we need to learn about white people. We always get black history, where's the white history? I don't know anything about white people. Nothing at all, except that they're white...they don't teach you it in school. They teach you about the Romans. But I want to know about British people and history. Coz that's what my mum is. I need to know about my British side. Not just my West Indian side (Fiona).

Some of those interviewed felt that one side of their heritage was overlooked whereas others did not:

...I used to ask if I could cook Jamaican meals. I didn't get offered a choice to learn to cook Jamaican meals. I think that, if somebody is black or somebody is Asian or Greek or whatever, there should be a thing where they can turn around and say 'look we are going to cook something from our background'... my dad was black ...we didn't do things like 'oh, today we are going to do Jamaican cooking'...There was none of that...there was nothing like 'we are going to take you to the proper hair dressers that specialises in black hair'... (Safi).

Some young people questioned whether black people require different regional food from white people. Again, placing dual heritage children and young people with African-Caribbean families in the belief that their cultural needs, (e.g. dietary requirements) will be met can be misleading. This can also make lasting impressions on the lives of some dual heritage individuals, as Amina illustrates:

...I'm half-Jamaican and half-English and my foster carer was Jamaican, so like all the food that we ate was Jamaican food and stuff so we didn't do any British stuff or anything. Since I did not grow up eating Jamaican food, this was a different experience for me.

Clearly, assumptions made when considering placements for dual heritage young people fail to take into account the fact that most lived with their white mothers prior to entering the public care system. Therefore, these young people were familiar with their white rather than black culture. Since the majority have had no contact with their black families, most of them had not grown up eating African-Caribbean food. This is a reminder that each case should be treated differently and people have different needs.

Some practitioners spoke of the complexity of finding placements. Although it is sometimes clear that the experience may not work, there is a tendency to pursue the placement if the cultural and racial needs of children are met. One social worker spoke of her frustration when she was forbidden from placing a dual heritage child with a white family by her line manager. She had predicted that the placement would fail because the child had no respect for black people, including his own father. The articulate nine-year-old child, wanted a placement with a white family and, after several failed placements with black foster carers, he was placed in a children's home at the age of twelve because he was deemed too old to be adopted.

6.3.5 Summary

The young people's care experiences varied, depending on their carers' and practitioners' values. Frequently, carers' intervention in situations where racism was making the young people's lives unbearable made a difference. These interventions involved moving schools or paying for private tuition as well as giving the young people encouragement and positive feedback. Although some young people found it difficult to adjust to new surroundings following years of neglect and abuse, being in a safe environment gave them a sense of security. Most of the carers were black, although all of the young people had white birth mothers. Some questioned the reasoning behind placing them with black families when they had always lived in white communities and had white friends. In most cases, experiences of being looked-

after away from their birth families were positive compared with their previous experiences. All the young people placed in white families (five) had positive care experiences regardless of preconceived ideas about placing children with families on the basis of their skin colour.

6.4 How can these services be improved?

Positive care experiences were reported in cases where the young people had been supported and respected. Although the young people who had been placed with white families had positive care experiences, many were disappointed at the length of time taken to find them permanent placements that reflected their cultural needs. These young people felt that, since they had been brought up by white relatives and foster carers, social workers should not have focused on finding placements based on skin colour.

Some young people and their carers were critical of the idea that extended families could be considered as alternative placements in the absence of their birth parents. Some were angry because although they had spent very little time with their birth mothers, the adoption process was complicated and lengthy because their mothers did not give consent for this to take place. Others recalled instances of painful emotional abuse from their biological relatives who looked-after them following abandonment by their birth mothers. These young people and their carers reported that the importance placed on blood relatives is 'an over played hand'. In their view, good relationships rather than genetic links are important. Many believed that existing services could be vastly improved if unhelpful practices of ethnic matching, which tend to prolong the uncertainty in the lives of these young people are avoided. Others felt that, if their views had been taken seriously, they would have been spared the prolonged neglect and abuse suffered prior to becoming looked-after. The importance of regular monitoring of foster placements was emphasised since some carers' unacceptable behaviour went unchecked.

6.4.1 Summary

The level of support given to the young people in this study determined their care experiences. In common with all looked-after young people, those interviewed felt

that existing services could be improved if they were respected, listened to and involved in decisions about their lives. The importance attached to birth families was criticised by the young people and their carers. Some birth families repeatedly changed their minds about care for their children and this had a damaging effect on the young people concerned. Many felt that it is time to reconsider the power given to birth parents or blood relatives.

6.5 Reasons why dual heritage young people become looked-after

Abuse and neglect were the main reasons why thirteen out of the sixteen young people from this study became looked-after and these findings are not unique to this group. However, some of the young people felt that they were often criticised by society at large, professionals and their wider families. They reported that their families were under pressure to ensure that they behaved well since misbehaviour would reflect on them. Some of these young people reported running away from home due to the parenting style which they perceive as too strict or controlling. Social network and support, which is essential in bringing up children, was found to be lacking in most cases in this study and social services was the only main source of support.

Most of the young people were not able to explain why they were abused and neglected by their parents. Some reported that their mothers often left them in the house alone all night — letting them go without food and stealing for survival. Some of these young people stated that their mothers' abuse reinforced the feelings that they were stupid and loathed by their families. Others claimed that drugs, alcohol and prostitution were the reason why they were abused and neglected — hence the intervention of social services. Abuse in all twelve cases was carried out by the young people's white birth mothers. Some of the young people stated that their mothers had been looked-after and had no contact with their own birth parents. Some of the mothers experienced very difficult childhoods themselves, which meant that their parenting ability was limited. Mimi explained:

...I think she had a very difficult background herself... She was nineteen when she had me, so she was in a difficult place and I...don't think she set out to

hurt me...it was immaturity, I think, rather than lack of love... she'd spent her whole life in and out of care...her father had been quite abusive to her, during her childhood...I think he had something like seventeen children.

Mimi's birth mother became a parent at a time when herself needed help and support with sorting out her life. She was young and already disadvantaged by that time and the parenting role was probably overwhelming for her. Support services could have made a difference at this time.

Some young people reported that their lives were further complicated by relationships that often involved step-parents and children from different partnerships. For example, Fiona reported that her white mother and her new partner did not want her but she did not fit in with her father's new family either. She viewed her father's parenting as controlling. This resulted in her becoming looked-after, although she hated being away from her birth family:

Fiona: My dad couldn't control me no more so he put me in care.

Vicky: What do you mean by control?

Fiona: I was off the rails...I wanted to do as I please. I didn't want to take orders...

Vicky: How old were you then?

Fiona: I was about twelve ...eleven. I've been here so long I don't know anymore.

Vicky: So where did you go at the age of eleven?

Fiona: I went into foster care.

Vicky: Did you stay with the same foster carer?

Fiona: No, coz I kept running of...I didn't like it. It was horrible.

Vicky: What was horrible?

Fiona: Being with different people who I don't know. So I kept running off.

Although some suggested that all children and young people should look to parents for guidance, almost all of the young people felt they were better off living apart from abusive birth parents. Some young people reported that their parents were often drunk and depressed — consequently they were uninterested in their children’s lives.

Timothy highlights this in his case story:

...Firstly, from birth I moved to Taunton with my mum in a small place above a shop and stayed there for maybe a couple of months and then moved into a council estate in Fleet. I stayed there for about three years and, due to my mum drinking and stuff like that, I got taken into care, me and my sister. We went to Wellington for six months and then the foster carer went back to Jamaica and we were moved to Hinton just a place not far from where we were living, so that we could get regular visits from my mum...but mum was always drunk and depressed so she was not able to take any interest in us...

Many of the young people who felt isolated in their neighbourhood reported that even their own grandparents did not want them. Some believed that their grand-parents saw them as ‘black bastards’. Others informed me that lack of contact with both black and white families meant that they ‘had no one to turn to’ and reported that referrals to social services were often made by neighbours. Although some stories were horrific, it was encouraging to see how many overcame the challenges they encountered.

Social services, psychiatrists and counsellors often became involved due to incidents of self-harming and suicide attempts. This was often provoked by ill treatment from step-fathers as in the case of Safi:

Safi: ...I was sick of being kicked out, let back in...kicked out at six o’clock in the morning so they could go on holidays, leaving three pounds to last me for five days...nobody knew what actually went on in them four walls...everyone would come round and say how well Frank (assumed name) and me were doing.

Vicky: Who is Frank?

Safi: My half-brother

- Vicky:** They went on holiday and left you with your half-brother?
- Safi:** No, they took him. I wasn't allowed to go in the car with my step-dad...
- Vicky:** Oh
- Safi:** I just got fed up...I was always in out in out. I got made to sleep on the bench on the back garden when I was fourteen...my mum didn't get in from work 'til half-past eight bearing in mind that I had to be in school for ten to nine...
- Vicky:** Hmm
- Safi:** With my mum working nights, she didn't get in 'til half-past eight I didn't have time to have a shower or anything and I felt terrible coz it had been raining that night...I had to sleep out in the cold and in the rain.

Safi become looked-after voluntarily under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 as a result of a long history of problems, particularly abuse from her step-father. Her birth mother may have been concerned about her marriage and therefore torn between loyalty to Safi or her husband. In addition to the ill treatment from her step-father, Safi's social worker and personal adviser reported that she had experienced a myriad of problems such as rape, the suicide of a friend and the death of her cousin, which had left her traumatised. Safi's personal adviser stated:

...I think her behaviour went downhill and the family couldn't cope with it and she was asked to leave...

6.5.1 Summary

Abuse and neglect have been identified as the main contributing factors to dual heritage young people becoming looked after. Nonetheless, the fact that many of their lone, white mothers have often been looked-after themselves, and tend to be rejected by their own parents, can exacerbate the challenges faced by this group. Rejection from both white and black communities can mean that these families often live in isolation — resulting in the lack of support networks. Furthermore, substance misuse, which can lead to mental health problems, can have a detrimental effect on parenting

capacity. Some of the lone, white mothers had never experienced love in their own lives and others had become parents at a very young age. This often meant that they were too young to manage the parenting role successfully. The existence of step-parents and children from other relationships complicated the situation further as some parents found themselves torn between loyalty to their children or new partners. This often led to the intervention of social services.

6.6 Racism

The young people involved in this study were asked about their experiences of racism and their understanding of the term. Most of the young people reported that negative attitudes and labelling were the foundation of racism. All reported experiences of racism ranging from negative attitudes to verbal and physical abuse because ‘they looked different’. The stories told by the young people and their practitioners/carers indicated that racism and discrimination contributed to feelings of isolation. Others reported that their neighbours were racist — using abusive language towards their parents and throwing stones at the children as they returned from school.

Some young people and their carers claimed that disapproval from neighbours and other members of the community played a major role in the stress they experienced as a family. Others believed that racism takes different forms — such as being ignored, people staring at them and whispering at each other. Incidents of being stopped and searched by police also featured in the stories told by most of the young people interviewed. Episodes of name calling were also reported. Most of the young people felt that the racist abuse they experienced left them with feelings of unworthiness. Judgements were often based on skin colour rather than their behaviour. Francis reported:

I have been refused entry to the pub with remarks such as ‘I didn’t know they let gollywogs in here’...

Some carers believed that many people felt wary of their adopted dual heritage young people since ‘they did not look like them’. These people often forbade their own children from playing with them because they believed that adopted dual heritage children ‘may have fleas’. Reports of this type of prejudice were recounted by most of

the young people and their carers. Some families found it impossible to understand why their children's skin colour had such negative effects. These families did their utmost to support their children as the following examples illustrate.

Case one:

Vicky: Would you say you have experienced racism then?

Roger: A great deal both from teachers and other children. I was always ignored by teachers who thought I was stupid.

Vicky: How did that make you feel?

Roger: Angry but there was nothing I could do but to show them I was not that stupid

Vicky: How did you do that?

Roger: By working hard and my parents helped by employing a private tutor.

Case two:

Vicky: So racist attacks were towards you or your parents?

Adam: Both. Yeah, they used to...throw apples at our house and things...when I went to my first school, I got attacked...because of my race and they had said something about my colour and everything...

Vicky: How did your parents cope?

Adam: ...My parents went to the school and said, you know, 'my son's been racially attacked, what you are going to do?' And apparently, the headmaster said, 'Well, what do you expect if you put a black child into a white community?'

Whilst some young people were supported, others reported being unable to discuss racism with some members of the family. Some even experienced racism within their own family. Some grandparents could not bring themselves to introduce the children who had been adopted by their sons or daughters as 'their' grandchildren. Some gave examples of being asked to stay in their rooms when their relatives had visitors. Others reported being upset when family members were unable to empathise with their experiences of racism. These young people were often informed that although the family tolerated them, they could not expect the wider society to do the same.

Consequently, such remarks led to constrained relationships and in some cases these young people fell out with their relatives. Mimi shared this experience:

Tolerate! Tolerate! I didn't speak to her for about two months after that. It was only coz my dad called me and asked me to talk to her...So I ended up talking to her but I did say to her, 'don't ever tell me that people should tolerate me coz of my skin colour'...And I just said,... 'if you do say things like that to me again then we're not going to have this relationship because I don't want you to be tolerating me'. You tolerate a toothache or a disease or somebody upsetting you.

Undoubtedly, most young people experiencing unpleasant incidents would have expected sympathy and not a reminder that they were simply tolerated. Mimi reported that such comments dented the relationship with her grandmother who, in the beginning, had been against the adoption.

Other young people and their carers recounted their own stories about the impact of racism. Racism is often carried out in such a subtle way that those experiencing it are accused of having a 'chip on their shoulders'. The young people in my study expressed feelings of oppression and alienation simply because they were perceived as different while questioning what multiculturalism means. Some described Britain as a racist society that has failed to embrace all aspects of their heritages and experiences within the context of 'race', sexual orientation, class and religion. Their bewilderment echoes the words of Audre Lorde (a black homosexual female in a world dominated by white heterosexual males), who stated:

As a black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, poet, mother of two, including one boy, and a member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself part of some group in which the majority defines me as deviant, difficult, inferior or just plain 'wrong.' From my membership in all of these groups, I have learned that oppression and the intolerance of differences comes in all shapes and sizes and colors [sic] and sexualities; and that among those of us who share the goals of liberation and a workable future for our children, there can be no

hierarchies of oppression (1983:14, cited by Van Soest and Garcia, 2003: xiii).

Often oppression limits privileges and choices that people can enjoy, resulting in stifling social justice. Failure to enable people to develop to their full potential due to age, 'race', disability, or gender is likely to create inequality and hinder integration.

6.6.1 Summary

Racism was prevalent in the lives of the group involved in this study and, for some families, alienation due to racism meant that they were excluded from the community. This was often traumatic, particularly when those in authority, such as teachers, condoned such behaviour. Others talked about the difficulties faced when racism existed in the family. Instead of finding refuge in their families, they were often lonely and ignored. Some reported that many forms of racism were subtle whereas others were very overt. In many cases, the young people involved in this study felt that society was obsessed with the dual heritage identity and this meant they were often seen as the 'other'. Consequently, this led to experiences of oppression and racism for some young people and their carers.

6.7 Messages to practitioners and policymakers

In many cases, accounts from the young people in this study mirror those from other looked-after groups. Nonetheless, other issues were specific to dual heritage young people, for example, some of them felt that 'same race' placement was not important. They also believed that meeting the needs of dual heritage people should be based on the outcome of an individual's assessment. Those who saw the ethnicity of the carers or social workers as irrelevant felt that sharing the same skin colour as their placement families did not necessarily mean they were caring and respectful. All of the young people felt that the key was to take into account individuals' requirements when assessing their needs rather than their skin colour. Many also agreed that, if children were old enough, they should be involved in decisions regarding placements and other aspects of their needs. The following illustrates these key points:

- The ethnicity of social workers is not important. How they treat you is what matters and not whether they match your ethnicity... It wouldn't have bothered me if my social workers were white, black or Asian... The most important thing is to be respected and to be listened to (Thomas).
- Certainly, they must not be treated differently because that is like drawing attention to themselves, saying, and 'look we are different'. I think the key is to avoid making generalisations and seeing each person as unique... what may suit one person may not suit another (Amina).
- It is important for people to adopt or foster because they really want to change a person's life and not because of money... take time to find the right carer and do not put too much emphasis on skin colour. Most social workers have such a big case load and no wonder they cannot give these young people time. Some of these young people have had such a rough time and, if they end up in another abusive environment, it makes it worse... if the young people are old enough, maybe they should be asked what they want. My guess is most of them would prefer a loving family than someone who looks like them and then abuses or neglects them (Timothy).

6.7.1 Education

The level of racism, prejudice and stereotyping that had been experienced by the young people in this study was particularly significant finding. High educational achievement was linked to the level of support from carers and practitioners. Most of these young people had been adopted or fostered by affluent, middle-class white families in primarily white communities. In addition to educational success, these young people were comfortable with their racial identities. Most of them were keen to learn because they wanted to make a success of their lives. Others felt that there was too much discussion about people with one black and one white parent and their lack of success in education. They felt that, when people are abused and rejected, they have to face many challenges and sometimes education is not considered to be a priority by them or by those working with them. Others believed that they were fortunate because their foster carers took a genuine interest in them and worked closely with the school.

Some young people urged practitioners/carers and policymakers to stress the importance of education at a young age. Some of them had performed well academically and some were full-time university students whilst others were graduates with good jobs. Many felt that it was important for carers to attend parents' evenings, otherwise the young people reported feeling disadvantaged. With no one to support them, they often missed parents' evenings themselves. Sue disclosed: 'My foster carer wouldn't come to my parents' evenings, so I didn't go'.

6.7.2 Labelling

All except one young person, revealed that derogatory and negative terms had been used to describe them — resulting in feelings of unworthiness. Hence, there is a need to move away from the terms used to describe this group. Some carers and young people were unhappy with the terms 'dual heritage' and 'mixed race', which are widely used to describe individuals with one white, and one black parent. They saw these terms as euphemisms since, in Britain, they tend to be applied when duality is visible.

6.7.3 Policy

The young people and carers were asked how they would influence policy in relation to looked-after, dual heritage young people if they were in a position to do so. Some of their responses, which are reported below, stress the need for policymakers and practitioners to consider carefully the potential outcome from placements. The young people who had been adopted preferred a clean break from their birth families and wanted to form completely new, secure relationships with their adopted families. Although children and young people should not be taken away from their birth families permanently without proper consideration, attempts to retain links with their blood relatives must not outweigh their best interests.

I'd ask them to think about what children really need. What are the fundamental things that children need to thrive and to feel secure and to feel safe...(they should) not to get bogged down in emotions and what the ideal picture would be ...If a child's already come into care and there's already difficulties, there is no ideal picture in all likelihood...(Sam).

If there was one piece of advice I would give to the legislators over the adoption stuff, it would be to follow through your reasoning about putting the child first...And all these notions of contact, all this worrying about heritage and the biological background of the child and trying to sustain the culture of the birth family is just damaging that child. And Social Services ought to intervene sooner when children are getting damaged, and...they ought to get those children into adoptive placements as fast as they possibly can. Keeping kids in care in the hope of being able to re-establish a relationship back with an abusive birth family is not going to be in the interests of those kids (Adam and Mimi's adoptive mother).

Workers should have more respect for us and to treat us as individuals with different needs and, if you are dual heritage, it does not mean you are black...That is crap and what we want is to have both sides of our heritage accepted and respected and not for teachers or social workers to say that we are confused or we have identity imbalance because we are not calling ourselves black. We have more than one heritage and, if we cannot describe ourselves as white, how can we describe ourselves as black anyway? (Musa)

Although some of the themes identified mirror those from other looked-after groups, some issues were specific to dual heritage young people, such as:

- treating this group according to their needs and not their skin colour
- minimising unnecessary delays and avoid focusing on 'same race' placements because carers and practitioners' ethnicity is not important
- supporting and encouraging education and not assuming that dual heritage individuals are stupid
- overcoming preconceptions that this group experiences identity crises
- supporting lone parents from this group and increasing awareness of looked-after, dual heritage children and young people.

6.7.4 Summary

Some of the issues raised by looked-after, dual heritage individuals were not dissimilar to those from other looked-after groups, such as the need to be listened to

and involved in decision making. Nonetheless, a range of issues affected looked-after, dual heritage young people, for example, ethnic matching for placements. Racism in schools and the low expectations of professionals were the main contributing factors to poor educational attainment by this particular group. Negative and derogatory terms used to describe these dual heritage individuals often leave them with feelings of low self-esteem.

6.8 Conclusion

The findings from the semi-structured interviews and case files have provided an insight into the experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people. Whilst identity was important to them, many felt that being listened to and respected was fundamental. Some believed that professionals formed their opinions (for example, seeing them as deviant before they met them) and failed to see them as people who deserve to be respected and listened to. In effect, they were pigeon-holed simply on the basis of their phenotype. An example of this pigeon-holing is the insistence of placing them in black families solely because of their skin-colour. The reasons that might influence some practitioners to respond to these young people in this manner are likely to vary. As pointed out in the introduction chapter some may be wary of breaching legislation under Section 22 (5) (c) due to the fear of being disciplined either by their organisations or the courts in the event of a crisis. Therefore practitioners are likely to dread taking risks that can draw what they may see as harmful or negative attention to their establishments. Others may be influenced by their failure to move from the mindset of the 1970s and 1980s as noticed in comments made by Anita (Fiona's social worker). Furthermore, some practitioners may fear being labelled racists, while others could be influenced by racism attitudes as disclosed by Francis:

Social workers are not different anyway because some are also racists and they think I should see myself as black.

There are stark differences between how the young people in this study self-define and how others defined them. The findings have been informed by the young people's perspectives and those of their practitioners/carers as well as data from the case files.

This empirical data has helped in deepening our understanding of a little-understood group. Whether or not the overarching aim of the study has been addressed will be discussed in the next chapter. As highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, the stigma attached to looked-after, dual heritage young people is not a new phenomenon and it stems from myths and stereotypes around identity confusion amongst dual heritage individuals. Some people's perceptions may lead members of this group to show signs of bewilderment at times but this should not be mistaken for 'identity crises'. Reports of the pathologisation of the dual heritage identity by professionals and carers have been noted. Many tend to ignore the fact that a range of factors influence and shape people's identities.

Most of the young people interviewed reported experiences of rejection and racism from both white and black people, including family members. All of the young people in the study had white mothers but the majority of them had been placed with non-white carers. The quality of care, and the young people's experiences, differed depending on the geographical context and their carers/practitioners. This study found that the ethnicity of the carers or adoptive parents was irrelevant to the young people concerned. Looked-after, dual heritage young people experience a range of issues in relation to their care. Nonetheless, common themes were found amongst those who were adopted by white, middle-class families as well as those who had non-pathologising practitioners/carers. In general, they performed well academically and had well-paid jobs. However, those with pathologising practitioners/teachers and carers experienced high levels of school exclusions and had no qualifications. They felt ill-equipped to deal with life once they ceased being looked-after and their chances of securing employment were very limited.

Abuse and neglect were identified as the main reasons for members of this group moving into care and this is not unique to dual heritage individuals. Nonetheless, racism and the stigma attached to this group and their families limits opportunities for social support. It was evident that, where families had rejected their white daughters for forming relationships with black men, social services became their 'new families'. This study indicates that racism often contributes to depression and mental illness, resulting in parenting problems. Racist attitudes from teachers and the police were reported by carers and the young people alike. In common with all looked-after

people, these young people cited a willingness to listen, respect and consistency of practitioners as high in their list of requirements from service providers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7 Discussions of the findings

Introduction

This chapter focuses on themes that emerged from this group's experiences, perspectives from practitioners/carers and some of the case files. Identity crisis, racism and cultural factors emerged as the three main 'limiting' assumptions behind placing dual heritage children and young people with black families. Since the prevailing view is that dual heritage individuals experience identity crises, practitioners believe that this can be addressed if they identify as black. This creates a vicious circle that fails to advance the debate and remains locked in a particular discourse. It was important that the young people in my study were able to articulate their experiences of being looked-after and the implications for their lives. The aim was to move away from pre-existing assumptions that their needs can be best met by placing them with black families who can equip them to deal with racism.

It is important to consider the implications of the gap between how professionals and dual heritage young people perceive the dual heritage identity since this is likely to affect service provision. As pointed out earlier, this group is seen as black, and assumptions are made that their needs can be met in the same way as those of black service users. This chapter explores the complexity and diversity of looked-after, dual heritage individuals in the light of their accounts. This is intended to address the main research question — 'What are the care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people' in Britain? The organisation of the chapter is based on aims of the study and the findings:

Section one discusses the young people concerned and their identity.

Section two explores how other people identify them.

Section three looks at the services offered to this group and their views.

Section four discusses how existing services can be improved.

Section five explores the reasons why dual heritage young people become looked-after away from their birth families.

Section six analyses the young people's perceptions of racism and its impact on their lives.

Section seven looks at the important messages participants wish to convey to professionals and policymakers.

Section eight offers conclusion to this chapter.

7.1 The young people and their identity

This study has confirmed that these young people's experiences are all unique and they are not different from any other teenagers, who tend to experiment with various identities (Okitikpi, 2005). As the previous chapter highlighted, people in this group do not have a single term with which to describe themselves. The majority of them were comfortable with their dual heritage identity. This reflects the findings reported by earlier authors (Wilson, 1987; Root, 1996; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Okitikpi, 2005; Goodyer and Okitikpi, 2007). Therefore, professionals who ask these young people to identify as black or assume that identity work will help address their needs ought to re-consider their standpoint. A more complex and dynamic understanding of ethnicity is required (Fook, 2001). In addition to their unique experiences, dual heritage individuals embrace non-black identities (Spencer, 1997). Dual heritage individuals are capable of self-identifying and they must retain this right (Okitikpi, 2005).

It is important for those working with this group to reflect on their practices to take account of the complexity of their identities. Many young people described shifting perceptions of identities. For example, at the age of three to five, some young people involved in my study believed that being white was 'cool' but such thoughts were later abandoned. These identities were often influenced by group loyalties at that time. This finding is supported by Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002:116) who believe that "group reference" plays an important role in the ways individuals decide to self-identify. The perspective that this group's psychological well-being can only be assured if they embrace black culture (Banks, 1992; Maxime, 1993; Goldstein, 1999)

has lost currency. This is an unsophisticated way of describing the multilayered challenges faced by this group. None of the young people involved in this study had psychological problems because they embraced both their black and white heritage. Those who insist that dual heritage individuals identify as black are, in effect no different from proponents of 'the one-drop rule'. In the USA, the one-drop rule was designed "to keep races separate and distinct" (Shih and Sanchez, 2009:5). So, if professionals endorse these perspectives, are they being racist or politically correct and where does the interest of this group fit in?

How some young people described themselves depended on how they had been socialised. Psychoanalytic theories of the development of identity, such as those formulated by Freud and Erikson, suggest that the formation of identity begins in infancy and the influence of the primary carer is vital (cited in Katz, 2001). In my study, for example, Safi was brought up believing that she was white, although she was aware of differences in phenotype between her and other white family members. Although Safi described herself as 'mixed ethnic' her practitioners stated that she always maintained her white status despite her dual heritage origins. Would Safi have expressed feelings of pride in her dual heritage if I, as the researcher, had been white? Safi had been denied knowledge of the true identity of her birth father for a long time. Safi's mother had insisted that her real father was the step-father who entered their lives when she was two years old. Consequently, Safi internalised her identity:

I was adamant that I was white British because that's the way that I was brought up...everyone in my family was white...so I was white British but now I know that I am mixed ethnic...

This quotation confirms the view that "socialisation..." (Rockquemore and Brunzman, 2002:116) may influence how people identify. This is because stories told to children can be used "to develop a sense of 'self'..." (Ali, 2003:95). A number of reasons could explain why some parents and extended family members would want their dual heritage children to identify as white. Phenotypical stereotypes and stigma may contribute to how these families feel. Living in primarily white communities may mean that some families fear their white neighbours' reaction due to the stigma

attached to those who 'mix' with black people. Hence, these families may seek to protect their dual heritage children by socialising them in white culture.

Although Safi came across as confident and articulate, the way she presented herself in relation to her identity (i.e. presentation of different identities to different people) led me to wonder whether or not it was a performance. Since some scholars have suggested that dual heritage people detest their identity (Maxime, 1993), the perspectives of both Safi's social worker and personal adviser were sought to identify whether or not she was denying her black heritage. Both practitioners confirmed that Safi was comfortable with her identity.

Furthermore, reference to dual heritage features was interesting because some young people had their curly hair straightened and there was no visible evidence that they were from dual heritage backgrounds. Perhaps they were passing for white because of the widely documented evidence (Cose, 1997; hooks, 1999; Alvarez, 1998; Song, 2003). It is critical that 'passing for white' is not seen as a denial of dual heritage. The process is often carried out, particularly in the USA, to gain access to some jobs or privileges that are not otherwise accessible to non-whites (Kimmel, 2003). In cases where the young people had been socialised as white, issues surrounding racism had not been explored by them or their practitioners.

