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Title	'Both/and rather than either/or': an insight into the real-life experiences of Asian/Irish youth in contemporary Irish society
Authors	Alam, Barbara
Publication date	17/09/2020
Original Citation	Alam, B. T. 2020. 'Both/and rather than either/or': an insight into the real-life experiences of Asian/Irish youth in contemporary Irish society. MPhil Thesis, University College Cork.
Type of publication	Masters thesis (Research)
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Download date	2026-11-03 14:10:56
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/10931



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‘Both/and rather than either/or’: An insight into the real-life experiences of Asian/Irish youth in contemporary Irish society.

Thesis presented by

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For the degree of

Master of Philosophy

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Date of submission: September 2020

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis, submitted for the award of Master of Philosophy, is entirely my own work. It has not been taken from the work of others apart from the work that has been cited and acknowledged within the text. This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study in University College Cork and has not been submitted in whole or in part for an award in any other Institute or University. The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the University's guidelines for ethics in research. The University has permission to keep, to lend or to copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis is duly acknowledged.

Candidate Signature: Barbara Alam Date September 17. 2020

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Jacqui O'Riordan and Dr. Caitríona Ní Laoire for their guidance and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my husband Badiul and my three children, Ryan, Sabena and Aaron, who supported me over the past number of years. I would also like to thank my friends who have continued to encourage me throughout this project. Finally, I would like to thank the sixteen young people who were willing to take part in this study and share their stories with me.

Abstract

This research investigates and analyses the factors that influence the lived experiences and identity negotiations of young people, who have grown up in Ireland, in families with mixed-ethnicity. Unlike research on this conducted previously in Ireland, it focuses on young people who have one Asian and one white Irish parent. According to the 2016 Irish census, there were 62,953people, resident and present in the state who identified themselves as either Asian or Asian/Irish (CSO, 2016). However, despite these significant numbers, there is not a lot of research on multi-ethnic young people even though attention is being paid to young people from migrant backgrounds. The rationale for choosing to study this cohort of young people's experiences stems from being the mother of three multi-ethnic children. Consequently, my position within this research is complex, in the sense that due to my involvement I have acquired an acute awareness of the negotiations that take place during these multi-ethnic young people's everyday social interactions, based on stories relayed by my children. Subsequently, this study is conducted to try to capture the processes and events that are part of the lived experiences of multi-ethnic Asian/Irish young people living in Ireland. A qualitative approach is used to conduct the research. This approach helps to meet the aims of this research which are to unearth the everyday encounters being experienced. Evidence is drawn from two sources: focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with young people from this specific cohort. Sixteen multi-ethnic young people, seven young women and nine young men, aged between 18 and 35 participated. While their parents' ethnic backgrounds were diverse, they shared one commonality: one of their parents was ethnic Irish, which in this context meant that they were white, and one parent was Asian. Although significant diversity was found in their experiences it was evident that issues pertaining to 'race' permeated their lived experiences, encompassing assumptions about colour, culture and religion. All multi-ethnic young people taking part in this study were subjected to racism based on Asian stereotypes. Their identity choices were limited and they felt marginalised to a certain extinct within contemporary Irish society due to dominant ideas about Irishness. Nevertheless, despite this multi-ethnic young people were seen to adopt survival strategies and managed their identity negotiations by challenging assumptions and negative stereotypes about the mixedness of their identities.

1.0 CHAPTER ONE:
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This research investigates the factors that influence the lived experiences and identity negotiations of young people, who have grown up in Ireland, in families with mixed-ethnicity. Unlike research on this conducted previously in Ireland, it focuses on young people who have one Asian and one white Irish parent. According to the 2016 Irish census, there were 62,953 people, resident and present in the State who identified themselves as either, Asian or Asian/Irish (CSO, 2016). However, despite these significant numbers and the growth in research with young people from migrant backgrounds, there is not a lot of research on multi-ethnic young people with Asian/Irish backgrounds. The study traces the ways these young people sustain their individual identities within their immediate families, extended families, peer groups and their wider communities.

1.2 The emergence of research on multi-ethnic identities

Although, internationally, scholars have taken an interest in mixed-race[1] people's racialising experiences for many years, it was during the 1990s that much of this work focused on mixed-race people's identity negotiations (Ifekwungue 2004, Parker and Song 2001). Recent international literature shows that children with mixed ethnic parentage have generally been the subject of much debate (Song 2016, Ifekwunigue 2015, Aspinall and Song 2013a, Aspinall and Song 2013b, Song and Aspinall 2012a, Song and Aspinall 2012b, Song 2010, Tizard and Phoenix 2002). According to Aspinall (2015) academics express interest in how such young people convey their identities, negotiate racial classifications assigned to them and utilize their coping mechanisms. While nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarship viewed mixed-race people as 'marginal', existing between two cultures and two worlds and experiencing a divided self, which left them open to confusion (Park 1928, Stonequist 1937), contemporary scholars now tend to construct a more positive discourse that celebrates mixed-race people's ambiguities. In fact, according to Vasquez (2010: 58) whose research focused on Mexican/Americans "many third generation Mexican Americans display 'flexible ethnicity'—the ability to navigate two different social worlds, that is, mainstream U.S. culture and a Mexican-oriented community". In this sense flexible ethnicity "refers to the ability to deftly and effectively navigate different racial terrains and be considered an 'insider' in more than one ethnic group" (Vasquez 2010: 46). Miville et al. (2005: 512) who investigated the development of racial identity among multi-ethnic adults in the USA

[1] I prefer to use the term multi-ethnic but where I refer to the development in literature, I use the terms generally used by the authors.

insist that "despite feeling alienated at times because of their unique racial mixture, many participants discussed how they attempted to develop strategies to help them fit in with more than one racial or cultural group (i.e. 'both/and' thinking rather than 'either/or' thinking)". According to Sandset (2019: 19) a new understanding of 'betwixt and between' emerged that reversed the narrative of alienation completely, "presenting it as the "best of both worlds". Prewitt (2013 cited in Aspinall 2015: 1074) takes a more critical perspective pointing out the continuation of physical features, biology exoticisation and othering when he states that in the US in the twenty-first-century ideas about mixed-race and ethnicity have been "recast in new but no less troubling ways, invoking a return to racial narratives rooted in biology". This reflects how dominant representations of mixed-race people have shifted towards different types of stereotypes which now represent them as 'extraordinary', 'more attractive' and continue to stem from notions of biological differences.

1.3 Growing diversity in Ireland

Ireland has a long history of emigration but during the 1990s there was a shift from the dominance of emigration to the emergence of immigration on a larger scale than before. The rapid growth in the economy during what became known as the Celtic Tiger[2] years meant that Ireland became an attractive destination, not only for many returning Irish migrants, but also for immigrants from different parts of the world, including refugees and asylum seekers (Christie, 2011). According to Loyal (2011) although Ireland portrayed itself as a welcoming and hospitable country, racism directed towards migrants persisted alongside discrimination and prejudices directed at existing minority groups. O' Mahony et al. (2001) conducted a survey that found that almost 80 per cent of people from black or ethnic-minority group backgrounds experienced some form of racism or discrimination while living in Ireland. More recently, when King-O'Riain (2019) examined a small sample of multi-ethnic (Asian/Irish) people's experiences in Ireland, she also found that despite increased diversity in Irish society mixed-race people continued to experience racial abuse and rejection. Although the inclusion in the census legislation in Ireland (2006)[3] gave mixed-race people the option of choosing different ethnic identifications, Cadogan (2008: 53) maintains that the question posed "implied 'static and finite group membership' rather than focusing on 'belonging' and 'self-identity'". This concurs with Goldberg (2002 cited in James and Redding,

[2]"Celtic Tiger" is a term referring to the economy of the Republic of Ireland from the mid-1990s to the late-2000s, a period of rapid real economic growth fuelled by foreign direct investment.

[3] The ethnicity question included in 2006 in Ireland is: 'What is your ethnic background? Choose from categories such as White, Black or Black Irish, Asian or Asian Irish, Other including mixed background'.

2005: 187) who insists that "because all states have effects on racial inequalities, all states are racial states". The Irish State proved no different in June 2004, it is argued, when citizenship became indirectly racialised after 80 percent of the Irish population supported constitutional changes that "increased restrictions on 'non-nationals' and created a racialized two-tier system where jus sanguinis, or descent, hence race, becomes the basis and prime criteria for being an Irish citizen" (King-O'Riain 2007: 535).

Morrison (2004: 386) highlights the connection between Irishness and whiteness as she ponders "is a brown skin genuinely incompatible with what it means to be really Irish"? She points out that her multi-ethnic friends' Irishness was often viewed by others as problematic and, at times they were told by others that they could not be Irish. She found that her multi-ethnic Irish friends, no matter how pale their skin was, referred to themselves as black, mainly because of the position in which white racialised Irish society located them. The re-emergence of Black Lives Matters activism globally and nationally is now also drawing attention to the continuing and contemporary racialisation and othering of black people in Ireland.

1.4 Research Questions

At present in Ireland, literature in this field focuses mainly on first-and-second generation emigrant and immigrant experiences of racism and the way in which they challenge notions of belonging, the welfare state and religious beliefs (Fanning 2018, Gilmartin and Dagg 2018, Loyal 2018, Lentin 2016, Ní Laoire et al. 2016, White and Gilmartin 2016). When Devine et al. (2008), Smyth et al. (2009), Gilligan et al. (2010) and Curry et al. (2011) looked at social interactions between immigrant children and their white Irish counterparts they found that although there appeared to be a general surface acceptance of refugee and immigrant children by their peers, there was evidence of hostility and racism towards them underneath this veneer. King-O'Riain (2019) claims that although mixed-race people of the past and present navigate their ambiguities, they continue to experience racism in Irish society. This research seeks to contribute to existing literature and fill the gaps in what can be considered a neglected area of study in Ireland, that is, the experiences of Asian/Irish young people who have grown up in Ireland. Bearing in mind that this omission may possibly be linked to Ireland's complex history with 'race' (Garner 2009), at this juncture, like Sandset (2019: 13) whose research focuses on issues that impact on mixed-race people's experiences in Norway, I contend and the research also indicates that Ireland still operates "with a paradigm of ethnicity that is ... highly racialised". While Morrison (2004), King-O'Riain (2019) and others point out the importance of racism, this research seeks to explore further the role racism

plays in the lives of multi-ethnic young people and how it influences the identity choices they make in twenty-first century Ireland.

As mentioned, Morrison (2004) insists that many multi-ethnic Asian/Irish people continue to have difficultly being accepted as Irish and are, at times, forced to make a case for their identities based on their appearance. My attention was drawn to this statement because of a question very often asked of multi-ethnic young people, that is, 'where are you from'? This question is racially loaded in the sense that it very often based on an individual's phenotypical appearance (Sandset, 2019). Encounters of this nature are of interest because they expose one of the ways in which multi-ethnic young people's sense of belonging can be undermined. Therefore, the questions which form the basis of this research attempt to unearth some of the everyday encounters being experienced by the multi-ethnic young people exposed to such questions.

Literature points to the important role played by familial and cultural practices which greatly influence the lived experiences of immigrant families in Ireland. According to Veale and Kennedy (2011: 16) for example, Indian parents living in Ireland do tend to resist cultural change and are committed to "instilling core cultural and religious values in the second generation". This finding is of interest because it occurred to me that the mixed cultural practices taking place in multi-cultural households must have a bearing on multi-ethnic young people's interactions with their Irish peers and others within their wider communities. On this premise, the research questions attempt to decipher how Asian/Irish young people experience family dynamics and how they experience any perceived differences between their families and those of white Irish young people.

The specific research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. In which ways do factors within contemporary Irish society influence the lived experiences and identity negotiations of young people, who have grown up in Ireland, in families consisting of one Asian and one white Irish parent?
2. How do young people with one Asian and one white Irish parent negotiate and sustain their individual identities within their immediate families, extended families, peer groups and the wider community?
3. How do multi-ethnic young people negotiate their everyday interactions and sustain a sense of belonging within Irish society, in the context of their mixed cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs?

1.5 Rationale for the study

In the Irish context literature on racism focuses mainly on first- and second-generation emigrant and immigrant experiences. This literature, as a general rule, does not separate out the experiences of people of mixed-ethnicity and therefore tends to presume similar experiences for migrant children, second-generation migrants and ethnic minorities, regardless of whether they have mixed Asian/Irish parents, or not. As a result, little has been written about the lived experiences of this particular cohort of young Irish people in the country where they were born and/or where they grew up. Consequently, not enough is known about the ways in which they negotiate different racial associations and their everyday lives. As an under-researched area narratives relevant to their experiences need to be built up so that an understanding of those who occupy that 'other space' in Irish society can be developed. This research adds to knowledge by bridging this gap and creating a platform from which multi-ethnic young Irish people's stories can be narrated, not only contributing to the broader field of ethnic and racial studies but also adding to mixed-race studies in general.

On a personal note, being aware of the negative experiences endured by my own multi-ethnic children growing up in Ireland, I had questions as to how these experiences may have influenced the identity choices they make and consequently, how they negotiate such encounters when they occur. I was aware of the impact that being asked the question 'where are you from?' had on their sense of belonging and wondered if other multi-ethnic young people had similar experiences. Such questions, along with my immersion in the literature, led me to researching these experiences and documenting their collective experiences. I was also curious to examine why their experiences were seldom debated or discussed in the media. It seemed to me that, like the experiences of many other minority group members in Irish society, multi-ethnic young people's experiences were simply being overlooked or ignored. Very recently, after an incident of police brutality led to the death of George Floyd, a black man, in the US, the then Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, who is of a multi-ethnic background (born to an Irish mother and an Indian father) spoke out against racism during a statements and questions and answers session in the Dáil (Murray, 04 June 2020). He stated that "we don't need to look across the Atlantic to find racism … because we have many examples in our own country". He added that many people of colour in Ireland "are made to feel that they are just a bit less Irish than everyone else". This study sets out to highlight some of these experiences and to assert that the experiences of multi-ethnic young Irish people do count.

1.6 Research approach and focus

The qualitative approach to this research sets out to capture the narratives of the young people in this group. Merriam and Tisdell (2009: 15) point out that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world". Thus, qualitative methods not only provide rich descriptions but also increase our understanding of the context of events as well as the events themselves. In this research, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with 16 Asian/Irish people of both genders aged between 18 and 35 are designed to do just this. It was important that this research capture the meaning in the narratives of this particular group of young people because their stories have for too long remained untold, except for Morrison (2004) and King-O'Riain (2019) mentioned earlier. It is imperative that the data generated capture the authenticity and nuances in each individual narrative. Therefore, for this research approach to be successful it was necessary to acquire a great deal of insight into a range of different social processes that potentially influence young people's experiences, shaping not only their identities but also their understandings of what it means to be Irish. An insight into these experiences was achieved by providing a space in which the young people in question could talk freely about their experiences and express their opinions.

In order to achieve this insight and analyse the complexities in their narrative's concepts like 'race', racism, racialization and micro-aggressions are employed. These provide the conceptual framework by which sense can be made of multi-ethnic young people's experiences, while discussions surrounding the origins and social constructions of each concept facilitate the interpretations. Drawing on these concepts and on the narratives of these young people, the study is enabled to focus on 'race' and the role played by racist assumptions in multi-ethnic young people's experiences in Irish society. It identifies different stereotypes attributed to young people based on the 'Asian' part of their mixed heritage. It recognises the pivotal role played by cultural practices within familial contexts and how this shapes multi-ethnic young people's ability to select aspects of cultural practices and identities that both speak to their environments and are meaningful to them.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1(Introduction) offers a broad outline of the focus and scope of the thesis overall.

Chapter 2(Theorising 'race', racialisation and ethnicity) engages in a discussion on 'race', racism and racialisation, concepts that are employed in making sense of multi-ethnic young

people's experiences. It then examines the concept of racial micro-aggressions which is helpful for making sense of young people's identity negotiations.

Chapter 3(Multi-ethnic youth identity negotiations: a review of the literature). This chapter examines the bodies of literature that focus on the lived experiences and identity negotiations of young multi-ethnic people. It presents a brief history of mixed-race and mixed-ethnicity discourses. It draws on international literature to explore the social environments in which multi-ethnic young people live as well as their subjective lived experiences, identity negotiations and the strategies implemented by them (in order) to evade the racialisation process.

Chapter 4(The boundaries of Irishness) engages in a discussion surrounding ideas about Irishness, 'race' and racialisation. The chapter outlines historical and contemporary associations of constructions of Irishness with 'race' and whiteness and how these notions continue to result in negative consequences for non-white people in contemporary Irish society.

Chapter 5(Methodology) outlines assumptions about the production of knowledge that underpin this research. As the mother of three multi-ethnic children, it was inevitable that I would approach this research from a partial insider's perspective and therefore, I need to accept that this may have influenced my positionality as a researcher. A qualitative research approach was used to capture the voices of the young people in this group. This chapter describes and justifies the methods used, how participants were selected, and the reasons for conducting both focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews. Finally, it outlines how the data analysis was conducted and the ethical principles that guided the study.

Chapter 6(Multi-ethnic young people's experiences of racism) is the first of three chapters in which the data are presented and analysed. This chapter focuses on experiences of racism that emerge from the multi-ethnic young people's accounts which reveal their experiences of racial abuse and prejudice. It outlines the ways in which multi-ethnic young people are subjected to overt discrimination, stereotyping and racial micro-aggressions based on the way they look and associated perceived ethnicities and religions. It then accentuates the tactics used by participants when identifying distinctions between what they perceive as jokes ('friendly banter') and racial abuse and how they distinguish between safe and unsafe spaces for social interactions.

Chapter 7(Perceptions of being 'typically' or 'fully Irish') focuses on multi-ethnic young people's relationship to Irishness and the ways in which they articulate how they feel both similar

and different to those around them, those they consider 'fully Irish[4]'. It focuses on ways in which cultural practices shape their experiences and highlights the disjuncture between their Asian parents' cultural practices and their own. This chapter also looks at the ways in which racism limits their capacity to feel typically Irish.

Chapter 8(Negotiating complex multiple identities and mixed cultural practices) focuses on the complexities involved in the identity negotiations and cultural practices of multi-ethnic young people. It concentrates particularly on the ways in which they manage to negotiate different aspects of their mixed cultural and religious backgrounds in the context of mainstream Irish culture. The data generated are discussed in terms of their strategic reactions and responses to racialised encounters.

Chapter 9(Conclusion) sets out the key conclusions of the research and is structured around answering the three research questions. Although significant diversity was found in participants' experiences, it is evident that issues pertaining to 'race' permeate their lived experiences, encompassing assumptions about colour, culture and religion. All multi-ethnic young people taking part in this study were subjected to racism based on Asian stereotypes. This process started early on in their lives and was perpetuated at school, in their neighbourhoods, by peers and adults, friends and strangers. Their identity choices were limited and they felt marginalised to a certain extinct, within contemporary Irish society, due to dominant ideas about Irishness. Despite this, multi-ethnic young people adopt survival strategies and manage their identity negotiations by challenging assumptions and negative stereotypes about the mixedness of their identities.

[4]This term arose during the research and was commonly used by the young people in this study.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO:
Theorising 'race', racialisation and ethnicity

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that shapes the foundation for my analysis. The focus of this study is to explore the lived experiences and identity negotiations of young multi-ethnic people in Ireland from a partial insider's perspective, as the parent of three multi-ethnic children. The position taken is that individual perspectives are influenced by social contexts and by ideologies, such as those relating to 'race', ethnicity and identity that surround everyday interactions. This study is grounded within the conceptual framework of 'race' and racism and manifestations of racism such as micro-aggressions which are considered useful analytical tools to understand how more subtle forms of racism persist in what is often considered to be a post-race era.

This chapter engages in a discussion of these, first by focusing on 'race', racism and racialisation, concepts that are useful in making sense of multi-ethnic young people's experiences. Then it examines the concept of racial micro-aggressions which is useful when trying to make sense of young people's identity negotiations.