7.1.1 Summary

Looked-after, dual heritage young people understand and experience their identities in different ways, but this is not dissimilar from the ways in which other teenagers experiment with different identities. Seeing this group as black ignores their white heritage as well as the complexity and multilayered challenges faced by dual heritage individuals in a racist society. The young people interviewed have demonstrated that they are able to self-identify and they need the autonomy to achieve this. Although various factors play a role in forming individuals' identities, people's identities are often determined by those around them and how they have been socialised. Some may have gone through the process of 'passing for white', but this is not unusual in a society where 'whiteness' is privileged.

7.2 How others identify them

Terms often have to be used to refer to people from different groups. Problems only arise when used to define those perceived as different result in “stigmatization, stereotyping and exclusion...” (Modood, 2007:37). Finding common terms that are acceptable to all, can be problematic —as in the use of the term ‘dual heritage’, which was chosen for this thesis. The term was chosen as a working reference for this study rather than a definitive description. Debates about its use among some carers highlighted the challenging nature of the terms used to describe this group. The majority of the young people interviewed were comfortable with the term because it seems to encompass the best of both worlds. However, some carers argued that the term dual heritage is used when the children have one white and one black parent, thus transforming the debate into a ‘skin colour’ issue. Mimi’s adoptive father argued:

An awful lot of decisions are not down to dual heritage at all - they’re down to skin colour and so it’s a bit euphemistic in the way that it’s used in social work practice. People talk about dual heritage children if one of their parents is non-white, but they wouldn’t talk about dual heritage children if one of their parents was Russian.

This group is unmistakably pigeon-holed on the basis of their skin colour. Although individuals have multiple heritages and identity is fluid, this point seem to be forgotten when it comes to dual heritage individuals. Negative racialisation can be directed at both black and white people in interracial relationships. Despite the fact that, in Britain, the number of people in interracial marriages is increasing, some individuals in these relationships and their children continue to encounter physical or verbal abuse. Who gives society the right to abuse people simply because of the partners they choose? If there are any concerns, they should purely involve people in those relationships and not any one else. Furthermore, what is the fascination around people’s skin colour? Although this group is now officially classified as ‘mixed race,’ some people still refer to them as black. Possibly this is done to ensure that this group is denied their white heritage. As highlighted earlier, dual heritage people are not against use of the term ‘black’ and some tend to use it for political reasons.

Nonetheless, dual heritage people resent it when the term is imposed on them as in the following example:

- Rosie:** ...At school, the teachers and other students used to call me black. My adoptive parents had insisted that my ethnicity should be recorded as 'mixed parentage' and they could not understand why the teachers were referring to me as black.
- Vicky:** Was the black identity imposed on you by other pupils and teachers?
- Rosie:** Yes and while there is the category 'mixed race'...I suppose if one is not white then he/she is black.
- Vicky:** Does that infuriate you?
- Rosie:** Yes and no. I am comfortable and proud of my identity so it does not bother me. But I feel that it is important for people to have the freedom to self-identify...
- Vicky:** Okay
- Rosie:** I think that some practitioners and society still believe that the 'label' black gives us a positive racial identity.
- Vicky:** And you?
- Rosie:** Definitely not and, the sooner practitioners move away from doing what they call identity work with people like us the better.
- Vicky:** Aha
- Rosie:** I suppose this is easier than finding the cause of why we come in care in the first place. They do not undertake identity work with children who have two black or two white parents so I do not see why they should think of doing this with us...

Dual heritage individuals are clearly a diverse group (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Rockquermore and Brunnsma, 2002) that cuts across among other cultures, language and backgrounds, but does not make it a separate ethnic group. Self identification is taken for granted by the majority of people except dual heritage individuals. Their origins are sometimes questioned simply because they do not look the same as those

asking those questions. Given the fact that young people's experiences often play a role in influencing their life chances, it is crucial that service providers and carers refrain from pathologising the dual heritage identity.

7.2.1 Pathologising dual heritage identity

It is a great concern that some practitioners/professionals believe that problems faced by this group stem from their skin tone. Alienation is bad enough but the situation is made worse when young people are told by professionals that their problems stem from their colour. Young people may cope with playground teasing and name calling but, when such behaviour comes from teachers or others in authority, the effect is worse. Whilst those in the looked-after population drop-out rate from school than others, the negative perceptions of teachers regarding dual heritage children and young people can exacerbate this problem, as in Josie's case:

The teachers in my school were all racists to a certain extent. They saw mixed-race kids as stupid and some of them say that is what they expected from us lot because if we did not know who we were, they did not see how we could learn... part way through year nine(following a series of exclusions), I walked out and just didn't go back (Josie).

Although it is unsurprising that these young people often perform poorly in educational terms, it is likely that these issues will be attributed to identity problems. Factors that may have contributed to Josie dropping out of school may not even be mentioned. Nevertheless, it is likely that his lack of success will be merely attributed to 'identity confusion'.

Perhaps one cannot help but empathise with teachers who are sometimes faced with young people displaying disruptive and challenging behaviour. However, it is important that the anti-social behaviour of any dual heritage young people is not mistaken for identity crises. Some of the young people displaying this behaviour require specialist support. Additional resources would prove more helpful than simply pathologising their identities and using this as an excuse for disruptive behaviour. For instance, Joachim, who was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

(ADHD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) had several placements and school exclusions. These disorders are said to:

Interfere with the learning process because they reduce the child's ability to pay attention...ADD and ADHD are difficult to diagnose because they affect all areas of a child's family life: family, school, friendships, team sports and work...Because ADD or ADHD are so hard to diagnose, you may be confused by your child's social behaviour. A teacher may not investigate difficult or disruptive behaviour because he/she cannot see the underlying attention problems. Two ways your child may try to mask his/her difficulty in the classroom or in a peer group are by:

- *becoming the 'class clown' or the 'class bully', or*
- *avoiding or refusing to become involved in activities where he/she is unsure of success.*

(Canadian Mental Health Association; undated).

Although it is unclear whether people grow out of ADD and ADHD, the view is that this behaviour can be overcome with appropriate support.

Initially Joachim had been labelled as experiencing problems with his identity because he was brought up in a predominantly rural, white community. The first assessment had concluded that identity work would resolve his disruptive behaviour because it was based on professionals' perspectives. Joachim's other underlying issues were not diagnosed until he saw his fourth practitioner who believed in assessment of needs based on different ways of problematising the situation (Fook, 2007). This was possible because the practitioner carried out the assessment of his needs "from multidisciplinary perspectives" (Fook 2007:119).

It is strange that professionals often inform members of this group that their problems stem from the failure to accept that they are black. If they can be black, why can they not be white? The implication is that dual heritage individuals are innately

problematic regardless of any external or structural inequalities in the society in which they live, and that their problems can be fixed through identity work. This ignores the reason why this group become looked-after away from their birth families in the first place. Setting aside racism, the reasons why dual heritage children and young people become looked-after away from their birth families are not that different from other looked-after groups. This means that, when policies are made, policymakers must move away from the notion that looked-after, dual heritage young people are a homogeneous group and their main problem is identity confusion or identity imbalance. Failure to move away from this stance may result in:

...static definition of problems and identities of people experiencing them, which attributes 'blame' to characteristics of these groups, rather than the contexts which may have created them (Fook, 2007:187 - 118)

As explained elsewhere, challenges faced by this group are exacerbated by the racial or ethnic stereotypes surrounding their identities. This can be harmful, particularly when these preconceptions come from professionals. For example, Lawrence talked about her dual heritage daughter who has bipolar disorder and she described a visit to a psychiatrist in 2005. According to Lawrence, the psychiatrist told her daughter that:

...the only reasons [sic] she was mentally ill was that she had an identity problem about her ethnicity and about the fact that she was gay (she had told him she lived with her woman partner). He said that, if she would decide which colour she was and cease to think of herself as gay and get herself a boyfriend, she would no longer be ill or in need of medication (Lawrence, 2008:2).

This individual was pilloried on two counts. Possibly if she had been white or even black, the psychiatrist may not have made reference to her ethnicity. The inference was that her ethnicity has played a role in her choice of a partner. The psychiatrist viewed the dual heritage identity primarily from the perspective of 'race'. His behaviour could be described as "habitual discriminatory actions" (Feagin, 2006:272), which are often directed at groups that are socially constructed as inferior. It is fundamental to try and close the gap between how practitioners and this group

perceive identity. Pathologising dual heritage identity does not provide a suitable way forward. The pathologisation of the dual heritage identity has impacted negatively on the lives of the majority of the young people in this study because approval by others plays a part in how we see ourselves (Rutter, 1990).

7.2.2 Seeing beyond the dual heritage identity

In cases where practitioners saw beyond 'race' identity, care experiences were positive. Instead of seeing this group's dual heritage identity as a problem it was seen in a positive light in these cases. The stories told by these practitioners indicated that they believed that the dual heritage identity was an advantage as it provided entry into the worlds of both black and white people:

It is usually a positive experience for them... they get the better of each side as well...they get the best of both worlds... they are usually proud...of who they are (Joachim's social worker).

Intriguingly, all of the young people who reported positive care experiences had carers and practitioners whose views were similar to those expressed above. These young people felt that they were respected and workers did not talk over them. In turn, the young people concerned respected their practitioners and carers, thus, creating mutual respect. The quality of relationships between the young people and those who worked with them determined the relative success or failure of placements. The relationships that produced the best placements were those built on trust and honesty by practitioners who were non-pathologising. They encouraged the young people to discuss issues of concern (Okitikpi and Aymer, 2008), thus, promoting a sense of being valued and respected, as highlighted below:

Personally I think that the best resources can be found in the young people themselves...It means listening to them more and asking them to tell us what they think we can do to improve what is in place. I always try to be there for my young people and I find being honest with them by telling them what I can do and not do is helpful. I try not to promise them something I cannot deliver and they respect that (Amina's social worker).

Recognition of the self-determination of looked-after, dual heritage people is important if they are to achieve their full potential.

7.2.3 Summary

Although there is no definitive term to describe dual heritage individuals, the terms often used to define them are negative. These terms are often based on stereotypes. Seeing this group as black is a way of denying them their white heritage. This thesis questions the practice of some professionals who pathologise the dual heritage identity. For instance, perceiving these young people as troublesome or incompetent merely on the basis of their skin colour undermines their capability from early childhood on wards. It is important that those involved in the lives of this group strive to see beyond the dual heritage identity.

7.3 Services offered and what looked-after, dual heritage young people thought of such services

7.3.1 Experiences that related to being looked-after

The young people involved in this study felt that successful placements required carers to be trained and supported. This has been identified as an important contributing factor to successful foster placements (Sinclair, 2005). Foster family care in Britain is often considered as a temporary measure in assisting families at times of crisis or to meet a specific need. Nonetheless, some young people's needs for permanent placements were met by their foster carers. Some had experienced abuse from their birth parents and had no extended families or relatives to offer support. The joy of finding stability in loving foster placements is illustrated by Jude:

I had very positive care experiences and I would not have changed my foster carers for anything. I truly think that they had the desire to give someone a stable home and my brother and I were fortunate to be fostered by them. I have got nothing but praise for them - I think it has also been good because their children (who are older) have also been fantastic. When mum and dad had to go away, we did not end up in a different foster home since it was okay for us to be left with the grown-up boys...

Jude's foster carers attributed the success of the placement to a joint effort. They commented on how well Jude had performed academically and, although racism made her life difficult at secondary school, she was determined to turn things around. Clearly, both parties shared mutual respect, which is likely to have contributed to the success of the placement.

Sometimes the expectations of foster carers differed from those of the young people and successful negotiations of these issues depended on practitioners' commitment. For instance, some young people were reported to put 100 percent effort into their education, but foster carers expected them to balance these demands with helping out around the house. This often caused conflicts between the young people and their foster carers. Amina's social worker shared this view:

...Amina wanted to focus on her studies. So I really begged the foster carer to make that commitment towards Amina and not put pressure on her to do household chores or cooking...I helped both the foster carer and Amina to maintain the placement because it is about taking the view of a good 'corporate parent'. What would you do if that was your own child, if your own child was...really doing well with education? Would you not be doing the cooking, washing, the cleaning...so they could actually spend their time studying... 150 percent of her time...that is what Amina was doing.

During the interview, this practitioner had pointed out that, although she did not monitor Amina's attendance with college, she kept a check on her overall progress. When she realised how well Amina was performing at school, she vowed to do everything within her power to support her. Amina's determination to succeed educationally was echoed by others who ensured that being looked-after was not a barrier to educational achievement. Certainly in most cases where the expectations of carers and the young people differ, placements can be jeopardised without the intervention of practitioners. Amina and others support the view that some looked-after young people are keen to enhance their life chances (Lees,202) and, with appropriate support, the right support they are able to achieve the same level of success as any other group (Chase et al, 2006).

Equally, some young people have performed extremely well irrespective of being fostered or adopted by white families in primarily white communities. Some of those who reported high educational attainment had suffered many problems prior to becoming looked-after. In certain cases, a supportive care environment (coupled with the social class and economic status of carers) helped to shape these young people's lives as Adam disclosed:

I went to Furlongs, which was OK...coz I'd done a lot of reading and stuff at home, I was a little bit ahead of the other children so I tended to just mess around really. My best friend Tim went to the same school and ...was if you were naughty you'd stand in the corner and play with the rabbit so I and Tim used to do that most of the day! Um, so yeah, I went there for a couple of years and then my parents said, 'you're not really getting anything out of this... you need to go to a different school' and so that was that ... I went to a private school when I was seven...

Adam has a degree and holds a very good job but undoubtedly his adoptive parents' SES played a major role in his success. Class emerged as an influencing factor in enhancing the life chances of some young people who would have otherwise left school without any qualifications. This is an indication that poor educational attainment is in certain cases, caused by lack of support rather than the characteristics of looked-after, dual heritage young people in general.

This study highlights the frustration that these young people face in terms of the perceptions of others, as Rosie illustrates:

You see I get very angry when I hear that dual heritage children and young people in care or leaving care are educational underachievers because people forget that all children and young people need help and support. If the teachers tell you that you are stupid, and they put you down...you may underachieve. But if, you have the determination to do well and are supported, then you stand a good chance of achieving.

Rosie's view illustrate how much of what has been written about this group is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Educational underachievement may be due to a lack of support and encouragement from teachers and parents. This can include a lack of participation in parents' evenings or low SES. I am not suggesting that young people from low SES families do not perform well educationally but sometimes they may have to leave education at the age of sixteen in order to support the family or themselves. Others may have grown up in a household where the idea of education is alien to them. There is a difference between children whose families show an interest in their education and encourage them to study and those left to their own devices.

Some young people gave examples of practitioners allocated to them simply based on ethnicity and sometimes these relationships did not work out. The young people interviewed felt that the level of support from their social workers was completely unrelated to their ethnic match. Often the practitioners described as caring were the ones who supported the young people in times of turmoil and tried to understand them. Joachim's social worker believes that:

...you have to see what is beyond that difficult behaviour, and you have to go that extra mile with them...to be prepared to ... tell them, 'look, ok, I am taking that on board. You are angry, frustrated, you feel like we are not listening to you, ok, I know you are angry, you are not happy to be in care, you are not happy to be here, let's move on now, let's get to the next point, how can I help you to get from "a" to "b", just tell me? Some young people are not quite assertive, not as assertive as I would like them to be, but that is ok, I give them a chance to settle...

The point made by Joachim's social worker is a valid one, but all the social workers who participated in this study were overwhelmed with heavy case loads and sometimes they found it difficult to give the young people the time they deserved. Some workers agreed that, in an ideal world, the young people should be given more time, but this is not always possible. Others believe that the majority of looked-after young people need tender loving care, a clean environment, stability and respect.

Many of the young people interviewed were troubled and unhappy prior to becoming looked-after but, at the time of the interview, they appeared happy and content. The young people attributed these achievements to support from social workers who were always willing to help despite heavy demand on resources. For instance, Safi's social worker stressed:

... I don't live in her pocket but I always say to her... 'you know, call if you want me. I'll probably see you in a fortnight but ring me if you want me before', which she does if she needs to. And now the phone calls have got less so, to me, she is coping a lot better because she's not ringing me all the time...

In common to Joachim's and Amina's social worker, Safi's social worker and personal adviser ensured that they offered her support regardless of heavy case loads. Support and encouragement play an important role in determining the life chances of all looked-after young people (Chase et al., 2006) and success stories were illustrated in the previous chapter.

Although some young people felt that their experiences would have been very different if they remained with their birth families, others wished social services had intervened sooner. One young person complained that he was left in the hands of his abusive mother and her boyfriend for what he saw as a life time of neglect and abuse:

...I could have been dead and these social services wouldn't have known about it, you know, they wouldn't have cared. You know...they knew about it for three years...and they just...let it carry on (Thomas).

Thomas's case illustrates the danger of keeping families together in the misguided belief that it is in the best interests of children and families. The mother may have been torn between loyalty to her son or to her boyfriend. Clearly what this young person needed was a safe environment — which his mother had failed to provide.

7.3.2 Safe environment

In addition to being listened to and respected, a safe and stable environment was very high in the list of the young people's priorities. Some young people who had never

experienced any sense of safety or stability were doubtful of fitting in amongst such surroundings initially. However, once they got used to their new families, they were able to adjust. Most of these young people had never received any compliments from their birth parents and some had received abuse in foster care. Having left these environments, boundaries, trust and positive feedback were seen by most of the young people as important factors in successful placements:

When we lived with my mother, school work was not good and we missed a lot of school anyway but that changed when we went into foster care. It was hard to settle at first and it took a while and our foster carers used to encourage us and always pointed out the positive things (Jude).

She has done surprisingly well, you know. When we first fostered them, there were problems because of the way their mother had abused them. It took a lot to boost their confidence and for them to trust adults (foster carer for Jude and her brother).

These quotes show that it is sometimes difficult for those escaping abuse and neglect to settle in safe environments. Nonetheless, placements with carers play a significant role in restoring young people's confidence. How young people are treated and their economic and social position determines whether or not they develop ways of coping in adulthood (Steinmetz, 1999; Graham, 2003). Undoubtedly, Jude and her brother had reached a stage where they did not trust anyone, which is unsurprising given their experiences with their birth parents. They neither were unsure how to act or behave since they had been mistreated and had neither felt safe nor received any guidance or boundaries from their birth parents. Those who struggle with parenting need external intervention and support services otherwise result could be detrimental to the young people and possibly society as a whole.

Young people over the age of fifteen may fail to reach their full potential because of low-self esteem caused by inconsistent parenting (Cleaver et al., 1999) and insecurity. Boundary setting and a sense of direction is important for all children and young people's well-being. This was supported by most of the young people interviewed

who believed that the establishment of boundaries indicated that someone cared. Sue reported:

...It is good to feel safe and to have someone who is interested in what I am doing. My mother was always drunk or stoned and had no time for us children. I see myself as very privileged to be in this situation because I know that a lot of other young people...in care may not have been this privileged, and the foster carers might not have treated them as I have been treated. I think being looked-after has definitely benefited me...

Specific parenting styles can influence social and cognitive development in young people (Bradley et al., 1994). Although support from parents who value education and are economically well off can increase young people's life chances, it is likely that their relationship with their children has greater importance than their status. When talking about parents' involvement, it is important that assumptions and generalisations are not made since this disregards the power of peer groups (Heatherington and Parke, 1999) and individuals' self-determination, including the influence of wider society. Young people may be brought up in exactly the same manner and still have different values.

Moreover, since the needs of parents can affect parenting capacity and children's development, (Howarth, 2003; Selwyn et al., 2005; Department for Education and Skills, 2006), parents must be properly assessed and, where necessary, offered support as early as possible. When assessing parents of dual heritage individuals who may face hostility from both sides (Banks, 1995; Olumide, 2002; Okitikpi, 2005; Rockquemoore et al., 2009), it must be appreciated that their ability to cope may be reduced. The majority of the young people interviewed told stories of abandonment and a desire to belong. They felt that a safe, happy home was very important to them regardless of their carer's ethnicity.

Although some young people told stories of becoming looked-after following abuse from their birth parents, some experienced further abuse at the hands of their foster carers, as Musa disclosed:

*...again the social services are very f***ed up because they knew about me and my brother getting abused by our foster carer for three years before they did anything.*

Musa's remark suggests that the importance of regular checks and monitoring once these young people are in placements which cannot be overemphasised. In this way further abuse and neglect can be avoided. Failure to monitor placements may mean that the young people could be subjected to the very same suffering they were meant to be sheltered from.

7.3.3 Experiences related to being fostered/adopted by white families

The previous section has explored the importance attached to being in a stable, safe environment. This raises questions around who has the authority to choose where looked-after, dual heritage young people are placed. People who intervene in the lives of this group need to move away from 'race' identity and determine what can be done to meet the needs of this group. Their needs cannot be met by focusing primarily on skin colour without considering all the factors that have made it impossible for these individuals to live with their birth families. Ideally, it would be beneficial if children and young people could be brought up by parents who share the same physical traits, but often these families are not available (Zeitlin, 2003). The assumption that placing these young people with black families will help them when they encounter racism needs to be reconsidered because it is not necessarily true. Furthermore, it is unlikely that these people are experts in dealing with issues of racism and discrimination merely because they are black. Black families who have been racially abused may feel very negative towards white people — hence it is worth considering what they can offer dual heritage young people as foster/adoptive parents. Moreover, young people use various strategies to manage racism (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002).

Some young people who had experienced several placement disruptions were adamant that the determining factor in the relative success of these placements was carers' attitudes and not their ethnicity. These views were confirmed by some practitioners. In many cases, young people frequently moved around different residential homes and the reasons for this varied. Concerns have been expressed about the effects of these disruptions on the lives of young people (Hayden, 2005). If

placements are to be successful, the voices of this group must be heard and the gap between how professionals and dual heritage young people perceive identity should be reassessed.

Some of the young people interviewed talked of their parents' alienation from their own family because they had formed relationships with people viewed as undesirables. Although this can happen in families that share the same physical and cultural traits, it is particularly problematic for people in interracial relationships. Family members, and even society at large, look down on people who cross the colour line. Olumide reminds us that:

...mixed race is a contested site and such notions of who is entitled to mix with who is a part of this. So too, in the context of 'looked-after' children, is the question of who is best placed to look after the mixed-race child (2005:138).

The Children Act 1989 stipulates that the well-being of the child is paramount. Despite this, the work of placing dual heritage young people is not straightforward. Practitioners hold different views in terms of finding suitable placements for dual heritage young people. Some feel that the preferred option is a mixed-race family followed by a black family and a white family should only be considered as a last resort. As stated earlier, views on placing this group with white families are divided since many believe that these families cannot equip them to deal with racism. However, the notion that dual heritage individuals can simply be absorbed in the black culture is challenged (Okitikpi, 1999). Roger said:

Sometimes I wonder why people make such a thing about whether the foster/adoptive parents are black or white. My father left when I was very young. I lived with my white mother who was abusive, but I think she was struggling with bringing up three children on her own, although that did not give her the right to abuse and neglect us. I have never met anyone from the black side of my family and, if they cared at all, they would have looked us up. So why should I worry about people who have not worried about me? The white people who have looked-after me have done a very good job of parenting.

Parents have a crucial role to play in promoting children's developmental needs (Department of Health et al., 2000) regardless of their ethnic origin. Additionally, parents of dual heritage children have an extra responsibility to teach their children not to use racism as a reason for failure (Hill, 2001). Conversely, it is unhelpful for white mothers who are struggling to cope to be informed that they are unable to address the needs of their dual heritage children adequately (Ifekwunigwe, 1999). Such views fail to give credit to some of these mothers who have successfully brought up their children and challenged racist behaviour towards them vehemently. Evidence shows that the majority of dual heritage children live with their lone white mothers (Goodyer and Okitikpi, 2007). Furthermore, most of those in the public care system had lived with their lone, white mothers prior to becoming looked-after (Barn, 1999). If so, why is it a problem to place them with white families? Is the concept of family crucial to this group or to policymakers? The key is not what policymakers perceive as family but the young people's perception of family.

While all the young people placed with white families reported positive experiences, some felt pressurised to constantly explain that they were adopted because they looked different from their parents. The white families recalled stories of people asking how their adopted dual heritage children could be theirs when they were a different colour. Mimi shared her experiences on this issue:

...either people assume that my mum's had an affair, which isn't very nice, or they assume that we're from her first marriage, so basically they either assume that my dad's not my dad, and that's quite hurtful...or they assume that...they never assume it the other way round actually. No one's ever said to me 'are you your dad's daughter?' They always assume it that way round. And if I'd been racially taunted or something it would have been nice for somebody...who'd gone through the same thing to have said, 'yeah that happened to me, don't worry'. I mean my parents were really good about it and they were always outraged and also taught us really well how to handle it if people did say nasty things.

The experiences of being questioned or challenged on their identity were reported in most of the young people's cases. All of the young people who were placed in white

families explained that their parents were very supportive and challenged people who were racially abusive to them. Nonetheless, it has been suggested that, although young people adopted by white families may benefit materially and feel loved, they miss out on cultural issues connected with their 'race' such as regional cuisine (Mallows, 2003; Banks, 2003b). Interestingly, the question of food relating to their black heritage was not mentioned by any of the young people placed with white families. Considering dual heritage children and young people as black for the purpose of placement decisions may neglect their cultural needs. As pointed out earlier, in a society where a dual heritage individual is often bombarded with questions related to their ethnicity or what mixes they are, it is not unusual for these people to question their origins. Undoubtedly, contact with birth families is desirable for young people to have a sense of belonging unless there is cause to believe that it may be detrimental to their well-being. It is worth noting that only one of the sixteen young people interviewed had expressed the desire to contact her birth parents.

7.3.4 Dispersing assumptions based on skin colour

The problematic question of 'the mixed-race child' is exacerbated by some practitioners' failure to see beyond skin colour or their fear of deviating from the legislation laid down in the Children Act 1989. The problems that can arise from practitioners' interpretation of the Children Act 1989 Section 22(5) (c) could have implications for the placements offered or chosen for this group. Some carers did not see the possible impact that paying attention to birth parents' religion could have on babies or young children adopted in new families. Jude's foster parents stated:

The colour thing is still there, even though the adoption of the Children Act is meant to be less prescriptive, it is still necessary for social workers to be mindful of the child's racial, cultural and religious background in placing them... (However), I don't think a two year old is old enough to have a religion ... um ...what sense does it make to want to pay attention to what religion the birth parents had? What possible impact does that have on a child in a new family?

Practitioners' judgement of placements is crucial since placement disruptions depended on the nature of the young people's challenging behaviour and the age they

became looked-after. Evidence suggests that the younger the placement takes place, the higher the chances of success (Thoburn et al., 2000; Zeitlin, 2003). This was the case in young people who had been fostered or adopted at a younger age compared with those who were placed in their teenage years. Furthermore, children are more likely to bond with new families and form secure attachment at an earlier age. Evidence suggests that, if children are securely attached as infants, they are more likely to have positive feelings of self-worth, show intellectual curiosity and form good relationships with others (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1980; Heatherington and Parke, 1999).

Therefore, attempts to find placements that match children's ethnicity should not be prolonged. Furthermore, considering the differences that can exist between members of the same ethnic group or families, placing too much emphasis on the racial identity or ethnicity of carers may not always be in the best interest of the child as was the case of a little girl (Asha). Before adopting Mimi her adoptive parents had wanted to adopt Asha, but at the time they were considered unsuitable because Asha was Asian. As a result, Asha was left in a children's home whilst workers searched for placements that reflected her ethnicity.

Some of the young people interviewed had been left in children's homes or moved several times whilst waiting for the right placement. Consequently, they had either become too old for adoption or had developed behavioural problems that adoptive parents were not prepared to deal with. Mimi and Adam's adoptive mother spoke about Asha and disclosed:

First time round, her social worker said that they wouldn't talk to us at all, but when we were looking for a second child it turned out Asha was still in care...she was now five, she'd been in care from birth, she was now very troubled ...I mean seriously mentally disturbed, she was smearing faeces round the walls ...the social policy of that social services department had done that to her ... you know, that was institutionalised child abuse because we would have taken her but they turned us down just out of political correctness and maybe destroyed that kid's life in the process...

Certainly, emphasis on same 'race' matching took precedence over the child's well-being because if the couple had been allowed to adopt Asha the first time round, perhaps the outcome would have been different. Some practitioners follow the Children Act 1989 in the strictest sense but this creates problems of its own. How does a practitioner actually work out the racial origin and cultural and linguistic background of a looked-after, dual heritage child? Problems faced by those who feel they cannot deviate from the act may be linked to the fact that, dual heritage individuals were defined as black prior to the 2001 UK national census. The category mixed race was included in the 2001 UK national census to describe an emergent, yet heterogeneous group of people. Perhaps until then, placements with black families could have gone unchallenged, or could they? These individuals have one white and one black parent: if black families are considered able to meet their needs, why are white families unable to do so? There may be a need to rethink Section 22(5) (c) of the act, as reflected in the comments made by Mimi and Adam's adoptive father below:

...I would think that the cultural differences of children born to non-white and white parents brought up in the same part of England may be even non-existent...the difference between two white British people, one brought up in the Ukraine and the other brought up in England, could be dramatic. And yet you wouldn't use the term dual heritage to describe them, but in the other case you would and all you're doing is talking about skin colour and that's because it matters to the individual and it matters to society. And why does it matter to the individual? Well mostly because it matters to society. And so it really comes down to prejudice. It seems to me (that) the whole thing grows out of the fact that people are prejudiced about skin colour and I just wish people would get over it.

Evidently these views raise concerns about prejudice based on physical appearance. Some carers felt that it may be easier if birth parents who give up their children voluntarily for adoption specified whether placements should be with white or black families.

7.3.5 *Summary*

The young people involved in this study believed that carers needed to be trained and supported to achieve successful placements. Those who were supported and encouraged by their carers and practitioners had positive care experiences unlike others who had received little support. In some cases, the type of services offered and the young people's self-determination and drive to succeed influenced their achievements. Above all, the young people themselves favoured a safe and stable environment where they were respected as individuals with rights and their skin colour was not an issue. The importance of ongoing monitoring became apparent when some young people found themselves being abused by those who should have provided them with a safe environment. The importance attached to birth families was questioned by some young people. These individuals had benefited from being looked-after away from home and believed that this had improved their opportunities. All of the young people agreed that the ethnicity of their carers or workers was irrelevant, thus challenging the controversy surrounding placements with white families. It is necessary to dispel myths and focus on the best interests of looked-after children and young people.

7.4 **How can these services be improved?**

Despite the fact that service providers understand the importance of participation and engagement, most young people complained that they were rarely involved in any decisions regarding their care. These services can be improved by this group's involvement in these decisions (O'Brian, 2008). This would prove empowering and show that they are trusted to make valuable contribution. It would also be a sign that they are valued and not merely passive receivers of services, — enabling them to take their position in society as equal citizens. Although Cashmore and O'Brien (2001) and Department for Education and Skills (2006) found that the involvement of young people is likely to help monitor the effectiveness intervention strategies, many young people in this group confirmed that this did not happen in their cases. The following extract supports this view:

Vicky:

Since you did not become looked-after until the age of fourteen, were you involved in the decision regarding your placement, for instance the choice of a white or black carer?

Amina: No, I didn't have a choice at all...they found the foster placement and it was in an area that I never knew before and they just put me in there and then left.

In some situations, it is not practical to involve young people in decision making, for example, when individuals may need to move into secure accommodation, secure either for their own safety or the safety of others. Still, it is hoped that any adults acting on their behalf would be consulted. However, the young person in the last quote was articulate and old enough to be involved in that process but she was placed with a black family as it was deemed the right placement to meet her needs.

Placements sometimes failed because young people, who had always lived with their lone, white mothers found themselves in cultures that were alien to them.

Consequently, they experienced several placement disruptions and, in some cases, this affected their education.

The vulnerability of children and young people in the looked-after population is highlighted by the frequency with which they drop out of education (Broad, 1998). Dual heritage children and young people living with their birth parents have a history of poor educational attainment and are disproportionately excluded from schools (Tikly, 2008). Undoubtedly, for those in the looked-after population the situation is more likely to get worse. The study by Barn et al. (2005), which looked at the life experiences of 261 young people from different ethnic groups, suggests that this group experiences severe disruption in placements and they perform badly in terms of education. This was confirmed by Fiona:

I have got no GCSEs as I was always getting moved around from pillar to post and getting detentions or excluded from school. You know, I have had about ten placements in a space of three years. I cannot even remember half of the foster mums I have had.

Fiona's view echoes many of the stories from the young people involved in this study. Services for this group could be greatly improved if the voices of the young people were taken seriously and this may explain why some of the placements do not succeed. My guess is that, if people are respected and taken seriously, negotiations can take place.

Preconceptions that this group's identity may be the problem could discourage negotiations. If stability and safety are important, it is pointless for practitioners to focus on matching these young people with families who resemble them. Clearly, services offered will differ – some will be aimed at young people at risk of significant harm and others aimed at keeping families together (Horwath, 2003). The majority of the young people in this study were in the former category and finding them stable and safe placements would have helped to improve the services on offer. This is far more a more important than issues of 'race' and ethnicity. Mimi shared this view:

Both my parents are white but they tried really hard and they fought really hard for both my brother and I if we reported incidents of racism or discrimination...(they) did a lot of legwork before the adoption was approved and made me feel stable. They talked to people and tried to find out about hair and skin care stuff even before the adoption process was completed. They also joined baby sitting circles and tried to make friends with other people in the village and get tips on parenting...they really threw themselves into the community.

Commitment and the drive to succeed as a parent can greatly improve the quality and services available. Others were of the view that, since there are bad and good parents, it is unhelpful to refuse certain couples a chance to give abandoned children love and care whilst waiting for an 'ideal' parent. Some carers had no experience of working in this domain but their willingness to learn contributed to successful placements, as Jude's foster carers explained:

- Vicky:** When you fostered Jude and Moses, was it your first time working with dual heritage children?
- Martin:** Yes and it was quite traumatic for them at first and we wanted to make sure some stability was brought back in their lives.
- Vicky:** So you did not have any experience of working with this group?
- Freda:** No
- Vicky:** How did you manage?

- Both parents:** We had the experience of bringing up our own children, but we know that is not the same...
- Martin:** We did get support from social services; the two social workers who worked with Jude and Moses were very good at their job indeed. I would say they were very supportive would you agree Freda?
- Freda:** Yes dear.
- Vicky:** How often would you say Jude talks about her life before coming to live with you?
- Martin:** ...Not unless she is prompted to be honest.
- Vicky:** Prompted by who?
- Martin:** In the early days, their social workers tried to see if they could open up.
- Vicky:** How did Jude get on at school?
- Freda:** She has done surprisingly well, you know... When we first fostered them, there were problems because of the way their mother had abused them. It took a lot to boost their confidence and for them to trust adults.
- Martin:** Yes and the headmaster was a very fine man and that helped. Also the social workers spent time with them and used to come here and tell us, if we wanted help, to let them know and they would do their best to see what could be done.

In the majority of cases, positive care experiences have emerged when carers and practitioners have been non-pathologising. Therefore, it is not surprising that the young people in this study thought that existing services could be improved by tackling the pathologisation of the dual heritage identity. Timothy explained:

Well some staff yeah, they provoke you, like, call you jungle bunny or milky bar kid and, if you retaliate, they call the police. I saw one staff push a mixed-race person...some of them just try and get people into trouble and then lie...it would be easier to send you out coz provoking just annoys the people and then they go hyper and start messing things up. This gives them an excuse to get

*them arrested, sending them to prison and saying they have problems...
because they want to be white but they are black...?*

Timothy's comments are echoed by others who believe that, if practitioners are able to reverse this behaviour, there could be remarkable improvement in the existing services.

7.4.1 Summary

This group's experiences are diverse and varied. Therefore, sophisticated combinations of support and assistance tailored to their needs are imperative. Stories about racism, abuse or rejection need to be contextualised. Many stories focused on the young people being confused and tormented by traumatic memories before the intervention of social services. Some young people were fortunate to have workers and carers who explored the causes of their trauma by seeing beyond the dual heritage identity rather than making assumptions.

Clearly, existing services can be improved by involving young people in the decision making process. For example, it is not surprising if a fourteen year old is placed with a family without consultation and then the placement fails. This study has demonstrated that any assumptions that the needs of this group can best be met by black families have lost currency. The complexities of their experiences are probably beyond the comprehension of practitioners and other professionals. Therefore, working in collaboration with the young people is more likely to be fruitful than if practice is based on assumptions alone. Clearly, services can differ depending on the age of the child or whether some young people are being protected from harm to themselves or others. Nonetheless, consultation between service providers and those benefiting from these services is critical.

7.5 Reasons why dual heritage young people become looked-after

Neglect and abuse have emerged as the main contributing factors for dual heritage children and young people moving into care. Most looked-after young people come from a hugely disadvantaged social background (Bebbington and Miles, 1989). Even though the point made by Bebbington and Miles certainly applied in my sample, it is

evident that these young people can achieve the same levels of success as well as any other group with appropriate support and encouragement.

In addition to experiencing loneliness, homelessness and unemployment; looked-after, dual heritage young people lack support and family ties (Ward et al., 2003; Ince, 2003). Thus, in most cases the intervention of social services as a 'corporate parent' is the only alternative.

In some cultures, the extended family system offers support that relieves suffering (Dominelli et al. 2005; Goodyer, 2005). Where this role is performed by social services, the views and personal contributions of parents and young people should be included in the needs assessment and care plan (Department for Education and Skills, 2006). Although some commentators believe that children and young people should be kept within the family unit when seeking placements because this can act as a source of sustenance (Banks, 1992; Department for Education and Skills, 2006), it is important to carefully assess the family in question. Wardle (1999) makes an important point when he suggests that adolescents require input from their parents or primary carers. However, placing children and young people with family members on the basis of familial links alone may lead to negative experiences and may not necessarily be in their best interests.

7.5.1 Parenting capacity

Barn and Mantovani (2006) found that 70 percent of mixed parentage and 67 percent of Caribbean young people who had become mothers were single compared with 41 percent of white mothers and they reported feelings of rejection, low self-worth and depression. Depressed people tend to be self-centred and may be unable to respond to others, including their children (Kochanska, 1991, cited in Hetherington and Parke). The impact of depression on parenting is well-documented (Cleaver et al., 1999) and explains why some children find their way into care (Thoburn et al., 2000).

Economically disadvantaged people are more likely to be stressed, depressed and their energies may be concentrated on survival (Ghate and Hazel, 2002) rather than concentrating on the well-being of their children. Similarly, mentally ill parents are often unable to offer their children and young people guidance and boundaries (Steinmetz, 1999; Cleaver, 2003) because they lack the ability to parent others.

There are also issues around the well-being of the unborn child. For instance, will young mothers with mental illness realise that drinking or taking drugs can be harmful to their unborn children? How can we guarantee that mentally ill parents will not neglect or abuse their children? Perhaps young people living with their birth parents, and with a strong support social network, can be monitored and helped through their pregnancies. However, those who are being, or have been, looked-after may not have these support networks. Furthermore, since some reported being rejected by both white and black relatives, it was not surprising that accounts of poor family and social relationships featured prominently in the stories told by the young people in this study. Other scholars have confirmed this (Alibhai-Brown, 2001; Olumide, 2002). Conversely, some parents can turn their anger and frustration on their children, as Josie highlighted:

When my dad was kicked out by my mum, I made a big mistake of choosing to go with him. His family think that I should identify as black but I refuse to disown my mother's existence. This makes my father angry and he accuses me of all sorts...he beat the crap out of me one day and I went into school the next day, the teachers noticed, and ... I tried to cover it up by saying I dropped down the stairs, blah, blah, blah, but they didn't believe me. Social services got involved from that point and I have been in care since.

Josie explained that normally his unemployed father was drunk or 'off his face on cannabis'. Allegedly, whenever he was sober Josie's father beat up his son as a form of disciplining him. Parents on low income are reported to be more authoritarian as they see this as a way of protecting their children from unfriendly neighbourhoods (Martini et al., 2004) and this could have contributed to the way Josie's father behaved towards him. Martini et al. may have a point, but the economic status of Josie's father may not be the driving force behind his abusive behaviour.

Undoubtedly, Josie's refusal to conform to his family's demands contributed to his father's anger – although his behaviour was completely unacceptable.

Although the category 'mixed' (see table 7.1 overleaf) does not indicate the numbers who are of dual heritage, it is evident that low income is not a major factor in young people becoming 'looked-after'. However, abuse and neglect are key factors. It is

therefore important that policymakers, and those working with them, strive to establish the cause. Further research is therefore needed to ascertain cause and effect.

Reason	Ethnic Origin				
	White %	Mixed %	Asian %	Black %	Other %
Abuse or neglect	45%	48%	47%	31%	34%
Disability	3%	1%	4%	2%	1%
Parental illness/disability	9%	9%	10%	9%	8%
Family in acute stress	13%	13%	4%	8%	5%
Family dysfunction	15%	13%	10%	12%	7%
Unacceptable behaviour	8%	6%	3%	8%	3%
Low income	<1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Absent parenting	6%	8%	22%	31%	42%
<i>Totals</i>	99%	99%	100%	102%	100%

Source: Selwyn et al. (2004:31) - Adopted from DH (2003a) Children Looked After in England: Year Ending 31 March 2002

Note: Percentages do not always sum to 100 percent.

All children need support and guidance if they are to develop to their full potential. Those at risk through abuse or neglect, bullying, poor parenting, family breakdown or mental illness need support from those who can look after their interests, particularly when family members are unable to fulfil that role.

Other key reasons given for this group moving into care were linked to abuse from their mothers' white partners. Relationships vary but step relationships can be particularly difficult if the newcomer is seen as a threat or is resented by the children for taking the place of the absent parent. This can be traumatic for all concerned. Furthermore, children may feel as though their worlds have been turned upside down when their parents separate and this can have negative effects on them, depending on how they are treated. Joachim illustrated this beautifully by stating:

...my mum got this new boyfriend. We got on for a while and then I was just always, bashed...and going mad so...was out of school and things.

Evidence suggests that absent fathers can have a negative impact on young males and some young people may display anti-social behaviour in these cases (Sewell 2004). Consequently, these young people may be excluded from schools and other social networks. The consequences of this exclusion are well documented (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003).

7.5.2 Summary

Most children and young people who become looked-after away from their birth families come from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, abuse and neglect have been identified as the main reason why children and young people become looked-after away from home. In some cases, this may be linked to poverty, which can result in parents becoming depressed and detached from the lives of their children. Furthermore, abuse from their birth mothers' white partners can result in the intervention of social services.

7.6 Racism

Many children and young people have protective influences from home, schools, or their community. However those in the looked-after population, particularly looked-after, dual heritage young people, may be robbed of these influences due to racism and discrimination. This was confirmed by the stories told by some young people who reported that racism was endemic in their schools and some teachers appeared to condone these incidents. Some teachers ignored this group because they perceived them as thick, stupid, or even deviant and they believed that they also had problems with their identities. Evidence suggests that some barriers faced by this group (e.g. institutional racism and exclusion from school) are similar to those faced by children and young people of Black Caribbean origin (Tikly, 2008).

The perception of black people as a social problem lingers on regardless of numerous Formal inquiries, such as Lord Scarman's Inquiry and the Inquiry, which concluded that institutional racism is endemic in Britain. Although the Macpherson report raised the public profile of institutional racism following the murder of Stephen Lawrence, its recommendations are not new. Furthermore, it would appear that little progress has been made as a result (McGhee, 2005) of such formal inquiries. What is clear is that

“racism and racists” (McGhee, 2005:1) have become identified as social problems that afflict British society. This was for example, reflected in the introduction of racially motivated offence legislation in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Experiences of institutional racism featured significantly in the experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people in this study. When asked about Rosie’s experiences at school, given that they lived in a primarily white area, her adoptive parents replied:

Anne: Primary school was alright, but when she went to secondary school things were not easy. They called her names, teachers did not help matters because they were either too busy or, if I may say so, some of them were racist when I think of the way they handled matters. Her school reports in the first year did not reflect what Rosie was or what she was capable of.

Vicky: Aha

John: We were not sure what was happening but, when we spoke to Rosie following a parents’ evening meeting, we were horrified to learn that, for a whole year, she had been coping with name calling as well as detention when she retaliated. We wanted to go to school to see the head teacher but Rosie asked us not to go and said she would fight her own battle.

Vicky: So what did you do?

Anne: We trusted her and we knew she was a bright girl... We helped with her homework the best we could and the areas we were not comfortable with, we paid for private tuition.

Vicky: Were you happy with the end result?

John: Absolutely and Anne will tell you the same. Rosie came out with eight GCSEs and three A-levels. I don’t know about you but that is not someone who is thick and stupid. We were very proud of her.

Similar to all children and young people, this group is more likely to benefit from carers who are supportive and believe in a child-centred approach. Placements with authoritarian carers they may not be as successful for children who encounter problems such as racism or other identity issues. Engaging and disengaging which can

be described as authoritative parenting typology is more than likely to contribute to young people becoming well-adjusted (Steinmetz, 1999).

Mixed relationships are frequently perceived as problematic and so the parenting skills of people in these partnerships are likely to be criticised by professionals and society at large. They also have the added pressure of ensuring that their children behave well due to the fear that misbehaviour will reflect on the non-white parent living in a racist white society (Alibhai-Brown, 2001). However, some parents in racially mixed unions can be too strict. This may, in turn, impact on how their children react, particularly, if the children believe they are treated differently from their peers. This was confirmed by some young people who contacted social services because they found their parents too strict and controlling.

Some people interviewed found schools unsympathetic to mixed-race families and their children and other pupils taunted them:

...my parents went to the school and said, 'my daughter's been racially attacked and I want to know what you are going to do about it'. And apparently, the headmaster said, 'Well, what do you expect if you put a black child into a white community?' ...My parents just took me straight out of that school... (Jude).

The young people in my study reported bullying from both black and white students, and teachers often turned a blind eye. Unfortunately, few parents can move their children to different schools in these circumstances. Do professionals explore issues around racism? This problem, which was endemic in the lives of the majority of the young people and their families, seemed to come from outsiders as well as from within their own families. Experiences of racism from within families of mixed-race individuals is confirmed by Banks (1992), Twine (1999), Barter (1999), Tizard and Phoenix (2002) and Olumide (2005).

7.6.1 Summary

Racism and discrimination continue to impact on the lives of this group of looked-after, dual heritage young people. In the British context, these young people continue

to be seen as black and the same barriers to achievement, such as institutional racism and social exclusion, therefore tend to affect this group. Furthermore, the prejudice towards interracial relationships means that this group has to contend with the stigma of being looked-after and the prospect of being shunned by both white and black communities for their mixed-race origins. Some young people reported racism within families and some family members either rejected them completely or failed to empathise with their experiences of racism.

7.7 Messages to practitioners and policymakers

Even though view points from the young people and their carers echo those from other looked-after groups, some issues were specific to this group. The young people interviewed and their carers believe that a holistic approach providing anti-discriminatory practice (Dhir, 2003; Okitikpi and Aymer, 2008) is crucial to ensuring the needs of all concerned are taken into account. The young people involved in this study are urging policymakers and practitioners to move beyond same race placement that seem to be the predominant factor when considering care for black and dual heritage children and young people.

Above all, the young people want to be accepted for being themselves and they believe that placing them in white communities is not necessarily inappropriate given that one of their birth parents is white. Some of the young people felt that their needs were not adequately and properly met. Joachim's social worker supported this:

Our borough has got a good mix of ethnic minorities you know, ethnic minorities are actually represented as white British...in terms of us providing specific support for young people of black or mixed race origins, I don't see that they are given any... I don't think their needs are particularly well met...

This view point is an indication that, even in areas with a high population of black and dual heritage people, this group does not necessarily receive better support than those placed in white communities. Therefore, practitioners could use their time better in providing greater support rather than devoting their time to finding the so called ideal placements.

7.7.1 Education

Education can make a difference within a persons or group's social and hierarchical position through its influence on occupation and income ((Gaskins, 1999; Ali, 2003; Tikly et al., 2004)). Historically occupation has been selected as the main component of SES and in general has been considered a good determinant because it gives some idea as to likely working conditions, risk of irregular unemployment, as well as salary, which in turn is associated with social class and access to material goods (Smith and Kington, 2004). Thus, in Britain, being black or dual heritage has an overwhelming impact on these groups' educational attainments. Furthermore, research has shown that people from black or dual heritage groups who have higher educational attainment do not receive the same rewards as their white counterparts with similar background (Platt, 2007).

Clearly, the patterning of inequalities faced by dual heritage individuals, particularly those in the looked-after population, is not straight forward, but complex. For example, it has been suggested that education is an important indicator of SES and is tied to individual advantages and disadvantages. Arguably, good education is likely to influence or determine people's SES in adult life and we are reminded that "education is linked with employment and (thereby) with poverty" (Platt, 2007:76). Evidently racism and discrimination against dual heritage individuals has resulted in high exclusion rates from schools, and poor educational attainment for many people in this group (Gaskins, 1999; Ali, 2003; Tikly et al., 2004). These findings were reported by the young people in this study. Considering the role of education in shaping young people's transition to adulthood and being a crucial determinant of economic status in adult life, it is extremely worrying that institutional racism continues to affect how this group performs academically.

Government statistics on the educational attainment of looked-after children and young people since 1999 do not paint a very encouraging picture. Stories of teachers' low expectations and pathologisation of this group were recounted by most of the young people. For many, exclusion meant poor educational attainment, which limited their employability. This is confirmed by Tikly et al. (2004) who confirmed that some teachers' had low expectations of dual heritage children and young people in schools. Undoubtedly, this is little more than self-fulfilling prophecy given that stereotyping

and low expectations of teachers were highlighted as major causes of underachievement among ethnic minorities (Swan Report, 1985).

The complexities surrounding the factors that impact on poor achievement of looked-after, dual heritage young people requires further research beyond the pathologisation of the dual heritage identity. Some young people reported being bullied and pathologised by teachers, although they had successful stories to tell. Urgent research is required to throw some light on why some achieve whilst others fail. Undoubtedly some young people were able to perform well academically due to the role played by their foster and adoptive parents in their education (e.g. attending parents' evening, paying for private tuition and buying houses in the catchment areas for good schools). Nonetheless, some achieved success despite experiences of placement disruptions and several school exclusions and other adversaries. This was often achieved due to the efforts of practitioners who worked closely with carers and schools, as Joachim's social worker illustrates:

It is about helping young people develop positive attitudes in life...you are a role model to these young people, being their social worker. You are probably not the person that gets to see them all the time, but you have got an important role in their life...you are the one that makes things happen...

The characteristics of dual heritage school children and young people, who are often pathologised by teachers, are quite different to looked-after, dual heritage students who may lack stability and a safe environment. Four common themes that influenced educational achievement were instability, teachers' low expectations, school exclusion, and a lack of collaborative working between schools, carers, and practitioners. These themes featured in the stories told by the majority of the young people who left secondary school without any qualifications. Placement disruptions and a lack of communication between carers, practitioners and teachers were also reported to have impacted negatively on this group's education. Undoubtedly, the effects of these factors on educational achievement are clear. Some young people who had left secondary schools without qualifications were keen to enhance their life chances through education but lacked support, as Josie explained:

...I want to take my access course to go and do social worker training, but social services won't pay for it. It is £525 but, because it is an access course, they said I can go to college to do it. No, I want to do Open University so I can sit at home and work at my own speed. But, as I have explained to them, I am not good in social situations, like in a classroom-based environment...but they refused to pay for it, so I have to save up to try and go on the course myself...

Those providing care for Josie should question whether or not, he was worth the £525 investment. Evidence suggests that sometimes “over £150,000 a year” can be spent on one child (Jackson and Simon, 2006:56). For some young people who are unable to perform well in mainstream schools, one-to-one teaching could be a way of enhancing their life chances. For example, Joachim, who had numerous disruptive placements and school exclusions, is now at college pursuing his interests and, at the time of the interview, his college reports were extremely encouraging. Criteria used by different local authorities in those situations may vary or some practitioners may know how to ‘work the system’ to achieve the best outcome for those under their care. Either way, given the poor educational attainment of looked-after young people, it is surprising that anyone would quibble over £525 to support a young person in achieving his or her aspirations.

7.7.2 Labels

Overall, this group was unhappy with offensive terms often used to describe them. Evidence gathered during this study indicates that unacceptable terminologies continue to be used when describing this group. Stories of name calling and negative labels such as ‘Niger lover’, ‘coon’ ‘yellow face’ were recounted by this group. Even though evidence from research has shown that dual heritage individuals are likely to experience negative labels and name calling (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Ali, 2003), the situation is worse for those in the looked-after population.

Terms used to define this group, which include half-breed, mulatto or mongrel (Christian, 1998), depict contamination and references to animals (Root, 1996; Owusu-Bempah, 2005). How far has society moved on in terms of the labels used to describe this group today? There has been considerable progress following the introduction of the category ‘mixed race’, which was included in the 2001 national

census to define this group. Nonetheless, this has not prevented the use of insulting terms, as Francis disclosed:

...Like they called me 'nigger' and like ... what is the word? What is the little teddy that they used to have? Wog, and golliwog and stuff like that. Like ... to me it is part of everyday life.

The use of belittling terms to describe this group is more likely to worsen these young people's life chances since they already face many challenges. Instead of disparaging terms, these people need support to enhance their opportunities. Without these measures, the chances of a successful transition to adulthood (Steinmetz, 1999) can be limited. For this group to feel valued members of society, derogatory labels from others must be challenged.

7.7.3 Policy

Policymakers need to increase their awareness and understanding of looked-after, dual heritage young people. Even though the reasons why dual heritage children and young people enter the public care sector may mirror those of other groups, racism, which is directed at people in mixed relationships and their children, may play a role. These findings are not surprising considering that we live in a society where judgements continue to be based on skin colour. Often when those forming interracial relationships are disowned by their own families, they do not have any access to support networks and this can prove difficult for some people. This was the case for two young people who were locked up at night when their lone, white mother went out. The mother, who had been disowned by her own family, had no contact with the children's father either. She embarked on prostitution and drugs, resulting in the children being left on their own at night until a neighbour who had noticed them looking for food in dustbins alerted social services.

Lone parents of dual heritage children and young people need support in terms childcare and training. Additionally, they need support in relation to issues of identity and culture so that they can, in turn, help their children when they raise questions in these areas. As pointed out earlier, all the young people interviewed had white mothers; all except two of them had lived with their lone, white mothers and some of

these mothers had previously been looked-after themselves. Others had mental illness and lacked the ability to support their children. This may explain why these children become looked-after away from home, particularly if they are rejected by both white and black families. Most looked-after, dual heritage young people are disadvantaged and most come from low-income households (Goodyer and Okitikpi, 2007). This trend is of great concern to practitioners and policymakers. Economically disadvantaged people are more likely to be stressed, depressed and their energies may be concentrated on survival (Ghate and Hazel, 2002) rather than concentrating on the well-being of their children. Our children represent the future generation and so it is crucial that policymakers invest in them adequately.

The concept of an 'ideal parent' is a fallacy and leaving young people in residential homes whilst looking for these families is more likely to cause delays in finding them permanent placements. The law should place greater responsibility on social services departments and the courts to act consistently in the best interests of the child. Since the two most important factors in successful adoptions are the age of the child and the length of time they spend in the public care system before being adopted, there must be a much greater focus on minimising delays.

Policymakers need to revisit the idea of contact with birth families because this can unsettle children and young people. Furthermore, some young people in my study did not want any contact with their birth families or were unable to form close relationships because of racism within the family. Roger reported:

My mother was kicked out by my grandparents because she was going out with my dad. She ended up in care and this was before I was born...so, as I told you before, I have never had contact with either my black or white grandparents.

Roger, who was fostered by a white family, was adamant that he wished to remain with the parents who fostered him when he was five years old. Arguably, arrangements could be reached between birth mothers and adoptive parents agree contact and assess the needs of all those involved. Some carers believe that legislators should stop focusing on contact and ensure that full access to information is available

because this is more important. These carers reported that adopted young people do not want to encounter surprises at the age of eighteen. Therefore, local authorities must not hold back any information from adoptive parents. This information can be shared with children and the young people involved at appropriate stages.

Undoubtedly, decisions about making contact with birth families can be left to the young people, ideally once they have reached the age of eighteen.

7.7.4 Summary

Policymakers and practitioners have been asked to reconsider same 'race' placements, which often tend to see skin colour as the most important criterion when considering the needs of this group. Education is one way of ensuring that people are equipped to participate fully in society. If so, teachers' low expectations and pathologisation of this group is a major concern and needs to be addressed if these young people are to achieve their full potential. For some young people the role of carers in intervening when bullying occurs or when they have to be move to different school has enabled some young people to perform well academically. However, not all carers were able to fulfil this role and policymakers, practitioners and other professionals are urged to refrain from pathologising this group and endeavour to treat them with respect and not view them purely on the basis of colour.