2.2 'Race'

Mathews (2013: 7) states that "stratification based on skin complexion originated with the enslavement of Africans by Europeans in the seventeenth century and that this became known as the "white supremacy ideology". She argues that slavery was justified by a system of beliefs that maintained that whiteness was superior, and blackness was shameful, immoral and unpleasant. She links the emergence of the ideology to the colonisation of the Americas and the enslavement of Africans. She also said that the contrast between the constructs of whiteness and blackness was like what W. E. B. Du Bois identified as "the problem of the color line" and maintains that "this color line was the dividing factor that pitted lighter shades against those who were dark and began the social construction of what we know today as race" (Mathews, 2013: 7). The idea of 'race' according to Morning (2011) includes the socially constructed belief that humanity is divided biologically into groups based on physical and cultural traits. During 'the Enlightenment' period (1720-1820) projects of categorisation were popular among scientists. They compiled inventories of living things which included people, as they sought to order and rank them according to their physical characteristics. Garner (2017: 8) reiterates that "the fulcrum of Enlightenment reasoning was Linnaeus's 'bodies merely natural': that is, a set of common-sense physical markers that expressed difference". During this period, because scientists linked phenotype and intellectual

ability with capacity for civilization, as a consequence the categories that were assigned to different people were understood in terms of appearance and culture, which Eze (1997 cited in Garner, 2017: 8) maintains were the "two sides of the same phenomenon. Physical appearance became a marker of cultural development, not just in the present, but also an indicator of the parameters of advancement". During the nineteenth century then science and pseudo-science built on the central thesis of the Enlightenment period and sciences such as craniology and phrenology, which focused on measuring different parts of the human body, flourished. In this climate, not surprisingly, when the then "new 'social' sciences sociology, ethnology and anthropology" emerged they too were preoccupied with physical appearance and the meanings attributed to it by their colleagues in the physical sciences (Garner, 2004: 11). For example, when the craniologist, Morton measured the capacity of skulls by filling them with lead pellets, he found that English skulls were larger than Black American or Native American, so, therefore he claimed that the former were superior (Garner, 2017).

Social Darwinism, which also emerged during the nineteenth century compounded assumptions that human beings were divided biologically. Social Darwinists sorted humankind by classifying different people based on the physical appearance of the body. Again, features such as skull size and skin colour were considered determining factors (Gould, 1994). The belief was that the body of what was known as 'the tribes' man was primitive and therefore, inferior to the white body. 'Race', thus, became a new way of separating 'us' from 'them' and a way of highlighting that 'other' people were human, but they were a different type of inferior human, not equal to the 'more superior' white people (Garner, 2010). This emphasis on the 'other' as not having any intelligence or limited intelligence, meant that their purpose was viewed as being to serve the dominant in society, those with intelligence: the white people. These notions served colonial powers well and legitimised the exploitation of others.

The origins of racism are of great importance, as this legacy remains deep-rooted within the institutions of many countries today, influencing the everyday experiences of members of non-white groups. The outcomes manifest themselves, not only in laws that contribute towards the differential treatment of people, but also the ways in which racism pervades all aspects of life for members of ethnic and minority groups in everyday situations (Garner, 2010). What is clear is that although we need to go back to the seventeenth century to look to the roots of racism, it remains a key dimension of inequality, stratification and disadvantage today. Within this system white Europeans in the seventeenth century were deemed superior to all other 'races' in every respect. This was necessary to achieve imperialist expansion around the world, as well as to justify the practice of slavery. According to Bashi and McDaniel (1997 cited in Song, 2004: 861) "Africans

were [and still are] at the bottom and Europeans at the top". Without this belief system, "it would not have been possible to subordinate and dehumanize conquered peoples" Song (2007: 3768) argues.

2.3 'Race' as a contested concept

Although these days scholars who engage in the deconstruction of 'race' place the word 'race' in inverted commas to indicate that the concept is contested, nevertheless, as 'race' is still very much embedded in laws and institutional norms and practices, scholars have no option other than to continue to engage with it. Gilroy (1987 cited in Miles, 2000: 134) argues on one hand that "race must be retained as an analytical category not because it corresponds to any biological or epistemological absolutes but because it refers investigation to the power that collective identities acquire by means of their roots in tradition". What he is arguing is not that the term be retained because it relates to biological differences or beliefs but rather because of the meaning it holds for all non-white people, whose histories are not only steeped in slavery and apartheid but also in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Miles (1993 cited in Garner, 2004: 7) on the other hand, insists that the word 'race' should never be used as it takes away from what he refers to as "the real area of study, namely the discriminatory processes based on the idea that the human race is divisible into distinct categories called races". He believes that the continued use of 'race' compounds people's assumptions that human beings are, indeed, divided categorically and therefore, reinforces discriminatory practices such as racism. Therefore, Miles (1993 cited in Garner, 2004) argues that the focus should be on the discriminatory practices and how they work rather than assumptions based on 'race', drawing our attention to racialising processes and practices.

Connolly (1998: 15-16) reiterates that despite discourses of race evolving and changing over the years, they always construct differences between people and consequently, reinforce the "notion of us and them". He argues that it is through these discourses that 'race' has been constructed. Nayak (2009: 93) claims that "race can appear an inescapable truth - a 'sticky' sign that attaches itself to particular bodies, spaces and practices" in the sense that although some scholars accept that 'race' is a socially constructed concept, they maintain that the meanings attached to it still impact on social relations among white and non-white groups. Although the idea of 'race' based on biology has no substance, many people still believe that it has social significance (Zevallos, 2017) and members of ethnic-minority groups continue to experience different forms of racial abuse and acts of discrimination based on the colour of their skin. Consequently, sociologists like Back (1996 cited in Meer and Nayak, 2015: 15) insist that "race is very much installed in the here and now. It remains ever present in late modernity and strangely solid in liquid times". In other

words, he emphasises the resilience of 'race' despite changes that have taken place. For example, African-Americans were oppressed for much longer than any other group in America and, even after the demise of slavery, African-Americans were subordinated, oppressed and disadvantaged and continue to be more than other groups in America (Feagin and Hernan, 2000). Consequently, 'race' has a social reality, which indicates that once it is created it produces real effects especially for those who are racialised. Examples include incidences of black youth who are accused of participating in street crime and other acts of violence because they are black (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Pyke and Dang (2003) assert that Asian-Americans face different forms of racism in the sense that they are often viewed as model minorities, based on stereotypes about their educational and economic successes. However, despite being considered hard working and studious, they are also accused of being 'nerdy', and of being out of touch with American culture. Consequently, they are both "praised and resented, complimented and derided" (Pyke and Dang, 2003: 150), and significantly the stereotypes employ notions of 'race' and race hierarchies.

2.4 Racisms

So, despite the idea of 'race' as a biological fact being rejected and debated, ideas about 'race' continue to influence members of the public and form the basis for racism. While Garner (2004: 19) suggests that it would be "self-defeating to attempt a definitive description of the multifaceted and fluid pattern of social relations that comprise racism" he draws attention to "the precondition for racism is the fundamental belief that the world's population is divided into races". He emphasises racism as a power relationship that exists within and between groups, where confrontation takes place based on 'race' among individuals and that dominant groups act out their control in the form of discriminatory practices. Garner (2017: 16) describes racism:

> As a belief system or doctrine which postulates a hierarchy among various human races or ethnic groups. It may be based on an assumption of inherent biological differences between different ethnic groups that purport to determine cultural or individual behaviour. Racism may be described as a strong form of ethnocentrism, including traits such as xenophobia (fear and hate of foreigners), views against interracial relationships (anti-miscegenation), ethnic nationalism, and ethnic stereotypes.

In this definition, Garner (2017) draws attention to the racist underpinnings of phenomena such as xenophobia[5] and anti-miscegenation[6] which are particularly relevant to this study. His description of racism "as a strong form of Ethnocentrism", Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992: 8) claim, "occurs

[5] Xenophobia implies behaviour based on the idea that the other is a 'stranger' to the group (Karlsson 2009: 3)
[6] Anti-miscegenation laws prohibited the marriage of whites to ''Negroes, Mongolians, American Indians, Asiatic Indians, and Malays in the U.S. (Sohoni 2007: 599)

when one's culture is taken for granted as natural and is characteristic of all ethnicities to a greater or lesser extinct". Subsequently, identifying the multifaceted nature of racism flags some of the reasons why dominant group members feel that it is acceptable to discriminate against members of ethnic-minority groups. Dyer (1997) maintains that as long as the idea of 'race' continues to be applied only to non-white bodies, whiteness remains the norm and therefore, retains its position as dominant and normative.

2.4.1 Institutional racism

Different forms of racism such as institutional (Mac Pherson, 1999), every day (Essed, 1991), cultural (Craighead and Nemeroff, 2004), and colour blind (Bonilla-Silva, 2019) have been identified as relevant to this study and are briefly outlined in the following. For the purpose of this study, forms of racism that operate at both macro and micro levels have been identified in an attempt to gain an understanding of, not only the social context in which racist behaviours take place, but also what the nature of such practices are and why they persist.

One of the most prevalent definitions of institutional racism was provided by Mac Pherson (1999 cited in Lea, 2000: 220) when he referred to institutional racism as:

> The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

Bonilla-Silva (2003: 9) adds that institutional racism is evident in formal and informal policies and proceedings that systematically subordinate and marginalise members of minority groups. He reminds us that it is society's racial structure and "the totality of the social relations and practices that reinforce white privilege". Some people associate racism with overt forms of racial abuse such as acts perpetrated against blacks by members of the Ku Klux Klan and the shooting dead of innocent black teenagers by police officers in the United States. While individual racist acts are often visible the opposite can be said of institutional racism, which despite being ingrained in the very structures of society itself, remains invisible, especially for those who are white. Blauner and Blauner (1972 cited in Miles and Brown, 2003: 68) insist that because "the processes that maintain domination – control of whites over non-whites are built into the major social institutions" definitions of racism should include not only individual racist attitudes but also the processes that sustain white domination. As institutions are built on racist foundations, and because societies are regulated and maintained through these institutions, racism permeates society (Feagin, 2004).

2.4.2 Cultural, every day, subtle and covert racism

In conjunction with institutional racism, the concept of cultural racism provides another platform from which racist ideologies can be maintained but without the use of 'race' as a precursor. Craighead and Nemeroff (2004 cited in Revell, 2012: 39) explain that cultural racism "occurs where the dominant group define the standards in a society to which all other minority groups must adhere, often requiring them to give up their own cultural heritages". Therefore, dominant group members are in positions where they can (and do) attribute deviance and backwardness to minorities, and they do this in such a way as to justify why social exclusion and marginalisation persist (Garner, 2010). Balibar (1991: 23) refers to cultural racism as "racism without race" and it is clear that this increased focus on culture is successful in its attempts to divert attention (if only partially) away from 'race' and racial difference towards what is perceived to be insurmountable cultural practices. It is important to remember that cultural racism is also racism in that it is about the racialisation of cultural difference. Cultural categories substitute racial categories, and the superiority of 'race' is replaced by the superiority of culture. It appears that "what counts is culture, not color" (Blaut, 1992: 289-299).

Muslims are currently the prime targets of racialisation in Europe and the U.S. Due to the links between international terrorism and Islam they are now perceived as potential terrorists. In relation to Islam, it is suggested that "even clothing becomes a racialisation tool" as the Hijab is now seen as evidence that Muslim women are racially different. This practice indicates that "whenever a cultural practice is thought to be unique to one group, people who are eager to racialize turn its practitioners into a race" (Gans, 2017: 351). Consequently, racialisation is the process by which suspect groups become the targets of racism. Carr and Hynes (2015) draw on Dunn et al. (2007) who claim that Muslims are racialised in two ways in the sense that not only are they discriminated against based on phenotypical characteristics, but they are also considered a threat to 'Western' society.

The meaning attached to new racisms, such as colour-blind racism, is the belief that racism is no longer a problem and that everyone has equal opportunities open to them. People who subscribe to colour-blind explanations claim they do not see the colour of people's skin and believe everyone to be equal. Yet, Bonilla-Silva (2006: 3) contends that "compared to Jim Crow racism [laws][7] the ideology of color blindness seems like 'racism lite". He maintains that within this ideology, racist attitudes and racial thinking still exist. He explains that instead of openly calling people names, colour-blind racism otherises softly through covert messages. While notions that minorities are in

[7]Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation in the United States until 1965 (Flatley 2001)

the world to serve others have changed, this perspective promotes the idea that they are unsuccessful because they do not work hard enough and are marginalised because they do not mix with others, more particularly with the dominant groups. He maintains that just because no one in the United States openly states that they have a problem with mixed marriage based on 'race', does not mean that they do not express concern for the children of such unions. Consequently, in his opinion "color blind racism serves today as the ideological armour for a covert and institutionalised system" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006: 3).

Essed (1991) saw racism as a process that is created and reinforced through everyday practices. She maintained that 'everyday racism' connects structural forces of racism with the routines of everyday life and therefore links the "ideological dimensions of racism with everyday attitudes and interprets the reproduction of racism in terms of experience of it in everyday life (Essed, 1991: 2)". She asserts that from the perspective of 'everyday racism', the recurrent and normalised existence of racism is "infused into familiar practices", which include learnt social attitudes and behaviours. These behaviours go unquestioned and become part of what is seen as normal within dominant groups. When these racist notions "infiltrate everyday life and become part of the reproduction of the system the system reproduces everyday racism" (Essed, 1991: 50).

Racial micro-aggressions are a form of racism that exist which are said to be disguised and difficult to identify (Sue, 2003, 2004). Sue (2003, 2004) maintains that these contemporary forms of racism are many times more problematic and damaging for people of colour than overt racist acts. Sue et al. (2007) reiterate that some people of colour feel that it is easier to handle overt racist acts than some of the more subtle kinds. Pierce (1970) introduced the concept of racial micro-aggressions and Sue et al. (2007: 271) define them as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults towards people of colour, of which the perpetrators are usually unaware". They argue that every interracial interaction is prone to micro-aggressions and identify three distinct micro-aggressions that are relevant to this study: "micro-assaults', 'micro-insults', and 'micro-invalidations". Sue et al. (2007) insist that micro-assaults are 'intentional discriminatory acts' that share similarities with overt racist actions that are perpetrated towards people of colour. Micro-insults are verbal or nonverbal communications that convey acts of rudeness and insensitivity in a subtle way that demeans either a person's racial identity or background. Sue et al. (2009: 89) highlight one such verbal insult which they refer to as the micro-aggression 'alien in your own land'. They found that "Asian Americans and Latino/Hispanic Americans" felt that statements like, "You speak such good English," or, "So where are you really from?" were insulting and left them feeling like aliens in their own country. Sue et al. (2007: 275)

also maintain that "the power in racial micro-aggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator and often times the recipient". Babacan (2008: 23-4) draws our attention to racism denial which she insists is "the widespread belief that racism is no longer a feature of modern social relations, which is articulated through commonly expressed views such as; 'racism was in the past', 'it only exists in a minority of the population". She maintains that statements like 'I'm not racist but' "only legitimises racist behaviour by rendering racism invisible". Consequently, statements like this position perpetrators outside the boundaries of racism, allowing them to express derogatory views about particular groups and "as such, the effects of 'race' denial are harmful and serve to reinforce patterns of inclusion and exclusion, dominance and subordination" (Babacan, 2008: 24). In a way, some aspects of colour-blind racism intersect with the concept of racial micro-aggressions, in the sense that both concepts suggest racist attitudes and behaviours are so subtle that they remain largely hidden.

The danger is that when people are of the understanding that racism is a thing of the past, they begin to believe that they cannot be racist and consequently racial micro-aggressive acts can be easily explained away (Sue et al. 2007). Huber and Solórzano (2015: 297) assert that they feel that the concept of racial micro-aggressions can be a useful tool for "identifying, disrupting, and dismantling the racism that marginalizes, subordinates and excludes People of Color". Wong et al. (2013: 194) maintain that it is hard for dominant group members to accept that they have biased attitudes because they have been socialised into "[e]urocentric values, beliefs, standards and norms, which make the perception of their power and privilege normative and therefore invisible". In this context, Bryan (2018) claims that perpetrators of micro-aggressions like micro-insults and micro-invalidations are not fully aware that they are treating members of minority groups disrespectfully or criticizing them unfairly so therefore, their aggressions go unacknowledged and uncorrected.

Johnston and Nadal (2010) and Nadal et al. (2011: 40) highlight the specificity of micro-aggressions aimed at 'multi-racial' people by exploring five 'multi-racial' micro-aggressions which include "exclusion and isolation, exoticization and objectification, assumption of a mono-racial identity, denial of a multi-racial reality, and the pathologizing of multi-racial identity and experiences". For example, Johnson and Nadal's (2010) research reveals that 'multi-racial' individuals can, at times, experience 'exclusion and isolation' from their families which is unique to their experience. They conclude that because 'multi-racial' individuals' experiences are unique to them, racial micro-aggressions should be more appropriately termed 'multi-racial' micro-aggressions, which implies, that there may be other manifestations of racial micro-aggressions that Sue et al. (2007) had not recognised. It is possible, therefore, to conceive how 'multi-racial' micro-

aggressions "allow us to 'see' those tangible ways racism emerges in everyday interactions especially among multi-racial groups" (Huber and Solórzano, 2015: 302). Consequently, these concepts provide a useful framework in which to explore ways in which racism manifests itself during the everyday lives of multi-ethnic young people in this study.

2.5 Racialisation

While racism manifests itself in different forms of discrimination and prejudice, racialisation represents the processes in which members of different ethnic groups become racialised. Garner (2017: 24-25) points out that:

> The concept of racialisation is based on the idea that the object of study should not be race itself, but the process by which it becomes meaningful in a particular place at a particular time. It is not an equivalent, either of race or 'racism'. Race is about categorisation and classification. Racism is about the differential outcomes of those classificatory and categorising practices. Racialisation, however, is the process by which the classification and categorisation takes place: it is therefore ongoing. The racialised group is the outcome of the process.

This quote highlights the fluidity and instability of the concept of 'race', and points to racialisation as a process rather than racial categories as fixed things. This can help in understanding how mixed-race or multi-ethnic people become racialised through social processes that seek to categorise them in particular ways. This relates back to Anthias and Yuval-Davis's (1992) definition of racism which indicates that racism can take on many different forms depending on different contexts and time periods.

Murji and Solomos (2005) suggest that racialisation as a concept is useful for describing how racial meanings become attached to social problems and the ways in which 'race' can be seen as a key factor in the manner in which these issues are defined and understood. Gans (2017: 352) highlights that racialisation processes can also "be understood as a form of othering" in the sense that physical characteristics are used to permanently other those who are different because this is something they cannot change. This is particularly relevant as it points out that those who are phenotypically different are permanently racialised because they cannot change the colour of their skin, signalling that there is no chance of de-racialisation, which is possible under other circumstances. As "the otherizers retain the ability to prevent or limit their social assimilation into the mainstream" (Gans, 2017: 352) attention needs to be given to what has become known as the positionality of the people in question. According to Murji and Solomos (2005: 107) "racialisation and positionality are complementary and mutually reinforcing theoretical concepts in that racialisation can be seen as

positioning in relation of race". Importantly they point out that "the spatial metaphor of position allows recognition of flexibility (rather than fixity) in location and the possibility of negotiating (including accepting and contesting) the ways in which people are positioned by others and position themselves in relation to discourses of race". They maintain that racialisation entails differential positioning and suggest that people's retrospective accounts of racialisation help them to construct subject positions and identities that are part of the process of becoming racialised which, in turn, enables them to negotiate current experiences of racialisation.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter draws on the concepts of 'race', racism, racialisation and racial micro-aggressions to provide a conceptual framework to help make sense of multi-ethnic young people's experiences. A discussion focusing on ideas surrounding the origins and social constructions of each concept helps to understand and analyse this cohort of young people's experiences. Although the construction of 'race' based on biology has been critiqued and shown to be a social construction, it is evident that it still holds social significance for members of ethnic-minority groups who continue to experience different forms of racism based on the colour of their skin. While overt forms of racism may have abated, they have been replaced by other manifestations of racism based on culture, the workings of institutions, assumptions of ethnicity based on racial hierarchies and manifest in racial micro-aggressions. For instance, institutional racism continues to subordinate and marginalise members of minority groups as racial structures current in societies reinforce white privilege. Dominant groups continue to define the standards in society, and they hold the power to attribute deviance and backwardness to minorities, which in turn promotes cultural racism. In what is believed to be a 'post- race' era, cultural racism diverts attention away from 'race' and racial difference towards what is perceived to be insurmountable cultural practices. While everyday racism is taken for granted, colour blind racism is the belief that racism is no longer a problem although it still persists and just finds more subtle ways to 'otherise'. Colour blind racism in some respects is similar to the concept of racial micro-aggressions, in the sense that both concepts suggest racist attitudes and behaviours are so subtle that they remain largely hidden. Racial micro-aggressions allow us to see the ways in which racism emerges in everyday interactions and provides an insight into identity negotiations taking place among members of 'multi-racial' groups.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE:
Multi-ethnic youth identity negotiations: a review of literature.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief history of mixed-race and mixed-ethnicity discourses by recounting the ways in which discussions surrounding them have evolved over the years. It sets out to acquire a better understanding of the social environments in which multi-ethnic people live as well as their subjective lived experiences and identity negotiations. The role played by social contexts in relation to the lived experiences of multi-ethnic people is taken into consideration and strategies implemented by them (in order) to evade the racialisation process are examined.