7.8 Conclusion

For most of the young people in this study whose birth parents lacked the capacity to meet their developmental needs, being looked-after gave them that opportunity. Interviews carried out for this thesis enabled me to identify key themes and learn about the central issues. Interestingly, each young dual heritage participant in this research study has used different terms to define themselves. None of them has used the term 'half-caste' which some people still use. Finding new language that is meaningful in everyday life is not easy. However, since this research focuses on young people who have one white and one black parent, the term dual heritage appears to sit more comfortably with this group. The study found that, how this group self-identify or is identified by others is a hotly contested issue. Although some carers believe that one has to use an ascribed category, particularly when filling forms, others objected vehemently to the use of labels.

Clearly the stories from the young people/practitioners/carers have indicated that myths and assumptions surrounding this group need to be dismissed. Cultural changes should go hand-in-hand with the growth of evidence informed practice and services offered to this group. Dual heritage young people who are being, or have been, looked-after are all unique and even the experiences of siblings differed because individuals' self-determination and resilience play a part in their life chances. It is inevitable that the environment and the support this group receives from those around them play a role in shaping their life chances. Indeed, many influences, including parents, wider family, school and the community are fundamental in childhood development (Steinmetz, 1999). For example, children and young people's school performance is strongly associated with those of their neighbours (Goux and Maurin, 2006). Furthermore, the lives of children and young people in families dealing with mental illness and without social networks are likely to be affected in different ways. Despite the negative views besieging this group, the young people's accounts show that with appropriate support, they are capable of achieving the same levels and success as any other group.

The notion that individuals with one white and one black parent will be appropriately placed simply by finding them families that share the same physical characteristics has lost currency. Families may share physical traits but they may differ in areas such as religion and language. Clearly, how their human, cultural and social development can be maximised will affect their life chances. The important issue for those working with this group is to explore the complexity and seemingly hopeless situations of these young people. The themes that emerged from this study show that services offered by local authorities as co-operate parents, differ from one local authority to another. There is a need to seriously consider the challenges and opportunities facing young people including those who have taken part in this research. There is room for all young people to be nurtured and encouraged to achieve their full potential, regardless of their ethnicities. First, they must be listened to, valued and be included in decisions involving their lives.

Although these young people generally resented labels, and the way others identify them, all bar one out of the sixteen interviewed were proud of and comfortable with their racial identities. Views of practitioners differed depending on their own beliefs

and perceptions of this group. Some practitioners believe that anyone who is neither white nor black experiences 'identity crisis'. Others believe that how dual heritage young people develop their identities in the same way as their peers, but these practitioners were in the minority. Since children and young people with one white and one black parent of Caribbean origin have a long history of being looked-after, as indicated earlier, there is an urgent need to conduct further research and explore the care experiences of these young people. Furthermore, the importance of supporting lone, white mothers of dual heritage children who often encounter racism from both black and white communities cannot be overemphasised.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8 Meeting the needs of looked-after, dual heritage young people: Negotiating complexities at all times.

Introduction

In this study I have proposed that new ethnicities are constantly being formed by people with dual and multiple heritages. The thesis has offered some understanding of looked-after, dual heritage young people and their fluid, complex identities from a theoretical point of view and stories told by these young people. The concept of new ethnicities fits well with this study, as it indicates a move away from the construction of ethnicity as fundamentally an ancestry-based reification. New ethnicities embrace cultural practices and fit in with a strong global move to individualistic human-rights ideology that includes the right of individuals to self-define their ethnicity and assume the capacity to maintain more than one identity (Modood, 2007). This global movement recognises that ethnicity is socially constructed, situational, unstable, and changes over time (Back, 1996; Mac an Ghail, 1999; Ali, 2003).

The first part of the chapter, which begins by drawing together some of the main themes that have emerged from this research in order to consider how the knowledge identified might be taken further in a theoretical/conceptual framework, will focus on five pertinent issues: (1) the interpretation of Section 22 (5) (c) of the Children Act 1989 in terms of the placement of dual heritage children and young people; (2) identity confusion, (3) prevalence of white mothers and absent black African Caribbean fathers in my sample of dual heritage young people (4) racism within families and (5) whether white families can provide adequate and appropriate care placements. The second section of the chapter will conceptualise four ecosystems (micro, meso, exo and macro) within which service provided for looked-after, dual heritage young people can be framed.

8.1 The interpretation of Section 22 (5) (c) of the Children Act 1989 in terms of the placement of dual heritage children and young people.

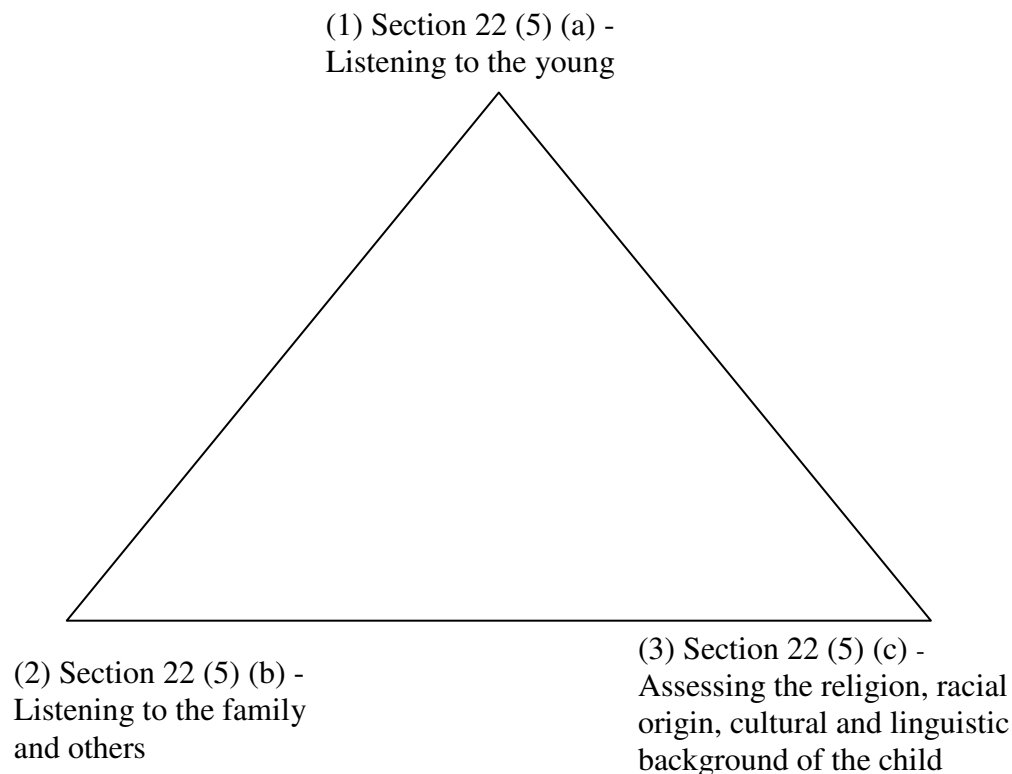
In many ways, this thesis has critically examined the impact of practitioners' perspectives on identity and challenged the rigidity of their 'racialised' thinking in working with this group. Although identity is important, neither the dual heritage young people in my study nor their carers viewed it as paramount. What was vital was an individual's needs. Current procedures in relation to placements need to be based on flexible guidelines that take into account individuals' needs and their potential development trajectories. It is essential that practitioners provide opportunities for older dual heritage children and young people to negotiate and explore their identity, linguistic preferences and contact with their birth families. Those types of discussion embrace the spirit of Section 22 (5), which states that:

In making any such decisions a local authority shall give due consideration -

- (a) having regard to his age and understanding, to such wishes and feelings of the child as they have been able to ascertain
- (b) to such wishes and feelings of any person mentioned in subsection (4) (b) to (d) as they have been able to ascertain; and
- (c) to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.

The relevant part of this Act was quoted in the introduction to the thesis section. I have quoted it again here and this time it has been illustrated with a triangle (diagram 8.1). This triangle highlights the complex range of considerations that practitioners are expected to balance when they are assessing the needs of children in need and their families. In addition to thinking about these people's cultural backgrounds, practitioners are expected to listen to the children and their families.

Diagram 8.1: Section 22 (5) of the Children Act 1989 illustrates what practitioners have to take into account when seeking placements



What we find is that practice has overwhelmingly focused on 22 (5) (c) to determine placements. In my study, I have contested the practice of privileging one section of the Act by emphasising that it is desirable to ensure that 22 (5) (a) and (b) are not neglected during the assessment process. I am aware that very young children or mentally ill parents, for example, may not be able to articulate their needs, however, people who are able to do so must be given the opportunity to have their voices heard. It has not been the intention of this study to deny the significance of social origin or, indeed, colour. Instead, I have chosen to compare and contrast the testimonies of young people in this study with those of their carers and set this against a seemingly over-dogmatic approach to placement matching.

There is insufficient data to make claims about the causes of such practice, but future research could explore the complexity of the balancing act shown in the triangle above. It is possible that most practitioners focus on only one side of this triangle, namely 22 (5) (c) due to being overworked, and perhaps inexperienced in these

matters. Future researchers may be interested in exploring the power of ‘mantra’ led practice coupled with dominant ideologies and how they can neglect the uniqueness of individual cases. There is clearly no one set way of assessing the needs of looked-after, dual heritage young people. Nonetheless, failure to take into account the other two sides of the triangle, that is, 22 (5) (a) and (b) ignores different dimensions, which are likely to impact in the lives of this group.

8.1.1 Summary

Focusing primarily on Section 22 (5) (c) of the Children Act 1989 is likely to limit the ways of meeting the needs of this group effectively. Clearly, focusing on the skin colour of looked-after, dual heritage young people, when considering appropriate placements, ignores the significance of the other two sections of the Act (a) and (b), and how they can impact on these young people’s well-being. When working with any vulnerable group, it is important to employ an approach that takes into account the whole picture. Unfortunately this is often overlooked when assessing the needs of looked-after, dual heritage children and young people because of the stereotypical generalisations and myths around identity confusion in dual heritage individuals.

8.2 Identity confusion

Stereotypical views of this group were held by both black and white practitioners and other professionals. This is worrying considering the importance of the wider community in contributing to the developmental needs of all children. There were stories of professionals such as psychiatrists, teachers, practitioners, as well as carers stipulating that challenges faced by this group stemmed from identity confusion. However, these young people have indicated that the notion of identity confusion is imposed. This study has highlighted that looked-after, dual heritage young people are not receiving a service that meets their needs, because some practitioners tend to disregard the importance of this group’s double or dual heritage as a fundamental aspect of their well being (all aspects need to be taken into consideration, not just their skin colour). These practitioners continue to offer social work services that are inadequate and inappropriate at responding to this group’s needs. The appropriateness of social work practice, which focuses in placing dual heritage children and young people with black families, needs to be challenged.

There is an urgent need to move away from the reliance of perceiving looked-after, dual heritage young people as a problem people, who ought to change or see themselves as black, in order to fit into existing approaches of practice. Practice has been located in approaches that disregard the nature of these young people's reality and the influence of that reality on the values and attitudes required to meet their needs. A way of working that locates responses to challenges faced by looked-after dual heritage young people on the failure to see themselves as black has lost currency. Often a simplistic, static, and linear modernistic approach is used to describe people of dual and multiple heritages. It is desirable to challenge binary oppositions (black/white) since other variables may influence and further dislocate people.

Identity can be defined as one of the most highly contested and theoretically complex concept to understanding when seeking to fuse the conceptual with individuals' lived experiences. Since variables such as religion, sexual orientation, SES and language are likely to influence people and group social interaction within highly complex ways, it is vital to move away from an essentialist fashion of perceiving identity. Stories told by participants in this study have highlighted that how people may perceive themselves in the social context, how they are perceived by others, as well as how they perceive the perception of others, are all significant considerations in shaping both positive and negative social interactions. Clearly, looked-after, dual heritage young people may experience multi-dimensional emotional, social, political and ideological processes flowing back and forth, but these must not be perceived as 'identity confusion'.

There is a need for policy makers, professionals and society at large, to move away from dictating to dual heritage individuals what representations of their identity is likely to be accepted, since this endorses essentialist notions of 'race', racism and ethnicity. The young people in my study believe that the hegemonic ways in which power is used to deny them the right to self-identify, and have their self-identification accepted in meaningful ways should be challenged. They welcome postmodernist views on hybridity that incorporate the fluidity required to offer the possibility of creating new cultures with new social actors, as well as new political agendas, to ensure that identity is global, limitless, changing and mobile (Modood, 2007). All the young people, who participated in this research, were against the way in which 'race'

is viewed in abstract instead of being lodged in a history and process of struggle and transformation. This is illustrated in the way some labels (e.g. black) used by both black and Asian people to fight against white prejudice have easily been taken over by racialisation processes. We find that racism is no longer what is done to people; it has been reduced to a position of discourse.

8.2.1 Summary

This group is likely to continue being disadvantaged, if those working with them continue to mask cultural hybridity in the language and practice of mono-cultural essentialism. There is a need to create a professional culture where academics, students and professionals, are able to discuss 'race' and racism matters openly – so that lessons can be learnt. The young people in my study have demonstrated that the lives of looked-after, dual heritage young people are unlikely to improve if one of their heritages is constantly disregarded. Practitioners and other professionals cannot and should not appropriate dual heritage individuals' voices. Discouraging use of Eurocentric approaches to interpret the validity of who should belong to which culture and the part culture ought to play in the lives of looked-after, dual heritage young people is likely to enhance their well-being.

8.3 Prevalence white mothers and absent black African Caribbean fathers

The prevalence of white lone, mothers of dual heritage children and young people has previously been highlighted by Goldstein (1999) and Barn (1999). However, the absence of black African Caribbean fathers in the lives of these dual heritage young people is concerning and causes one to wonder what may be contributing factors to such a trend. Again, although it was not surprising that all the young people in the study had white mothers and black fathers, the question arose as to why these fathers were predominantly black African Caribbean and not black African. Amina and Joachim reported that their black father endured many incidents of racist attacks. Although Rosie said that her father told her that he left Britain soon after she was born, because of racism, there was not enough evidence from the data to suggest that was the case for all the absent fathers in the lives of the young people in this study. What is clear is that racism can often lead to social isolation and if this is combined by people's fear of safety, due to hostility from their neighbourhood, it is likely to cause

detrimental results. Whether couples facing such hostility stay together, or not, is likely to depend on support available to them as well as their health. For example, Amina reported that her father's mental illness and the social isolation he experienced, contributed to her parents' divorce. The impact of absent fathers is likely to cause disruptive behaviour in some children especially if they were close to their parents as was the case for Joachim. Sewell (2004) talks of the impact of absent fathers on young males.

Sewell may have a point, however, the presence of an abusive father could be damaging to the child. For example, Josie became looked-after following incidents of physical abuse from his father. His father blamed his abusive behaviour on drinking (he allegedly embarked on heavy drinking as a way of coping with racism within the family). According to Josie, his father, who was often pilloried by both black and white people in his neighbourhood for having a white partner, found it impossible to cope when his own family went against him; consequently he vented his anger and frustration on Josie.

8.4 Racism within families

Participants in this study confirmed experiences of racism and discrimination faced by this group from both white and black people. This supported the findings of various studies on dual heritage individuals (Banks, 1992; 1995; Root, 1996; Gaskins, 1999; Olumide, 2002; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Okitikpi, 2005; Owusu-Bempah, 2005). However, it is disturbing to learn about experiences of racism within the family. Often most people find refuge in their homes, but this did not appear to be the case from the stories told by the young people in my study. All the sixteen young people in this study and some carers reported experiences of racism within the family. Undoubtedly racism within the family added another dimension in the lives of this group and contributed to some children becoming looked-after by local authorities. Some young people told stories of lone, white mothers who were disowned by their own parents and close families. Many of their mothers had not been offered love and affection, which are crucial ingredients in any family unit (Haas, 1999). Consequently, this may have had an adverse effect on their ability to look-after their own children.

8.5 White families can provide adequate and appropriate care placements.

Some young people placed with black families reported negative care experiences whilst some placed with white families had positive experiences. Despite the emphasis on placements that reflected the young people's ethnicity, those placed with white families in primarily middle-class, white environments had positive care experiences. They were also comfortable with their racial and social identities. Once these foster/adoptive white parents took on their caring and parenting roles, they embarked on an ongoing journey of learning to help their dual heritage children succeed and cope with racism. This example challenges the preconceptions of practitioners who refuse to place this group with white families on the misapprehension that they will not help them to deal with racism. Many of these white families saw themselves as 'mixed race' families as soon as they had adopted or fostered a child from this group and learned about the cultural background of the new members of the family. For example, some parents bought books and art relating to the young people's culture which helped their children to remain connected with their absent black parents' heritage. Others chose holiday destinations that included the countries where the children's minority ethnic parent was born. Carers saw this as another way of encouraging these young people to remain connected with their black heritage even though most of them had never met their black parents.

Interestingly, all sixteen young people involved in this study did not link a positive racial or social identity with the ethnic identity of their carers or practitioners. Clearly, this provides an opportunity to challenge existing placement policy. The young people who indicated a preference for placements with white families were very clear that this was because all their friends were white and their affiliation with black people (including family members) was non-existent. Given that the majority of them (fourteen) had lived with their lone, white mothers prior to becoming looked-after; it was not surprising that placements with black carers did not seem appropriate to them. Being loved and establishing a sense of belonging appeared to be more important to these young people than the ethnicity of their carers. Furthermore, there was no evidence to suggest that those placed with black carers were better equipped to deal with racism or that they used different coping tactics from those employed by other groups. This is confirmed by Tizard and Phoenix (2002), who reported that young

people living with black parents do not use dissimilar strategies from any other people of a similar age.

There was no indication that looked-after, dual heritage young people who lived in predominantly white communities experienced greater difficulties than those who lived in areas with a high population of black people. No single culture is experienced by all people (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Modood, 2007) and the culture shared by any group of people is determined by factors such as class, gender and sexual orientation (Phillips, 2007). For example, to presuppose that all black people from Kenya share the same culture would disregard these factors and the different ethnic groups found in that country. Looked-after, dual heritage young people are not a homogeneous group and their problems are not related to their identities. These young people's needs are complex and diverse and most of them need help with many different issues.

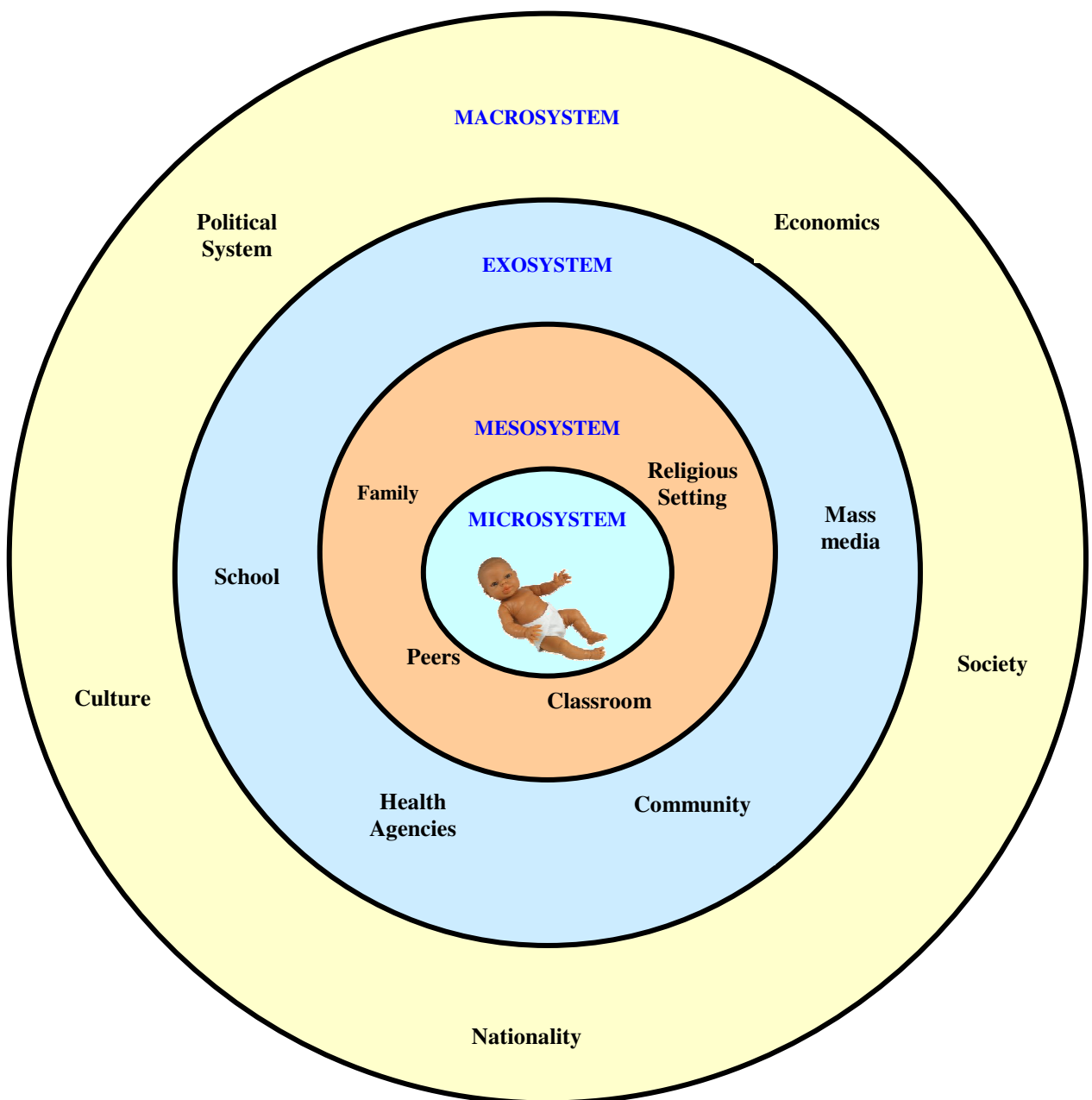
8.6 Conceptualisation of the ecosystems which are likely to impact on looked-after dual heritage young people

The ways, in which relations between internal and external dynamics may impact on the lives of people, especially those who are marginalised or demonised for a variety of reasons are crucial when ways of addressing their needs are sought. The importance of using an ecological model to illustrate various factors that are likely to impact in the lives of this group was emphasised in chapter one. Failure to incorporate a holistic approach during the assessment process is likely to lead to some aspects of the needs of service users being neglected. An ecological model such as the one developed by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) is a very useful tool to use when investigating issues facing dual heritage individuals especially those in the looked-after population given the prejudice, rejection, and stigmatisation towards them.

In child developmental psychology, emphasis on identity is on a single, not mixed 'race' and is based largely on white-middle-class children (Robinson, 1997). As a result, society regards dual heritage people as black even though one of the biological parent is white. When society accepts and values children regardless of parentage, challenges faced by most children may decrease. All young people should be able to

achieve their full potential, should be enabled to feel loved and valued, and be supported by reliable and affectionate social networks (Department of Health et al., 1999). An ecological approach takes into account the multifaceted dimensions that are likely to determine whether children develop to their full potential (see diagram 8.2).

Diagram 8.2: The interrelated ecosystems which impact on the life of dual heritage young people (adopted from Bronfenbrenner's (1979))



Source: <http://www.saskschools.ca/~psychportal/ecological.htm>

Focussing on one factor or dimension is unlikely to reveal appropriate ways of addressing certain challenges faced by vulnerable groups in our society. Warren-Adamson reminds us that:

An ecological perspective requires of practitioners a close knowledge, a direct experience, of the developmental needs and patterns of children and families, and skills in employing methods of intervention in individual, group and community contexts (2001:227).

Plainly all the theoretical perspectives in Bronfenbrenner's model are intrinsically linked. Furthermore, they are all very critical for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all children. Each of these four ecosystems will briefly be explained and show how they impact in the lives of looked-after, dual heritage young people.

The microsystems: This draws our attention to the particular multi-ethnic, unique, individual (at the centre of the model). In addition to the primary care giver, Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes that children are considerably influenced by interaction among a number of overlapping ecosystems.

The mesosystems: Communications between the microsystems and mesosystems take place, for example, when parents and teachers direct their efforts towards children's education. In relation to looked-after, dual heritage young people, the mesosystem can be seen as the linking world between family and other resources (school, social and health workers, carers), representing a world of reflexivity and negotiation, and becomes problematic, dysfunctional, when negotiation and mutual recognition breaks down.

The exosystem: Included in the exosystems that influence the microsystems are the external networks, for example, extended families, neighbours, employment, communications systems, and community health and welfare services. Meeting the needs of looked-after, dual heritage young people adequately and appropriately is likely to depend on the availability (or not) of sensitive resources which respond flexibly, for example, social workers, teachers and foster carers. We know that the first experience children have as members of a particular ethnic group is from the

family and involvement in their ethnic neighbourhood. How they are perceived by those ethnic groups and neighbourhood will determine whether their experiences are negative or positive. This study has highlighted that often looked-after, dual heritage young people experience rejection, not only, from both white and black neighbourhoods, but also from their own families.

The macrosystems: In regard to dual heritage individuals, the macrosystem, which Bronfenbrenner (1979) calls the social context of human development, can sometimes be the stereotyping, generalising world which labels and categorises in unhelpful ways. *Macro systems* consist of laws, customs, cultural values, political philosophies, economic patterns, and social conditions. Issues of racism and social isolation featured hugely in the stories told by the young people and their carers. Furthermore, the young people's carers acknowledged that some problems faced by this group were exacerbated by other people's perceptions, particularly the myths surrounding their identities. Many believed that these perceptions can have lasting negative impact, particularly if they come from those in authority. Discrimination and racism within the macrosystems is likely to impact negatively on these young people.

8.6.1 Needs of parents

The needs of parents must be assessed because they can, in turn, affect parenting capacity and how their own children develop (Steinmetz, 1999; Howarth, 2003; Selwyn et al., 2005; Department for Education and Skills, 2006). We know from the stories told that all of the young people in this study had white mothers of low SES. In addition to issues surrounding their SES, stories of hostility experienced by parents of dual heritage young people in this study from both white and black community as well as within the families were reported. Consequently, their chances of coping may be reduced. Therefore, ways of supporting them (e.g. giving them opportunity to clarify their fears and misapprehension, training and services) need to be identified.

It is important to look beyond the economic problems that some lone, white mothers face when assessing the factors that contribute to parenting problems. Warmth and nurture are difficult variables to measure scientifically, as is a child's happiness or capabilities. Quantifying these variables to produce reliable and valid research data is

problematic and the conclusions of parenting research are not always clear. However, the Department of Health et al. (2000, paragraph 2.9:20) assert that:

Critically important to a child's health and development is the ability of parents or caregivers to ensure that the child's developmental needs are being appropriately and adequately responded to, and to adapt to his or her changing needs over time.

Clearly, parenting is a major influencing factor in the lives of children and young people and, given its crucial role in promoting developmental needs (Haas, 1999; Jones, 2003), it is important to find ways to support lone mothers. This may include offering support with parenting skills. Lone, white mothers of dual heritage children may face additional difficulties (racism, familial rejection etc) and they require proactive support to prevent the breakdown of families and their children being looked-after away from home. In common with other looked-after children and young people, the majority of looked-after dual heritage children and young people in this study (ten) were placed in care due to abuse and neglect.

8.6.2 *Child's developmental needs*

The findings from this thesis have highlighted the ways that barriers to achievement include forms of institutional racism and suggest ways of working positively with looked-after, dual heritage young people. The role of teachers and education in contributing to the psychosocial well-being of children and young people cannot be over stated. Despite this, all the young people involved in this study reported that they had been ignored by teachers who perceived them as 'mixed up'. These young people felt that teachers' low expectations of them meant that they did not see any reason to work hard. Considering that teachers often play the second most important 'adult' role in children's lives after primary care givers, it is worrying that racism is rampant in schools.

The stories from all the participants suggest that, if the needs of this group are to be adequately and appropriately met, there is an urgent need to ensure training in areas of 'race' and racism is given priority. This is often either neglected or perceived to be too sensitive to tackle, resulting in some tokenistic gestures, such as employing a

black person as a race expert. It is vital for schools and teachers to raise their expectations of dual heritage individuals, particularly those in the looked-after population. Failure to do so could result in a future generation of this group who achieve poor educational outcomes.

Chapter Nine

9 Conclusion

Introduction

The overarching aim of this thesis was to give voice to looked-after, dual heritage young people and explore different aspects of their care experiences, including issues around ‘race’, identity, and support services. Examining empirical data on looked-after, dual heritage young people has highlighted some of the causes of their difficulties. Interviews with the young people concerned indicate that their views are often not heard. In addition to examining the care experiences of this group, the study aimed to address a lack of research in this domain and particularly the lack of empirical evidence about this — under researched group. This concluding chapter offers recommendations, and identify further areas for research and final reflections.