3.2 Historical discourse of mixed-race and ethnicity

As discussed, the idea of 'race' according to Morning (2011) includes the socially constructed belief that humanity is divided biologically into groups based on physical and cultural traits. Although Tizard and Phoenix (1993) remind us that theories on 'race' have been rejected by contemporary scientists, 'race' continues to have a hold on members of the public and these notions form the basis for racism. However, because white people introduced these ideas, they viewed themselves as superior, while others were placed in positions that made them inferior. These racial classifications maintained that the white 'race' was superior: therefore, 'white blood' needed to be kept pure and thus, for instance, there was outrage at the idea of mixed marriage throughout the nineteenth century in the U.S, supported, for instance with anti-miscegenation laws.

Spickard (1992: 16) emphasises that in the US "definitions of what constituted being black … varied, but, in practice-both legal and customary- anyone with any known African ancestry was deemed an African American, while only those without any trace of known African ancestry were called Whites". This was known as the 'one drop rule' which, according to Spickard (1992), may have made some sense if it had been based on the colour of someone's skin. However, it was discovered that despite some mixed-race people's skin looking paler than some people categorised as white, they were still classified as black (Spickard, 1992). Daniel et al. (2014: 12) reiterate that "this mechanism, which is unique to the United States, has historically precluded any choice in self-identification, and ensured that all future offspring of African American ancestry have been socially designated as black" there. Spickard (1989) informs us that despite these classifications, during the 1950s more than a third of mixed-race people in the US identified themselves as both black and white, although according to Young (1995) forty out of fifty states in the United States had laws that prohibited mixed-racial unions and marriages.Marriage of whites to black people was discouraged/made illegal based on the rationale that "it was feared that their offspring would

not only dilute 'white blood' but that they would disgrace the family by inheriting and transmitting the bad qualities of the inferior race, including their stigmatised appearance" (Tizard and Phoenix 1993: 2). Phoenix and Owen (1996: 74) reiterate that there were specific terms used to describe those with mixed parentage and names such as "half caste', 'mixed-race', 'bi-racial', 'maroon', 'mulatto' (from mule) and 'metis' (French for mongrel dog)" were assigned to them. Tizard and Phoenix (2002) insist that although the term 'mixed breed'/'half breed' were often used in Britain, 'half caste' became the most popular term used there, throughout the twentieth century. This signifies one of the many ways in which the racialisation process served to racialise people in the US. These laws were not declared unconstitutional until 1967.

Tizard and Phoenix (1993) state that it was during the 1960s that changes came about, and that black and mixed-race people developed more positive identities in the US. As theories around the superiority of the white 'race' became discredited, attitudes changed, and the stigma attached to black and mixed-race individuals reduced somewhat, especially after the black consciousness movement in the US, which led to the demise of racial discrimination and segregation there. Tizard and Phoenix (1993) maintain that within the British context, although there were never any special definitions applied to those who were black and those in interracial marriages, 'half castes' and those categorised as black were stigmatised because they normally lived-in poorer sections of society.

3.3 Identity formation and socio-cultural practices: the evolution of research

One of the main bodies of literature that focused on the identity development of mixed-race people was that of Park (1928) when he introduced the concept of the 'marginal man' to explain his understanding of the social disposition experienced by mixed-race people. He advocated that because mixed-race people found themselves living between two cultures and two worlds, they experienced a divided self, which left them open to confusion.

It was not until the 1980s and 1990s in the American context, according to Rockquemore et al. (2009: 18), that "a new generation of researchers emerged who focused on conceptualizing the mixed-race population as distinct from any single racial group". These researchers studied the ways in which mixed-race people constructed their 'biracial' or 'multi-racial' identities and looked at the ways in which they maintained a healthy sense of their multiple racial backgrounds, cultures and social locations. Rockquemore et al. (2009) express that this was best illustrated in a book written by Root (1992) in which a group of progressive scholars forwarded the idea that the mixed-race population was a separate group worthy of study independently of any other.

In the British context, during the 1990s partially owing to the increase in the number of mixed-race marriages, the use of the term racial group became discredited. Gibbs and Hines (1992) report that the term ethnic group began to be used more in place of the other (indicating that 'race' was no longer an accepted term). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992: 8) articulate that "[e]thnicity is a term with a longer history than race. Derived from the Greek word, 'ethnos', meaning people, it still retains in its contemporary usage the sense of belonging to a particular group and sharing its conditions of existence". Yoo and Lee (2005: 497) define it "as an individual's acquisition and retention of cultural characteristics that are incorporated into one's self-concept, and it develops in the context of the individual belonging to a minority ethnic group within the larger society". While the term ethnicity is applied to those who share backgrounds, cultures, traditions, languages and religious beliefs sustained between generations, Bhopal (2004) points out that ethnicity should never be mistaken for nationality. For example, while the offspring of people who immigrate to the United Kingdom from Bangladesh are British nationals, they are also likely to identify with another ethnic group i.e. Bengali Muslim. We need to consider that although British nationals are members of their parents' ethnic groups, they may also perceive themselves as having another ethnic identity - in this case, British. This issue has a significant impact on the everyday lives of multi-ethnic young people as misunderstandings surrounding the meaning of ethnicity, nationality and 'race' occur and assumptions are made that do not necessarily reflect people's own perceptions of ethnicity.

Tizard and Phoenix (1993) suggest that although people in Britain appeared to be more approving of 'multi-racial' marriages in late twentieth century than they had been previously, there continued to be an element of concern for the children of such unions. Phoenix and Owen (1996: 76) maintain that evidence continued to exist that there was continuing opposition to interracial marriages in late twentieth century Britain. They claim that this was reflected several times in the findings of the British Social Attitudes Survey which was set up in 1983 to study the Social Identities of Young Londoners. While this survey continues to the present date, the researchers found that in the 1991 report, when participants were asked if they would mind if a family member got married to a person of either Asian or West Indian origin, fifty per cent of respondents said that they would mind (Brah and Coombes, 2000).

In agreement, Wilson (1987: 1-2) insisted that "the prevailing view of mixed children is that they have identity problems because of their ambiguous social position … the stereotype of the 'tortured misfit'". Phoenix and Owen (1996: 77) also agree that "there has been a shift from eugenic concerns with 'miscegenation', to liberal concerns with the welfare of the children born from such unions, i.e. to expressions of benevolent concerns about the children". The researchers emphasise

that although there appeared to be a positive change, it still highlights that mixed-marriages continued to be considered problematic. Tizard and Phoenix (1993) maintain that instead of being the fortunate inheritors of two cultures, they are often considered objects of pity. They go on to claim that this line of thinking is deep-rooted in theories of 'race', which despite being rejected by science continue to maintain a hold on the public and form the basis for racism. Earlier, Wilson (1984) concluded that some young people of mixed-race adapt and participate very well within different groups, managing to change their self-image depending on the situation they find themselves in, indicating that ethnic identity is more fluid than it was initially imagined. While previous assumptions had claimed that mixed-race people find themselves living between two cultures and two worlds, experiencing a divided self and open to confusion, it was discovered that this was not necessarily the case. Later Spencer (1997: 29) reiterated that although:

> Some mixed-race people settle on a mono-racial identity, others, because of being raised in an interracial home, have fluid identities that adjust to the immediate context. Such a person may feel biracial at home, white amongst accepting white grandparents, and black amongst black relatives or in an all-white classroom.

Tizard and Phoenix (2002) contend that despite the increased numbers of people entering interracial relationships their children are still often stigmatised, as assumptions that they feel confused and unhappy about their racial identities continued to hold currency towards end of the century; returning our attention to a turn to moral/social concern for children in these families. Therefore, the earlier research focus on assuming problems then continued to this point at least here.

3.4 Multi-ethnic young people and identities

Discussing the US context, Roth (2005) argues that although the 'one drop rule' no longer applies, many of those who were termed mixed-race people still feel pressurised to identify with one 'race' over the other. It is generally accepted that the 'one drop rule' was never applied to Asian/white people in the United States (Jordan 2014). Herman (2004) assures us that they can identify themselves as either Asian or white. This, at times, can become problematic, according to Spickard (1989), who maintains that the difficulty with this is that some Asian-Americans and members of other minority groups do not always accept Asian/white people, as being one of them. For example, in Spickard's (1989) research, a young American girl with a Japanese father and an American mother, relates her experiences of living in America. This girl expressed her feelings of being perceived differently by people within her own country. She said that she was often referred to as a Japanese doll, although she had never been to Japan. Furthermore, she insists that when she did

go to Japan, she found that she had no connection to their culture or people. She felt out of place there as much as she had felt out of place in America. She felt out of place, not only in the Japanese context but also within her home country, America. This experience of feeling out of place and not fitting in appears to be part and parcel of some multi-ethnic young people's lives.

Similarly, research carried out by Campbell and Troyer (2007) in the United States reveals that the constant misidentification of American-Indians by others made them prone to stress, not because of their own identity confusion but due to being routinely racially misidentified by others. Thus, they felt that their communities were being devalued. Campbell and Troyer (2007:750) point out "that individuals' who self-identify with one racial group but are routinely perceived by observers as 'looking like' another racial group may experience negative outcomes associated with this stressful situation". A better way of understanding these people's positions can be achieved by contemplating the work of Sue et al. (2007) who use the term "alien in your own land" to explain how participants expressed they felt during some social interactions. Sue et al. (2007: 75) claim that comments like "Where are you from? Where were you born?" were problematic for some multi-ethnic people as they find it difficult to distinguish whether people are genuinely interested in them or whether they are trying to make a point that they are foreigners and do not belong.

Research undertaken by Harman and Barn (2005) in the United Kingdom found that the cultural norm for bi-racial children was to be brought up by one white parent, which at the time of their research, was found to be, most often, their mother. Consequently, growing up, these children related to their mother's white culture and it was only when they interacted with children outside their homes, who perceived them differently in the playground and school environments, that they were forced to perceive themselves as being different. This indicates that the ways in which young people imagine themselves to be, are different to the ways in which they are perceived by others. Young people who believe that they belong to a certain group but are not accepted into it may then begin to feel isolated and alienated.

It is, therefore, important to consider the congruence between the observer's perception of a young person and the way the young person perceives themselves. Herman (2010) carried out research in the United States which examined the ways in which people perceived multi-ethnic youth and determined if observer perceptions were like 'multi-racial' self-identifications. She found that while the observers perceived almost half of the 'multi-racial' participants as mono-racial, the 'multi-racial' participants who identified themselves as black were almost always perceived as black but not always as 'multi-racial'. Herman (2010:58) concluded that:

> Observers were more congruent when examining targets who self-identified as black or white and less congruent when identifying targets from Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, or Middle Eastern backgrounds. Despite the demographic trend toward multiracialism in the United States, observers' perceptions may maintain the status quo in race relations: a black-white dichotomy where part blacks remain in the collective black category.

The above paragraph highlights that observers' perceptions contribute to maintaining the status quo in 'race' relations by placing those who identify as part black into the black category. It suggests that individuals of Asian, Hispanic, American-Indian, or Middle Eastern backgrounds, despite at times being accepted as mono-racial more formally, are very often wrongly identified, due to the colour of their skin, by others. In other words, when a person chooses to identify themselves in a certain way, but others do not accept their choices, these misidentifications leave some individuals open to stereotyping during their everyday interactions creating barriers that limit integration. Brunsma and Rockquemore (2002) examine the role played by physical appearance in the racial identity choices of multi-ethnic individuals. Here they found that despite young people of mixed-race making identity choices within limited cultural contexts, these choices were not influenced by skin colour but by the way others perceived them. This notion was also evident when Song's (2010:281) research in Britain found that "even if a mixed family wished to deny the legitimacy of ethnic and racial labels and constructs, or wished to resist racial categorization, the wider societal gaze could make it very difficult for families to remain insulated from racial discourses which assign people to various racial categories". Morrison (2004) argues that at times in Ireland her multi-ethnic friends were being singled out as exotic. Sue et al. (2007) contend that telling people that they look exotic implies that they look strikingly unusual or look different by way of appearance and this is a form of micro-aggression.

Vasquez (2010) agrees and narrates that Mexican-American women challenge the gendered stereotype of being exotic as they feel stereotyped by both Caucasian and Mexican men. One participant felt that Caucasian men saw her as sexy being half Latino, while, Mexican men saw her as attractive because she looked more like a white girl and different to other women, as if it were somehow better or 'classier'. Within this perspective 'multi-racial' women are being subjected to both racialised and gendered stereotypes. The reality is that 'race' persists and plays a pivotal role in the ways in which multi-ethnic people identify themselves, in other words, on the basis of 'race' multi-ethnic people continue to be classified into racial groups. Due to the persistence of 'race' multi-ethnic people's identity choices remain influenced by observer's perceptions. Thus, it is certain that as long as the wider societal gaze makes it difficult for them to

remain isolated from racial discourses they will continue to be pressured to identify in certain ways.

3.5 Social context and the lived experiences of multi-ethnic young people

Gibbs (1998: 322) refers to multi-ethnic young people as "an emerging population ... who have some unique characteristics, some potential problems, and some social needs ... all related to their ambiguous ethnicity and their need to define their identities in a society where race has always been a significant social dimension". Root (1992) insists that there were studies to indicate that some multi-ethnic young people were not prepared for the racist treatment they experience in society and this manifest itself in a lack of support from family and friends as well as from people in communities. Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2003:120) highlight that the difficulty arises "when individuals select a racial identity that is routinely invalidated by others, especially others who are emotionally significant to that individual". Cunico (2009) stresses that for some multi-ethnic young people managing more than one racial identity can be difficult enough without having to cope with the added pressure of dealing with prejudice and biases from friends and people in their communities. She maintains that for some it is difficult to find someone who fully understands their position as their parents are very often single-raced individuals.

The significance of social context in the lived experiences of multi-ethnic young people is highlighted by Brunsma and Rockquemore (2002) when they acknowledge that the way in which people's interpretations of racial categories interrelate with important symbols influences the ways in which individuals recognise themselves and their affiliations with others. Bradshaw (1992 cited in Root, 1996:202) insists that "the ambiguous external racial coding or variegated phenotype appearances of the racially mixed significantly contribute to their ambiguous, displaced social position. People's own understandings of their identity are filtered through cumulative racial experiences". Root (1996) states that despite the formation of identity being complex, interactive and always changing, racial descriptions have been fashioned and force individuals into fixed categories. Brunsma and Rockquemore (2002) draw on Goffman (1959) who believed that bodily appearance was one of the most salient symbols of appearance. This encompasses attributes such as skin colour, hairstyle and clothing and plays a role in the process of human interaction. These are the first things we observe when we meet a person for the first time. Therefore, he suggests that we evaluate both others and ourselves by appearance and it is through appearance that we present ourselves to others. In this scenario, we need to consider if the identities that multi-ethnic young people choose to present to others are rejected within their own societies, what impact, if any, would this have on the everyday lived experiences of these multi-ethnic young people?

Williams (1996: 203) highlights "the sociological significance of What Are You? Encounters" which play an essential role in explaining the reason why so many multi-ethnic young people find themselves unnecessarily subjected to social interrogations as they go about their everyday lives. She maintains that because there are assumptions and social meaning attached to different racial groups, these are the ways in which members of society gauge and interact with members of minority groups. Omi and Winant (1986: 62) claim that our understandings about 'race' are based solely on a set of beliefs that we hold in relation to the social world and we use these assumptions "as a compass for navigating race relations". Williams (1996: 203) reiterates that "when the racial compass fails, the What are you? question is prompted" and although on most occasions this question may be asked out of genuine curiosity, Bradshaw (1992: 77) conveys that "it reveals an awareness of unfamiliarity due to variances in physical features". Williams (1996: 203) insists that asking this particular question only serves to validate the assumption that 'phenotypically ambiguous individuals' are foreigners and do not belong.

However, at the same time Brunsma (2005) claims that the difficulties being experienced by some multi-ethnic young people in America are compounded by the fact that American society is still racially divided and unequal. He insists that this environment takes a toll on all families but especially on interracial families. Consequently, although members of interracial families have become very well adapted to negotiating the racial structures in America, it appears that the social context is a changing one. The type of prejudice and biases experienced these days by some members of multi-ethnic-minority groups are subtle and manifest in the form of what Huyth (2012) calls ethnic micro-aggressions (as discussed in Chapter Three) a form of everyday, interpersonal discrimination which are ambiguous and difficult to recognise as discrimination.

3.6 Strategies used by multi-ethnic young people to negotiate racialisation processes

There is evidence to suggest that multi-ethnic young people find useful ways to negotiate their everyday lives and manage identity issues as well as racism and racial/ethnic micro-aggressions should they occur. Work undertaken by Rassool (1999) explores the life histories of a group of immigrant students of Asian and African diasporas living in Britain. His research set out to investigate the differences, if any, between the perception of first-and second-generation immigrants in relation to their social or educational experiences. At the same time, he was trying to attain a better understanding of the ways in which members of these groups encountered racism, and if they did, how they dealt with it and redefined themselves. He discovered that in order to fit in to society some members of minority groups practiced what is known as conscious

hybridisation, which he claims has been in existence since people began to move from one place to another.

> Adopting in these instances as a basic survival strategy, cultural hybridity has historically formed an integral part of the need to adapt to new ways of living, to develop a sense of belonging, and to negotiate from the margins, social (as well as cultural, political and economic) space to inhabit within the country of adoption (Rassool, 1999: 27).

This is achieved when a person consciously chooses some aspects of their ancestral/parental ethnic identities and some aspects of the culture in which they live, disregarding aspects which they do not agree with. Dwyer (1999) found that when she researched the ways in which young British Muslim women negotiated their multi- faceted identities for most of them being Muslim was part of an 'ethnic' inheritance from their parents and an integral, and inescapable, part of their heritage. However, the key finding in Dwyer's (1999) research is that they were able to consciously celebrate some aspects while rejecting others.

When Dwyer (2000) explored the ways in which young Muslim women in Britain negotiated their ethnic identities within both the social and local contexts of their everyday lives she found that the ways in which young Muslim women dressed helped them to negotiate their gendered identities. She (2000: 481) explains that "while their attire was used by parents and others to monitor religious and ethnic 'purity', it simultaneously functioned … to position young women as 'typical' Muslim girls. In this way, dress has become an over determined signifier for the identity of young British Muslim women". For these women dressing differently and wearing new styles allowed them to create new 'hybrid' identities and in doing so, they challenged the connotations associated with Asian and English ways of dressing. The participants felt that it was still possible to adhere to Muslim ways of dressing by simply wearing long skirts and trousers rather than typical salwar Kameez. This highlights that part of the process of adapting to the different social norms and expectations held within a new society is achieved by acting more like other members of society. These practices also illustrate how one generation takes on and departs from cultural traditions more generally without abandoning familial norms and expectations. Knott and Khokher's (1993) findings were similar and they found that among their participants some also only accepted some aspects of their religion. Overall, they found that although some participants practised their religion, others asserted a Muslim identity not dependent on religious belief.

Flexible ethnicity according to Vasquez (2010: 46) "refers to the ability to deftly and effectively navigate different racial terrains and be considered an 'insider' in more than one ethnic group". This phenomenon is illuminated by Vasquez (2010) when she suggests that third generation

Mexican-Americans find themselves caught between two social worlds and exist in racial liminality, due to their physical appearance. In this light, Brunsma et al. (2013) argue that 'multi-racial' identities have always been liminal, existing somewhere between hybrid and marginal. In the U S context this position, according to Vasquez (2010), affects especially those who are mixed-race, for example, the children of non-Hispanic white and Mexican-American couples. She felt that this position was problematic for some because despite Mexican-Americans' ability to exhibit flexible ethnicity, depending on the context, their chosen ethnicity might not always be accepted by others.