This study shows the gap that exists in some practitioners insistence on continuing with approaches which do not recognise the need for support, understanding, encouragement or nurturing of emotional and developmental needs as core components in social work practice with ‘cultural other’ groups (Dominelli, 2004). Practitioners can possibly learn that difference between white, black and multiple heritage people may be better explained by an awareness and sensitivity of culture expressed as negative understanding of difference. Van Soest and Garcia (2003) believe that to be effective, practitioners must communicate with service users from different cultures after taking time to become aware of diverse cultures. Investing in other people’s cultures and different forms of cultural communication is likely to enable practitioners to relate to service users from various cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, when assessing individual’s needs, it is important to take an approach which is designed to examine, not only, the people in need and their families, but other dimensions outside their control as highlighted in the previous chapter (see diagram 8.2).

While studies on looked-after ethnic minority groups including mixed parentage children and young people have been carried out, they have not focussed on one

specific dual heritage white and black African Caribbean origin. Although the findings from this study are not to be generalised, it is fair to say that my contribution has filled the gap in this under researched area by deepening our understanding of this group. There is likely to be various beneficiaries and in the context of recent policy and practice the interdisciplinary nature of my research will integrate concepts from other disciplines, for example, bringing insights from social work to education and vice versa. In the context of every Child Matters, this will help carers, educators, other professionals such as social and health care professionals to understanding of issues that act as barriers to meeting the needs of looked-after, dual heritage children and young people.

Furthermore, looked-after, dual heritage young people and their lone, white mothers (who are often left to struggle without support from families or their communities) will benefit from this research since it highlights more appropriate and sensitive ways of meeting their needs by engaging in meaningful negotiations relating to their lived experiences. Most importantly the findings and recommendations from this research are likely to influence policy and government initiatives, for example in placements, schools, social and health care, racism, and labelling. This means better practice which in turn will enhance services offered to looked-after, dual heritage children and young people. What is more, this study has highlighted the importance of academics engagement in open and honest discussions on how 'race' continues to be used to divide people into 'them' and 'us'.

The voices of the young people in this study have shown that there is no one universal approach which can explain human behaviour in all people and in every culture. Nonetheless, there was no evidence that practitioners were interested in taking on board the significance of cultural specificities as functional aspects which might contribute to the onset, expression, and alleviation of discomfort which others inflict on this group. Some of the practitioners were of the view that what needed to change is the young people's behaviour and not social work practice. Given that the young people in this study felt comfortable with practitioners and carers who respected them, it is important for those working with this group to resolve their own fears and doubts as well as acknowledging that 'race' and racism act as barriers to meeting the needs of looked-after, young people appropriately and adequately.

This research has identified that the real problem facing the young people, who participated in this study, is basing their care needs on their phenotype. Various factors including social divisions, structural inequalities, parenting as well as their SES and class may impact on how children and young develop. Nonetheless, although all this may be the case for the majority of children and young people, the impact may be different for dual heritage individuals, particularly those in the looked after population due to the negative way they are viewed by society. It seems as though basing their needs on physical attributes and blaming their behaviour on 'identity confusion' is the most appropriate resources within the control of practitioners to solve the challenges facing these young people. Respecting this group and listening to them will minimise time, effort and cost, consequently maximising their satisfaction.

It was pointed out on page 180 of this thesis that the category mixed race was included in the 2001 UK national census to describe an emergent, yet heterogeneous group of people. This thesis has demonstrated that still very little is understood about dual heritage individuals, particularly those in the looked-after population. There has been a significant scarcity of discussion about dual heritage and multiple heritage individuals in Britain. This study has shown that often focus is on their physical features and any challenges they may face is attributed to their dual heritage identity especially the failure to accept a mono-racial (black identity). As highlighted earlier, most of the young people in this study reported that the reason they challenge the imposition of the label black is not because they want to deny their black heritage, but because they felt that they should not deny their white heritage. Their identity may be political, ideological, linguistic, or religious and while marking difference, must not be assumed to be intrinsically linked to their dual heritage identity of ethnicity. While ethnicity is a marker about groups, 'race' may be a highly significant feature of a person's identity but it cannot simply be seen as static. This research has demonstrated that how dual heritage individuals are perceived by others in a social encounter can cause discomfort. It is important to challenge categorisation within a rigid framework.

Does the claim that the needs of this group are often inadequately or inappropriately met mean that it is difficult to find families who meet the criteria set out under section 22 (5)(c) of the act? This section of the act fails to recognise the complexities

involved in any dealings with human beings. Where does this leave dual heritage individuals who want to acknowledge both sides of their heritage? If it is appropriate to place them with black families, why is it wrong to place them with white families given that they are genetically white as well as black? If the aim of Section 22 (5) (c) is to ensure that looked-after children and young establish a sense of belonging by being in 'same race' families, where do dual heritage individuals, who may look different from their white or black parents, fit in? Practitioners who adhere to section 22 (5) (c) of the act focus on finding black or mixed-race families for looked-after, dual heritage young people and are often uncomfortable with changing their stance. Some of them may base their approach on their training from the 1980s and younger practitioners may be influenced by critical thinking from that time which decried that white families were unable to equip non-white children and young people to deal with racism (Small, 1986). The assumption is that black people can provide their children with coping strategies when faced with racism. These assumptions are based on the perspective that all black people have lived in Britain all of their lives and have experienced racism.

9.1 Recommendations

This section intends to draw together some of the issues highlighted in this thesis. In order to understand the issues facing looked-after, dual heritage young people, it is essential to employ research methods commonly used to understand any group of young people in care. This means locating them within the context of their care providers, communities and the culture in which they have been brought up (Jack, 2003), which requires a holistic approach (Department of Health et al., 2000; Warren-Adamson, 2001). Historically, because dual heritage individuals are seen as black, considerations of ways of meeting their care needs differently from those of black people have not been considered in research. This omission has had far-reaching consequences for meeting the care needs of looked-after, dual heritage children and young people adequately and appropriately. Assumptions that the care needs of this group can be met the same way as those of black people have resulted in placement failures/disruptions. Evidence-based research is required to understand and respond to the care needs of this group.

9.1.1 Placement policy

There is a need to carefully consider placement options for this group and avoid the trap of making these decisions on the basis of skin colour alone. Although very young children might not be able to articulate their care needs sufficiently, many older children can. Undoubtedly, the best care is tailored to the individual child's needs. Arguably, it begins with feeding the body with food, the heart with love and the mind with knowledge. Given the significance of environmental factors and parenting in promoting the welfare of children and young people (Steinmetz, 1999; Department of Health et al., 2000; Jones, 2003), it is vital to ensure that carers are adequately supported. This means providing them with support and training, which can range from respite care to parenting skills.

9.1.2 Anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices

Anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices promote self-determination and recognise that people should be understood within their cultural and social context (Thompson, 1997; Ince 1998; Dominelli, 2002). In social work, some discrimination takes place in very subtle ways (Dominelli, 1991). Discrimination is not only defined by 'what workers do', but also by 'what they do not do'. This can include refraining from challenging oppression or refusing to accept people from other cultures (Thompson, 2000; Dominelli, 2004). Good practice requires a safe environment to encourage people to play an active role in discussions on these complex challenges. It is particularly important that practitioners recognise their own-base values and set them aside (Goodyer, 2005). Dominant power relations that categorise people result in social divisions and structural inequality (Dominelli, 2004), which must be challenged.

9.2 Areas for further research

9.2.1 How to raise expectations of dual heritage pupils

It is desirable to find ways of raising expectations of dual heritage individuals, particularly those in the looked-after population who have to deal with the stigma of being in care as well as the pathologisation of their identity. Pathologisation of the dual heritage identity by those in authority has a negative impact as it is a self-

fulfilling prophecy. Participatory research with this group is more than likely to highlight how their expectations can be met.

9.2.2 *Racism within the family*

Stories told by the young people in this study and some of their carers have indicated that although challenges faced by this group are not dissimilar to those faced by other looked-after groups, racism from both white and black communities and within the family add another dimensions in the challenges they often encounter. However, very little is known about racism within the family. This type of racism was more prevalent in families who had objected to interracial relationships. Some of the young people interviewed for my study told stories of relatives distancing themselves from their parents because they were in interracial marriages.

9.2.3 *Who sees ethnic matching as important?*

Evidence is needed in order to ascertain why ethnic matching plays such a major role in placement decisions. Looked-after, dual heritage young people must not be left in care homes whilst working out the correct placement based on ethnic matching because this can be used to justify the notion that 'one size fits all'. Whose interests are being served by this practice?

9.2.4 *Support for lone, white mothers of dual heritage young people*

Further support must be provided to this group and their families, particularly lone, white mothers (who sometimes face criticism for not knowing how to care for their dual heritage children), if these young people are to achieve their full potential. We know that young people's health and development can be affected by their parents' SES (Dekovic and Janssens, 1992; Crew and Balcazar, 1999; Graham, 2003). Some lone, mothers were reported being looked-after themselves and having children at a very young age without any social support in times of need.

Furthermore, some of these mothers may have wanted to keep their children but may be circumstances did not permit. For instance, Fiona, who was pregnant at the time of the interview vowed not to give up on her child. Fiona may genuinely want to keep her baby, but this may be difficult given that at the time of the interview she lived in a

sheltered accommodation for homeless young people. Fiona's birth mother, white step-father, and white half-brother were visiting her at the time of the interview. I asked if I could contact her birth parents and foster carers. She was happy for me to contact her birth father and no one else. Her father reported that Fiona had only asked me to talk to him because she had no one else to turn to now that she was pregnant. Fiona's father told me he could not make time for face to face interview, but was happy to talk on the telephone. He came across as disappointed in his daughter and blamed Fiona's mother:

She wanted the custody of Fiona, but that only lasted for two years. You see her mother had been in care all the time she was growing up and I knew it was wrong to leave Fiona with her, but she was the mother and the law was on her side. I told them her mother had a drinking problem...I left when Fiona was three and by the time she was five her mother said she could not look after her any more...she had no money, but I was paying maintenance so I do not think it was about the money

It is desirable to go further than merely blaming the poverty trap some lone white mothers find themselves in. Warmth and nurture are difficult variables to measure scientifically, as is a child's happiness or competence. Quantifying these measurements to produce reliable and valid research data cannot be exact and the conclusions of parenting research are not always clear.

Clearly, what lone, white mothers of dual heritage children need is help and advice rather than criticism. Failure to offer them support can create a circle of deprivation. Therefore, it is important that further research in these areas is carried out. Lone white mothers should be empowered so that this group of looked-after, dual heritage children and young people can be brought up and supported within their families and communities. It is necessary to work collaboratively with white lone, mothers of dual heritage children to explore ways of supporting them and how to raise their children's aspirations. These children's achievements are hampered by institutional and cultural racisms including teachers' low expectations of them. Furthermore, it is important to identify why the majority of looked-after, dual heritage young people have white birth mothers.

9.3 Final Reflections

Finally, this study has suggested that, given the degree of awareness in this field, we must adopt a holistic approach to uncover the ‘truth’. This can be achieved by enabling unheard voices to be heard. Furthermore, any consultation with this group needs to be carried out in conjunction with ongoing monitoring and assessment. Listening to looked-after, dual heritage young people offers the best approach since their care experiences and stories help to identify the most effective way of meeting their needs.

The findings from this study build on existing research on the looked-after, dual heritage population. Although their stories may have differed, common themes were identified – such as resentment at being pigeon-holed on the basis of their phenotype. They saw identity as fluid and continuously changing over time. The majority of practitioners and carers reported that, in all respects, the young people were like any other teenagers growing up in difficult circumstances. This group, overall, was not seen as helpless and confused but rather as resilient and with the right support, these individuals could succeed despite their disadvantaged backgrounds. Their care experiences can be understood from the subjective viewpoint and context of the individual concerned and cannot be assumed by so — called experts.

There is a tendency for practitioners to focus on the negatives rather than the strengths of this group’s attributes (e.g. the notion of identity crisis and confusion). Conversely, the young people viewed themselves as being unique, doubly blessed, and more privileged than mono-racial groups. Resilience and self-determination played a major role in helping some of these young people to cope with loss and rejection from their birth families. Many young people told stories of being accepted by their carers and practitioners who were confident and willing to challenge racism and provide the love and support that was not forthcoming from their birth families appropriately and adequately. These young people were well-adjusted and confirmed that the key to children’s and young people’s healthy development is acceptance by those to whom they attach importance (Rutter, 1990). It is important that looked-after, dual heritage young people’s definitions of needs, problems, and priorities are appreciated, instead of imposing other people’s views on them (e.g. placing them with black families).

What professionals perceive as ‘family’ differed from the young people’s perceptions of ‘family’. This group wanted their uniqueness to be recognised and for professionals to move away from pathologising them.

Furthermore, practitioners and policymakers should understand that this group is capable of deciding what works for them. Although they may be stigmatised and vulnerable, these young people are resilient and are not just passive recipients. The challenge for professionals and policymakers is to start to listen to their views and value their contribution. Service need to be delivered sensitively and realistically based on what is feasible. The key is to build on these young people’s own capabilities in a manner that promotes autonomy, resilience, and empowerment.

Reflecting on the main themes of this study, it was concluded that the identities and needs of this group differed and were more complex than the simplistic and negative social constructions imposed on them. Although some of the practitioners interviewed for this study believed that what looked-after, dual heritage young people need is ‘identity work’ (in the form of a process of cultural familiarisation with the different aspects of their heritage), the stories told by the young people interviewed, and their carers did not support this view. At the same time, I noticed that some practitioners misinterpreted the young people’s response to abuse and neglect as evidence of an identity crisis. Linking back these problems to the dual heritage identity fails to identify the other issues and challenges associated with these young people.

The perception that these young people experience identity crises is based on stereotypical assumptions. Looked-after, dual heritage young people do not experience identity crises but ignorance of their history and culture. Existing literature in this domain reminds us that those involved with looked-after, dual heritage young people need to see beyond the dual heritage identity. Instead, they must focus on individuals’ uniqueness and move away from using skin colour as a deciding factor when meeting the needs of this group. Assumptions based on skin colour need to be dismissed if services offered to this group are to be improved. This study focused on one specific dual heritage identity: white and black Caribbean. There is a need for future research to explore other combinations of individuals with multiple identities as well as those without white heritage.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Participant's information sheet (for the young people)



School of Social Sciences
Division of Social Work Studies
Tel: +44(0)2380599393
Fax: +44(0)2380592954

If you are being, or have been, looked after and you:

- Have one white and one black parent of African Caribbean origin
- Are 16 years or over

Vicky would like to hear from you.

Who is Vicky and what is her role?

Vicky is a PhD student at the University of Southampton. Her research project is on the 'care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people. The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Why is Vicky interested in this research?

Vicky is black and her interest in this area stems from her experience as a parent of four dual heritage children. Questions on whether her children consider themselves 'White' or 'Black' and how they like to be identified, led her to read widely on dual heritage individuals, and increased her quest to want to know more about this group. Vicky is interested in finding out:

- How dual heritage individuals like to be identified
- How others identify them
- What services are offered to them
- What they think of services offered to them
- How can these services be improved?

What does Vicky aim to achieve by doing this research?

Vicky hopes that the findings from her research will:

- Deepen our understanding of the experiences of young people of dual heritage who are being, or have been, looked after
- Provide evidence which can be used to inform policy and practice
- Improve services for dual heritage young people who are being, or have been, looked after.

How is Vicky going to do the research?

In order for Vicky to learn all she can about looked-after, dual heritage young people, she would like to spend time with 6-8 different young people of both sexes who fit this profile. This will help her to find out about their lived experiences by asking them questions like:

- At what age did you start being looked after?

- How long have you been looked after?
- When did you stop being looked after?
- Did you have contact with your birth family?
- Do you have exposure to both heritages?
- What are your educational achievements?
- Do you think the social perception of dual heritage individuals is negative?
- Does being looked after mean that decisions are made for you?
- How would you describe your experiences while being looked after?
- How would you describe your experience now you are no longer being looked after?

There are no wrong answers to these questions. Vicky is interested in your care experiences as a looked-after, dual heritage young person. She understands that people's experience may be different and every thing each participant has to say about his/her experience is important. In order to ensure that none of this important information is missed, with your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded and notes will be taken.

What will happen to the information you provide and how will the research benefit you?

Vicky will write a report about the findings from the participants in the research. It is hoped that the information generated from all the participants will help to increase our understanding of the care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people. Your involvement will help enhance the quality of services offered to looked-after dual heritage young people.

Will you receive anything for your participation?

If you participate, Vicky can offer you £10 voucher, as a token of her appreciation.

Who else would Vicky want to speak to?

With your permission Vicky would like to speak to key individuals in your life. For example, your social worker, foster carers, adoptive/birth parents or friends.

Will Vicky be interested in anything else?

Again, with your permission Vicky would like to examine your file to see whether your background including ethnicity and religion are recorded accurately.

Confidentiality

There are things researchers cannot keep confidential (e.g. physical and sexual abuse) other than that anything else will remain strictly confidential, and you will not be identified by your name. When describing research settings Vicky will take care to ensure that anonymity is not compromised. She will write the work in such a way that you are not recognised by using assumed names as well as altering certain biographical contents. Vicky will offer you an opportunity to suggest the assumed names to be used and this will be another way of involving you in the research process. The research will comply with the Ethics Committee of the University of Southampton and the Code of Ethics of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Your well being will be paramount and you will not be subject to any harm.

How long will Vicky keep the data?

Vicky will keep the data securely stored for a period of 10 years in compliance with the University of Southampton's guidelines. The data will be destroyed after the recommended period.

Where and how will the data be stored?

Vicky will store the data securely in her computer which can only be accessed by her using a personal password. The written notes and taped interviews will be kept in a locked desk.

Who will have access to the data?

The only people who will have access to the data besides Vicky will be her supervisors and perhaps the examiners.

Would you like to be involved?

If you like what you have read about this research on the narratives of young people of dual heritage, who are being, or have been, looked after and you would like to participate, you may contact Vicky direct. Alternatively, you may wish to discuss the matter with your social worker, carer, or personal adviser **who should feel free to talk to Vicky and seek any clarification they see as necessary.**

What do you have to do?

Vicky will come and visit you and she can tell you a little bit more about the research and answer any questions you may have about the project. Meetings can take place either in your place of work, residence, at school, University of Southampton or at another office, whichever is more convenient for you.

Do you have to sign any forms?

Attached to this information sheet are a consent form and a release form, which Vicky will ask you to sign. By signing the consent form you are saying that:

- You know why the research is being carried out
- You understand what you will be expected to do
- You want to participate in this research project.

By signing the release form you are agreeing with how Vicky is going to use and store the information you are giving her.

Please be re-assured that even if you say 'yes' to participate in the research, you can change your mind later. You just need to let Vicky know if at any time you want to leave the research project.

Would you like some more information?

Along with this information sheet please find your interview schedule. If you are unsure of any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. If you are interested in taking part, or would like additional information about the research, please contact:

Vicky Lambeth: Tel: 023 8059 3276, Mobile: 07771 578 376 or Email: uvl100@soton.ac.uk

Vicky is keen for you to realise that your involvement is voluntary and you can withdraw from the interview at any time without feeling threatened or service provision being affected.

Also if you want to complain about Vicky's conduct you may do so by contacting her study supervisors: Professor Jan Fook and Dr Derek McGhee. They can be contacted on **JFook@soton.ac.uk** and **D.P.McGhee@soton.ac.uk**. You can also telephone the University of Southampton on extension 28849 or e-mail **Ld7@soton.ac.uk**.

Appendix 2: Participant’s information sheet (for the young people)



School of Social Sciences
 Division of Social Work
 Tel: 44(0)23 8059 9393
 Fax: +44(0)23 8059 2954

Please answer either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the following questions. Your answers will be recorded on this form by ticking the ‘yes’ or ‘no’ box. You will then be asked to sign your name at the bottom of the form.

Have you read the participant’s information sheet? **Yes** **No**

Have you had the chance to ask questions? **Yes** **No**

Do you understand that the research aims to find out about young people of dual heritage, who are being, or have been, looked after? **Yes** **No**

Do you understand that what we discuss will be written down or tape – recorded? **Yes** **No**

Do you understand that you can stop the Interview whenever you like? **Yes** **No**

Do you give permission for Vicky to briefly examine your files?
(this question is only for dual heritage young people) **Yes** **No**

Do you give permission for Vicky to talk to your social worker, carers etc.?
(this question is only for dual heritage young people) **Yes** **No**

Do you understand that you can refuse to answer any of the questions? **Yes** **No**

Would you like to take part in this research project? **Yes** **No**

Signed.....**Date**.....

Name in BLOCK LETTERS.....

Name of Name of Researcher.....**Date**.....

Appendix 3: Dissertation/Thesis Risk assessment form

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES **DISSERTATION/THESIS RISK ASSESSMENT FORM**

STUDENT'S NAME: Ufoo-Vicky Lambeth

DEGREE: PhD Student

YEAR: 1st Year

SUPERVISORS: Chris Warren-Adamson and Derek McGhee

Please note that all students undertaking work for dissertations/theses should complete this form. If your work involves fieldwork of any kind, you cannot proceed with this until this form has been reviewed and permission has been granted. (Fieldwork is regarded as any activity undertaken for the purpose of your research which involves the collection of information from others, whether by means of survey, observation, interview or other means such as internet or e-mail contact. It also encompasses visits to sites outside the University for the collection of material relating to your dissertation – e.g. consultation of documentary sources. Students planning to collect material in countries other than the UK should consult the School's guidelines on risk assessment for international travel at:

<http://www.socscinet.soton.ac.uk/safety/index.html#travel>

A copy of the form should be retained for inclusion in the final dissertation/thesis.

Students who change their original research plans will have to complete a new risk assessment form.

PART 1: DISSERTATION/PROJECT ACTIVITIES (to be completed by the student)
Narratives of dual heritage young people (those with one white and one black parent of African or Afro-Caribbean origin) in care or leaving care: Lessons for Practitioners.

What do you intend to do? (please provide a brief description of your project and details of your proposed methods) I intend to explore with young people of dual heritage in care or leaving care how they like to be identified and how others identify them. The study will also explore how the particular needs of these individuals are met and ways of improving existing services. By establishing what services are offered to them and their views on such services we shall be able to ascertain if they are appropriate to their needs. At the same time asking the young people for suggestions to changes to current services may provide means of enhancing existing services.

The research aims to develop messages of young people of dual heritage in care or leaving care and consider how they may help professionals, foster parents and others who intervene in the lives of this group. It is therefore important to consider methods which will provide rich and meaningful data. My proposed methods will involve a case study approach; including semi-structured interviews which I believe will be suitable for exploring the perceptions, opinions and views of this group. Using in-depth semi-structured interviews and analysing this groups' lived experience may reveal their care experiences and care needs. A case study approach will be used as a way of providing rich and meaningful data from listening to their life stories.

Will this involve collection of information from other people? (in the case of projects involving fieldwork, please provide a description of your proposed sample/case study site)

Potentially my proposed case study site will be a place convenient to participants in my study. It is unclear at the moment to state exactly where most interviews will be carried out.

If relevant, what location/s is/are involved?

The locations to be involved will probably be in offices or in people's homes.

Will you be working alone or with others?

Alone

PART 2: POTENTIAL SAFETY ISSUES/RISK ASSESSMENT (to be completed in conjunction with your supervisor)

Potential safety issues arising from proposed activity?

Potentially some personal risks

Person/s likely to be affected?

Myself

Likelihood of risk?

Very slight

PART 3: PRECAUTIONS/RISK REDUCTION (to be completed in conjunction with your supervisor)

Existing precautions:

I will let friends and family know whom I will be meeting and where I will be meeting.

I will try and conduct interviews, when I can, in public places

Proposed risk reduction strategies if existing precautions are not adequate:

Not applicable

Use of mobile telephone - Informing others of where I am going and indicating an approximate time to be spent there and if I fail to return by certain time to make contact.

Completed by: (name)	Signature	Date
Ufoo-Vicky Lambeth		16 August 2006
Supervisor's name:	Signature	Date
Dr Derek McGhee		16 August 2006

Appendix 4: Flyer given to participants attending In care/Leaving care conference at Southampton in July 2006

My research will comply with the Code of Ethics of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Ethics Committee of the University of Southampton.

My understanding of research ethics will be informed by anti-discrimination and anti-oppressive practices. The well being of participants will be paramount and my aim is to ensure the participants will not be subject to any harm in the course of the study.

The title of my thesis is "Narratives of Young People of Dual Heritage in Care or Leaving Care: Lessons for Practitioners".



The research is being supervised by Chris Warren-Adams and Derek McGhee.

If you are interested in taking part, or would like additional information about the research, please contact:

Ufoo-Vicky Lambeth
Social Work Research Student
School of Social Sciences
University of Southampton
Highfield Campus
Southampton
SO17 1BJ


Telephone: 023 8059 3276
Mobile: 07771 578 376
Email: uvl100@soton.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest, I would welcome your participation.



**I
need
your
help**

How would you like to receive £10 or a £10 voucher at your favourite shop in return for an interview of issues around your identity and experiences in care or leaving care.



If you have been in care or you are leaving care and

- You have one white and one black parent of African or Afro/Caribbean origin
- You are 16 years or over
- You want autonomy to self identify
- You are keen to see existing services improved
- You want your needs to be met appropriately and adequately
- You want to be involved in decisions to do with your life

I would like to hear from you.

What is it about?

My name is Ufoo-Vicky (please call me Vicky). I am a 1st year PhD Student in the Division of Social Work at the University of Southampton.

As part of my PhD study, I am interested in interviewing young people of dual heritage in care or leaving care.

To find out:

- How they like to be identified
- How do others identify them
- What services are offered to them
- What do they think of the services offered to them
- How can these services be improved?

What will you be expected to do?

With your permission, our chat will be tape recorded, and notes will be taken. All these will be transcribed before being destroyed on completion of the study.

Where do you have to go?

Meetings can be held either in your place of work, residence, at school, University of Southampton or at another office, whichever is more convenient for you.

How will my research benefit you?

It is hoped that the information generated from all the participants in this research will help to increase our understanding of how dual heritage individuals like to be identified by others, and how they identify themselves.

Your involvement will help enhance the quality of services offered to young people of dual heritage in care or leaving care.

Will you receive anything for your participation?

If you participate I can offer you £10 or a £10 voucher, not as payment, but as a token of my appreciation.

Confidentiality

I am aware that information about you is very private to you and you may be wondering if anyone will be told of what you have to say. Anything you tell me will remain strictly confidential, and will not be identified by your name. At the completion of the study a report will be prepared summarising the findings from all participants.

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule for practitioners

Working with dual heritage young people who are being, or have been, looked after

Confidential

About the young person/persons

- First name? Family name? Other
- Age – date of birth
- Gender
- Cultural origin
- Country of birth
- Nationality
- Source of referral
- Time between referral and placement
- How long have you known the young person/persons?
- Current placement
- Languages spoken
- Religion
- Social Class

About the Practitioner

- Ethnicity
- Language spoken and degree of fluency
- Cultural origin
- Religion
- Experience of working with dual heritage young people
- Training received in working with this group
- Other relevant experience

About the organisation's work with looked-after, dual heritage young people

- Appraisal of policies regarding working with this group
- Links with organisations involved with looked-after, dual heritage young people
- Resources including specialist services used in working with this group
- Liaison with government departments
- Training given to help in your work with looked-after, dual heritage young people

Time before placement

The young person/persons talk about their life before placement

- Never
- Hardly ever/reluctantly
- Without prompting
- When prompted
- Sometimes spontaneously
- Often when prompted
- Talks about their past all the time

- Has a family tree been done with the young person/people?
- Has any life story work been done with the young person/people?
- Have you got a record of people who have played a significant role in the lives of the young person/persons?
- Have you got a record of important events, before and after placement?
- Have you got a record of the young person/people's medical history, including major illnesses, immunisations, medication, special diets, and so forth?
- Have you got a record of the young person/people's educational history (e.g. length and type of schooling, disruptions in education, exams taken/passed and level achieved)?

Have you got a record of the young person/people's emotional and behavioural development and evidence of difficulties and resilience in response to:

- Abuse and neglect
- Separation and loss (e.g. belonging, control, trustworthy relationships)
- Witnessing violence or traumatic events
- Adapting to new environment

Have you considered the young person/people's "religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural origin and linguistic background" [The Children Act 1989 – s22 (5)(c)] ?

- How would the young person/people describe their racial origin?
- How would the young person/people describe their cultural origin?
- How would the young person/people describe their religion?
- Which language did the young person/people speak before placement?

Caring for the young person/people

- How long has the young person/people being looked after by the present carers?
- Why were the carers chosen?
- Would you say that the young person/people are settled in their placement?
- What do you attribute this to?
- Are there unmet needs which may assist in making the placement a success?
- If yes, what are these and how are they being addressed?
- Is contact with birth families maintained? If no, please say why?
- If yes, please say how? How often?

Health

- How would you describe the young/person's present physical health?
- Is the young person/people receiving any medical treatment? If yes, what type and why?
- What is the young person/people's opinion on help given?
- Does the young person/people have any special dietary need on medical grounds?
- Is the young person/people receiving any therapeutic help? If yes, what type and why?
- What is the young person/people's opinion on help given?
- Are there any emotional or behavioural difficulties? If yes, are they being addressed? How? If not, why?

Education

- What type of education is the young person/people receiving?
- Are there any educational issues arising from this?
- Which lessons does the young person/people doing well at/enjoys the most?
- Does the young person/people require any extra educational support? If yes, is the support being given? How? If not, why?

Identity

- Does the young person/people have the autonomy to self identify?
- How does the young person/people identify themselves?
- How do you identify them?
- Does the young person/people belong to a religious group?
- Does the young person/people have the chance to follow the customs of their religion? If not, why?
- Can the young person/people name the racial or ethnic group they belong to?
- How much does the young person/people's present context reflect their racial/cultural origins, religious and linguistic background?
- Does the young person/people have the opportunities to speak the language of their minority parent?
- Does the young person/people eat foods which reflect their cultural origins?

Family and social relationships

- If the young person/people were to nominate people who provided them with physical/emotional support, affectionate and trustworthy relationships, whom would such a list include?
- How does the young person/people get on with their present carers/foster parents?
- What would you see as strengths or weaknesses in the relationship?
- How has the young person/people used their own skills and personal attributes in settling in a new environment?
- What or who has been of the most use in this placement process? How?
- Does the young person/people have a friendship network or a special friend?
- Does this network contain individuals who have been through similar experiences of being looked after?
- Would you say that the young person/people are popular with their peers?

Social Presentation

- How does the young person/people respond to affection?
- How does the young person/people respond to praise?
- How does the young person/people respond to criticism?
- Does the young person/people adjust their behaviour and conversation to different situations?
- Has the young person/people reported being bullied because of their dual heritage?
- How would you describe your own relationship with the young person/people currently?
- What are the significant things you have done which have made the relationship what it is?

Appendix 6: Interview schedule for foster/adoptive parents

Working with dual heritage young people, who are being, or have been, looked after

Confidential

About the young person/persons

- First name? Family name? Other
- Age – date of birth
- Gender
- Race
- Cultural origin
- Country of birth
- Nationality
- Source of referral
- How long have you looked after the young person/people?
- Languages spoken
- Religion
- Social Class

About carers/relatives/foster parents/friends

- Race
- Language spoken and degree of fluency
- Cultural origin
- Religion
- Experience of working with looked after, dual heritage young people
- Training received in working with this group
- Support given
- Contact with the young person/people's social worker/Persona Advisor
- Other relevant experience

Time before placement

The young person/persons talk about their life before placement

- Never
- Hardly ever/reluctantly
- Without prompting
- When prompted
- Sometimes spontaneously
- Often when prompted
- Talks about their past all the time
- Has a family tree been done with the young person/people?
- Has any life story work been done with the young person/people?
- Have you got a record of people who have played a significant role in the lives of the young person/persons?
- Have you got a record of important events, before and after placement?
- Have you got a record of the young person/people's medical history, including major illnesses, immunisations, medication, special diets, and so forth?

- Have you got a record of the young person/people's educational history (e.g. length and type of schooling, disruptions in education, exams taken/passed and level achieved)?

Have you got a record of the young person/people's emotional and behavioural development and evidence of difficulties and resilience in response to:-

- Abuse and neglect
- Separation and loss (e.g. belonging, control, trustworthy relationships)
- Witnessing violence or traumatic events
- Adapting to new environment

Have you considered the young person/people's "religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural origin and linguistic background" [The Children Act 1989 – s22 (5) (c)]?

- How would the young person/people describe their racial origin?
- How would the young person/people describe their cultural origin?
- How would the young person/people describe their religion?
- Which language did the young person/people speak before placement?

Caring for the young person/people

- How long has the young person/people being looked after by you?
- Why were you chosen?
- Would you say that the young person/people are settled in this placement?
- What do you attribute this to?
- Are there unmet needs which may assist in making the placement a success?
- If yes, what are these and how are they being addressed?
- Is contact with birth families maintained? If no, please say why?
- If yes, please say how? How often?

Health

- How would you describe the young/person's present physical health?
- Is the young person/people receiving any medical treatment? If yes, what type and why?
- What is the young person/people's opinion on help given?
- Does the young person/people have any special dietary need on medical grounds?
- Is the young person/people receiving any therapeutic help? If yes, what type and why?
- What is the young person/people's opinion on help given?
- Are there any emotional or behavioural difficulties? If yes, are they being addressed? How? If not, why?

Education

- What type of education is the young person/people receiving?
- Are there any educational issues arising from this?
- Which lessons does the young person/people doing well at/enjoys the most?
- Does the young person/people require any extra educational support? If yes, is the support being given? How? If not, why?

Identity

- Does the young person/people have the autonomy to self identify?
- How does the young person/people identify themselves?
- How do you identify them?
- Does the young person/people belong to a religious group?
- Does the young person/people have the chance to follow the customs of their religion? If not, why?
- Can the young person/people name the racial or ethnic group they belong to?
- How much does the young person/people's present context reflect their racial/cultural origins, religious and linguistic background?
- Does the young person/people have the opportunities to speak the language of their minority parent?
- Does the young person/people eat foods which reflect their cultural origins?

Family and social relationships

- If the young person/people were to nominate people who provided them with physical/emotional support, affectionate and trustworthy relationships, whom would such a list include?
- How do you get on with the young person/people?
- What would you see as strengths or weaknesses in the relationship?
- How has the young person/people used their own skills and personal attributes in settling in a new environment?
- What or who has been of the most use in this placement process? How?
- Does the young person/people have a friendship network or a special friend?
- Does this network contain individuals who have been through similar experiences of been looked after, or being looked after?
- Would you say that the young person/people are popular with their peers?

Social Presentation

- How does the young person/people respond to affection?
- How does the young person/people respond to praise?
- How does the young person/people respond to criticism?
- Does the young person/people adjust their behaviour and conversation to different situations?
- Has the young person/people reported being bullied because of their dual heritage?
- How would you describe your own relationship with the young person/people currently?
- What are the significant things you have done which have made the relationship what it is?

Appendix 7: Interview schedule for looked-after dual heritage young people

1. Place and date of birth
2. How do you identify yourself?
3. How do other people describe you?
4. Is your ethnicity clearly recorded and if so, who decides on what is recorded?
5. Are you more comfortable with one side of your heritage than the other
6. Do you feel more accepted by the white side of your family or the black side?
7. Have you experienced racism?
8. If you have experienced racism, is it mainly from white people or black people?
9. Where do you normally live?
10. When did you start being looked after?
11. How many different care or foster homes have you lived in?
12. Since your last placement in a residential home or foster care, how many supported living such as hostels etc have you lived in?
13. Have you lived in a local authority secure unit or Young Offenders Institution?
14. How would you describe your experiences as a looked after young person of dual heritage?
15. What improvements or changes would you like to see in current services?
16. What do you think of education?
17. Please tell me what is your highest level of education?
18. Are you employed?
19. What are your views on drugs?

Appendix 8: Social workers, carers, relatives, friends and foster parent's information sheet



School of Social Sciences
Division of
Social Work Studies
Tel: +44 (0) 23 8059 2772
Fax: +44 (0) 23 8059 8878

You are being requested to participate in this research as a social worker, Personal Adviser, carer relative, friend or foster/parent of a young person of dual heritage who is being, or has been, looked after. Your involvement in the research is very important because information relating to this group is scarce. Your understanding of present, past and future needs of these young people you are working with, friends with, or looking after will clarify their needs.

Often terms used for this group do not distinguish between those of African, Caribbean and Asian origin or dual/multiple heritages and this may affect services offered to them. Your account and reflection of your professional responses or your knowledge of them as carers or friends will clarify what is happening in the lives of dual heritage young people who are being, or have been, looked after.

Who is the researcher?

The researcher's name is Ufoo-Vicky Lambeth (Vicky). She is a PhD student at the University of Southampton. Her research project is on narratives of young people of dual heritage, who are being, or have been, looked after. The project which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) started in October 2005 and is due to be completed in September 2008.

Why is Vicky interested in this research?

Vicky is black and her interest in this area stems from experience as a parent of four dual heritage children. Questions on whether her children consider themselves 'White' or 'Black' and how they like to be identified, led her to read widely on dual heritage individuals, and increased her quest to want to know more about this group.

Vicky is interested in finding out:

- How dual heritage individuals like to be identified
- How others identify them
- What services are offered to them
- What they think of services offered to them
- How these services can be improved.

What does Vicky aim to achieve by doing this research?

Vicky hopes that the findings from her research will:

- Reduce the gap which exists between theory and practice

- Deepen our understanding of the experiences of young people of dual heritage who are being, or have been, looked after
- Provide evidence which can be used to inform policy and practice
- Improve services for dual heritage young people who are being, or have been, looked after.

How is Vicky going to do the research?

In order for Vicky to learn all she can about young people of dual heritage, who are being, or have been, looked after; she would like to spend time with 10 different young people (male and female) aged 16 - 24. This will help her to find out about their lived experiences by asking them questions like:

- At what age did they start being looked after?
- How long have they been looked after?
- When did they stop being looked after?
- Did they have contact with their birth family?
- Do they have exposure to both heritages?
- What are their educational achievements?
- Do they think the social perception of dual heritage individuals is negative?
- Does being looked after mean that decisions are made for them?
- How would they describe their experiences while being looked after?
- How would they describe their experiences now they are no longer looked after?

There are no wrong answers to these questions. Vicky is interested in their experiences as young people of dual heritage, who are being, or have been, looked after. She understands that people's experience may be different and every thing each participant has to say about their experience is important. In order to ensure that none of this important information is missed, the young people's consent, our chat is tape-recorded and taken. All these are transcribed before being destroyed on completion of the research.

In order to expand on this information, Vicky has asked the young people interviewed for permission to contact key people in their lives (e.g., social workers, carers, foster/parents or friends) to gain their perspectives on the young person's experience. The interview schedule Vicky will use for this is enclosed. As with the interviews with the young people these interviews will be audio-taped with your permission.

In order to plan for what should be happening in the future especially regarding supporting effective practice; the Children's Services need to get a clear picture of what is happening locally. At the completion of the study a report will be prepared summarising the findings from all participants. It is hoped that the information generated from all the participants in this research will help to increase our understanding of how dual heritage individuals like to be identified by others and how they identify themselves. Your involvement and that of the young people will help enhance the quality of services offered to young people of dual heritage, who are being, or have been, looked after. Furthermore, the involvement of foster carers and practitioners, relatives or friends will provide rich data as well as different perspectives. This may also highlight carers and practitioners' needs, for example, training and general support when intervening in the lives of young people of dual heritage in care or leaving care.

Confidentiality

There are things researchers cannot keep confidential (e.g. physical and sexual abuse) other than that anything else will remain strictly confidential, and you will not be identified by your name. Vicky will ensure that the research findings and any written work produced will be made anonymous. When describing research settings she will take care to ensure that

anonymity is not compromised. Vicky will write the work in such a way that participants and their organisations are not recognised by using assumed names as well as altering certain biographical contents. Participants will be offered an opportunity to suggest assumed names to be used and this will be another way of involving participants in the research process.

Vicky's research will comply with the Ethics Committee of the University of Southampton and the Code of Ethics of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Participants' well being will be paramount and Vicky aims to ensure that no one will be subject to any harm in the course of the study.

How long will Vicky keep the data?

Vicky will keep the data securely stored for a period of 10 years in compliance with the University of Southampton's guidelines. The data will be destroyed after the recommended period.

Where and how will the data be stored?

Vicky will store the data securely in her computer which can only be accessed by her using a personal password. The written notes and taped interviews will be kept in a locked desk.

Who will have access to the data?

The only people who will have access to the data besides Vicky will be her supervisors and perhaps the examiners. After the examination the data will be destroyed.

Along with your information sheet please find the following:

- a covering letter
- consent and release forms.
- interview schedule for young people of dual heritage who are being, or have been, looked after
- interview schedule for carers/relatives/foster parents/friends.

What happens now?

Thank you for taking time to read this and it is hoped what you have read explains roughly where Vicky is coming from and heading to. Please if you or your colleagues require any point to be clarified, have any questions, comments or amendments do not hesitate to contact Vicky on the address below. If you are willing to participate in this study please contact:

Vicky Lambeth: Tel: 023 8059 3276, Mobile: 07771 578 376 or Email: uvl100@soton.ac.uk

Vicky is keen for you to realise that your involvement is voluntary and you can withdraw from the interview at any time without feeling threatened or service provision being affected.

Also if you want to complain about Vicky's conduct you may do so by contacting her study supervisors: Professor Jan Fook and Dr Derek McGhee. They can be contacted on **JFook@soton.ac.uk** and **D.P.McGhee@soton.ac.uk**.

Every effort will be made to ensure that this projected is conducted professionally and in such a way that does not cause you discomfort or unnecessary stress. If you have any cause to complain or would like to give any feed back, please telephone the University of Southampton on extension 28849 or e-mail **Ld7@soton.ac.uk**.

Appendix 9: Participant's Release Form in accordance to Data Protection Act 1998



Division of Social Work Studies
School of Social Sciences
Tel: +44(0)23 8059 9393
Fax: +44(0)23 8059 2954

This is a release form in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Please read and sign your name at the bottom of the form if you agree with how Vicky is going to use and store the information you are giving her.

Ufoo-Vicky Lambeth will store this information in a locked desk and in 'my document' section of her computer which can only be accessed by herself. The information will be stored for the duration of her research including examination which will be around December 2008. The only people who will have access to this information will be myself, my supervisors and examiners. After completion of her research the information will be destroyed.

I agree for Ufoo-Vicky Lambeth to use and store this information this way.

Signed.....Date.....

Name in BLOCK LETTERS.....

Name of Researcher.....Date.....

Appendix 10: A covering letter



School of Social Science, Social Work Studies, University of Southampton, Highfield Campus, Southampton, Hampshire, SO17 IBJ

A Letter to social workers, carers, foster/parents or any other person identified by the young people as their significant other.

Dear

My name is Ufoo-Vicky Lambeth and I am a PhD student at the University of Southampton, School of Social Sciences in the Division of Social Work Studies.

My research project is 'care experiences of looked-after, dual heritage young people' (those with one white and one black parent of African Caribbean origin).

.....has taken part in this project and has given me permission to contact you. I would very much like to speak to you about what you know about experience as a looked-after young person. If you agree to be interviewed, the interview will be tape-recorded but your identity will be kept anonymous. Your confidentiality and that of your organization will be respected.

Please find enclosed participants' information sheet, the interview schedule, consent and release forms. The names of the people supervising this research project are given on the information sheet. If you have any comments to make about the way this research is being carried out please do not hesitate to contact them.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Vicky Lambeth

Encls.

Appendix 11: Participants' vignettes

Participant's Vignettes						
Name	Background			Age entered Care	Education	Reasons for being looked-after
	Sex	Age	Relationship			
Safi	Female	20	white mother; white step-father; white boy friend; son and white half-brother	15	five GCSEs; GNVQ in health and social care;. A/s level in health and social care.	Abuse and neglect (by step-father)
Amina	Female	19	white mother; white step-father; half-sister; four brothers; three step-brothers; boyfriend (dual heritage)	14	10 GCSEs; three A-levels At university	Unable to take on the caring role because of parents' mental health illness
Joachim	Male	17	white mother; white step-father; sister; three brothers; three step-brothers; half-sister	Eight	three GCSEs	Abuse and neglect (by step-father)
Musa	Male	19	white mother; dual heritage half-brother; white girlfriend	One	Failed his GCSEs	Abuse and neglect (by foster carer)
Sue	Female	19	white mother; one brother; one dual heritage half sister; black step-father	five	10 GCSEs one C and nine Ds	Abuse and neglect (by birth mother)
Thomas	Male	20	white mother; one dual heritage brother white step-dad	Nine	none	Abuse and neglect (by foster carer)
Rosie	Female	23	white mother; six half-brothers; (black); two half-sisters (white); two brothers (sons of the adoptive parents) husband and one son; white in-laws (white)	Fostered at birth Adopted at three.	Eight GCSEs and three A-Levels. Degree level	Abuse and neglect (by birth mother)
Jude		20	white mother; dual heritage brother	seven	Six GCSEs and three A-Levels. At university	Abuse and neglect; (by birth mother)
Sam		21	white mother; dual heritage brother	two	none	Abuse and neglect; (by birth mother)

Participant's Vignettes						
Name	Background			Age entered Care	Education	Reasons for being looked-after
	Sex	Age	Relationship			
Roger		20	two brothers; white mother	five	10 GCSEs; four A/levels At university	Abuse and neglect; (by birth mother)
Fiona		17	white mother; one sister; dual heritage half-brother; four white step-siblings step-father; (mixed –race)	eleven	none	After divorce challenging behaviour unmanageable by both parents.
Josie		17	white mother; one sister	six	Trained as a chef	Physical Abuse; (by birth father)
Francis		18	white mother; one brother	five	none	Mother unable to cope due to substance misuse
Mimi		24	Adoptive white parents; white mother adopted dual heritage brother	Fostered at one Adopted at five	Degree level	Left with grandfather when age four months. G/father in and out of prison
Adam		21	white mother; adopted dual heritage sister; white adoptive parents	three	Degree level	Mother gave him away for adoption due to prostitution.
Timothy		18	white mother, brother, aunty, sister	six	At college studying performance art	Mother unable to cope due to substance misuse

Appendix 12: Examples of some raw data.

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth</p> <p>Interviewee: Musa</p> <p><i>Vicky: Thank you very much for coming and I hope this is not too early for you. As you saw in the consent and information forms this is about your care experiences and feel free to stop and ask me to explain anything which is unclear. The interview will be recorded</i></p> <p>Musa : That is okay</p> <p><i>Vicky: So the digital recorder will be on now and we are ready to start.</i></p> <p>Musa: And you are recording it?</p> <p><i>Vicky: Yes, The most important thing to remember is that at any time you can say ‘Vicky I want to stop’ or ‘I don’t want to answer that question’ that will be fine by me.</i></p> <p>Musa: Yes.</p> <p><i>Vicky: The life-curve is for you to write down important events say from birth to where you are today. This means your participation is more than answering questions from me.</i></p> <p>Musa: Ok.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Perhaps we could begin by you telling me your date of birth please?</i></p> <p>Musa: I was born 27th September 1988.</p> <p><i>Vicky: At what age did you enter care?</i></p> <p>Musa: I think I was about one year old</p> <p><i>Vicky: Ok. So you have always lived in a residential setting?</i></p> <p>Musa: No, my brother and I love each other but fight all the time and lived with foster carers for quite some time and then we kind of swapped over because his wife died, and he re-married and his second wife became our carer, and then she said she didn’t want to leave us with him anymore because he used to beat me and my brother up. We were put in care to be cared for but he abused us instead. We lived with our real mum for a few months or so. I have pictures with her, and I know we used to visit her in the prison, but that is ages ago. I do not know why the visits stopped</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Establishing rapport , building a relationship, reassurance, Process of building trust and ensuring that the participant is relaxed</p> <p>Assesses the set up</p> <p>reinforce right to opt out</p> <p>visual aid benefits and disadvantages highlighted</p> <p>abandoned use of life-curve</p> <p>What happened at that age?</p> <p>Relationships: dual heritage half-brother and abusive foster carers</p> <p>Possibly a relief</p> <p>those supposed to provide care abused them – need to monitor services</p> <p>No contact</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Musa relaxed and confident</p> <p>Musa keen to kick off</p> <p>Reluctant to be recorded</p> <p>Gives consent to tape record</p> <p>Appears unsure</p> <p>literacy skills quite poor</p> <p>cannot write or read</p> <p>Formation of new relationships, hope of safety, learning to trust</p> <p>loss, grief, bereavement, sad</p> <p>Stigma of being in care, being dual heritage, mum in prison</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data</u>	<u>2nd stage data</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Joachim <i>Vicky: OK, Joachim, I'm Vicky and thank you so much for agreeing to see me. So what you tell me will be confidential but remember there are things researchers are unable to keep to themselves as explained in the information sheet, your name, the people you've worked with will be made anonymous so they won't at all be recognised.</i> Joachim: OK. <i>Vicky: How do you describe yourself?</i> Joachim: As both white and black. <i>Vicky: As both. So you are proud of both heritages?</i> Joachim: Yeah. <i>Vicky: Um, so how do you feel then about how other people describe you?</i> Joachim: No different. People call me mixed race, some people say I'm white, but I just tell them no, I'm not and that's it. <i>Vicky: Has anyone asked you to identify either as black or as white or 'mixed race'?</i> Joachim: No. <i>Vicky: Do you have much chance to be with both sides of your family?</i> Joachim: Well, with my white side of the family, my mum, there's only my mum, and my youngest brother and the only other family I see is my dad, so that's my dad's side. Like all my other brothers and sisters, my half brothers and sisters that my dad had before he met my mum... <i>Vicky: So do you have regular contact with your father?</i> Joachim: Yeah, once every fortnight and sometimes I go and see him more. <i>Vicky: Where does he live?</i> Joachim: In a home for the mentally ill. My mum is also mentally ill but not as bad and she kicked him out.</p>	<p>1st stage data interrogation Comments:</p> <p>Rapport building and restating the importance of anonymity and confidentiality but also stating that there may be situations where this is not possible for researchers to adhere to</p> <p>From his dress mode I thought he would have said black!</p> <p>Embraces both</p> <p>Very sure of himself Presented himself as a very self-assured young person</p> <p>Free to identify as he wishes</p> <p>Yet all his placements were with black carers mum was disowned by her parents</p> <p>Whether relationship which exists between half and step siblings is good or bad was not disclosed</p> <p>17 at the time of the interview so taken on responsibility from a very young age</p>	<p>2nd stage data interrogation Comments:</p> <p>Crucial to be up front because issues of confidentiality can cause ethical dilemma</p> <p>Lesson: never assume</p> <p>Comfortable and proud of his dual heritage identity</p> <p>Happy with himself</p> <p>Embraces both his white and black heritage</p> <p>Mum was disowned by her own family Racism within the family</p> <p>Regular visits to dad But the effect on Joachim who was very close to him are unknown</p> <p>Extremely complex – Additional stigma of having parents who are mentally ill</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data</u>	<u>2nd stage data</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Safi (not her real name) Juma=Boyfriend (not his real name) <i>Vicky: Thank you very much for agreeing to take part and as mentioned earlier this will be recorded and will use the life-curve and the circle I was telling you when the tape recorder broke. We are ready to start now and please remember that at any time you can stop and you do not have to answer questions you are not comfortable with.</i> Safi: Yep <i>Vicky: Starting from when you were born, could you just begin by telling me what happened please?</i> Safi: Yup well I were born January 23rd 1987 my mum is white British and I was made to believe that I was white British due to the fact that well I lived with my mum's family which is her parents and my aunt and my uncles and then I had a white stepfather that came into my life when I was two and at that age you're not going to think well two years ago I didn't have you and now you're here it's well that's my dad. <i>Vicky: So you hadn't seen your natural father by then?</i> Safi: No I hadn't seen him at all so I believed my mum when she said that he was my dad but when I was about seven or eight my younger brother was born and there was so much difference between us I've got really curly hair, I've got really dark eyes and features of a dual heritage person but my brother had nice big bright blue eyes and fair straight hair and I started asking questions about who my real dad was. <i>Vicky: How old were you at this time?</i> Safi: I was seven or eight and that whole time I believed that my stepfather was my natural birth father</p>	<p>interrogation Comments:</p> <p>Reminded Safi that she was free to stop at any time. Safi has a baby and this helped to break the ice when I arrived. The tape recorder broke and her boy friend saved the day by setting up a device using his computer. Date of birth Socialised and brought up with white values and denied any knowledge that one parent was black.</p> <p>Anyone is more than likely to believe their mother at the age of two</p> <p>Feelings of betrayal Painful if this is from own mother</p> <p>Looked different from half-brother and this increased suspicion re the identity of real dad.</p> <p>Lots of lies from age of two and half to this time</p>	<p>interrogation Comments:</p> <p>The first few minutes are crucial in forming rapport and trust</p> <p>identity 'whiteness' white British</p> <p>Emphasis on white British mother is white</p> <p>Why socialise her in this way?</p> <p>Family's fear of stigma from neighbours? Passing for white due to privileges perceived to go with being white perhaps.</p> <p>Building up trust with adults could be difficult later in life</p> <p>Emphasis on physical appearance</p> <p>Need to belong and look like the rest of the family perhaps</p>