Vasquez (2010) found that this position was advantageous for those who were light skinned, as they could be accepted into both mixed and white groups. She found that although both men and women had equal ability to demonstrate flexible identities, there was evidence that flexible ethnicity was accepted more easily in lighter skinned individuals and it was most often found to relate to women. This highlights that in this instance skin colour and physical features and gender do play a role in multi-ethnic young people's acceptance into different groups (especially white) highlighting the theoretical discussions on white/racial hierarchies. One participant in Vasquez's (2010) research said that she thought of herself as neither Mexican nor American but because she was pale skinned, she could present flexible identities in different contexts. However, although she could reveal different identities in different situations, her ability to be flexible was limited by racialisation, as she could also, at times, be perceived as racially 'other'. Harris and Sim (2002: 615) highlight that "racial classifications can differ not only among nations and historical periods, but also in the day-to-day lives of individuals … [each] individual can be seen as having multiple context-specific racial identities". Vasquez (2010) argues that there are two ways by which the identity experience of third generation Mexican-Americans are shaped; firstly, by enacting flexible identities and secondly through the process of racialisation. Her argument indicates that Latinos are constantly exposed to practices of whitening and racialisation. This indicates that as a Latino one has the possibility of being identified as white and treated as non-Hispanic. Vasquez (2010) insists that there is a downside to the assumptions made by others, because, at times, they placed participants in her study in uncomfortable positions. For example, when participants were perceived as white, they commented that they had to listen to jokes and insults directed at members of their own group, which left them feeling uneasy. Consequently, Vasquez (2010) insists that some multi-ethnic young people attempted to racialise themselves as Latino, to avoid these uncomfortable situations in which they try to negotiate their identities in the face of assumptions and common biases of others.

To overcome these difficulties, some multi-ethnic young people use tactics that help them to negotiate their everyday interactions. This is evident in research undertaken by Mas Giralt (2011: 331) where she found that young people of Latin American descent living in Britain learn to "reproduce notions of sameness or enact forms of cultural diversity to gain membership to the place where they live". Mas Giralt (2011) refers to this phenomenon as strategies of invisibility. These invisibility strategies are enacted to maintain the person's position in society by reproducing ideas of sameness or changing their cultural practices in order to become more accepted. These strategies include staying invisible by being passive, silencing their differences and becoming visible by making their background known to others selectively. On other occasions these ethnic minorities also negotiate sameness by becoming friends with people who are like themselves also from minority ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, visibility becomes a basis for sameness.

According to Vasquez (2010:46) "the complexity of the spectrum of visibility and invisibility which characterises the embodied lives of young people became apparent in relation to their everyday experiences … interactions". Miville et al. (2005) investigated the development of racial identity among a number of multi-ethnic adults in the US and found that all participants had encountered racism. This had made them aware that they belonged to one 'race' or another. They highlight that most instances of racism, however, were directed towards multi-ethnic individuals because they were not only different, but they also looked unusual among those who were considered different. As a result, Miville et al. (2005) argue that these multi-ethnic people were being subjected to a dual experience, firstly as people of colour and secondly as people who are 'multi-racial'. However, regardless of their ambiguous positions, Miville et al. (2005: 512) insist that: "despite feeling alienated at times because of their unique racial mixture, many participants discussed how they attempted to develop strategies to help them fit in with more than one racial or cultural group" (i.e. 'both/and' thinking rather than 'either/or' thinking", mentioned earlier). They found that the participants used a flexible approach to their social interactions and worked out ways of adapting to demands or expectations of their cultural surroundings. The researchers refer to this as the chameleon experience.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter explores existing literature on the historical discourse of mixed-race and ethnicity, and the evolution of research on identity formation and socio-cultural practices. It focuses primarily on multi-ethnic identity negotiations and the ways in which racism and racialisation influence multi-ethnic young people's identity choices. When the social context and its contribution to the lived experiences of multi-ethnic young people are examined, we find that it plays a fundamental role in determining the outcomes for many. The literature emphasises that

some multi-ethnic young people are not prepared for the racist treatment they experience in society and highlights the difficulties that arise when the identities chosen by individuals are routinely invalidated by others. Moving away from fixed categorisation, the literature uncovers multi-faceted strategies being used by multi-ethnic young people to not only evade the racialisation process but to also reduce the negative connotations attached to misidentifications should they occur. It is apparent that some multi-ethnic young people negotiate their everyday lives and manage misidentifications by implementing different practices, for example, the use of flexible identities or conscious hybridisation, in which some multi-ethnic young people have learnt how to successfully navigate different racial landscapes, managing to become insiders in more than one ethnic group.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR:
The boundaries of Irishness: a review of the literature

4.1 Introduction

Although many of the issues identified in the US and UK have also been identified in Ireland research undertaken focusing on the lived experiences and identity negotiations of young multi-ethnic people in Ireland is limited and little is known about the ways in which they negotiate different racial associations and their everyday lives[8]. Therefore, to set the scene this chapter engages in a discussion on Irishness and 'race'. This discussion exposes Ireland's long history with 'race', establishes the ways in which it became associated with whiteness and goes on to examine research on the lived experiences of ethnic-minority children in Ireland.

4.2 Irishness and 'race'

Although Irishness is equated with whiteness, this was not always the case as the Irish were once racialised as non-white and uncivilised, for instance in the US during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Ignatiev, 1995). Irish immigrants found themselves in similar positions as the enslaved black population in the US and were also targets of racial stereotypes which drew on "a debased Darwinism' that positioned them akin to Blacks as being nearer to apes than those of 'Anglo-Saxon origin" (Curtis 1997 cited in Joseph, 2018: 51). The process of racialisation at that time linked Irish social, cultural, and economic identities to the origins and spread of disease, making them an undesirable social group. During the mid-nineteenth century in Philadelphia and New York, typhus was known as 'Irish fever' (Gallman, 2000). Overtime, despite being treated as subordinate in the US and Britain, the Irish managed to call upon and benefited from, possessing white bodies (Ignatiev, 1995). According to Garner (2007: 130) for the Irish "the passage between blackness and whiteness was negotiated over the 1830-1890 period" in the US. In Britain, however, the Irish continued to be discriminated against as recently as the late 1970s and 1980s and this was evident on letting signs that read "'No blacks, no Irish, no dogs'" (Ó Cuinneagáin 2018: 15). However, despite having endured subordination and discrimination the Irish also have a long history of racism perpetrated against members of ethnic-minority groups such as members of the Traveller community, Jews and Black Irish people (Fanning 2009, Lentin and McVeigh 2006).

According to King-O'Riain (2019), in Ireland in the twentieth century, mixed-race people, who were most often black and white, faced not only individual discrimination but also mistreatment

[8]However, with the BLM movement and since the murder of George Floyd in the US young people in Ireland are beginning to speak out more about their experiences.

by the State. She recounts how the Irish State was complicit in the discrimination against mixed-race babies and children in mother and baby homes and orphanages during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, a time when mothers were encouraged or forced to place their mixed-race children in State care. Rosemary Adaser (an abuse survivor) spoke of her experiences of growing up as a mixed-race person in Ireland in this era in a documentary *Ireland's forgotten mixed-race child abuse victims* (King-O'Riain 2019). In this documentary she claims that mixed-race babies and children like herself were considered unadoptable, not only because their mothers were stigmatized as fallen women but also because their fathers were perceived as savages, conveying a negative attitude towards racial mixing in Ireland at that time. Adaser suggests that mixed-race children were seen as "filthy and dirty" and considered "the most undesirable of the undesirables" (Adaser 2017 cited in King-O'Riain, 2019: 5). The association of mixed-race Irish (AMRI) is a support group that highlights racial discrimination in the historic care system in Ireland for mothers and babies/children.

Morrison (2004) argues that people of mixed-race in Ireland must often explain their lineage to strangers, sometimes in detail. This, she insists places the person in a position where they must make a case for their identity. She believes that this case should never need to be made, based on the colour of one's skin. On the other hand, she argues that if they had been born white, no questions would be asked about their identity in the first place. Morrison (2004: 387) insists that:

> As far as the classifying and deciding force of whiteness is concerned, only one possible position is available for the radically indeterminate subject of mixed-race. Only one position will guarantee full outsider status and ensure that the mixed subject can be kept at arm's length. This position is whiteness's false opposite—blackness.

In the above context, there is a hint of micro-aggression which suggests that people of colour are made to feel like aliens in their own land. The researchers propose that although most comments are made without the intention of insulting members of ethnic-minority groups, recipients have a different understanding.

As mentioned earlier, significant changes have been taking place globally in relation to the recognition of people with mixed-race and in Ireland one of the most obvious changes was the addition to the census of a category for people who are mixed-race. Although the inclusion in the census legislation in Ireland (2006) gave mixed-race people the option of choosing different ethnic identifications (Garner, 2017), it also presented a problem, in the sense that it still placed people into different categories (King-O'Riain, 2007). Although Mac Gréil (1996) had published on *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland*, in the 1970s and again in the early 1990s, identifying

racialisation as a key factor in othering of people, claims were still being made during the 2000s that racism originated from the presence of refugees and immigrants, those new to Irish society (Fanning, 2012). Such claims ignored the historical roots of racism that persist in Ireland as discussed by Fanning (2009) and Garner (2007). Cohen (1993) maintains that it was easier to blame others for introducing racism rather than blaming the Irish themselves. Breen et al. (2006) link this notion, in part, to the Irish media and claim that it frames asylum seekers as threats to Irish society's integrity. They suggest that media not only represents this 'other' as a threat to the imagined homogeneity of Irish society, but also a threat to what they refer to as Ireland's legitimate population. Newspaper articles in 2002 highlight the opinions of some Irish TDs whose agendas included increasing health screening programmes in order to monitor asylum seekers' health issues, as they were considered potential health threats, especially in relation to AIDS and TB (Breen et al. 2006). Thus, the events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when Irish immigrants in the US and Britain were also racialised as destitute economic immigrants, became replicated in reverse in early twenty-first century Ireland. Lentin and McVeigh (2006) draw on Goldberg (2002) who claims that racism in Ireland shifted from the periphery of political life to the centre when the Irish state introduced policies that were explicitly racist. As an example, they point to the referendum held in 2004, which removed the automatic right to Irish citizenship from the new-born children of asylum seekers. They argue that this justifies claims that the Irish state had changed from a 'racial state' to a 'racist state'.

4.3 Experiences of ethnic-minority children in Ireland

In Ireland, much of the research relating to the lived experiences of ethnic-minority and migrant children has focused on children's experiences in Ireland. Devine et al. (2008), Smyth et al. (2009), Gilligan et al. (2010), Curry et al. (2011), have looked at the social interactions between immigrant children and their white Irish counterparts. For example, Devine et al. (2008) examined the identity constructions and experiences of racism among children in Irish schools. In their research, the voices of the children were central to their analysis as their understandings of 'what it means to be Irish' were teased out. The researchers focused on assumptions surrounding, not only skin colour but also the children's lifestyles, language and religious beliefs. As mentioned, although they acknowledged that there appeared to be a general surface acceptance of refugee and immigrant children by their peers, there was evidence of hostility and racism towards them underneath the surface. Upon further investigation, Devine et al. (2008) found that although ethnic-minority children experienced racism within school environments, these negative experiences occurred more frequently outside the school grounds, while children were on their way to and from school and on other occasions such as play time.

Therefore, they suggest that the racist incidences that teachers saw taking place in school yards and classrooms were very often only 'the tip of the iceberg'. Nevertheless, Smyth et al. (2009) comment, based on their research for the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) that most teachers were aware of the instances of bullying taking place in their schools but insisted that it was impossible to identify the occasions when bullying occurred as it took on so many different forms. Such responses can be interpreted as an indication of the acceptance of bullying in school contexts.

Devine et al. (2008:16) reveal that because the "perceptions of minority ethnic groups are located within a context which defines what it is to be Irish, such definitions carry with them assumptions related not only to skin colour but also accent, language, dress and religious belief". This indicates that interactions between children may reflect and reproduce these assumptions and being different for any reason such as colour, language, dress, or religious belief may be the reason why they are being singled out. This not only influences the ways in which they present themselves to others but also impacts on their social positioning among their peers. Similarly, when Gilligan et al. (2010) explored the experiences of young people who had migrated to Ireland they found that young migrants' experiences were also marked by racism. For instance, they discovered that migrant children's relationships with their Irish peers also involved being subjected to racisms such as being verbally taunted and abused. These instances of racism took place in the school environment and it was discovered that it was classmates that occasionally made overtly racist remarks towards them. However, often it was "misunderstandings and misrepresentations" that caused "annoyance and frustration" among young migrants (Gilligan et al. 2010: 3). When Ní Laoire (2011) interviewed the children of return migrants she found that they had been subjected to instances of bullying because their accents were different. She claimed that "accent and perceived nationality are markers of difference in peer networks and are often used to exclude return-migrant children … participants talked about feeling marked out as different in peer contexts or being bullied because of their accents – or, more generally, for not 'being Irish'" (Ní Laoire, 2011: 1266). Similarly, Curry et al. (2011) in research they undertook in Dublin where they examined the underlying forces of social interactions between children, found that speaking poor quality English acted as a barrier to social inclusion for some while speaking good English with an accent was also problematic for others. The researchers insist that "on the part of the children, irritation and discomfort is usually expressed as a fear that they are being talked about" (Curry et al. 2011: 54). They add that children also experienced bullying based on their nationality or ethnicity at other times.

Research undertaken in Ireland regarding the lived experiences of migrant and refugee children emphasises that there is a dilemma in relation to the number of instances of bullying and racial abuse taking place within Irish school contexts. When Devine et al. (2008) interviewed ethnic-minority children, these children informed the researchers that they had been shouted at and called offensive names as they went about their daily activities. Even though these racist instances occurred on a regular basis Devine et al. (2008) found that the children found occurrences of colour racism even more offensive.

What becomes evident in this instance is that name-calling and the shouting of obscenities at ethnic-minority children appear to be becoming accepted practices in Irish society as the twenty-first century unfolds. Support for this statement comes from Smyth et al. (2009) who found that there was almost a denial of racism in the ways in which the principals they interviewed in post primary schools approached the topic, as 75 per cent of them stated that newcomer students ran the same risk of being bullied as any other students in the school. Curry et al. (2011: 14) found that the approach was similar in the primary schools they researched where only eight per cent of principals mentioned that "bullying and racism were … contributing 'A lot' or 'Quite a lot' to difficulties among newcomer students". In this context, it becomes obvious that unless the person is being physically assaulted these inappropriate behaviours seem to be getting pushed aside and ignored. It is evident that ethnic-minority children are easy targets of name-calling in Irish schools and that name-calling revolves around skin colour relating to their ethnicities.

Devine et al. (2008) insist that there were other examples of name-calling that were directed towards children's countries of origin and especially towards Muslims after the 9/11 attacks in New York, which highlights the presence of Islam as a focus of othering in Ireland. An ESRI (2013) report also found that there was an increase in anti-Muslim sentiment in Ireland after 9/11 and attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims became more negative after 2006. Lentin (2007: 2) claims that because the Irish government constructed immigrants "as progressively 'bogus', 'illegal', and 'economic" it is partially responsible for the negative attitudes and discriminatory practices directed towards those who are seen as immigrants.

There is evidence to suggest that racial harassment was also experienced by minority ethnic students in schools in Northern Ireland. This was unmistakable in research carried out by Connolly and Keenan (2002) when they investigated the nature and extent of racial harassment taking place in Northern Ireland. Their research highlights that there were varied forms of racial harassment occurring. These fluctuated from acts of physical and verbal abuse to more subtle forms of abuse such as teasing which ethnic-minority children experienced under the guise of friendly banter. Connolly and Keenan (2002: 348) argue that because there was a "presence of an environment of

harassment" within the schools they researched it was difficult for ethnic-minority children to trust even their closest friends, due to the fear that they may be concealing prejudiced feelings.

Kitching (2014) looks at integration and segregation in contemporary primary schools in Ireland. He draws our attention to the ways in which religious beliefs are used in schools to constitute what it means to be Irish (relating back to the dominance of Catholicism in Irish schools). Kitching (2014) argues that non-Catholic students who are accepted into Catholic schools should not be made feel as though they are not Irish because they are not Catholic. He argues further that forcing this religious obligation on some children is another way of positioning these children as subordinate to Catholic students and in the case of multi-ethnic students leads to double subordination: Not only are students subordinated because of the colour of their skin but also because they are not Catholic. In this regard Kitching's (2014) research also found that having a light skin tone and being Catholic helped some multi-ethnic children to identify as Irish although they had been born outside Ireland and had a different nationality, while some children who were born in Ireland who had different religious beliefs or darker skin tones were not considered Irish. Kitching (2014: 99) suggests that "some racial minority children could mobilise Catholic authority to 'belong more' or become more culturally compatible than others".

Devine and Kelly (2006) assert that ideas about "who and where 'we' are could be further entrenched to frame a racial Other who was 'not Catholic' and/or 'not white". Overall, Connolly and Keenan (2002) found that the most common form of harassment experienced by the ethnic-minority children they interviewed was racist name-calling. The researchers found that most other ethnic-minority students endured similar experiences daily. Unfortunately, the researchers uncovered that as well as name-calling these children were subjected to other subtle forms of harassment i.e. being teased because of their accent or being singled out during play time (Connolly and Keenan, 2002). Smith et al.'s (2020: 11) research involving young Syrian refugees resettled in Ireland found that during focus group discussions racism was also raised as being an issue in Ireland. While stereotyping and negative attitudes emerged as significant themes "the general view expressed within the focus groups was that Ireland was a 'safe' country" nevertheless, "some young people recounted experiences of what they understood as prejudice and racism which had occurred in school settings". In fact, Ní Raghallaigh et al. (2019: 65) affirm that "incidents of … racism were recounted including bullying and name-calling (such as 'ISIS') in school settings". We must consider that name-calling and being teased can be particularly harmful for young people as it may shape their educational decisions as well as being emotionally harmful (Huynh, 2012). Pierce (1995) reminds us that after all it is not a single insult that damages one's health but the cumulative burden over a lifetime that diminishes morality and flattens confidence.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter engages in a discussion surrounding ideas about Irishness, 'race' and racialisation. It outlines the way in which the Irish diaspora were racialised and at one time treated as non-white. What becomes clear is that once the Irish achieved whiteness, notions surrounding Irishness and whiteness were consolidated. These notions produce negative consequences for non-white people in Irish society. It is apparent that in twenty-first century Ireland the long history of racism perpetrated against members of ethnic-minority groups such as members of the Traveller community, Jews and Black Irish people now extends to multi-ethnic Irish people. Although the days of blatant mistreatment of mixed-race people by the State are over, it is evident that members of minority groups and multi-ethnic people continue to face discrimination and racism during their everyday interactions. The interrogations faced by multi-ethnic people demanding explanations as to why they look certain ways is a reminder to us all that racialisation remains a factor in the othering of multi-ethnic people in Ireland.

The repercussions are visible, particularly in the literature on the lived experiences of minority ethnic children within educational settings in Ireland and Northern Ireland. It has been found that name-calling, based on 'race', is one of the most frequent forms of abuse endured by some minority ethnic young people. It has been acknowledged that although there appears to be a general acceptance of refugee and immigrant children (by their peers) in schools on the surface, there is evidence to suggest that there is hostility and racism underneath. Therefore, it is evident that ethnic-minority children are easy targets of name-calling in Irish schools and that name-calling revolves around not only skin colour relating to their ethnicities but also their religious beliefs.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE:
Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to gain an understanding of the lived experiences and identity negotiations of multi-ethnic young people in Ireland who have one Asian and one (white) Irish parent. This understanding was acquired by conducting qualitative research with multi-ethnic young people about their lives and their identity negotiations and the ways in which members of this minority group negotiate their understandings and feelings surrounding their mixed parentage. As up-to-date research focusing on the lived experiences of multi-ethnic young people in Ireland is limited, little is known about the ways in which they negotiate different racial associations in their everyday lives.

This chapter outlines the assumptions about knowledge that underpin this research, discusses the reasons why a qualitative approach was taken and highlights the positionality of the researcher. It describes and justifies how research participants were selected, how the focus group discussions and interviews were conducted and how data analysis was carried out. Finally, it outlines the ways in which ethical principles were adhered to throughout the research project. Ethical approval was sought and granted by the Social Research Ethics Committee of University College Cork[9].

5.2 Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology

Grix (2010: 57) maintains that "ontology and epistemology are to research what 'footings' are to a house: they form the foundations of the whole edifice". He further claims that as researchers, if we wish to present our work clearly during engagements with others, we need to be conscious of the assumptions that underpin our work, as these assumptions often inform our choice of research question(s), methodologies and methods. Researchers, therefore, need to have a good working knowledge of theoretical concepts prior to undertaking any form of research. Although researchers generally acknowledge that research questions, aims and objectives need to be addressed through the application of the methods they propose, they also need to consider the necessity to outline the philosophical approaches that underpin their research. As researchers bring with them their own emotions, experiences, values and assumptions (Finlay and Gough, 2003) it is these assumptions that constitute their theoretical perspectives which, in turn, influence research processes and outcomes. Crotty (1998: 66) concludes that "different ways of viewing the world shape different

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ways of researching the world". For these reasons, I turn my attention to the philosophical underpinnings of social research, by initially focusing upon ontology and epistemology.