<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Amina <i>Vicky: OK. Please feel free to say whatever you want or if there are questions you don't want to answer, feel free to say so</i> Amina: OK.</p> <p><i>Vicky: So, when were you born?</i> Amina: August 24th 1988. <i>Vicky: When did you become looked-after away from your birth parents?</i> Amina: I was 14 before I went into care, my mum had a stroke and then um, like she was in hospital for a couple of months and my step-dad looked after us. And then she came out of hospital, and then after that like, our relationship started to deteriorate. <i>Vicky: Your relationship with mum?</i> Amina: Yeah <i>Vicky: How long were you then in care?</i> Amina: Um, three years. <i>Vicky: In the foster home?</i> Amina: Yeah but when I was first put there I ran away <i>Vicky: Why did you run away?</i> Amina: There was nothing wrong but I didn't really like living with some one that I didn't know ... <i>Vicky: What was the carer's ethnicity?</i> Amina: Jamaican Vicky: How do you identify yourself? Amina: Well, I see myself as dual heritage. <i>Vicky: So have you always seen yourself as dual heritage?</i> Amina: Yeah, <i>Vicky: So your mum is?</i> Amina: White. <i>Vicky: And your dad?</i> Amina: Black</p>	<p><u>1st stage data interrogation</u> Comments:</p> <p>Rapport building and re-assurance</p> <p>Started being looked-after at the age of 14.</p> <p>Is Mum's illness being given as the reason for becoming looked-after?</p> <p>A teenager pushing boundaries perhaps?</p> <p>Stability at least</p> <p>No wonder- perhaps fear</p> <p>Said she hated living with strangers and was not given any choice in placement preference</p> <p>It is inappropriate not to involve a 14 year old</p> <p>Why Jamaican? She knew practically nothing about Jamaican life style.</p> <p>Takes pride in both regarded her dual heritage positively</p> <p>lived with her mother prior to entering care</p> <p>both parents mentally ill</p>	<p><u>2nd stage data interrogation</u> Comments:</p> <p>freedom to withdraw</p> <p>What was the relationship with mum like before she went to hospital?</p> <p>Did the stroke affect mum perhaps? Possibly step-dad gave her more freedom whilst mum was in hospital</p> <p>Provision of services based on assumptions Consultation with her would have helped</p> <p>Ethical considerations</p> <p>assumed as best suited to meet her needs</p> <p>Clear about who she is and confident</p> <p>aware of her identity</p> <p>effects of mental illness on parenting?</p>
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<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Sue</p> <p><i>Vicky: And ... so who is white and who is black?</i> Sue: My mum is white. <i>Vicky: Ok</i> Sue: Mm. <i>Vicky: And dad...?</i> Sue: Black. <i>Vicky: Black, did you say Caribbean?</i> Sue: Mm. <i>Vicky: When did you become a looked-after young person?</i> Sue: Around ... five years old. <i>Vicky: Do you want to do the life-curve now or when you have finished talking, would that be easier for you?</i> Sue: No, I will do it now. <i>Vicky: Ok. You said you became looked-after at the age of five, do you know why?</i> Sue: My mum used to beat me and my brother <i>Vicky: where was your birth father?</i> Sue: We never met him <i>Vicky: Who is older, you or your brother.</i> Sue: My brother and we get on well <i>Vicky: Did you go into children's home?</i> Sue: No, We lived with a foster carer. <i>Vicky: What was the ethnicity of your carer?</i> Sue: She was black <i>Vicky: Black African or black ...</i> Sue: Black Caribbean. <i>Vicky: How long were you with this carer?</i> Sue: Erm ... 11 years. <i>Vicky: You stayed from the age of 5 until you were how old.?</i> Sue: Well I was 16. <i>Vicky: With the same carer?</i> Sue: The same lady. <i>Vicky: What about your brother?</i> Sue: He left two years before me. <i>Vicky: Were you asked to leave at 16?</i> Sue: I left because I wanted my own space <i>Vicky: Any contact with your birth mother?</i> Sue: Sometimes <i>Vicky: And your brother?</i> Sue: We meet twice a week</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Ascertaining parent's ethnicity</p> <p>Attempts to draw her in</p> <p>rejection loss abuse No knowledge of birth father</p> <p>Good relationship</p> <p>Better than a residential setting</p> <p>why not white?</p> <p>stability</p> <p>age most young people involved in GCSEs studies – Transition into adulthood perhaps</p> <p>Wanted freedom</p> <p>Not keen to talk about mother</p> <p>Gets on well</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>– appeared distant</p> <p>Why? Anger due to absent partner?</p> <p>At least they had each other</p> <p>Meeting child's cultural background?</p> <p>Helpful having her brother there</p> <p>tricky time those living with birth families do not have to leave home at 16</p> <p>Independence</p> <p>do not get on good friends</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth</p> <p>Interviewee: Rosie</p> <p>Rosie: I was born in August 14th 1984</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Were you born in this country or abroad?</i></p> <p>Rosie: In this country but not in London...in the country somewhere...everyone was white</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Mmm</i></p> <p>Rosie: Yes, I did not see any black people</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Do you mean in the house you lived in or in the streets and like in the shops, schools and</i></p> <p>Rosie: I have always lived in a white area and although there are few black people now, things were different when I was growing up. I did not see any black people and my mother gave me up soon after I was born. I went through four foster placements before being adopted at the age of six by my white mum and dad. I do not know why my birth mother had me and then gave me away and sometimes I wonder if she was afraid of prejudice. I do not mean she was afraid of me facing prejudice, but how she would have coped with it herself.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>You mean your birth mother?</i></p> <p>Rosie: Yeah and sometimes I used to think maybe something was wrong with me, but I do not think like that now...My life has turned out alright but it is good to know your history and where you came from...it is not easy to forget that your birth parents rejected you.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Aha</i></p> <p>Rosie: My mum and dad were very brave I think to adopt a 'black child' at the time, yes even if I had a white mother and a black father I was still black and I do not think it was easy for them in an area where there were no black people.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>What about the relatives of your adoptive parents?</i></p> <p>Rosie: They were not very keen on the idea. Whenever I visited my uncle if visitors came I was not allowed out of my bedroom</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Rural setting and no contact with black people</p> <p>primarily white Community</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Disruptions</p> <p>Permanency at last</p> <p>Sense of loss and Rejection</p> <p>Questioning and trying to understand why she was put into care</p> <p>Wanted to know Her biological roots</p> <p>Praise for adoptive parents –</p> <p>White parents</p> <p>Stigma perhaps? Fear of the unknown</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Undoubtedly embraced White culture</p> <p>Perhaps due to racism</p> <p>Possibly both in the community and within the family</p> <p>The torment of working out why she was given up</p> <p>Sense of loss</p> <p>Blaming self</p> <p>Rejection by birth parents hard to deal with</p> <p>positive care experiences</p> <p>parents were aware of racism and prejudice that was likely to affect Rosie</p> <p>Racism within family</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage Data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage Data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth</p> <p>Interviewee: Sam</p> <p><i>Vicky: Were you born in this country?</i> Sam: Yes born and bred here that is me. <i>Vicky: Good</i> Sam: I suppose so although sometime the way they treat us you would not think so you know. <i>Vicky: What do you mean?</i> Sam: Never mind. <i>Vicky: I would be interested to hear what you mean if you want to share</i> Sam: I thought you wanted to hear about my experiences in care. <i>Vicky: Sam, Yes of course but I am also interested in everything about you which you are prepared to share with me. As explained earlier, I want to find out how you describe yourself and how other people describe you</i> Sam: Alright, I don't have all day you know. <i>Vicky: Ok Sam, let us start by you telling me how you happen to be a looked-after person?</i> Sam: It is a long story. <i>Vicky: Aha</i> Sam: Me and my brother we were taken away when we were very young and put in care <i>Vicky: At what age did you enter care?</i> Sam: I think I was about two year old and my brother was only one. <i>Vicky: Ok. So you have always lived in a residential setting?</i> Sam: No, my brother and I lived in a foster home and now I am living independently <i>Vicky: Do you live with your brother now?</i> Sam: No <i>Vicky: please tell me about your experiences</i> Sam: In care you mean? <i>Vicky: yes please</i> Sam: Horrible. Absolutely terrible. <i>Vicky: What do you meant?</i> Sam: Our first foster carer abused us <i>Vicky: Did you report this?</i> Sam: Social services knew and did nothing <i>Vicky: And then?</i> Sam: He had a new wife who kicked him out</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Britain is the only home he knows</p> <p>He is affected by social issues</p> <p>Reluctant to talk about certain issues</p> <p>May be it is safer to focus on care experiences</p> <p>Gentle probing</p> <p>Explore reasons for entering care</p> <p>A silence followed</p> <p>Expressions of sadness</p> <p>Expression of a sense of loss and rejection</p> <p>How was the placement decided?</p> <p>Negative care experiences</p> <p>Stability or abuse?</p> <p>Felt et down</p> <p>That was fortune</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Expressed pride in his British identity</p> <p>Proud of the British identity but society treats them as outsiders</p> <p>Perhaps afraid to re-open closed chapters in his past</p> <p>Possibly painful memories of being badly treated</p> <p>Still reluctant to disclose information</p> <p>Did that mean the placement was right for both?</p> <p>Placement was with a black family</p> <p>Abused by those supposed to care for them A safer option or negligent?</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Roger</p> <p><i>Vicky: Did you live with both your parents before you started being looked-after?</i> Roger: Nope <i>Vicky: Were your parents divorced or did your father work and lived away from home?</i> Roger: My mother was not married to him and he left when my mother was pregnant with my youngest brother. <i>Vicky: Have you got any contact with your father's side of the family?</i> Roger: Nope. <i>Vicky: Which side of your heritage do you lean to more?</i> Roger: What do you mean? <i>Vicky: Do you affiliate with the white side more than the black?</i> Roger: I know nothing about my black side of the family and I am always with white people. My mother is an only child so I do not have aunts and uncles and my grand parents died before I was born. <i>Vicky: How would you describe yourself?</i> Roger: I am both white and black. I am me but if I am filling forms I put down mixed race because that is the category which has been chosen for me. <i>Vicky: By whom?</i> Roger: No one asked me so I am assuming that someone decided. <i>Vicky: If you had been asked, what would have been your choice?</i> Roger: Brown <i>Vicky: How do other people describe you?</i> Roger: Mixed race Vicky: Do you mind that? Roger: Nope <i>Vicky: At what age did you start being looked after?</i> Roger: I was five years old. Vicky: Do you contact your birth mother? Roger: No.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Ascertain primary care giver prior to entering care</p> <p>Never met birth father</p> <p>Expresses feelings of loss and rejection</p> <p>No affiliation with his birth family</p> <p>Socialisation within white neighbourhood</p> <p>Confident with both his backgrounds</p> <p>Labelled by society as one or the other</p> <p>Capable to choose own identity</p> <p>Participant was contented with the recognition of mixed race people</p> <p>Too young to be consulted?</p> <p>The absent birth parents. Any say?</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Participant appears angry</p> <p>Little is known of birth father even from the case file</p> <p>No other known blood relations</p> <p>He considered his carers as his only family.</p> <p>More likely to identify with white than black</p> <p>Complexity and diversity of identity</p> <p>Assumptions about identity</p> <p>Need autonomy to self-identify</p> <p>Is a five year old able to indicate placement preferences?</p> <p>Whose interest?</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky:</p> <p>Interviewee: Fiona</p> <p><i>Vicky: OK. Now what is important is to remember that this is your show really, it's your interview so you say as much or as little as you want. If you want to pull out for whatever reason, please say and I'll respect your wish.</i></p> <p>Fiona: OK</p> <p><i>Vicky: Thank you, maybe we can start by you telling me how you happened to be a looked-after young person?</i></p> <p>Fiona: My dad couldn't control me no more so he put me in care.</p> <p><i>Vicky: What do you mean by control you?</i></p> <p>Fiona: I was off the rails, coz I wanted to do as I please. Didn't want to take orders...</p> <p><i>Vicky: How old were you then?</i></p> <p>Fiona: I was about twelve ... eleven. Eleven to twelve, I don't know, I've been here so long I don't know anymore.</p> <p><i>Vicky: So where did you go at the age of eleven?</i></p> <p>Fiona: I went into foster care.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Alright. Did you stay with the same foster carer?</i></p> <p>Fiona: No, coz I kept running off, I didn't like it. It was horrible.</p> <p><i>Vicky: What was horrible?</i></p> <p>Fiona: Being with different people who I don't know. So I kept running off.</p> <p><i>Vicky: So at the age of eleven were you taken to the placement or did you have any say?</i></p> <p>Fiona: No, I was just taken there. I can't tell them where to put me. They wouldn't listen if I tried.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Why do you say so?</i></p> <p>Fiona: Because they don't listen to nothing.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Who are they?</i></p> <p>Fiona: Social services. They're the people who look after me, they don't listen very much</p> <p><i>Vicky: Sorry to hear that.</i></p> <p>Fiona: I am sorry too</p> <p><i>Vicky: What about your social worker</i></p> <p>Fiona: My social worker does not seem to have any time for me at all.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Building rapport and trust.</p> <p>Reassurance that at any time we can stop the interview</p> <p>Boundaries meant control</p> <p>Off the rails – she talked about drinking heavily and sleeping rough</p> <p>Could tell by body Language that she was rather stressed</p> <p>People she did not know – at 11 why not talk things through with her?</p> <p>No involvement in placement decision</p> <p>Wanted to be with birth parents on her terms perhaps?</p> <p>No choice Was not listened to Need to be listened to Behaviour of an uninvolved parent</p> <p>Too busy perhaps</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>At first appeared restless and fidgety</p> <p>Perhaps not the boundaries, but how they were given</p> <p>Lacked guidance perhaps?</p> <p>instability</p> <p>Birth mother had new partner Did she feel left out?</p> <p>Whose needs are being met?</p> <p>Too busy? Uncaring?</p> <p>If not listened to you feel devalued</p> <p>Vital to listen insensitive</p> <p>How good a parent?</p> <p>Heavy case loads?</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth</p> <p>Interviewee: Jude</p> <p>Vicky: <i>It makes it easier to keep an accurate record if we tape record but</i></p> <p>Jude: I shall have more freedom to say what I want if I know that you are not recording and I think I shall be more comfortable too.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>The thing is if we do not tape record it may take longer because I shall have to make some notes.</i></p> <p>Jude: That is okay</p> <p>Vicky: <i>I shall put my digital recorder back in the bag then</i></p> <p>Jude: So where do you want me to start:</p> <p>Vicky: <i>You can begin by telling me your date of birth and here is the life-curve 'S' which you can use to recall significant events in your life chronologically. Later on we shall use the intimacy circle where you put yourself in the centre and people who are significant to you are placed as close to you as possible.</i></p> <p>Jude: I was born in October 1987</p> <p>Vicky: <i>How did you end up being looked-after?</i></p> <p>Jude: Through abuse and neglect...my brother and I you know</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Your brother</i></p> <p>Jude: Yes</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Who is older?</i></p> <p>Jude: I am</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Where were you both born?</i></p> <p>Jude: Trent</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Rather semi-rural</i></p> <p>Jude: Yeah</p> <p>Vicky: <i>You were saying that you and your brother</i></p> <p>Jude: Yeah, that my birth mother used to beat my brother and I a lot and she would leave us locked up in the house alone all night and often we did not have anything to eat. We used to steal for survival...she said we were stupid and that she hated us.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Negotiations</p> <p>Who say participants do not have power?</p> <p>Situations where participants have the last word</p> <p>Who is in charge?</p> <p>Explaining some of the methods (tools)</p> <p>Providing space</p> <p>Helps to identify the important events and people</p> <p>Reasons for being looked-after</p> <p>Abuse and neglect</p> <p>Responsibility for the young sibling fell on her</p> <p>Did the context play a part?</p> <p>Angry perhaps? Why? Being left to bring up two children on her own possibly-</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>May have own reasons</p> <p>It is important for participants to relax</p> <p>On going negotiations</p> <p>facilitator start at where participants are at</p> <p>She began to relax As very anxious before</p> <p>It is important to investigate what makes mothers to abuse their children</p> <p>Was she trying to cope with hostility as well as bring up her two children perhaps?</p> <p>Locked up-What if there was fire?</p> <p>Physical, verbal, emotional abuse</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Interviewee: Francis</p> <p><i>Vicky: When you moved from foster homes, did that mean you changed schools as well?</i> Francis: Yap <i>Vicky:</i> That must have been very hard Francis: Very hard especially when this meant starting new friendships every time a new placement was found.</p> <p><i>Vicky: How would you describe your care experiences?</i> Francis: Not very nice <i>Vicky: Why?</i> Francis: I did not have any stability and this affected my education. <i>Vicky: Talking about education, can you tell me how many GCSEs you got please?</i> Francis: None <i>Vicky:</i> Any particular reasons for this? Francis: I don't know? <i>Vicky:</i> Did you miss school then? Francis: Sometimes <i>Vicky:</i> What did your teachers say? Francis: I don't even think they noticed that I was not there. <i>Vicky:</i> What do you mean? Francis: My teachers did not like me and every time there were fights I used to get into trouble even though I was not the one who started the fight. <i>Vicky:</i> What were the fights about? Francis: Bullying, name calling and racism I guess. <i>Vicky: When you say racism, what do you mean?</i> Francis: I grew up in this white community and people were really racists. The way they looked at me and the names I was called you know like f*****nigger or other nasty names and being told to go where I came from and these people failed to see I was born in this country and I had the right to be here as much as they did.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Instability,</p> <p>New environment means new friends, school, social workers teachers etc. Moving from pillar to post is disruptive even for those who have not been abused</p> <p>Poor educational achievement</p> <p>Irregularities in school attendance</p> <p>Practitioners/carers and teachers to be vigilant</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Would it have been different in another context?</p> <p>Stares merely due to his skin colour</p> <p>Seen as alien although born here in Britain - where else does he go?</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Task of making new friends</p> <p>Inconsistency</p> <p>Negative care experiences</p> <p>Lack of stability because of regular movements between placements meant poor achievement</p> <p>No time to adjust and get on with school work if</p> <p>Institutional racism perhaps?</p> <p>Teachers' low expectation of this group could have played a role</p> <p>Seen as different</p> <p>Seen as a terrorist perhaps? Hence 'go back' where you come from? Name calling and Negative labels</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Josie</p> <p><i>Vicky: Are you comfortable with your identity?</i> Josie: Yes. <i>Vicky: Do you know why your dad wants you to identify as black?</i> Josie: I have no idea but according to like my dad if you have a bit of black then you are black. <i>Vicky: Do you talk to your dad about this?</i> Josie: No, it is like hitting a brick wall constantly so I just leave it. <i>Vicky: Do you find that you are accepted by both?</i> Josie: Erm I am accepted by my mum's side now, not by my dad's side. But it was my Nan who didn't want my dad and my mum to get together because my mum was white. <i>Vicky: Ok, which Nan?</i> Josie: My black Nan, but also, my Nan on my mum's side didn't want my mum and my dad to get together because my dad was black. <i>Vicky: Oh, so they had confrontation from both sides?</i> Josie: Yes, they had confrontation from both sides of the family because their parents believed they should marry into their own race, and have kids of their own race, not mixed kids. <i>Vicky: Please tell me why you became looked-after away from home?</i> Josie: Erm ... my dad beat the crap out of me one day and I went into school the next day, the teachers noticed, and ... I tried to cover it up by saying I dropped down the stairs, blah, blah, blah, but they didn't believe me, social services got involved from that point. <i>Vicky: Was it the first time he had hit you?</i> Josie: No, he had hit me through most of my childhood, for as long as I can actually remember. <i>Vicky: Ok</i> Josie: But a lot of the time he would be sober and it was his form of discipline. <i>Vicky: why were you covering up the bruises?</i> Josie: I was protecting my dad I guess</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Proud of his identity</p> <p>Bring 'black' back in the family maybe</p> <p>Perhaps is okay to bringing black in the family and not the other way round</p> <p>But dad is homeless and lives with his mother- Poor Josie is living with paternal grandmother who does not accept her</p> <p>'Race' politics from both families</p> <p>Could it be they are asking "what about the children?"</p> <p>Physical abuse from birth dad, possibly paternal grandmother is unlikely to intervene</p> <p>Why protect dad? Awful childhood - being mistreated by strangers is one thing and by your own father is another lived with abusive father for a long time</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Whose identity?</p> <p>Dad is saying that what chance against society?</p> <p>Dad is set on what he perceives as acceptable</p> <p>Racism within the family – this questions the notion of family</p> <p>Perhaps fears of miscegenation or prejudice- possibly both If so why?</p> <p>Where does this leave the dual heritage child?</p> <p>Fear of the unknown or love and loyalty</p> <p>Inexcusable regardless of the Reasons</p> <p>Stigma from society, abusive dad who devalues the child's identity.</p> <p>Neglect by social services maybe?</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky</p> <p>Interviewee: Thomas</p> <p><i>Vicky: What is your parents' ethnicity?</i></p> <p>Thomas: My mum is white and my dad is black.</p> <p><i>Vicky: And how do you describe yourself?</i></p> <p>Thomas: I say I am mixed parentage.</p> <p><i>Vicky: And how do other people identify you?</i></p> <p>Thomas: They think I am Turkish most of the time.</p> <p><i>Vicky: You say most of the times, what about other times?</i></p> <p>Thomas: A coon or nigger.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Right, what do you say to them?</i></p> <p>Thomas: I used to challenge people, but now I just ignore them</p> <p><i>Vicky: So what have your experiences been like in care?</i></p> <p>Thomas: Erm ... quite crazy really. It has been ok but it has been f***ed ... There have been times when I have been threatened by my foster carers that they are going to slit me and try and kill me and shit, and f***ing I took them to court for it, you know what I mean? There have been times where I have been sleeping naked in my bed and I told them to stop but they still pulled the sheets off of me in front of all the people there.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Thomas, you lived with your mum and your own real dad for?</i></p> <p>Thomas: From when I was a baby until I was about 9 I lived with my mum not my dad.</p> <p><i>Vicky: So why did you go into care?</i></p> <p>Thomas: 8, sorry.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Why did you go into care at 8 then?</i></p> <p>Thomas: Eh? No, no I didn't go into care.</p> <p><i>Vicky: No, you didn't?</i></p> <p>Thomas: Not at that age, I was 11 or 12.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Ok. So you lived with?</i></p> <p>Thomas: My step dad and my mum for about 3 years and my step-dad used to beat me up.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Where was mum at this time?</i></p> <p>Thomas: In the other room popping crack.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>He was comfortable with his identity</p> <p>Assumptions based on phenotype</p> <p>Derogatory terms</p> <p>Undoubtedly got tired of fighting does not change people's perception</p> <p>From one abusive environment to the next. Need to monitor foster placement.</p> <p>Abuse and neglect</p> <p>Sense of powerlessness</p> <p>No mention of any other relatives</p> <p>Reasons for going into care</p> <p>Unsure or forgetful?</p> <p>Abuse from step-dad Mum uninvolved</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Turkish – possibly a terrorist -An outsider, not British</p> <p>Possibly best way to handle this</p> <p>Negative care experiences</p> <p>Whose needs are being met and how come such foster carers get away with such behaviour</p> <p>Bullying, abuse, degradation enough to destroy ones confidence</p> <p>Who else is there to offer support?</p> <p>Causations?</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Fear? Torn between son and partner?</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky</p> <p>Interviewee: Mimi (assumed name)</p> <p><i>Vicky: And so they adopted you when you were how old?</i></p> <p>Mimi: Um, five but I went to live with them when I was two and a half. It just took a long time.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Ah ... two and a half! So by then where were you living?</i></p> <p>Mimi: Um, where was I? I was living with my foster parents in Hinton at the time, and I still see them and then I went to live with my parents with a view to adoption at two and a half. But then I had to be made a ward of court so that took a long time, um, to get the consent for the adoption, so that's why I didn't get adopted until I was five.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Ah, so were you with the foster parents from birth?</i></p> <p>Mimi: No. Um, there was like a period where I was with my biological mother um, and then with my biological grandfather and his like, long-term partner they took over care for me at four months because my birth mother couldn't look after me...then he went to prison...</p> <p><i>Vicky: Your birth mum gave you to them?</i></p> <p>Mimi: Yeah, Grace is her name and she gave me to him – he's called Billy ...</p> <p><i>Vicky: So Billy being ...</i></p> <p>Mimi: Biological grandfather, her father Grace's father yeah, he looked-after me for a while and then he went to prison, and his sort of wife, well, not wife but partner, looked-after me for a while but then he said that he didn't want me to be there anymore so I went back into care then he came out and said 'Oh, I do want her to be with me after all' and he took me back and then he called Social Services and sort of, made threats to me – said to come and get her otherwise I'll hurt her, so then they came back, got me, went back into care and yeah, then I got put up with a view to adoption, and my parents ... yeah, came and visited me.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>She had said earlier that it was hard to trace her birth mother who slept rough</p> <p>Still in touch with foster carer</p> <p>Good practice to have moved foster to prospective adoptive parents</p> <p>Grandfather and his partner – what was the criterion?</p> <p>Why not to social services initially?</p> <p>This call in question the wisdom of leaving a vulnerable child in such an environment.</p> <p>Why was he allowed to do this?</p> <p>How does this serve the interest of the child</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Balance rights of birth parents and the child</p> <p>evidence of good relationship with the foster carer</p> <p>Still two and half offers the chance to form bond and attachment</p> <p>Grandfather chosen because he was blood relative</p> <p>What impact on the child?</p> <p>It transpired that birth mother had been in care</p> <p>Undoubtedly this could be perceived as a form of abuse.</p> <p>Calls placement policy into question. Whose perception of family is been considered here? Definitely not the child's perception.</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth</p> <p>Interviewee: Timothy</p> <p><i>Vicky: How old were you then, at this time you were separated from your sister?</i></p> <p>Timothy: I was... I think about ... 8ish, 7. No, I was about ... yes about 8.</p> <p><i>Vicky: So how long did you stay with the first foster carer?</i></p> <p>Timothy: The first one wasn't that long, just maybe 9 months. It was 9 months. And then after Frome we went back with my mum, just my mum only because my dad left before I was born. Mum and dad's parents had nothing to do with us.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Oh, I am sorry.</i></p> <p>Timothy: I went to, yes we went back with my mum in Haworth, just not far from here, there is Sutton, and then there is Trent and then Haworth... yes we went to Haworth, a housing unit like this it was like ... mother and children kind of thing, where they get support and stuff yeah...</p> <p><i>Vicky: How old were you by this time?</i></p> <p>Timothy: I was about 9 or 10.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Your sister came as well?</i></p> <p>Timothy: Yes, but my sister probably wanted it a lot more for my mum to succeed and getting us back but my mum wasn't complying with the alcohol rules that much, she like some weekends she would bring a drink into the house, or whatever, and sneak it in.</p> <p><i>Vicky: So did she drink a lot?</i></p> <p>Timothy: Yes.</p> <p><i>Vicky: But that is not why you went into care?</i></p> <p>Timothy: Yes maybe, and because mum was not coping and there was no help apart from social services.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Did she drink heavily before?</i></p> <p>Timothy: Probably, yes.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Just drinking?</i></p> <p>Timothy: maybe drugs yes probably, not heavy drugs. Marihuana and stuff like that...then my sister told the staff that my mum was bringing in drink and this got my mum into trouble. So we went back into care,</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Had stated earlier that the sister had challenging behaviour and foster carers were unable to cope a</p> <p>Instability, loss rejection anger</p> <p>Pillar to post, lack of stability</p> <p>Is this for the best interest of the child? Need to weigh up how this benefits the child</p> <p>What is behind the drinking?</p> <p>Unable to manage No social support network</p> <p>Drugs and drinking as a last resort or cry for help?</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Relationship with sister was said to be good -talked about painful experiences of separation</p> <p>Sense of being unwanted by own father as well as paternal and maternal grand parents.</p> <p>Accommodation inadequate and inappropriate</p> <p>This was more than likely to affect parenting capacity.</p> <p>possibly drinking to numb the pain or as a coping strategy. lacked social and family net works</p> <p>If developmental problems were to occur it would be due to what he has witnessed and not his identity</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth</p> <p>Interviewee: Adam</p> <p><i>Vicky: Do you mind if I ask you how you identify yourself?</i></p> <p>Adam: I see myself as a person with many identities, but I suppose you are more interested in whether I see myself as black, white, mixed race or whatever.</p> <p><i>Vicky: You are right, I am interested in your racial identity.</i></p> <p>Adam: I am proud of both my white and black side but I would not necessarily use the term mixed race to describe myself. I am me but if I had to describe myself in relation to my ethnicity I would say dual heritage.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Is that how you have always seen yourself?</i></p> <p>Adam: Personally yes, because I know I have two different cultures which I am very proud and comfortable with by the way.</p> <p><i>Vicky: How would you describe your experiences of being looked-after?</i></p> <p>Adam: I would say they have been positive.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Can you tell me more please?</i></p> <p>Adam: I was given up for adoption when I was three years old as I told you. Reading from my file I consider myself very lucky to have been adopted by my mum and dad. Perhaps things would have been different if I had gone into a children's home or moved around.</p> <p><i>Vicky: What is in your file for you say that?</i></p> <p>Adam: You can read it for yourself if you want.</p> <p><i>Vicky: If you are sure?</i></p> <p>Adam: I can't see why not.</p> <p><i>Vicky: If you are absolutely sure I would like to read it after going through the remaining few questions please?</i></p> <p>Adam: Sure</p> <p><i>Vicky: Thank you</i></p> <p>Adam: You see my mother did not know who my father was because she was a prostitute when I was conceived. It is all in the file anyway and you can read it yourself.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Multiple identities</p> <p>Affluent and confident in how he sees himself.</p> <p>Takes pride in both His White and black heritage</p> <p>Positive outcomes</p> <p>Being looked-after changed his life for better. Full of admiration for adoptive parents. He does not like what the file contains</p> <p>Opportunity for background data from the file</p> <p>File proved the patchy knowledge of absent father, bouts unknown</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Challenges how the dual heritage identity is perceived</p> <p>Would this have been so if focus had been on skin colour?</p> <p>He values stability and safety</p> <p>Placed trans-racially and considers himself lucky</p> <p>Is ignorance bliss?</p> <p>Did prostitution play a role in Adam becoming looked-after? Was it the only option?</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky</p> <p>Interviewee: Samantha (Musa's Social Worker)</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Do you think there is any difference working with dual heritage young people and those with two white or two black parents?</i></p> <p>Samantha: I don't think so really, I think it depends on the young person's experiences in life, resourcefulness and self-determination and... you know in terms of the support in them growing up, the support that they received and how they kind of ... you know, responded, or used the support around them. I don't know whether I could say it is issues of you know ... dual heritage, but I am thinking in my experience one or two young other individuals I have worked with, they have done well. So ... I think it is just where the individual is at and probably the support that they had, you know, because you find other young people have had quite a difficult erm ... history or background, and they still have kind of managed to get on with things, and others have struggled or totally kind of failed. So it is just working at the individual's pace.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>So are saying it comes down to a person's self determination?</i></p> <p>Samantha: Yes, I would say that as well, Because there are people who kind of moan about what is happening in their life and then kind of keep blaming ... whatever could be responsible for their situation. Then there are other youngsters who look at a situation and are able to move on, and turn their negative experience into something positive. So basically it depends. I think it is also psychological you know, for example emotional development, where they are at, given one situation others cope better and other struggle with the situation.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>So do you feel you are in an organisation which supports you to meet individuals unique needs?</i></p> <p>Samantha: Yes, yes, we are constantly looking at each young person's needs and reviewing how best to support them.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>No difference?</p> <p>Considers other factors</p> <p>background, previous support</p> <p>Some succeed others do not</p> <p>Start from where the person is at</p> <p>Desire to move away from a life of deprivation</p> <p>Those who feel sorry for themselves and those who act</p> <p>Support and encouragement to bring out the best in people</p> <p>Time to explore where the young person is at</p> <p>this is likely to lead to better use of resources</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>young person's experience seen as crucial</p> <p>non-pathologising social networks</p> <p>socialisation</p> <p>Determination to succeed</p> <p>Needs will vary</p> <p>attitudes</p> <p>turning negative experiences into positive.</p> <p>Avoid generalisation</p> <p>A supportive employer means a happy workforce and service users.</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
	Comments:	Comments:
Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth		
Interviewee: Kate (Sue's Social Worker)		
<i>Vicky: I am really pleased that you have agreed to see me because talking to the young people is one thing, but it is also important to talk to people who work closely with them to get different perceptive</i>	Setting the scene	Establish rapport
Kate: Ok		
<i>Vicky: I suppose we could start by checking that, the person we are talking about, has given me the right name. What does she call herself?</i>	Trying to draw Kate in	
Kate: She calls herself Sue Thomas (assumed names).	Confirming the young person's name and date of birth	
<i>Vicky: Ok thank you and she told me she was born in 1988.</i>		
Kate: That is correct.		
<i>Vicky: And how long have you known her?</i>		
Kate: I have known Sue since she was 18.	Sue was 19 at the time of the interview	Known her for twelve months perhaps?
<i>Vicky: Ok, so could you tell me a little about her please?</i>		
Kate: Sue? What do you want to know?		
<i>Vicky: Her background really, for example,</i>		
Kate: ...pause, silence...	Kate very reluctant to open up	
<i>Vicky: She didn't seem to know the reason Why she came into care .</i>		
Kate: Or maybe she didn't want to tell you.	some may want to block out things	Best to forget unpleasantness memories?
<i>Vicky: Maybe, I am thinking she went into care at the age of 5 perhaps she has blocked the reasons why out.</i>	issues may come out in the open but may choose not to share	Reactions when they find out could be devastating
Kate: No, even if they don't know, eventually when they get older, they do find out. I don't know. But I know the reason why but I don't know if she wants me to tell you.		
<i>Vicky: She did give me permission, to ask you anything, and she did put that in the consent form.</i>		
Kate: She didn't want you to see her mum?	Didn't want mum contacted	relationship with mum not good
<i>Vicky: No.</i>		
Kate: Sue was in care because her mother was into prostitution and drugs and she was clearly unable to take care of her. Sue and her brother were brought in for abuse and neglect and that is when she went into foster care, and she was with that foster carer until last year	Reasons for entering care What are the underlying issues? Drugs Abuse and neglect	Foster placement successful social network? Sue identifies with the carer Stability