Blaikie (2000: 8) suggests that "ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality". There are two fundamental ontological positions. The realist position, Ritchie et al. (2014: 4-5) communicate, "is based on the idea that there is an external reality which acts independently of people's beliefs about or understandings of it". In contrast, the constructionist way of thinking, Denscombe (2010: 118) informs us, sees "the social world as a creation of the human mind – a reality that is constructed through people's perceptions and reinforced by their interactions with other people". Crotty (1998) proposes that all reality is dependent on human practices, constructed within human interactions, developing and being transmitted within the social context. As a researcher, I lean towards the constructionist viewpoint: (1) the world is constructed in the way that people speak and write about it, (2) that human nature shapes the social world, and, (3) that social reality is produced and reproduced by actions, beliefs and interactions.

Epistemology, according to Ritchie et al. (2014: 6) concerns itself with the "ways of knowing and learning about the world", focusing on how we learn about reality and what forms the foundation of our knowledge. Once again, there are two dominant positions related to epistemological thinking-positivism and interpretivism. Positivism, Given (2015: 15) explains, originates from a realist perspective in which "a single reality is believed to exist and can be measured" as scientific methods are used to gain knowledge about the world, and truths are uncovered by collecting and analysing data through the use of precise tests. On the other hand, Denscombe (2010) informs us that within the interpretivist approach there is the conviction that in order to gain knowledge of the social world, human capacities are required to make sense of reality. Ritchie et al. (2014: 12) add that within this line of thinking "knowledge is produced by exploring and understanding the social world of the people being studied, focusing on meanings and interpretations".

This research focuses on the lived experiences, perceptions and understandings of young multi-ethnic people; therefore, the use of the interpretivist paradigm was deemed most appropriate. Grix (2010) tells us that the interpretivist paradigm places an emphasis on: (1) understanding social phenomena rather than explaining them, (2) that social phenomena do not exist independently but that they need to be interpreted, and, (3) that it is these interpretations that influence the outcomes. In comparison to the positivist position which reasons that researchers can remain objective during the research process, it is assumed that when researchers take the interpretivist approach, objectivity may be difficult to maintain as researchers in all fields are indeed part of the social reality they research. Finlay and Gough (2003: 40) insist that "the practice of research makes an

element of subjectivity inescapable". Consequently, this research made provision for the young multi-ethnic participants to act as the experts on explaining their own lived experiences. The subjective accounts of their lived experiences were represented by interviewing them and inviting them to describe the events that had taken place during their everyday lives. I engaged in research reflexivity through engaging with my positionality as a researcher, this included interrogating my own possible biases.

5.3 Qualitative research

Wisker (2008: 75) suggests that "qualitative research is carried out when we wish to understand meanings, interpretations, and/or look at, describe and understand experience, ideas, beliefs and values". Kumar (2014:132-133) advises us that "the main focus in qualitative research is to understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of a group of people". Therefore, I believe that this approach helps to unearth the everyday encounters being experienced by multi-ethnic young people. Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 3-4) inform us that qualitative research can be described as:

> A set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to self … qualitative researchers study things ... attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Therefore, using this approach provided a much-desired insight and greater understanding of the ways in which young multi-ethnic young people negotiate their feelings surrounding their mixed parentage, identity choices and everyday interactions. This research focused on participant responses, so therefore, its outcomes and findings were emergent, in the sense that not until the research was well advanced did the issues affecting these participants become revealed. Therefore, to deal with issues when they arose, the research methods needed to be as flexible as possible. Denscombe (2010: 109) tells us that "the success of qualitative research, indeed, can often depend on its ability to react to developing circumstances". Qualitative methods not only provide rich descriptions but also increase our understanding of the context of events as well as the events themselves. Therefore, the use of such methods allowed me to examine the everyday interactions experienced by multi-ethnic young people.

I decided to use focus group discussions in order to engage with participants collectively and to encourage them to talk about their experiences and views. I hoped that although the questions were directed at specific topics, in this context the participants would become more engaged and talk

openly as they shared their stories with others who may share their experiences. Hennick et al. (2011:111) point out that "focus group discussions do not collect narratives or personal stories of participants, but information on a range of opinions from participants ... focus group discussions produce information on the norms and values that exist within the community more broadly". I considered that a better understanding of these norms was exactly what was required at this first stage of the research process. Subsequently, it turned out the focus group discussions did provide information on participants' perceptions of social norms in their overall experiences. Additionally, Frey and Fontana (1993) point out that focus group discussion also provide suitable situations in which variations in perspectives and attitudes can be revealed. Nevertheless, researchers still run the risk that participants will tell them only what they think they want to hear. Considering this, Barbour (2007: 34) tells us that "this problem may be exacerbated by focus group research because of the additional fear of peer group disapproval". Although, in this research, it was difficult to ascertain whether participants felt at ease or not during the discussions, every effort was made on my part to alleviate any fears they might have had, by reassuring them that it was okay to express different views. To further facilitate this environment, the questions posed were broad and open ended: for example, one topic focused on what participants liked most or least about their family units.

As a follow-up to the focus group discussions, additional primary data was obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews in which young people with multi-ethnic backgrounds were, once again, the participants. Four of these participants had previously taken part in the focus group discussions, while eight had not. Although the focus group discussions provided a broad view of participants' experiences, more detailed accounts of participants' experiences were necessary in order to answer the research questions comprehensively. This was achieved by asking interview participants more personal questions, such as, what had it been like for them growing up in a family with one Irish and one Asian parent and had they ever felt that they were advantaged or disadvantaged because they have a multi-ethnic background? Bell (2005) suggests that for this semi-structured approach to be successful the researcher needs to be not only skilled in the art of asking questions but also able to recognise the best times to probe or improvise their line of questioning. She further elaborates that if this approach was well adapted it would enable the researcher to get the most from the participant as this approach encourages participants to talk openly about their feelings and experiences.

Although not part of the data collection but used as an icebreaker in this study, photo elicitation is another approach used by researchers to encourage participants to talk openly about their feelings and experiences. Clark-Ibanez (2004: 1507) described "the photo-elicitation interview (PEI)" in

which he explains that the researcher introduces photographs to enhance the interview process. These photographs can be provided by either the interviewee, to communicate different aspects of their lives, or by the researcher to expand the questions they plan to ask. I made a conscious effort to enable participants to become more personally involved in the research process by asking them to bring photographs of things that depicted important people, places and things in their lives to the semi-structured interview sessions. Modell (1983) supports the notion that giving young people the opportunity to articulate their understandings of how they perceive their social worlds will provide the researcher with a rich understanding of their lived experiences. Rose (2012: 306) also suggests that "participant-generated images ... empower research participants, both because taking photographs gives them a clear and central role in the research process, and because they are the 'expert' in the interview with the photographs as they explain the images to the researcher". This is effective in the sense that as participants go about explaining the content and meaning of their photographs, they become more engaged than they may have been in a word focused interview and consequently contribute even more in-depth, interesting information providing the researcher with the opportunity to acquire different insights into the topics being discussed (Bolton et al. 2001).

In this respect, I thought that the use of photographs would not only help to smooth the progress of the interview questions but also reduce the uneven power relations that exist between researchers and their participants. According to Karnieli-Miller (2009: 282) "this negotiation has the potential to change the power relations between the two, giving participants greater power". I believed that the use of this method would allow the participants to construct their own stories which would empower them to feel more at par with the researcher for the duration of the interview. To encourage the participants to feel relaxed enough to talk openly my intention was to focus on the photographs at the beginning of the interviews, to act as icebreakers. However, while I was aware that this approach had been successful for others, in this particular research context it was not really successful in achieving this objective. The young people taking part did not engage fully with the process; only 3 of the 12 participants produced photographs at the time of their interview. Langevang (2007) argues that not every method suits every research context, but by offering participants a range of options (focus groups, interviews, photo elicitation) you are giving them a little bit of control over how they engage with the research. And in this case, participants preferred to talk in focus groups or interviews and most of them did not elect to use the photo method. So, this research illustrates how important it is to be flexible and to be open to engaging with participants on their own terms. The details of recruitment are discussed further below in 5.5.1.

5.4 Positionality and reflexivity

As the mother of three multi-ethnic children who have one Asian and one (white) Irish parent there is no doubt that my positionality shapes my assumptions about their lives. What I felt was critical to this research was that I considered myself to be a partial insider within this group, despite being white Irish, not only owing to my relationships with my own children but also my associations with other multi-ethnic young people through my family connections. Therefore, I felt that my position within this research was complex, in the sense that, due to my involvement, I had acquired an acute awareness of the negotiations that take place during these multi-ethnic young people's everyday social interactions, based on stories relayed by my children.

I admit that while this position appeared advantageous, the reality was that it placed me, as a researcher, in a position which could become quite difficult for me during the research process and the analysis phase. I wondered if participants known to me would not talk openly about personal issues, such as problems they may be experiencing within their families or in their relationships. At the same time, I felt that being aware of their backgrounds and family practices/scripts might be an advantage in the sense that it informed my line of questioning, enabling me to be better able to negotiate asking sensitive questions of the participants. However, I believed that by placing the participants in a position where they might have felt pressured to take part in the research, their participation could hinder the research, in the sense that they may not be in a comfortable space to participate wholeheartedly. This was the reason why, when dealing with young people previously known to me, I was careful to leave it up to them as to whether or not they wanted to participate and therefore, once initial contact was made there was no further contact with them if they did not respond. Consequently, they were not compelled and only participated if they felt completely comfortable to do so.

With all these considerations I accepted that I needed to be careful that the questions I asked participants were not leading and embedded within my own unchecked assumptions. Agee (2009: 444) suggests that "it can be difficult to avoid leading questions based on assumptions in a particular world view". Considering this, I imagined that my line of questioning could potentially cause discomfort for some participants. This issue was brought to my attention while driving with my daughter one day, when I casually asked her if she thought that someone, we passed on the street was mixed-race. She turned to me and said that by bringing up the topic of being mixed I was actually making her feel different. I suddenly realised that although I had considered the feelings of the potential participants in relation to the nature of the study, for the first time, I understood that it might also single multi-ethnic young people out as being different.

Similarly, Ytrehus (2007) found when she conducted research on people in exile in Norway, several of the immigrants she was in contact with expressed the opinion that the research presented a biased and stigmatising image of them and their children. The researcher explained that several of the refugees refused to participate because they were sceptical about immigrant research and were determined to rid themselves of the status of being perceived as 'different'; something they felt was being imposed on them by immigration researchers. I realised that when I questioned the person's ethnicity, my daughter felt that I was assigning a racial category to the person in question, stigmatising them in my daughter's eyes. As my daughter's view of the world is coming from a multi-ethnic perspective, I, as a white individual had not anticipated that reaction. As this anecdote provides me with a useful way of talking about my reflexivity, my daughter had no objection and was, in fact, happy that I use her words to express it here. Shih et al. (2007) proposed that 'multi-racial' people have a heightened awareness of 'race' as a social construction, as often they have been brought up by parents with different racial backgrounds. In these settings parents often de-emphasise the importance of 'race' as a racial categorisation.

My daughter was shocked by the way I had singled someone out and this might also be problematic for other multi-ethnic young people. Nakashima (1992) explains that the difficulty arises when the 'multi-racial' individuals' understandings are different to that of dominant views, which emphasise racial conflict and barriers between racial groups. I fear that by introducing research that highlights these differences, I am, in fact contradicting my own beliefs, especially those I have instilled in my daughter during her upbringing. Consequently, despite my admirable intentions I realised that this aspect of the research had the potential to be problematic. In a similar way, Eriksen (2002 ci

ted in Nazroo, 2006: 20) claimed that "the choice of an analytical perspective or 'research hypothesis' is not an innocent act. If one goes out to look for ethnicity, one will 'find' it and thereby contribute to constructing it". Nevertheless, with these cautions in mind, I felt that carrying out this research had the potential to highlight aspects of participants' lives that have not been highlighted and made visible previously.

Adams (2008: 184) "admitted that concerns about ethics can paralyze a researcher: 'Will *I* silence myself worrying about harming *them*?' [He concluded], 'We can never definitively know how others interpret our work nor can we ever definitively know who we harm and help with our life stories". In this respect the challenge for me was to accept that despite my familiarity and close links with members of this group, I must accept that I am not or cannot ever be multi-ethnic and I am, in fact, an outsider. Furthermore, it important to recognise that as an outsider with close insider contacts I would need to continue my reflexivity throughout the entire research process.

Although being a member of a different ethnic group, at times, is considered problematic, there are those who insist that when the researcher has a different ethnic background to the participants it can have a positive effect. Song and Parker (1995) insist that this is apparent in interviews where the researcher and the participant have different ethnic identities. Because the researcher is outside the experience of the participant it adds something new and different to the interview process in the sense that it eliminates any taken for granted assumptions that may exist between two people who share the same ethnic identity. Although this applied to me as indeed, I do share my ethnic identity with participants to the extent that we are all Irish, I am however not multi-ethnic.
Consequently, as a researcher I do understand that I need to accept, like Rose (1997) did, that I did not know everything there is to know about this group and that I should not pretend to know all there is to know, but instead accept that I should locate myself and the way I interpreted these interviews by reflexively examining my own positionality. McDowell (1992: 409) echoes that "we must recognize and take account of our own position, as well as that of our research participants, and write this into our research practice". Therefore, every effort was made on my part to ensure that the research remained open to the different ways of viewing the multiplicity of the lives of multi-ethnic young people. I attempted to overcome my own assumptions by extensively examining literature addressing issues that related directly to the upbringings, schooling, social lives and societal interactions of members of this group. I believe that asking open-ended questions during the focus group discussions and open-ended questions during interview sessions allowed participants to select the ways in which they wanted to respond, encouraged interactions and gave them scope to change their opinions during the course of their discussions with others. I also kept a reflexive diary, which was part of my strategy for examining my own positionality and thoughts throughout the process. Nevertheless, despite this I do acknowledge that my positionality shaped the ways in which data was collected, viewed and interpreted to a certain extent.

5.5 Methods

Primary data was gathered by conducting three focus groups and twelve semi-structured interviews with multi-ethnic young people living in Ireland who have one Asian and one (white) Irish parent. Each focus group consisted of three multi-ethnic participants. As a follow up to these focus groups, semi-structured interviews were conducted in which several different topics were discussed. There was an added dimension to the interviews as participants who agreed to participate were asked to take part in a photo-elicitation activity which involved taking photographs of what they felt depicted important people, places and things in their lives. These photographs were to be used during the interview sessions to act as icebreakers, to encourage participants to feel relaxed and to

stimulate discussion in relation to the ways in which these young people visualised different aspects of their lives. This is discussed further below.

5.5.1 Recruitment, criteria and sample composition

Burton (2000: 215) mentions that "the limitations of the interview process can be the difficulty in recruiting people, who to recruit and which people will suit the research projects' aims most appropriately". In this case one limitation was, indeed, the recruitment of multi-ethnic young people who were not known to me. For this reason, I decided to use snowball sampling. According to Kumar (1999: 162):

> Snowball sampling is the process of selecting a sample using networks. To start with, a few individuals in a group or organisation are selected and the required information is collected from them. They are then asked to identify other people in the group or organisation, and the people selected by them become part of the sample.

However, I envisaged that once the aims and objectives of the research were explained efficiently there would be a positive uptake. In a similar fashion to that of Miville et al. (2005) I imagined that the participants who came forward to take part in the research would more than likely be aware of their multi-ethnic backgrounds and want to tell their stories. Miville et al. (2005: 509) state that these young people "might have a story" they wanted to tell about their unique racial background and, thus, serve as rich sources of information regarding their racial identity development. At the outset this was also my aspiration. Therefore, to recruit participants, contact was made initially with multi-ethnic young people who were known to me. I explained the research and invited them to take part. (Please find a copy of the recruitment advertisement in Appendix K). I requested also that they invite other multi-ethnic young people known to them to participate. This approach was not as successful as I had wished as many of the multi-ethnic young people known to me were not keen to take part in the study. One reason for this may have been the construction of the closeness of this community in the greater Cork area. As many Asian/Irish families are interconnected I can only surmise that the young people in question did not feel comfortable enough to participate because I was part of the community. This is how they could have perceived me, despite my emphasis on my research role and therefore declined my invitations. Subsequently, advertisements were placed in colleges, community centres and mosques in the greater Cork area, to contact other participants who fit the age criteria and ethnic profile of young people with one Asian and one (white) Irish parent. Once initial contact was made, information about the intended research was emailed to each potential participant. This material explained the uses to which the information gathered during these sessions would be put. (Please find copies of the information sheets in Appendices A and B). Prior to the study, four participants were known to me while the

other twelve contacted me after seeing the advertisements. The participants were mixed gender, aged between 18 and 35 years old. (Please see Table1.1below).

Table 1.1 Profile of research participants

	Pseudonym	**Age**	**Parental Ethnicity**	**Participation**
1	Sally	18-24	Irish mother and Asian father	Focus group and Interview
2	Larry	18-24	Irish mother and Asian father	Focus group and Interview
3	Mark	18-24	Irish mother and Asian father	Interview
4	Susan	18-24	Asian mother and Irish father	Interview
5	Sam	18-24	Irish mother and Asian father	Focus group
6	Sarah	18-24	Irish mother and Asian father	Focus group
7	Simon	18-24	Irish mother and Asian father	Two focus groups
8	Barry	18-24	Irish mother and Asian father	Focus group
9	Ronan	25-29	Irish mother and Asian father	Focus group and Interview
10	Conor	18-24	Irish mother and Asian father	Interview
11	Donald	18-24	Irish mother and Asian father	Interview
12	Amy	25-29	Asian/Irish mother and Irish father	Interview
13	Alice	25-29	Irish mother and Asian father	Interview
14	Steven	25-29	Asian mother and Irish father	Interview
15	Danny	30-35	Asian mother and Irish father	Focus group and Interview
16	Marie	30-35	Irish mother and Asian father	Interview

As mentioned earlier, only young people who fit the ethnic profile and were aged over 18 were selected for this study. Although I did not limit the sample to people living in, or from, the greater Cork area it turned out that most of the participants were from the Cork region. Some were living in different geographical locations around Ireland at the time of the interviews and some were living away from home (Cork) in other locations around the globe. All Asian parents were born in

Asian countries and migrated to Ireland except for one parent who was, in fact, Asian/Irish herself (born in Ireland to Asian parents). One Asian parent had grown up in a European country and four participants were siblings, two brothers and a brother and sister. Initially, I believed that participants should also be born in Ireland, but I adjusted this criteria when response levels were low. I re-examined these criterion and on reflection considered that it was of little significance whether participants were born in Ireland or not, only that they had spent their childhood years growing up in Ireland. However, despite this change, difficulties in recruiting persisted so the decision was made to remove the age limit which had been set at 25; this now meant that anyone over 18 and under 35 could be included in the study while other criteria remained as was. Finally, I interviewed sixteen multi-ethnic young people. The sample consisted of seven young women and nine young men. While their parents' ethnic backgrounds were diverse, they shared one commonality: one of their parents was ethnic Irish, which in this context meant that they were white, and the other parent Asian.

5.5.2 Focus group discussions

Focus group participation, Morgan (1998: 9) claims, is not just a way of listening and learning from participants but "a three part process of communication: (1) The research team members decide what they need to hear from participants; (2) the focus groups create conversation among the participants around these chosen topics; and (3) members of the research team summarize what they have learned from the participants". Focus group interviews, according to Kumar (2014: 156) "are facilitated group discussions in which a researcher raises issues or asks questions that stimulate discussion among members of the group. Issues, questions and different perspectives on them and any significant points arising during these discussions provide data to draw conclusions and inferences". While the use of this method allowed me to interview participants collectively, it also encouraged individuals to talk about their own experiences and views. Although the questions were directed at specific topics, in this context, the participants became more engaged and talked openly as they shared their stories with others who shared their experiences. Similarly, Crabtree et al. (1993 cited in Morgan, 1993) saw that within the focus group setting participants can, at times, recognise hidden aspects of themselves in others and reconstruct their own life stories just by listening to others tell theirs. Wilkinson (1999: 225) insists that focus group discussions "can provide a window on processes that otherwise remain hidden and are difficult to penetrate. ... Collective sense is made, meanings negotiated, and identities elaborated through the process of social interaction between people". According to Frey and Fontana (1993) the focus group setting provides a great situation for gathering a variety of different perspectives and attitudes from

participants as they discuss their different feelings and opinions about their experiences, which is exactly what I wanted to achieve.

To facilitate this, I requested that those taking part in the focus group discussions bring an object with them that meant something to them or that they felt expressed something about who they are and suggested that they be willing to talk about this object briefly during the focus group discussion. Puchta and Potter (2004: 74-75) propose that by "encouraging focus group members to speak about selected objects and ideas" it helps them to focus on the topic being discussed. While my intention was that this activity would encourage discussion, the activity acted only as an icebreaker and did not encourage any further discussion. (Please find a copy of the Focus Group schedule in Appendix G). The participants were invited back to take part in another discussion group in which a summary of the focus group transcripts could be discussed. These follow-up focus group discussions were timetabled to take place one month after the first, but they did not take place. Initially, I had imagined that follow-up focus group discussions would provide additional data, however; things did not work out as I had planned as participants showed no interest in participating in further focus group sessions. My intention had been to explore further issues that may have been highlighted during earlier discussions for further clarification. While further exploration of participant's experiences with their peers may have been beneficial to the study and added to the data set, I do not feel that it was a limitation of the study as the data gathered through the first round of focus groups was rich and highlighted key issues of importance to the participants. Four young people who took part in the focus group session did volunteer to participate in semi-structured interviews which also enabled further elaboration on the detail of their particular experiences. (Please find a copy of the Second Focus Group schedule in Appendix H). One of the main limitations of conducting these focus groups was ensuring that participants turned up on the day at the right time and place. To minimise this limitation, I contacted participants the day before to give them a gentle reminder and to confirm their attendance. Subsequently, most participants did turn up at the focus group session they had agreed to attend.

5.5.3 Semi-structured interviews

For this research the interview format was semi-structured which, according to Morris (2015: 10) means "that the interviewer has topics that they want to cover that are related to their research question/s, but there is plenty of scope for digression". I made this choice because I needed the interviews to be as flexible and free flowing as possible because it was vital that the participants felt comfortable and free to express themselves. This approach also allowed me the scope to probe further with my line of questioning which was necessary throughout the interview sessions. This

is what is desired in this type of interview. Bryman (2012: 470) reiterates that in qualitative interviewing, participants' opinions are of great importance because within this style of interview:

> 'rambling' or going off at tangents is often encouraged-it gives insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important … interviewers can adapt significantly from any schedule or guide that is being used. They can ask new questions that follow up interviewees' replies and can vary the order and even the wording of questions.

Similarly, Thomas (2013: 198) insists that "the semi-structured interview provides the best of both worlds as far as interviewing is concerned, combining the structure of a list of issues to be covered together with the freedom to follow up if necessary". Since I asked participants to take photographs, I felt that it was important to give some guidance on what they should photograph to best serve the research environment. Therefore, I provided them with a photograph guide outlining the kind of photographs desired to best suit the research agenda. (Please find the photograph guide in Appendix I).

My reasons for introducing photographs during the interview sessions were two-fold: firstly, to act as icebreakers and secondly, to stimulate discussion. Collier and Collier (1996: 105) inform us that "photos can ... foster a relaxed atmosphere because they lessen the pressure on an interviewee. One way they do this is by acting as a 'third party' in interviews ... so that the interviewee no longer feels they are the center of attention". I believed that the use of photographs to explore what Mannay (2010 cited in Rose, 2012: 306) refers to as "the everyday, taken-for-granted things in their research participants' lives" would stimulate discussion surrounding topics that relate directly to their upbringings, schooling, social lives and societal interactions. In this respect, I imagined that the nature of the semi-structured interview format would not only facilitate the use of interview photographs and spontaneous questions but also smooth the progress of follow up questions and probing where necessary. The questions posed during both the focus group and interview sessions were designed to encourage participants to talk freely about their memories and experiences and minimise my own subjectivities as a partial insider. As it happened participants did respond well to personal questions, like, what had it been like for them growing up in a family with one Irish and one Asian parent? In fact, they were very articulate about their feelings which meant that it was relatively easy to recognise some of the uncertainties they faced in Irish society. Although I introduced photographs to act as icebreakers and to stimulate discussion overall, they acted only as ice breakers and did not stimulate discussion.

5.6 Data collection

As this research focuses on aspects of the participants' lives, they were asked to discuss topics that related directly to their upbringings, schooling, social lives and societal interactions. The questions were open ended to ensure that participants got their views and opinions across. Gillham (2000) asserts that there are limitations to using interviews as a method of data collection: for example, interviews take time to develop and pilot, a lot of time is also needed to transcribe and analyse them. To reduce the complications that can occur during the focus group and interview sessions, a pilot focus group and pilot interview were carried out. These pilots allowed me to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the data collection questions and adjustments were made where necessary. During the pilot focus group discussion, it became apparent that some multi-ethnic young people had difficulty differentiating between terms such as ethnicity, nationality and identity hence they had difficulty answering some questions. Therefore, adjustments were made to reduce any confusion.

5.6.1 The focus group procedure

Three focus groups were conducted at a time and venue most suited to the participants. Since most of the participants were third-level students these discussions took place in private rooms in the college library. I facilitated the groups independently, apart from the pilot group discussion in which another research student took notes. When the participants arrived, I introduced myself to the group and explained the purpose of the research. I reiterated that the research was being conducted to uncover the opinions and views of multi-ethnic young people like them, born to families with one Asian and one (white) Irish parent, in relation to their lived experiences and identity negotiations. I explained that the research was being carried out as part of my MPhil degree at University College Cork and that I was especially interested in the ways in which they negotiate social interactions in their everyday lives. They were informed that the questions posed during the focus group discussions would be directed towards their feelings and perceptions and to rest assured that everything they said would be used only for the research. No one outside the research team (which includes my supervisors) would have access to the interview transcripts or recordings and their personal details including their names would not be shared with anyone outside the focus group. They were reminded that although they had signed consent forms that they were still within their rights to leave the group session at any time, if they so wished. (Please find a copy of the consent form in Appendix C) (Please find a copy of the research student confidentiality agreement in Appendix F).

Participants were reminded that the focus group would run from 11/2 to 2 hours and that refreshments would be available during the discussion. Participants were asked to be mindful about

what they disclosed during and after the group session in order to protect their own privacy and the privacy of others. After the participants signed the consent forms and if there were no further questions, participants were asked to introduce themselves to the group. I then invited the participants to talk about the objects that I had requested them to bring with them (objects that they felt meant something to them or expressed something about who they were). As stated, this was done to stimulate discussion and conversation between the participants. However, during the focus group discussions although this approach did introduce the participants to each other, it did not stimulate much further discussion. Questions posed were influenced by literature pertaining to multi-ethnic young people's documented experiences, focusing on broad issues, like social settings in which they felt at ease or conscious of their backgrounds or the ways in which they practiced customs or traditions.

The first of three focus group sessions ran for one hour and 23 minutes, the second almost two hours and the third for one hour and 15 minutes. To conclude each session participants were thanked for taking part and were assured that access to the session's transcripts or recordings would be restricted to the research team. They were reassured that they would remain anonymous throughout the research process and in the presentation or publication of the research findings. They were informed that they would receive a copy of the transcript of their dialogue for their validation. The participants were reminded that although they had signed a consent form, they were still within their rights to withdraw their consent up to two weeks after the focus group has been completed. Although participants were invited back to take part in another discussion group in which a summary of the focus group transcripts could be discussed. These follow-up focus group discussions never took place because none of the participants wanted to take part. None of the participants withdrew their consent and all validated their transcripts.

5.6.2 Semi-structured interview procedure

In preparation for the interview sessions, contact was made with participants to reiterate the purpose of the research and to provide them with a photography guide. I requested that participants send the photographs they produced on to me in advance of the scheduled interviews. (Please find a copy of consent to use photographs in Appendix J). As five of the twelve semi-structured interviews took place via Skype, only three participants provided photographs at the time of their interview. On these occasions, the photographs did act as icebreakers, stimulated some discussion and then the discussions moved on.

All interviews took place in private rooms at times that was most convenient for participants: as mentioned, five interviews took place via Skype as participants were in different geographical locations. These interviews were different in the sense that we did not have photographs to start

the discussion. On each occasion, when participants either arrived at the session or we started to talk via Skype, I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the research. I answered any questions that they had and then asked them to sign the consent forms. (Please find a copy of the consent form in Appendix D). I did discuss the photographs with the three participants who produced them at the time of the interviews and asked questions like, why did you take this photo, how do you feel about this photo and what meaning does it hold for you? I interwove the interview questions into our discussion wherever possible. I used fewer personal questions initially in the anticipation that this approach would not only help participants to feel relaxed but also encourage them to talk freely and in depth about their own creations. The more personal questions were slowly introduced during the interview to answer the aims and objectives of the research. During interviews where participants did not provide photographs, I proceeded in a similar fashion once the introductions were made. The interview questions were influenced by both literature and the outcomes of the focus group discussions. Therefore, questions became more personal as the interviews progressed, focusing more on how participants viewed their nationalities, religions and cultures. At this juncture, I admit that I found it difficult to ask questions about identity, race and ethnicity in a way that was not presumptuous or leading. Therefore, I made every effort to ask these questions in a way that I believed that participants could relate to. While the duration of interviews varied from 40 minutes to one hour and 20 minutes, the majority ran for one hour. (Please find a copy of the Interview schedule in Appendix E).

To conclude the interviews, the participants were, once again, thanked for taking part and assured that access to the information gathered would be restricted to the research team only. They were assured that pseudonyms would be used in the research findings and that access to audio recordings and photographs would be restricted to the researcher. They were informed that they would receive a copy of the interview transcript for their validation and reminded that although they had signed a consent form that they were still within their rights to withdraw their consent for up two weeks after without explanation. Once again none of the participants withdrew their consent and all validated the interview transcripts.

5.7 Data analysis

The transcripts of the three focus group discussions and twelve interviews made up the data set on which analysis was conducted. Silverman (2000) lays more emphasis on the analysis of the data than on successfully collecting the data. He claims that the most important aspect of research is what is done with the data. Qualitative researchers believe that rich descriptions are valuable (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Therefore, initially, at the end of each focus group discussion emerging issues were noted and incorporated into the semi-structured interview questions. For

example, during the focus group discussions it became clear that participants did not like being asked the question 'where are you from', in their everyday lives, which they expressed undermined their sense of belonging in Ireland. Consequently, for example, one question such as 'if someone asked you where you are from, what would you say' was included to the interview schedule.

Upon completion of all focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, the recordings were transcribed. Interview transcripts according to Harvey and MacDonald (1993) are easier to analyse than tape recordings as they are more flexible. Furthermore, to analysis the data you must be able to relate one statement to another as well as relate one participant's response to another. The transcripts were read through several times to become familiar with the data collected and to capture key points. These were recorded along with recurrent issues, transitions, similarities/differences, missing data, and theory related materials that were found within the texts. The data was coded using an open coding approach which involves "labeling concepts, defining and developing categories based on their properties and dimensions" (Khandkar 2009: 1). This approach proved beneficial as it allowed concepts to emerge from the raw data. Subsequently, upwards of 30 codes were tentatively selected based on this data. The codes were then organised into five categories, (family practices, identity negotiations, micro-aggressions, racialisation and sense of belonging). The data in each of these categories were interpreted over time. At this point I focused on the content and became immersed in the detail of the substantive findings. This process helped me to develop a greater understanding and gain more insight into the material I was scrutinising and enriched the research findings. Therefore, once the data was scrutinised and interpretations were applied the findings emerged and were then written up in accordance with relevance to the multi-ethnic young people's experiences.

5.8 Ethical issues

"As researchers we go about interfering in people's lives; to uphold the integrity of what we do, we also need to think, and discuss, how we embody an ethical research practice" (Daley, 2012: 1). This research involved multi-ethnic young people in focus group and interview sessions. Every effort was made to develop a rapport with participants, as it helps the participants to feel relaxed and more at ease. Denscombe (2010) insists that all researchers need to consider if the research is acceptable, allowing for the social, moral context in which it is being conducted. To meet these terms, I applied for and received approval from the Social Research Ethics Committee of University College Cork for the research.

The focus group discussions and interview sessions were held at a time and place that was convenient to the participants. Prior to the sessions an email was sent to each one explaining the

purpose of the research and inviting them to participate in either focus group discussions or interviews. (Please find copy of the invitation letter in Appendix K). This letter also explained the uses to which the data gathered during these sessions would be put. I believed that providing adequate information to potential participants about the nature of the research in advance would allow ample time for the participants to give their informed consent to take part in either the focus groups or semi-structured interviews, as well as their consent to being recorded during the sessions. "In essence, this means that people should be given adequate information to enable them to make a decision about whether or not to take part in a study" (Ritchie et al. 2014: 87). The participants were given every assurance that their anonymity would be protected, firstly by being giving the assurance that all transcripts and recordings would be available only to the research team. Secondly, only pseudonyms were to be used in the research findings and access to audio recordings and photographs would be restricted to the researcher and supervisors and stored securely at the researchers' private residence for a ten-year period. Finally, participants were given every assurance that any other potentially identifying information would either be modified or removed from the final transcripts to maintain their anonymity and confidentiality. According to Wiles et al. (2008) this meant that I would not discuss information provided by any individual with others, and that when presenting findings, I would ensure that individuals could not be identified primarily through anonymisation. Participants were also given the opportunity to view the transcripts to verify their contents. When the interviews were complete participants were emailed either a copy of their interview transcript or focus group dialogue transcript in order to verify the contents. Although all participants approved the contents, two did say that they would appreciate it if I did not mention either where they were from or where they were working. I made sure to comply with their requests.

5.8.1 Ethical issues in focus group participation

I acknowledge that different ethical issues can arise during a focus group discussion, such as not being able to guarantee participants' anonymity and privacy. Therefore, to protect their privacy I advised them to be careful about what personal information they would disclose during the discussions. To highlight this issue, I included the following statement in my introduction:

> Some of the topics that you'll be discussing today can be very sensitive and personal. We don't want you to say anything that you might regret later. And we don't want you to feel stressed by this discussion. So, if I sense that the discussion is getting too stressful or too personal, I'll have us all take a little break, relax for a minute and then start up again at a level where everyone feels comfortable (from Morgan, 1998: 93).

However, I did reassure them that although I could not offer them total anonymity while taking part in the focus group discussions, I could offer them confidentiality. I gave a guarantee that all information gathered would be carefully protected. While it was not anticipated that the research would present any risks to the participants, it was possible that some questions could have raised some uncomfortable issues. Therefore, every effort was made to provide the participants with a safe space in which they could talk openly about their experiences. For example, if a participant was to become upset or feel uncomfortable during either a focus group discussion or interview, the session would have been paused or terminated. If this difficulty had arisen, I planned to not only provide participants with contact details of free counseling services such as the Samaritans but would also have spent time with them after the session to ensure that they were feeling well.

To avoid difficulties arising with young participants and especially those known to me feeling pressured into taking part in this research, I emphasised that taking part was completely voluntary and that no one should feel obliged to do so. I sought participant's agreement to participate in the study only after I was sure that they had been provided with a thorough explanation of the research process. As a researcher I was conscious that not only had I set the agenda for the research, but that I was also going to be the one interpreting the data collected. Sandset (2019: 50) argues that the "power within such a setting cannot be overstated and the embedded asymmetry within ... qualitative research should not be overlooked nor made light of". Therefore, I made every effort to rectify this situation by identifying and addressing my ethnical obligations to the participants and approaching potentially sensitive issues with as much caution and respect as I could. Owing to my familiarity and close links with some members of the group, I was mindful that in my position as a researcher I had to ensure that the research kept its focus on the experiences of young people generally and not on my personal community connections. Furthermore, as an outsider with close insider contacts I focused on my reflexivity throughout the entire research process.

5.9 Limitations of the research

Although I did succeed in recruiting an appropriate number of multi-ethnic young people to take part in this study the majority were unintentionally third-level students. Therefore, one of the limitations of this study was that the multi-ethnic young people taking part in this study were from predominantly middle-class backgrounds. The Census (2016) shows that the 'Asian/Asian-Irish' category is overwhelmingly in the 'managerial & technical' social group which is 'middle class' so, this could also help to explain one of the reasons why the sample was quite middle classed. I believe that the inclusion of multi-ethnic young people from different socio-economic

backgrounds would have enriched the overall outcomes. In addition, although only four participants were known to me personally, I felt that interviewing them may have reduced the amount of information they revealed in relation to certain things about themselves and this may have restricted research outcomes.

Although I had hoped to conduct follow up feed-back and question sessions with focus group participants, this did not materialise because participants showed no interest in taking part. I also missed out on the opportunity to conduct online focus group discussions which would have included young people living further afield, due to time restraints. While it was not feasible, I felt that this omission was a great loss to this study overall.

6.0 CHAPTER SIX:
Multi-ethnic young people's experiences of racism in contemporary Irish society

6.1 Introduction

This chapter, the first of the finding's chapters, focuses on the experiences of racism that emerge from the participants' stories because of the prominence of this theme in the data. Participants' accounts of incidents of racial abuse and prejudice reveal the ways in which their identities are racialised. Concepts discussed in Chapter Three, such as 'race', racism, racialisation and racial micro-aggressions, are used here to explore participants' everyday experiences. These provide an understanding of the factors within contemporary Irish society that influence participants' lived experiences in the context of their mixed cultural backgrounds and religious identities. Racialisation and racial micro-aggressions refer to the processes by which the multi-ethnic young people in this study become racialised and othered. As assumptions made in relation to skin colour and physical differences tend to be based on the understanding that some people are superior to others, 'race' positions people as either superior or inferior. Keskinen and Andreassen (2017: 65) argue that the concept of racialisation "allows for creating connections between historical processes of racism and colonialism and contemporary experiences". The historical processes of racism resonate in participants' accounts of their everyday experiences and interactions. The analysis is also cognisant of the social climate in which multi-ethnic young people live and the ways in which the participants' experiences are likely to have been shaped by the economic recession from 2008 onwards which saw an increase in negative attitudes towards immigrants in Ireland (Isaksen, 2019). As participants were very often mistaken for immigrants it is reasonable to expect that this change in attitude would have impacted significantly on their experiences.

In addition to overt racist incidents, subtle forms of racism or racial micro-aggressions as discussed in Chapter Three emerged as playing a significant role in participants' racialising experiences. Sue et al. (2007) ascertain that micro-aggressions are experienced by people of colour, through 'micro-assaults', 'micro-insults', and 'micro-invalidations'. This chapter draws on the concepts of 'micro-assaults', which are 'intentional discriminatory acts' that share similarities with overt racist actions and 'micro-insults', which are verbal or nonverbal communications that convey acts of rudeness and insensitivity in a subtle way that demeans either a person's racial identity or background.

Data generated relating to their experiences then are discussed under the following headings: (i) experiences of racism, (ii) experiences of violence, racist attacks and physical abuse, (iii) stereotyping and anti-Muslim prejudice as a particular form of racialisation and (iv) racist jokes

and racial comments as racial micro-aggressions, where the concept 'micro-insults' is utilised to expose the ways in which participants experience more subtle forms of racism.

6.2 Experiences of racism and racialisation

The significance of 'race' as a concept is prevalent throughout this study in the sense that it's meaning and relevance comes through in the participants' accounts of being on the receiving end of racist name-calling, physical abuse and stereotyping. Research carried out by Connolly and Keenan (2002) in Northern Ireland, as discussed in Chapter One, found that the most common form of harassment experienced by the ethnic-minority children they interviewed was racist name-calling. Phoenix (2005) also argues that being conscious of racism means that ethnic-minority children in London become aware of how they are positioned in relation to racism. Consequently, not only are they aware of their positioning in relation to 'race', but they are also aware of the social significance of 'race': something which also reflects the experiences of the participants in this study.