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Anne and John (Rosie's Adoptive parents) Vicky: <i>Hello, my name is Vicky and I'd like to thank you both so much for agreeing to see me. I did explain that this interview will be tape recorded and I hope this is still okay with you.</i> John: Okay – you tell us what you want to know and we shall do our best to tell you what we can. Vicky: <i>How old was Rosie when she first came to you?</i> John: Um, six years, yes she was six years old but we were told that she went into care soon after birth and then she lived with four different foster carers before she came to us. Vicky: <i>What nationality would you say her parents were?</i> Anne: We were told that her mother was white and her father was black Vicky: Please tell me how you came to adopt Rosie? Both parents: We had always wanted to adopt you know. We wanted to give someone a home and love, but these decisions are not easy. I think it was more difficult for Rosie than it was for us you know – to come into a new environment and social class must have been a bit strange for her and also not having many black people in this area did not help...It had always been our desire to adopt but we wanted our own children to reach an age where we could talk to them about this. Vicky: <i>You mean discuss with them if they would like you to adopt or not?</i> John: Yes – we have two sons and they are both older than Rosie but they are very fond of her and get on well. They were very supportive and did make her feel very welcome Vicky: <i>What about other family members?</i> Anne: They had their views but people who mattered in the decision to adopt or not were my sons and they did not have a problem with that. Our parents were against it but who cares. They are the ones who have lost out because of their prejudice</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Courtesy, rapport and relationship building.</p> <p>Encouraging</p> <p>Given up at birth</p> <p>Parents' ethnicity</p> <p>Desire to give someone a home and love</p> <p>Class</p> <p>New environment strange predominantly white area</p> <p>own children an integral part</p> <p>Other families members not keen</p> <p>Grandparents not in favour Prejudice base on 'race' perhaps?</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Ensuring that they were still happy to Proceed and to tape record the interview</p> <p>friendly</p> <p>Four foster placements in six years</p> <p>Acquired middle-class through adoption</p> <p>Prudent to have waited for their own children to grow up</p> <p>Own children supportive and fond of Rosie</p> <p>Unable to deal with difference – racism or fear of the unknown?</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewees: Elly and Frank (Mimi) Adoptive parents <i>Vicky: Thank you so much – I was so excited when Mimi said ‘Mum and Dad would love to see you’ I said ‘thank you’ and here I am.</i> Elly: Mimi said she enjoyed talking to you <i>Vicky: Me too. So what was your process like?</i> Elly: When we were applying to adopt – slow! Frank: Yes, it must have taken ... well, my feeling is that it probably took a couple of years really just to get approved, but maybe it wasn't quite as long as that. Elly: I think it was a couple of years because we made an initial enquiry... Frank: That's right, and then basically they said 'yeah, we'll put you on the list' and went away essentially leaving us to think about it for nearly a year and then came back and said 'Are you still interested, OK, we'll go through ...' <i>Vicky: So was that for them to make sure that you were serious, or ...?</i> Elly: In part, I think, yes. And in part because its quite expensive to go through the approval process with an adoptive family, and so they don't do an awful lot of them. <i>Vicky: Expensive from ...?</i> Elly: Expensive from the local authorities' point of view, you know, because it involves lots of visits, it involves Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, it involves visits to referees, you know, it's a lot of work. And I get to read the paperwork for prospective adopters and you know I can see how much work has goes into it. <i>Vicky: So once they established that you were , serious and then ...</i> Elly: Then we had a series of interviews with a particular social worker who came to our house, maybe eight times ... <i>Vicky: The social worker allocated to Mimi?</i> Frank: No...this was still at the point where we were being vetted, before approval stage. Elly: I was adopted as a baby. <i>Vicky: Oh, right.</i> Elly: I think that what matters are the quality of relationships and not genetic links.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Mimi had said it took a long time</p> <p>Requires patience and commitment</p> <p>It is a big decision and it is important to be sure and not to rush into things.</p> <p>Expensive physiscally and emotionally</p> <p>Also expensive process in terms of money and time</p> <p>Ensure the best interests and safety of children</p> <p>Home visits can shed light on what family life is like</p> <p>Elly felt that blood relatives are given too much power</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Two years seems a long time, but it is a serious business</p> <p>Allows time for families to change their minds</p> <p>Making sure families are aware of what they are taking on</p> <p>Adoption is permanent so it is vital to take time</p> <p>The rigour of checks may vary depending on local authorities</p> <p>Checking out the home</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Mo (Joachim's Social Worker)</p> <p><i>Vicky: Thank you for agreeing to take part in this project. Joachim gave me permission to come and talk to you.</i></p> <p>Mo: I am still working with Joachim although I am no longer Amina's social worker.</p> <p><i>Vicky: I understand although when I asked Amina permission to talk to her social worker, she suggested I spoke to you</i></p> <p>Mo: Yes, erm ...what do you want to know? Start with Joachim then Amina later, okay?</p> <p><i>Vicky: Yes, thank you. As much as you can tell me and we could begin by confirming his name and date of birth perhaps?</i></p> <p>Mo: The names he has given you are correct and he was born in this county in 1989.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Joachim appears to have had so many placement disruptions and wondered...</i></p> <p>Mo: You wondered why this is the case...Yes, he came into care much younger than his sister, but I think for different reasons. He seems to have taken on the role of 'carer' from a very young age...</p> <p><i>Vicky: Who referred him to social services?</i></p> <p>Mo: His mother was unable to cope and put him into care, against his dad's wishes. The relationship with Joachim and his mother has always been good though and the only place he wanted to be was at home and I think that is why his placements have not worked out. He has made them not work by doing things so that he would be kicked out...</p> <p><i>Vicky: Aha....</i></p> <p>Mo: From what I gathered, mum's new partner used to bash Joachim about and things got worse I guess and he went into care at the age of eight. He calls mum's partner step-dad, but I do not think they are married although they have a child together. He had to deal with coping with his father's absence as well as a new child who may have been given more attention than he was receiving. A lot of children find it very hard to cope when one of their parents forms new relationships...</p> <p><i>Vicky: So he does get on with mum's partner?</i></p> <p>Mo: No, that is why he was put into care...</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Amina had told me that Mo knew the family will</p> <p>Any information to help understand Joachim better</p> <p>Confirmed name and date of birth</p> <p>Could benefit from attention himself</p> <p>External factors – mother's new partner</p> <p>Good relationship with mum</p> <p>The only place he wants to be is home</p> <p>Abuse from mum's partner</p> <p>resentment</p> <p>jealousy</p> <p>distrust</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>She had just stopped working and the new one had not been allocated</p> <p>Hates living in children's homes</p> <p>Role of Caring for his parents may be too much</p> <p>Torn between loyalty to partner and child</p> <p>Sabotage placements</p> <p>anger</p> <p>dislikes his mum's partner</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u> Comments	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u> Comments
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Amina's Social Worker</p> <p><i>Vicky: Now on to Amina, and how does she get on with her father?</i> Mo: Very well. <i>Vicky: Splendid</i> Mo: The same cannot be said about mum <i>Vicky: They do not get on?</i> Mo: Amina's relationship with dad has always been ... a good one I would say. But again bearing in mind I have never had the opportunity to meet with dad, so obviously it is based on what Amina says. I have sometimes provided her with travel warrants to visit him in his residential home for mentally ill people. <i>Vicky: Ok.</i> Mo: Yes, she came into care relatively late in her life, but social services never initiated care proceedings for Amina it was a voluntary agreement between mum and the local authority to accommodate Amina under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. But Amina I think had some episodes in care when she was younger, or at least the children were on the at risk register, but this was before they moved to this area. <i>Vicky: Right.</i> Mo: Erm, Amina came into care because her relationship with mum broke down, erm she just couldn't get on with mum at all, they had constant physical fights and verbal arguments. And a decision was made that it was in Amina's best interest to come into care. Amina's relationship with mum has always been a difficult one, very complex, mum... never formed a close bond with her daughter, never. I have had discussions with Amina around why that is, why is it that mum doesn't feel close to her or why Amina does not feel close to mum ... Amina couldn't really understand, but she explained to me once that ... mum was herself ... subjected to physical abuse by her own mother, was rejected by her own mother. I tried to make Amina realize that maybe mum transferred those feelings onto her as a result of her difficult relationship with her own mum who did not like her.</p>	<p>Good relationship with father</p> <p>Relationship with mum problematic</p> <p>Not around to be involved in discipline perhaps?</p> <p>Does she feel sorry for him?</p> <p>Demands of a teenager too much for mum perhaps?</p> <p>Relationship break down Unable to get on Physical and verbal arguments</p> <p>No close bond with Mum</p> <p>The whole issue too complex for Amina but is aware of mother's past Amina's mother had not been shown love by her own mother</p>	<p>Personality clash?</p> <p>Resentful of mum and her new partner?</p> <p>social worker unpacks the situation</p> <p>Complex relationship between daughter and mother</p> <p>Aware that grandmother did not get on with her mother</p> <p>Vicious circle</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
	Comments:	Comments:
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewees: Jude’s foster parents Vicky: <i>Thank you both for agreeing to see me and inviting me into your home</i> Martin: So Jude was happy for you to speak with us. Vicky: <i>That is correct</i> Freda: What do you want us to tell you? Vicky: <i>For a start, How did she get on in this area?</i> Martin: First with difficulties because of racism and discrimination or call it prejudice Vicky: <i>At school or in the village</i> Martin: Particularly at school. Vicky: <i>How did she deal with that?</i> Freda: Jude was determined to fight her own battles and sometimes she got into all sorts of trouble because she retaliated when she was called names Vicky: <i>How old was she at the time?</i> Freda: She was seven and her brother was three at the time: Martin: Yes we fostered both children you know, Jude and her brother, Moses yes... Freda: Yes and two very different children too Vicky: <i>Jude told me about the two of them and how you changed their lives</i> Martin: We did what we could. Damage had been done by the time they came to us though. Freda: Yes, poor things. It was good that our own children were quite old then and they got on very well with Jude and Moses. Yes our eldest son was eighteen, his brother was sixteen and their sister was fourteen at the time. Jude and Moses were quite excited to have older siblings to play with and to some extent to spoil them if I can remember. Vicky: <i>I have not spoken to Moses, but Jude told me that they got on very well with your own children.</i> Martin: Do you plan to speak to Moses then? Vicky: <i>I am afraid Moses does not want to be interviewed which is a shame</i> Freda: He is very determined that one Vicky: <i>Had you worked with dual heritage children before fostering Jude and Moses?</i> Martin: No, but the experience has been good.</p>	<p>Establishing rapport</p> <p>Making sure I had Consent from Jude</p> <p>Primarily white area</p> <p>No exposure to people who were not white</p> <p>She was seen as the trouble maker</p> <p>Continuity and stability</p> <p>Good to place them together</p> <p>No sign of damage now</p> <p>Good relationship with their own children must have gone a long way to enhance Rosie and Moses quality of life</p> <p>Sister and brother get on well Moses declined to be interviewed</p> <p>Both have enjoyed the process of looking after Jude and her brother</p>	<p>Racism, discrimination, prejudice</p> <p>safety</p> <p>Their genuine desire to offer someone a home and love made the process a very positive one for them and the Children.</p> <p>He may have wanted to forget about his past</p> <p>Determination will Stand him in good stead.</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Fiona's birth father</p> <p><i>Vicky: Thank you for making the time to talk to me on the telephone.</i> Tom: As explained to you last week, I am self-employed and I cannot afford time off. I also do not understand why you want to talk to me about Fiona. <i>Vicky: When I asked her if I could talk to anyone she considered important in her life she suggested that I spoke to you.</i> Tom: I am important when it suits her I see. <i>Vicky: I understand that Fiona lived with her mother following your divorce?</i> Tom: That was a big mistake – I told the courts that would not work but they would not listen to me. But when her mother did not want her anymore it was considered alright for me to have her. <i>Vicky: How long was she with you before going into care?</i> Tom: Six years, did not get on with my wife. <i>Vicky: then what happened?</i> Tom: She went off the rails. <i>Vicky: What do you mean?.</i> Tom: Truanting, staying out late, drugs and drinking...She saw me as controlling. <i>Vicky: Were you?</i> Tom: All children need guidance and boundaries and I would not call that controlling, would you? <i>Vicky: I guess not</i> Tom: Fiona did and see where it got her <i>Vicky: What do you mean?</i> Tom: She is pregnant is she not? <i>Vicky: Correct</i> Tom: Now that she is pregnant I am an important person in her life, because she has no one else to turn to. <i>Vicky: How does Fiona respond to affection?</i> Tom: She got on well with her uncle I guess <i>Vicky: And you?</i> Tom: Evidently not. <i>Vicky: Have you tried praising her</i> Tom: What is there to praise? <i>Vicky: She said that her uncle praised her</i> Tom: They are two of a kind – useless</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>more important things to do with his time and Fiona is not part of it.</p> <p>Sees father as important</p> <p>Not impressed</p> <p>angry</p> <p>resentment, angry with ex partner</p> <p>Perhaps poor channels of Communication Depends on How the boundaries Are set</p> <p>angry</p> <p>shame perhaps</p> <p>That is part of being a parent</p> <p>Gave her time</p> <p>Why? Anything e.g. getting out of bed?</p> <p>No one is useless</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Hate his time being wasted</p> <p>father does not want to know .</p> <p>Seeking Approval?</p> <p>Are reasons given</p> <p>Feeling let down</p> <p>Disinterested in Fiona's life</p> <p>Uncle listened</p> <p>Was father too busy?</p> <p>negative</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Paul (Safi's Social Worker)</p> <p><i>Vicky: Thank you, so how long have you known Safi then Paul?</i></p> <p>Paul: I've known Safi since she was fifteen and a half. In my previous post I was a looked after social worker and Safi was one of my young people then. I moved post in 2001 to After Care and Safi came with me really, she was leaving care at the time I was changing jobs and Safi came with me. So I've known Safi for a few years really. Um, since she was fifteen and a half.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Does she talk about her experiences before coming into care?</i></p> <p>Paul: Yes. She's talked about her relationship with her mum and her step-father. She talks about those quite a lot. We do look at contact with family in her pathway plans and pathway reviews that we do with Safi every six months. Safi's quite an open young person who does share a lot of information with us, and the relationship with the family, particularly step-father has never been good. So she's able, you know, to share her past with us quite well.</p> <p><i>Vicky: Does she talk about it would you say quite a lot, frequently or infrequently?</i></p> <p>Paul: I would say, it's infrequently really but when she does talk to us she tells us lots of things She's very open about what's happened. The relationship with mum and step-father isn't very good, and the step-father was the real reason why Safi left home to be honest, and um, Safi's quite open with us over that and when she does meet mum she doesn't go to mum's house because of step-father, they'll meet either at Safi's flat or somewhere in town</p> <p><i>Vicky: So the relationship with mum is good?</i></p> <p>Paul: Not great, but it's not as bad as the one with step-father.</p> <p><i>Vicky: So when she left to come to social services was this voluntarily?</i></p> <p>Paul: Yeah, there was no care order attached to Safi at all. So she came into care voluntary.</p> <p><i>Vicky: How does she respond to affection?</i></p> <p>Paul: Safi is a very affectionate young person and she responds well to affection and praise.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Soon after she entered care</p> <p>Very good practice</p> <p>Continuity of social worker</p> <p>Safi says the family lied to her about the identity of her real father.</p> <p>Relationship with step-father is bad The two do not get on at all.</p> <p>Relationship with mum and step-father quite bad</p> <p>Contact with mum is maintained for the sake of Safi's baby,</p> <p>Mum and Safi tolerate each other</p> <p>Went into care voluntarily</p> <p>This was evidence in her interaction with her baby</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Has given Safi's stability needed after her traumatic life experiences</p> <p>Relationship with family members fraught</p> <p>Relationship problems with the family are a big issue</p> <p>Step-father is one of the reason for Safi entering care</p> <p>Mum may be torn between her partner and daughter</p> <p>No care order</p> <p>This was also demonstrated in the way she responded to her Boyfriend's praise</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Ann (Saif's Personal Adviser)</p> <p>Vicky: Thank you so much indeed. Ann: It is okay Vicky: So very briefly how long have you worked with Safi and how old was she when she came in contact with you? Ann: I've worked with Safi now for nearly four years. Um, she was just coming up to her 16th birthday when I started working with her. She hadn't been in care very long, um, and they tried to move her out before her 16th birthday so that she wouldn't get the full care package. But I went in, you know, and discussed it, said that it wasn't the best thing for Safi so she ended up staying in care so that she'd get the full after-care service. Vicky: Which involved things such as? Ann: Well, personal adviser and after-care social worker, so that she'd have assistance, you know, advice and assistance to get into housing um, with all her independent living skills, so that she'd always have that support for herself, you know, people behind her to help her live more independently. Vicky: So if someone was to say to you how is your relationship with Safi, how would you describe it? Ann: I've got a very good relationship with Safi, um, I can discuss anything with Safi, you know, I mean I can challenge her if I'm not happy with what she's done in a fair way... Vicky: So she feels she can come to you with any problems? Ann: Yes, yes. Vicky: How would you describe her emotional behaviour generally? Ann: It's funny you should ask that really because when she was in the second unit, or third unit, residential unit, they were trying to get her to move on because she's quite independent, but I had to fight for her to stay there because of her emotional problems. Her emotional behaviour wasn't stable at all. I mean, her friend had committed suicide, then her cousin died. She is getting better but she had emotional problems at the time...</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Consistency with personal adviser</p> <p>This is what Safi needed</p> <p>Practitioner prepared to fight for what she believes in</p> <p>Encouragement, support and all in all empowerment</p> <p>promoting ways to enhance Safi's life chances</p> <p>very good working relationship</p> <p>relationship built on trust</p> <p>A worker who has taken trouble to know the needs of the service user</p> <p>Recognised Safi's vulnerability and worked out the best way to help</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Lucky to have someone committed to her job and prepared to fight for justice</p> <p>Support with transition to adulthood</p> <p>listened to and respected</p> <p>mutual respect for each other</p> <p>reliable and trusted to deliver</p> <p>a worker who is not afraid to challenge and fight for what she believes in</p> <p>commitment and willingness to go the extra mile</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewee: Fiona's social worker</p> <p><i>Vicky: Thank you for your time</i> Alison: You have to make it really quick. <i>Vicky: You have to bear with me because I shall have to jot down some notes as we talk.</i> Alison: The interview is about Fiona right? <i>Vicky: Correct</i> Alison: I still cannot understand why you want to talk to me. Fiona is over sixteen so you do not need my views. <i>Vicky: It is always good to get the perspective of people who work closely with the young people</i> Alison: I do not see why. I am actually very busy and I do not have time to waste. <i>Vicky: I shall make this as brief as possible?</i> Alison: What do you want to know? <i>Vicky: How long have you known Fiona?</i> Alison: Since she came into care at eleven. <i>Vicky: How would you describe her present physical health?</i> Alison: She is pregnant, not ill. <i>Vicky: Is she receiving any therapeutic help?</i> Alison: Why? <i>Vicky: She appeared quite distressed and I wondered whether there are any emotional difficulties.</i> Alison: I am not aware of any. <i>Vicky: Fiona told me that she did not do very well at school. Is she getting any help with her literacy skills?</i> Alison: No <i>Vicky: Why?</i> Alison: We cannot force young people to learn if they do not want to. <i>Vicky: We can encourage them surely?</i> Alison: I guess so – they have to want to learn <i>Vicky: How do you identify Fiona?</i> Alison: Black of course. <i>Vicky: What do you mean of course?</i> Alison: What do you think she is then? <i>Vicky: She has one white and one black parent...</i> Alison: That does not make her white <i>Vicky: Has she the autonomy to self identify?</i> Alison: People like you make them confused.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>No patience</p> <p>Feels Fiona is a grown up</p> <p>Attitude with</p> <p>No empathy</p> <p>Wanted to explore what help was there</p> <p>Fiona was depressed and anxious</p> <p>not interested in Fiona's well-being</p> <p>They can be encouraged as well</p> <p>What if did not want that identity?</p> <p>Does not make her black either How?</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Rude or lacks the manner to communicate</p> <p>Most unhelpful</p> <p>One cannot help but wonder how she deals with vulnerable people</p> <p>Impatient and uncaring</p> <p>No support or guidance</p> <p>She had just finished with her boyfriend and was six months pregnant</p> <p>explain the importance of education at least</p> <p>In the eyes of this worker what the young person want is unimportant</p> <p>Worker's perception</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u> Comments	<u>2ndstage data interrogation</u> Comments
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth Interviewees: Elly and Frank (Adam's Adoptive parents)</p> <p><i>Vicky: How often would you say Adam talks about his life before coming to live with you?</i> Frank: I do not think Adam talks about his life before coming here unless he is prompted to be honest. <i>Vicky: Prompted by who?</i> Elly: By us when we are trying to help him open up <i>Vicky: You mean talk about his time before coming to you?</i> Frank: Elly and I feel that he tries to block out his early childhood memories. Elly: Do you blame him Frank? Frank: He hates talking about his birth mother that is for sure. <i>Vicky: Why?</i> Frank: Because of how she lived her life I guess. Elly: She was a prostitute we are told. <i>Vicky: So he does not talk about her at all?</i> Frank: Not really. <i>Vicky: How does Adam identify himself?</i> Both parents: He sees himself as a man of multiple identities. Frank: Absolutely. <i>Vicky: Would you say he is comfortable with his dual heritage identity?</i> Elly: Definitely Frank: I agree with Elly. He takes pride in both his black and white roots. <i>Vicky: How do you get on with Adam?</i> Frank: We both get on very well with him and his sister come to that. <i>Vicky: If Adam was to nominate someone to provide him with emotional/physical support and trustworthy relationship, who would that person be?</i> Elly: I would say Frank. <i>Vicky: Do you agree with that Frank?</i> Frank: Absolutely, but I think Elly too <i>Vicky: Is Adam popular with his peers?</i> Both parents: He is a very popular young man and you should see this place when he is home, crowds of young people playing music.</p>	<p>Why bring it all up?</p> <p>Blocks out unpleasant issues</p> <p>Would rather forget</p> <p>Not a career to be proud of</p> <p>Identity as fluid</p> <p>Proud and with his identity</p> <p>Close relationship</p> <p>Father and son get on really well</p> <p>Sociable, friendly and popular</p>	<p>If he volunteers the information then that is ok</p> <p>Not something to be proud of</p> <p>embarrassed</p> <p>shame</p> <p>Confident and sure of who he is</p> <p>Very comfortable</p> <p>Main source of support and role model is Frank</p> <p>Has good relationship with both parents.</p>

<u>Data generation</u>	<u>1st stage data interrogation</u>	<u>2nd stage data interrogation</u>
<p>Interviewer: Vicky Lambeth</p> <p>Interviewee: Linda (fostered Mimi before she was adopted)</p> <p>Vicky: <i>What is your experience of working with dual heritage young people?</i></p> <p>Linda : I have been a foster carer for twenty years and during that time I have looked after children from many different ethnic groups</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Have you received any training?</i></p> <p>Linda: I have learnt on the job</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Do you keep in contact with the social workers?</i></p> <p>Linda: Absolutely. Mind you, they all differ...</p> <p>Vicky: <i>What do you mean?</i></p> <p>Linda: Some keep in touch others leave you to get on with it.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>How old was Mimi when she came to you?</i></p> <p>Linda: Five months old, but it was on and off.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Can tell me more please?</i></p> <p>Linda: Her birth mother left her with maternal grandfather at the age of four months. He was a nasty piece of work and one minute he wanted her the second he did not. So whenever he did not want her or he was in prison, Mimi came to me.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>How did Mimi respond to separation from her birth mother?</i></p> <p>Linda: I used to think she coped very well until one day I found her in tears surrounded by torn photographs of her mother.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>How old was she then?</i></p> <p>Linda: She was just over two years then</p> <p>Vicky: <i>What was the cause of her stress?</i></p> <p>Linda: Her mother had failed to show up</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Was that unusual?</i></p> <p>Linda: Not really, but it was different this time</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Why?</i></p> <p>Linda: She was meant to find a flat for them</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Then?</i></p> <p>Linda: That was the last she heard of her</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Mimi spoke very highly of you</i></p> <p>Linda: We still keep in touch and Elly and Frank are very good parents indeed.</p> <p>Vicky: <i>Thank you very much for your time</i></p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Long career in fostering in tune with other cultures Very experienced</p> <p>Good practice</p> <p>Perhaps heavy case loads</p> <p>Very confusing</p> <p>why not social services</p> <p>that could be seen as abuse</p> <p>angry hate</p> <p>frustrations</p> <p>Sense of loss Felt safe with foster carer</p> <p>Love and security at last</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Sensitive and caring</p> <p>workers have different values</p> <p>Blood relative</p> <p>Sometimes she was very sad</p> <p>Let down</p> <p>Rejection Feeling of being unloved</p> <p>Stability, a sense of belonging and being loved</p>

GLOSSARY

Black: “Historically the concept ‘black’ was constructed in terms of its deviation(s) from white norms. This applied both to social identity, where ‘one drop of black blood’ meant crossing the threshold between white and black, and to meanings of blackness taking on the repressed and often reviled elements of whiteness” (Kirton, 2000:72).

Culture: “belonging to a culture includes not only sharing a language, religion, music, arts and customs, aspects which are relatively easy to assess, but also sharing values and having a feeling of a shared past and of identification with the cultures” (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002:130).

Cultural diversity: “refers to differences between groups with distinctive characteristics and social identities based on culture, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and class...Diversity is inseparable from issues of oppression and social and economic justice...(Van Soest and Garcia, 2003:3-4).

Discrimination: refers to the identification of individuals and groups with identifiable characteristics and behaving less favourable towards this individual or group, than those with favoured characteristics (McLughlin, 2006:114).

Dual heritage: “Avoids offence, but ...there are many people with dual heritage who are of the same race” (Katz and Treacher 2005:47). In this study the term refers to those with one white and one black parent of Afro-Caribbean origin.

Ethnic minority: “‘Minority ethnic families’ means those families who do not share common physical, religious and cultural similarities to the dominant group in society – in the British context: white British people” (Banks, 2003a: 141).

Looked-after young people: refers to young people living away from their birth families and in the care of local authorities; they either live in residential homes, are looked-after by foster carers or adoptive parents.

One-drop rule: “American social and legal custom of classifying anyone with one black ancestor, regardless of how far back, as black” (Zack, 2005:124)>

Racism: “Racism ‘works’ by attributing meanings to certain phenotypical and /or genetic characteristics of human beings in such away as to create a system of categorisation, and by attributing additional (negatively evaluated) characteristics to the people sorted into those categories (Miles, 1991:3).

Trans-racial Adoption: “The joining together of ethnically different parents and children in adoptive families. In the UK this invariably means the adoption of minority ethnic children by white families” (Selwyn et al., 2004)

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