6.2.1 Early awareness of difference in colour and ethnicity

Feelings of differences were first experienced by participants when their peers associated the colour of their skin and differences in physical appearance with assumptions and stereotypes based on ideas of 'race'. Although the participants in this study generally maintained that they were aware that they were different to their Irish peers in a number of ways, initially they did not refer to colour differences explicitly. However, as the interviews progressed, it became apparent that some participants had, indeed, become conscious of colour from an early age. Existing research in this area has shown that children as young as three can be conscious of colour (Connolly 2003, Milner 2007). For Phoenix (2005: 114), the "consciousness of colour involved recognition of being positioned in relation to an episode of racialized discrimination". Similarly, two participants in this research, Marie and Larry, gave accounts of specific incidents related to skin colour and physical characteristics while other participants made more general statements about feeling different or experiencing abuse based on the colour of their skin. Marie said that she had been made aware from early on that her skin was darker than those around her in her neighbourhood. She stated that:

> We were actually much darker when we were younger ... even then, like, ... our friends never called names but people … you know, kids would say, Blackie, or things like that… horrible names like that but these are kids you don't know ... because we were darker, I guess we would always associate with our dad's part.

The manner in which Marie emphasises feeling darker at a younger age and being called 'Blackie' by children she did not really know reflects one of the ways in which she became conscious of colour as a young child, signifying part of the process by which her identity among her broader set of peers was racialised. The racialisation process, in this case, was not so subtle. The name-calling and associated perceptions have origins in the understanding that there are distinctions between 'races' which are constructed through the belief that humanity is divided biologically into groups based on physical and cultural traits. Here we see its use by young children to differentiate and single out Marie based on the colour of her skin. Similarly, Curry et al. (2011) point out that although some black children in their study were being bullied for several reasons, skin colour was an important factor. Larry's experiences are similar but revolved more around his ethnicity. He mentioned that in:

> Juniors Infants ... there was this one guy who would always ... be, like, grabbing me and he used to make me want to run around all the time by pulling my jumper.

He said that this boy:

> Used to scream and call me a dog … I don't remember him saying this, but my mother told me … I went home, and I was, like, Mum, I'm not Chinese, am I?

Larry's comments emphasise that from his time in Junior Infant class[10] he was made aware that there was something different about him that somehow indicated to this boy that he could treat him this way. What is clear here is that although the perpetrator was also very young, he had the consciousness and power to identify and act on racialised differences between himself and Larry. Although Larry did not say explicitly that the boy called him 'Chinese', clearly, he was aware that the behaviour was somehow related to being viewed as Chinese. Not only is he made aware that he is different, but he is also made to feel inferior to other children in his class because of ethnic and physical differences.

This experience intensified for Larry when he got older, showing how such assumptions can gain momentum as well as the way they are embedded in power relations:

> If anyone, kind of, like, had any disagreement with me or just didn't like me in general, it would instantly be, like, 'oh you're a chink, go and work in a takeaway for the rest of your life' and this, kind of, stuff.

Speaking of his experience in secondary school, he also said that if he disagreed with his peers their reactions often drew on racist ideas. He stated that:

[10]Children are usually 4-5 years old when they are in Junior Infant class

> Straight out, without hesitation, just straight away, like, [they would say] 'oh, you Gouch, you Chink' … they'd tell me I'd be working in a takeaway for the rest of my life.

Larry's accounts indicate that his racialisation, through peer interactions and assumptions made by his peers about biological differences, continued throughout his childhood and were embedded in racial stereotyping. These stereotypes were used to dis-empower him and could manifest in verbal and physical ways. Like Larry's experiences, Connolly and Keenan (2002) report that one of their participants was called 'Chinky' on a regular basis up to three or four times a week in the school context.

Like Marie and Larry, Susan was also made aware at an early age in primary school that she was not white and that she belonged to an 'other' group. Susan's racialising experience came in the form of exclusion from peer friendship groups. She said that when she was at school, she was not sure why she had felt "so bad". However, later she realised that the negative feelings she had experienced at this time stemmed from the treatment she had received at the hands of her white Irish counterparts in primary school. This strengthens the conviction that there is an element of contemporary racism that obscures the understanding that racial oppression can be expressed or felt through the invisible nature of prejudice and discrimination.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the nature of Susan's exclusion can be viewed as constituting a form of racial micro-aggression which Sue et al. (2007) claim to be so subtle that it leaves recipients in a state of confusion about whether they have, indeed, been subjected to discrimination or not. Susan talks about being confused when she was in primary school and said that:

> I think ... a lot of it was the way people behaved towards me, like, when I brought in Filipino food, they would just retch at it, or they'd laugh at it, or they'd make Filipino jokes.

It is apparent that perceived differences were pointed out and othering was perpetuated through these 'micro-insults'. Devine et al. (2008) emphasise that 'otherness', owing to the colour of one's skin or cultural differences, carries a threat of exclusion, which appears to be the case in this instance. We see from the above that participants' experiences of being made aware of their differences are linked to ideas that are embedded in concepts of 'race' and racialisation. The participants are othered and ranked as inferior, and in this manner, they are dis-empowered verbally, physically and through being excluded. Their experiences relate to perceived differences in colour and in physical appearance. Through processes of racialisation their peers then associate these differences with assumptions and stereotypes based on ideas of 'race', which justify exclusion and name-calling and generally allow these peers to exert power over them. Their accounts make it clear that they feel different to their Irish peers in a number of ways. Firstly, they

were made conscious, from an early age, of colour and/or physical difference and this signified differentiation. In this differentiation system they are ranked lower than 'white' peers, signifying part of the process by which their identities are racialised.

6.2.2 Childhood/youth experiences of violence, racist attacks and physical abuse

This section focuses on the participants' experiences of violence, racist attacks and physical abuse throughout their childhoods and youth, with an emphasis on the school and neighbourhood environment. It demonstrates the way the racialisation process not only continued throughout their youth, but how it could grow from something that could be interpreted as innocuous to becoming more overtly discriminatory, racist and more violent. Marie, Larry and Barry's accounts provide examples of such incidents. The significance of 'race' and its associated power to divide and oppress became very clear in Marie's interview. Here she talks about an incident that had taken place in her neighbourhood, involving a family that lived nearby when she was very young. She said that her neighbour's family consisted of an Irish man, his wife who was Asian and their children:

> She very much looked Indian and there were three children who looked very similar to us, but the older son was the same age as my brother, and they were friends … he got beaten up very badly and they said it was because of his skin. So, he was really, really, badly beaten and they said they were going to come after my brother next. So, I was very aware from a very, very young age that we were different.

Marie said that "I just remember it so vividly because it was awful" adding "that it was very common at the time … that groups of guys wanted to single people out [saying] 'oh, you're a different colour". She said that her family were worried that her brother would be the next victim and that this fear was always at the back of their minds. She added that after the attack on her neighbour:

> Unfortunately, he [the neighbour] stopped being friends with my brother … because I think they both felt that by hanging around together they were not making their case any better.

In other words, she believed that their visibility increased their risk of being attacked and their fears seemed to be well grounded. This account was not an isolated incident of experiences of physical violence based on racist ideas. Two other participants said that in the school context they too had been threatened physically. For example, Larry mentioned that in secondary school another

student regularly threatened him with a hurley[11] and sliotar[12]. He talks about it in the following excerpt:

> We had PE at 9 am, so he would wait outside the changing rooms. He would bring a hurley and a sliotar, even if you weren't doing hurley and he would try to hit me with it, and he used to aim it at me … threatening me. I didn't even talk to the guy. One day I was, kind of, like, sick of it and I caught the sliotar I went into the bathroom and I threw it down the toilet. Then he had to go and get it out … he just grabbed me and pushed me up against the wall and tried to hit me with the hurley. I had to fight back, and I cut his face with a key and I got suspended for it because I was the one using a weapon, but he was the one with a hurley and a sliotar.

Even though this incident was serious and arose out of regular harassment, Larry said that from what he could recall the teachers/school principal did little to rectify the matter. According to Larry, although this young man had threatened him with the hurley and sliotar on a number of occasions prior to this incident, it was only when Larry cut this boy's face with a key, that the issue drew the attention of teachers and the school principal, who then intervened. In addition, Larry claimed that:

> I got suspended for it because I was the one using a weapon.

He draws attention to the perceived unfairness in treatment and the apparent contradiction in the application of school rules regarding the recognition of what might be considered a weapon and its use. Furthermore, while we do not know if the teachers were aware of the preceding harassment, it would be reasonable to assume that any investigation of the incident would have revealed it. Thus, one would expect a revelation of the preceding harassment and consequent action to address it. From Larry's account it seems that his suspension leads to a questioning of the school's willingness to investigate, reveal and address racialised abuse, possibly reflecting a racial blindness within the institution (McCullagh, 2016). It thus, points to the potential presence of institutional racism within the school.

[11]A hurley (or camán) is a wooden stick used in the Irish sports of hurling and camogie. It measures between 45 and 100 cm (18 to 40 inches) long with a flattened, curved bas at the end, which provides the striking surface.

[12]A sliotar is a hard leather-covered ball used in the game of hurling.

Barry also talked about experiences he perceived as racial abuse in secondary school and maintained that it became physical. He is Muslim and recounted one such incident which involved a pork sandwich:

> One guy got a pork sandwich, and he was, like, 'oh, if you touch pork you'll go to hell'. So, he smashed his sandwich on the back of my head and that annoyed me, but it didn't annoy me because, it's true. … I was annoyed because I didn't want it on my head. It was a mayonnaise sandwich as well and there I was with bits of bacon and mayonnaise on my hair, you know, ha, ha. You just don't want that even if it was a chicken sandwich, but it was full of mayonnaise, I don't like mayonnaise at all. I think it smells so bad.

From his comments it seems that Barry is trying to make light of the use of pork in this incident and when he claims that he "was annoyed because I didn't want it on my head". He neglects to mention the humiliation one might expect he would have felt in that situation. This incident potentially highlights an aspect of cultural racism which Cohen (1992) reminds us is not always connected to skin colour but can also be linked to religion.

Both incidents above draw our attention to experiences the boys claim they had in secondary school, where there appeared to be ample space for their peers to discriminate against them on both racist and religious grounds. In Larry's opinion, it seems that a denial of the racist origins of his experience by school authorities was evident. Barry made no comment on his teachers' knowledge. However, there is reason to believe that a space can exist where power can be enacted.

In this section multi-ethnic young people's perceived experiences of racism in their schools and neighbourhood environments and the ways in which they felt they were directly positioned in relation to racism, are revealed. This shows how these assumptions may manifest themselves in violence perpetrated against them. This violence may be justified by these assumptions and perhaps represent a further iteration of their othering: in this case the othering may justify physical violence as well as name-calling and exclusion. It appears that this may be sustained through ideas that originate from racist thinking and the process shows ways the pattern may become validated and embedded throughout their childhoods. It also signifies how these processes may become violent and the way school and neighbourhood environments become spaces where racialised power is played out. We are also made aware of the blindness of these environments to racial interactions. Connolly and Keenan (2002) found that as well as name-calling children in Irish schools were also subjected to other subtle forms of harassment i.e. being teased because of their accent or being singled out during play time.

6.3 Stereotyping and anti-Muslim prejudice as a form of racialisation

An important aspect of participants' experiences of racism and racialisation is their awareness of othering processes which revolve around perceived religions and assumptions based on stereotypes in relation to surnames, intelligence and language. Devine et al. (2008: 379) insist that this persists where dominant discourses that categorise 'Irish' "as being white, sedentary and Catholic" exist and subsequently position those who are not white as 'other'. This section focuses on anti-Muslim sentiment and more general stereotyping based on religion, surnames, language and ascriptions of intelligence.

As noted in the previous section, the participants maintained that they felt that they had been subjected to stereotyping, singled out and discriminated against based on the way they looked, their perceived ethnicities and religions. Not all participants were Muslim-some were or came from Muslim families: however more generally, participants said that they felt that they were stereotyped as 'Muslim' because of their Asian backgrounds, regardless of their actual religious affiliations. In addition to those examples already discussed, two participants, Sally and Sarah, said that they felt that their experiences suggested that Islam was a focus of 'othering' for them in the classroom. They felt that during their time in secondary school some teachers, especially those who taught religion, along with some peers, were very often prejudiced against Muslims and openly displayed this prejudice. Their accounts refer in particular to religion teachers' attitudes towards Islam in secondary schools. Sally said that in her third year:

> The religion teacher was peculiar, like … I remember one day when she was going on about forgiveness and she pointed at a girl in my class who wore a hijab, and she was, like, 'How is Islam, do you believe in forgiveness'? And the two of us just looked at each other and we were just, like, 'No, no, we don't at all'.

Sarah said that she did not attend religion class in her final year. Her actions offer some insight into the level of discrimination she felt she would have to face in this class and her agency in resisting this by not attending. Furthermore, in a show of solidarity, Sarah said that her friends defended Muslims in the class on her behalf.

In total, eight of the participants gave accounts of religious discrimination that in their opinion referred to the potential threat posed by Islamic terrorists and the rise in such fears more recently. As already mentioned, an increase in anti-Muslim sentiment after 9/11 was also recorded in a study carried out by the ESRI (2013), which reports that in Ireland attitudes towards immigrants and towards Muslims became more negative after 2006. It is reasonable to assume that this turn of events may have negatively impacted on the participants in this study in the sense that they asserted

that they were often mistaken for immigrants and Muslims and in their opinion there was an implication that all immigrants were potential terrorists. This connection to immigrants and being perceived as terrorists is discussed further in Chapter Eight. Some participants did say that after 9/11 and other incidents they felt that there was an increase in comments directed at them about either being terrorists or associating with terrorists. Marie specifically claimed that after 9/11 she was often asked questions because of assumptions about her Asian origins.

> I felt like I was constantly being ...you're almost, like, railroaded with questions even though you've no answers but because 'Oh, wait a second, you have part of you that's from another country that happens to have Muslims in it'... so you should have all the answers.

She said that:

> It still happens now, where people are querying, does your dad know, or do you know anyone in the Mosque ... that would be involved in things?

The implication here is that Marie feels that people think that both she and her father could be Muslim terrorists and that they are thus suspicious of her family and/or assume that because they are Muslims, they have knowledge about terrorist activities or plans. Marie said that she felt that anti-Muslim sentiment was more distinctive after 9/11 and recalled that, at times, people shouted at her father. She said that there was one incident when the bin outside her parents' house was stolen and set on fire and that because of this event, her father felt intimidated.

Another way that participants felt singled out was in the ways in which their surnames were used to stereotype and to 'other'. Three participants said that, at times, their surnames which were perceived as 'Muslim' surnames, attracted unwanted attention. Sam changed her surname. She provides an example of one of her experiences in fourth year of secondary school where one day, after completing a test on a Muslim country, the teacher called her up and said:

> Don't you think that you should have done better than this …it was on Islam and your surname is Islamic.

During the focus group discussion, Sam said that she had changed her Islamic surname to her mother's Irish maiden name insisting that:

> I didn't like the surname because I wasn't Muslim, I don't follow any Muslim traditions so why would I have a Muslim surname? I'm not Muslim and, like, my mum raised me, and, like, I know, like, my dad, like, you know paid for stuff, but she raised me she was there, do you know that, kind of, thing. I'm close to my mum's side.

She claimed that she:

> Would have changed it either way ... regardless of whatever surname it was I would have changed it back to my mum's surname anyway.

However, she did add that having changed it, life was easier now because in the past people would automatically assume that she was a Muslim and she does not want to be seen as a Muslim because she identifies with her mother's side.

A further aspect of othering experienced by participants intersects with the stereotype of South Asians as "obedient and hard-working but also culturally 'strange' and different" (Connolly, 1998: 13). In this study this stereotype was attributed to those who look different. Larry talked about a time when their substitute maths teacher was becoming frustrated at the lack of attention from the class and says:

> She turns to me and she was, like, why aren't you answering questions? You look like you're great at maths, you're definitely a child prodigy and everyone in the class, kind of, knew, like, it's because he's Asian, like. It's assumed that I'm good at maths or whatever I don't know why.

This incident highlights what Sue et al. (2007) refer to as ascription of intelligence where an assumption was made based on Larry's perceived ethnicity and appearance. Larry also talked about a time when a lecturer in college assumed that he could speak Chinese. He explains that:

> In first year, I did computer science and one of its streams is computer science with Chinese and for the first few weeks I tried out the Chinese stream, but I didn't stick with it … At the start … the teacher, like, instantly, kind of, assumed that me and another guy knew Chinese ..., but I'd never heard it before in my life. She, kind of, assumed that we had done it before and then … she used to say this thing when someone did well in a class test, she'd be, like, 'oh, you're Chinese'.

In the above we see an example of an assumption made based on stereotypical ideas about being Chinese. In other words, although he was mis-categorised he was then also not deemed worthy of the ascription 'model citizen', as he lacked a vital component, which was language. Therefore, this participant experienced micro-aggressions based on ascription of intelligence and assumptions made based on language acquisition which may be positive on the one hand, but because they are based on stereotypical reasoning, Larry did not see it that way. This reinforces the argument that ability to speak the language is socially constructed as a positive attribute but one that they cannot claim.

The data reveals that different stereotypes are attributed to participants based on the 'Asian' part of their mixed heritage while presumptions relating to perceived physical traits and appearances

left them open to stereotyping. The data reveals certain things about schools regarding discrimination and stereotyping on religious grounds, which throws up more questions about anti-Muslim sentiment and stereotyping. From participants' accounts these stereotypes not only 'other' them, but also place them in positions of danger when others insinuate that they are in some way responsible for or involved in terrorist attacks. Furthermore, participants are also subjected to a range of stereotypes that imply higher intelligence or model citizen status based on assumptions made in relation to surnames, intelligence and language.

6.4 Racial comments and racist jokes as racial micro-aggressions

While participants are subjected to overt discrimination and stereotyping based on the way they look and their perceived ethnicities and religions there is also evidence that racism is perpetrated in less obvious ways. This section focuses on the ways in which participants identify distinctions between what they perceive as jokes ('friendly banter') and racial abuse and how they distinguish between safe and unsafe spaces for these interactions. These negotiations are discussed here as subtle forms of racism which Sue et al. (2007: 272) claim are "more likely than ever to be disguised and covert and … evolved from the 'old fashioned' form, in which overt racial hatred and bigotry is consciously and publicly displayed, to a more ambiguous and nebulous form that is more difficult to identify and acknowledge". Their experiences of micro-aggressions can be categorised according to Sue et al.'s (2007) categorisation as 'micro-insults' which, mentioned earlier, are verbal or nonverbal communications that convey acts of insensitivity that demean either a person's racial identity or background. For example, Ronan said that at work sometimes his boss made 'strange comments' about foreign people or places. Ronan explained these strange occurrences in terms of his boss either:

> Being in a bad humour or simply being sarcastic.

Although he claimed it was never specifically directed at him, he was conscious of it and often wondered if his boss was trying to put him down indirectly. His accounts reflect the confusion that micro-aggressive acts can produce for recipients. Sue et al. (2007: 275) warn us about the danger with micro-aggressive acts insisting that they can "usually be explained away by seemingly nonbiased and valid reasons. For the recipient of a micro-aggression, however, there is always the nagging question of whether it really happened". They say that victims of such incidents describe having vague feelings that they have been insulted but cannot be sure that anything has actually happened.

Sue (2005) insists that the power in racial micro-aggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator and, often, their recipient. Similarly, Danny said that during his school days there were

times when he felt that if he had been bullied out right that it may have been easier to deal with, in the sense that what he experienced was so subtle that, at times, he felt that it might have been just something within himself. He said:

> Let's say, in class when things about 'race' or issues about foreigners coming in were being raised, it would make me feel uncomfortable in a strange way… they weren't explicitly talking about me but it felt like it was … some of it was just being conscious of the fact and thinking how do you even have an issue with that? It's, like, strange because it's so subtle it's more kind of subversive.

The subtleness of 'micro-insults' is apparent in this study and during the course of the research it became evident that being on the receiving end of what could be termed 'friendly banter' appeared to be acceptable sometimes and participants found different ways of dealing with it. For example, they brush off their impacts, they also emphasise their relationship to fun and being a joke. They find places and peers with whom they can engage safely in banter and joking. The similarities between Devine et al.'s (2008) research on the experiences of racism among refugee and immigrant children and that of the participants in this study are notable, in the sense that members of both groups had been called offensive names and subjected to so called 'friendly banter'. Fifteen participants in this study raised the issue of 'friendly banter' and their accounts highlight the importance of context in understanding their experiences of it as well as the importance of locating a peer group where differences can be aired freely, played with and challenged safely. Some participants claimed that they interpreted name-calling and racial comments as jokes. On occasion participants said that these jokes were offensive to them. However, some highlighted the contexts where they felt that these racial encounters were acceptable to them. Simon explained that among friends in school he interpreted name-calling and racist comments as inoffensive because:

> They [friends] joke about it or bring stuff up in a joking way. You're not going to, like, take any notice, because you know it's your friends saying it and you can say things back.

That participants also take part in the exchange is important here in the sense that it can be a playful two-way exchange. When asked how these jokes occurred and what 'stuff' is brought up, Simon replied that:

> It's always, like, immigrants or anything like that as a joke, like, or after a while they may see my dad and say is, he a terrorist. All that stuff is fun, it's just a joke. We can give as much as we take, really, that's more like fun and a joke.

Barry held a similar view to Simon and talked about his experiences in secondary school, saying that the 'friendly banter' he experienced among his peers was:

> Mostly terrorist jokes: that was the main thing really, mostly, like, Bin Laden stuff or 9/11 stuff or just general terrorist jokes, like, that you'd listen to them, but you wouldn't get bothered by them at all.

In this statement Barry claims that 'he wouldn't get bothered at all' by the comments and responded in a similar way to the incident with the pork sandwich as discussed earlier. Generally, they agreed that jokes making fun of their cultural differences and backgrounds were more acceptable and less harmful when they were shared with other multi-ethnic friends. Ronan said that:

> Well, if somebody who is 'half and half' says to me, like, 'oh, you have a terrible … or something like that, or whatever, I wouldn't take any notice of them because they are basing that on something they are themselves. Whereas if it was somebody who was wherever, in Cork and both parents were Irish, I would be thinking to myself … are they a friend, or are they trying to insult me indirectly?

There is an indication here, once again, that while each interaction is a negotiation, the negotiation is less complex when it is with another multi-ethnic person. This draws our attention to a tension associated with jokes and friendly banter by viewing them through the lens of micro-aggressions, where their acceptance becomes a means of protection, and a way to fit in, revealing their racial and discriminatory origins. Larry, who had been on the receiving end of what he referred to as racial abuse during his secondary school days, said that the immigrant boys in his class were on the receiving end (of racial abuse) as well and explained that:

> I know some people can … be offended by them [jokes] but I don't think anybody was ever, kind of, like, seriously, like, looking to hurt them like beating each other up and stuff, not too much anyway.

In the extract, Larry claims that they are not "beating each other up". However, through his comment he acknowledges that people might be offended by the jokes but also justifies the jokes by saying that the situation could have been worse had there been physical violence. In doing this it can be argued that he equates hurt more with physical hurt in general and not emotional or psychological hurt. On the contrary, Huynh (2012: 832) claims that:

> Experiencing micro-aggressions during adolescence may be particularly harmful for the adjustment to adulthood because negative treatment may shape youths' educational and occupational decisions, and also influence health.

Furthermore, although participants did not mention having endured any emotional or psychological hurt during the exchanges referred to above, Pierce (1995: 281) reminds us that " in

and of itself a micro-aggression may seem harmless, but the cumulative burden of a lifetime of micro-aggressions can theoretically contribute to diminished mortality, augmented morbidity, and flattened confidence". However, engaging in friendly banter and jokes with multi-ethnic peers provides a safe space for those involved, as the fear of being insulted is reduced. Conor highlights one such negotiation when he talks about the close relationship, he shares with one of his multi-ethnic friends and said:

> Well, obviously, we are very close friends so every now and again we'd make, like, an Asian joke but, like, you know she'd be in on it, like, that, kind of, thing… Our friends, obviously, every now and then would make a joke about India or curry or something like that, just the real stereotypical stuff but, like, most of the time it's us making jokes about ourselves, kind of, thing. It's nice that way because they genuinely don't care, like, you know, it's not like taboo to talk about it or anything.

From his comments it is evident that the harmful effects of stereotypical jokes are reduced when Conor and his multi-ethnic friend make jokes about themselves before other people do, and in his opinion, it reduces some of the tensions that exist in such encounters. Subsequently, Conor insists "it's not taboo to talk about it" in the sense that he feels comfortable enough to make fun of something that he cannot make fun of in front of others because it would be disloyal and could feed the racism that he knows already exists. It appears that in response to micro-aggressions participants must be subtle in the way they manage the situation as well in the sense that they find safe spaces in which racial jokes can be exchanged safely, mainly involving other multi-ethnic young people who share their experiences and are less likely to be racist towards them.

This section focuses on the ways in which participants identify distinctions between what they perceive as jokes ('friendly banter') and racial abuse and how they distinguish between safe and unsafe spaces for these interactions. Participants' narratives provide accounts of their experiences in which 'micro-insults' were perpetrated. Despite their subtle nature it appears that the participants in this study developed the skills necessary to safeguard and protect themselves against their negative impacts. Their accounts suggest that they deal with such unpleasant incidents in three keyways: in the first instance they brush off their impacts; secondly, they emphasise their relationship to fun and being a joke. Thirdly, they find places and peers with whom they can engage in banter and joking.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter draws on participants' accounts of incidents of racial abuse and prejudice that had taken place between them and others such as their teachers and peers and highlights the ways in

which their identities were racialised by others. Through analysis of these experiences the participants in this study were subjected to different forms of racial abuse and stereotyping. Consequently, they were made to feel different and inferior to other Irish peers, as they had been made conscious of colour differences from as young as four. As a result, they were treated differently by both their peers and teachers on occasions, based on the colour of their skin, other physical characteristics, and assumptions about their religious affiliations. In addition to reports of incidents of racist name-calling, and several accounts of quite overt experiences, including some physically violent experiences, racial micro-aggressions were another form of racial abuse encountered by participants who recounted their experiences of racist jokes, racial comments.

Some participants considered that teachers in secondary schools ignored instances of bullying and racial abuse taking place among and between pupils and that their responses to such incidents varied. While some participants said that they had been negatively impacted by these occurrences, others made light of similar incidents. Nevertheless, their accounts did highlight the forms of racial abuse they had suffered during their years in school and illustrates some of their reactions and responses to being racialised and bullied. Participants also identify distinctions between what they perceive as jokes ('friendly banter') and racial abuse and how they distinguish between safe and unsafe spaces for these interactions. They found ways of dealing with these incidents. For example, they brushed off their impacts, they emphasised their relationship to fun and being a joke and found places and peers with whom they could engage in banter and joking.

The analysis reveals that young people from multi-ethnic backgrounds are racialised in a variety of ways, ranging from racist name-calling and racial abuse to physical violence. Although there are many ways that the concept of racialisation furthers our understanding, the analysis draws attention to the certainty that it is the 'Asian' part of their Asian-Irish identities that is the target of racialisation and othering. Participants were commonly racialised based on assumptions made in relation to phenotypical/physical traits, ethnicity and the colour of their skin.

7.0 CHAPTER SEVEN:
Participants' perceptions of being 'typically' or 'fully Irish'

7.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on participants' relationship to Irishness and the ways in which they articulate how they feel both similar and different to those around them, those they consider 'fully Irish'. It focuses on the ways in which participants are challenged on their Irishness and how to resist such challenges by claiming their Irishness based on certain markers of identity. It analyses the ways in which participants assert their Irishness using different identity markers. These identity markers signify belonging and revolve around negotiations taking place within families, extended families, peer groups and wider communities. The concept of racial micro-aggressions and the micro-aggression 'alien in your own land' are utilised to frame participants' narratives of what they are made to feel it means to be 'typically' or 'fully Irish'. 'Fully Irish' is a term that participants used quite a lot, and therefore it is used here, although I do recognise that it is a very problematic term.

The data generated relating to the micro-aggression 'alien in your own land', cultural differences and participants' claims that they are not 'fully Irish' are discussed under the following headings: (i) multi-ethnic young people's narratives of difference, (ii) how challenges make participants question their Irishness, (iii) claiming Irishness in the face of challenges to it, (iv) 'alien in your own land', and (v) the use of identity markers.

7.2 Multi-ethnic young people's narratives of cultural difference

Cultural practices arose as important in shaping the lived experiences of the multi-ethnic young people in this study. Many participants express that their cultural practices are different to those of their 'fully Irish' friends, even in the sense of what they cook and eat, which forms part of their cultural practices. In light of their claims that they do not feel 'fully Irish' they talked about the reasons why they felt that their experiences in their homes set them apart from families they considered 'fully Irish', which then sometimes led to conflict between themselves and their parents.

The differences between the two parents in the home extended from different parenting styles to conflicting cultural practices and beliefs. Some did say that their family practices had been influenced by their Asian parents' cultures. It appears that these cultural practices contribute to their feeling different in some ways to the friends around them. While participants did not explicitly say that their friends were directly racist towards them, based on their mixed cultural practices, their attitudes and opinions have been shaped by other racist experiences such as those

discussed in Chapter Six. For example, Connor said that while growing up he felt that there was something of a different culture in his home:

> We didn't have a hundred percent Irish background…. a lot of the time my friends would be, like, talking about very Irish things, that we wouldn't be able to relate to, even in terms of, like, traditional Irish songs. ... you' d start meeting friends and stuff and they would be very, kind of, more I guess, clued into their Irish heritages and they would know a lot more about themselves as a family… they are more traditional.

What is important here is how participants perceived or experienced these differences. Donald, Connor's brother, agreed with him, also stating that:

> There was always a difference; I suppose we were never going to be, like, the same as everyone else. ... It didn't really affect me in any way, but there was always that, kind of, thing that the family was a little bit different to the rest of the families out there.

Reiterating such sentiment, Sally asserted that:

> I'm not like a typical Irish person, you know … I didn't go to mass and we weren't obsessed with spuds. … We didn't have Sunday dinners, you know. That's very common, and my friends would even say it now, you know. I'd say, 'what are you having for dinner' and they'd say, 'oh, a Sunday roast', like, that's normal and I'd be, like, 'no we don't do that'.

Simon said that he felt more aware of the differences in his family practices in school when he was in a classroom of 28 or more 'fully Irish' people and pointed out that:

> You'd always feel that you couldn't relate to some of the things that go on in their households. They were just small things, everyday things, like; they could be just talking about something in the class. If there was a discussion you would feel left out in the sense that some stuff wouldn't happen in your house because you don't have two Irish parents.

In the above, participants draw attention to the ways in which they believe their family lives are different to those of their 'fully Irish' friends (those with two Irish parents). They talk about these differences in terms of having an Asian influence in their homes, and because different cultural practices were taking place, they felt that they were not able to relate to certain 'Irish' cultural practices.

While some participants said that there was an issue of strictness within their families, Gilligan et al. (2011) also found that immigrant parents of teenage girls were very strict and over-protective. Some participants mentioned instances of conflict between themselves and their parents and reported that one of the difficulties they faced was that their parents had been very strict, and, in

most cases, they associated this strictness with their Asian parent. The difficulties arose for some participants from the perspective that they were different to their peers because they had one Muslim/Asian parent. They were aware that Muslim beliefs and practices were different and not assumed as a norm. Two female participants who had a Muslim parent said that their parent had been strict when they were growing up and one nineteen-year-old female, Sally, talked openly about her continuing struggle to gain a little independence and freedom:

> I am still best friends with two girls from first-year, but I remember … they both have Irish parents, but I always felt different … my dad is a bit stricter, he really doesn't like me hanging out with boys … so I don't have the same freedom as they do because of my background.

Marie, who is in her mid-thirties, had a similar story to tell, stating that her parents were so strict that it was only when she was nineteen that she was allowed, for the first time, to stay away from home (indicating that she may not have been allowed to stay overnight at friends' houses prior to this). Then she spent two consecutive summers in New York on J1 and J2 visas. She said that she could not understand why they were so strict, but she tries to reason why in the following statement:

> My dad's a Muslim and it was harder for him because we [sisters] were going to Catholic schools and my brother went to a Protestant school… We were also very much influenced by our friends growing up, you know, so it was harder for him. So, I suppose, the only thing he could do was be stricter. It was hard though; it was hard for me because I was the eldest girl.

Both participants thought that it was difficult for their Asian fathers to adjust to the Irish way of life. This reflects Naidoo's (2007: 59) study, which found that among second generation Indians in Australia:

> The greatest fear of parents is that their children will become too "Australianised" and begin to relinquish the core cultural values and practices of their family.

Consequently, these parents establish strict rules "for their children's behaviour in order to exert some control in the face of cultural change and foreign influence" (Naidoo, 2007: 59). It is reasonable to speculate that the Asian parents referred to in this study were strict for similar reasons and that this may be why these girls experienced tensions growing up in their Asian-Irish families in Ireland.

Although Marie said that her parents did not insist, she wear a hijab, she did say that she thought that it was unfair of them [her parents] to be so strict and adds that:

> I know it was to do with my dad's background, I know that a hundred percent it was.

She insists that her parents were strict because of her father's background. Marie mentions that her father came from an "ethos of education, education, education" but omits to say that her mother was in fact a teacher. She said that:

> The first thing he asked me was before he knew anything about him [her husband] was, like, what degree or PhD did he get in college? And when I said he was a guard[13] I thought that my dad would have a heart attack, but he didn't ... In fairness he [her husband] is very well educated. He's such a great guy and my dad fell madly in love with him. They loved him, they really loved him because he's got very strict morals as well.

Similarly, Veale and Kennedy (2011: 16) found that Indian parents living in Ireland tended to resist cultural change and were committed to "instilling core cultural and religious values in the second generation". As it turns out although most participants in this study perceived strictness in their parents as negative, they attributed it mostly to their Asian born parents' heritage which they felt limited their lifestyles and choices. They did not seem to consider these parents' authority over them as legitimate in the sense that their Asian parents' cultural practices and religious beliefs do not connect with their own background and heritage. Having grown up in Ireland, participants were more familiar with their own Irish culture rather than their Asian parents' customs and traditions. On the other hand, although these two young women did mention that their parents were strict, another participant Susan said that her parents were strict also, even if they were strict for different reasons. This signals that the emphasis should not be placed either solely on cultural practices or religious beliefs but also on the orientations of individuals involved. Susan claimed that there was a lot of conflict at home between her Catholic Filipino mother and Catholic Irish father. She said that they could not agree on a lot but maintained that her mother was the lenient one, while she said that her father "was very uptight and wanted, like, things to be a certain way". She said that:

> My mum was, like, the more open minded, balanced one and my dad with his strictness, he, kind of, conditioned me and my sister to perform better in school and stuff.

She added that:

> Even to this day my mum and dad don't agree on some things because, like, their cultural differences and negative viewpoints.

[13]An Garda Síochána, more commonly referred to as the Gardaí or 'the Guards', is the police service of the Republic of Ireland.

This indicates that difficulties can also stem from cultural differences and strictness in parenting that originate from Irish born parents as well as Asian born parents.

This section focuses on participants' own perceptions and feelings about differences between their homes and other young people's homes. There are also internal differences within their homes between three perspectives – their own, their Irish parent and their Asian parent. They differentiate between being 'fully Irish' and being influenced by their Asian parent's culture in their homes and insist that their Asian parents' strictness caused some difficulties for them among their peers growing up in Ireland. It is these different cultural and religious practices that contribute to them feeling different in some ways to the friends around them. While participants attribute strictness to their Asian parents' difficulties stem from the impact of cultural differences between their parents.

7.3 Constructions of Irishness

This section focuses on ways in which participants felt they were not typically Irish and how their differences highlighted them as being not 'typically' or 'fully Irish'. It is evident that participants construct and negotiate their identities in line with, not only dominant values and norms but also their own understanding of what Irishness signifies for them. Two participants, Sam and Conor describe those they perceive as fully Irish in a distinctively stereotypical way. For example, Sam says that "the Irish are usually foxy haired and freckled" while Conor describes "a person who looks fully Irish as white, ginger, with freckles". From these quotes their understandings of what it means to be 'typically Irish' are partly based on appearance, demonstrating that they have internalised the understanding that to be accepted as 'typically Irish', a person would first and foremost need to be freckled, ginger and white. By being questioned about their visible differences, participants formed their views on what it means to be Irish. While one might expect changes in this belief, it was confirmed for participants when other Irish people did not see them as Irish, when they first met them. Ronan said that:

> They recognised that I wasn't 'typically Irish' … based on my appearance.

Sally, Ronan's sister, reiterated this:

> I'm not, like, a typical Irish person because with people it's appearance straight off … they just judge off appearance … I think they take one look, a quick scan because everyone does that.

It is evident in the above that Ronan and Sally are aware that their appearance limits their capacity to feel 'typically Irish'. While this occurs because of other people's perceptions of them it also stems from their own opinions of what being 'typically Irish' means.

Participants said that they felt Irish although they were often made to feel as though they were Irish one day and not Irish the next. Ronan provided an example of one such incident when he said that:

> Maybe today somebody might say 'oh, you're as Irish as the rest of us and the next day then somebody might turn around and say 'oh, but actually what are you saying ... you're Indian'.

Other people's perceptions of them influence the ways in which they identify themselves and whether they are permitted to identify as Irish or not. As discussed in Chapter Three it is evident that members of dominant groups, white Irish people in this case, "retain the ability to prevent or limit ... social assimilation into the mainstream" (Gans, 2017: 352) drawing attention to the positionality of the participants in this study. It is important to consider that "racialisation and positionality are complementary and mutually reinforcing theoretical concepts in that racialisation can be seen as positioning in relation of race" (Murji and Solomos 2005: 107). This positioning process demonstrates another way in which participants are racialised. Owing to these uncertainties and the ways in which some participants find themselves positioned, they said that they find it difficult to fit in at times. For example, Susan explains that she finds it difficult to identify as Irish, partially attributing this to not fitting in and emphasises that "I fit more in the Philippines than I do in Ireland". Similarly, Ronan claims that he feels like he "doesn't fit in ... despite being raised in Ireland". He said that because:

> You've a parent from outside the country, you're not fully Irish ... in the sense that both their parents are from the same place so there are certain things that happen I'm sure throughout their childhood or their upbringing things are different to what would happen if one parent is from one place and another parent is from another place.

Donald said that it was "a big deal" because "he just wanted to feel like everyone else". For Steven it was obvious that he had spent some time debating the issue when he said that:

> When I was a teenager ... I sometimes felt that I didn't entirely fit in ... as hard as I tried to be completely, kind of, unilaterally, kind of, fully Irish.

In these cases, the participants appear to have difficulty identifying as 'fully Irish' and consequently for some when they were younger fitting in was a significant concern. Steven said that:

> I think in Ireland I'm seen as an outsider, I guess, but this is where I've grown up and I know … things as well as anyone else.

On a similar note, Hamilton (2009: 7-8) alleges that while he was growing up in Ireland as an Irish /German person, he felt that he was marked and claims that:

> It means that we are aliens and we'll never be Irish enough, even though we speak the Irish Language and ... we're more Irish than the Irish themselves.

Despite these feelings of never being Irish enough, Steven identifies as Irish rather than the other options that are available to him (such as Chinese and American)[14]. He elaborates this in the following way:

> If somebody questioned my, kind of, Chinese or American nationalities, I guess, I wouldn't have much of an issue with that ... As for America I was born here [in the US] I have full responsibility as an American citizen but, like, culturally I have no idea about American customs.

Although Steven mentions that he has full responsibility as an American citizen, as he was born there, he does not claim his American identity because he feels that he has no connection to it other than that. Nevertheless, he takes quite a different stance, which is not so accommodating, if someone questions his Irish identity. In his own words:

> Now it, sort of, just makes me feel sad, maybe sad for the other person and, I guess, well to be perfectly honest sometimes, like, if you'll excuse the language, I just think, like, 'Fuck you', that's not very nice, 'screw you'.

This highlights that although he is willing to accept that further negotiations are necessary when it comes to identifying as either Chinese or American (based on not speaking Chinese or understanding American culture) he is not willing to negotiate any further when it comes to his Irish identity.

This section demonstrates that some participants' understandings of what it means to be Irish are based partly on a stereotypical assumption that Irish people are white, and this is one of the reasons why they do not see themselves as 'typically Irish'. It is also clear that despite their upbringings in Ireland, based on appearance, other white Irish people question their origins, which make it difficult for them to identify as 'fully Irish'. Although it is clear that participants find various ways to avoid the outcomes of the racialisation process through their experiences of racial micro-aggressions, they still find ways to assert their Irishness. However, their choices are limited and

[14] While Steven was born in the US, and currently lives there, he grew up in Ireland

restricted by the opinions and perceptions of other people who either directly or indirectly maintain that they are not Irish.

7.4 Challenges to Irishness

Ralph (2012: 445) claims that debates about belonging in view of the scale of in-migration during the 'Celtic Tiger' years in Ireland, "placed the onus on newcomers to shed their 'difference' and conform to Irish society's norms of 'sameness' if they were to belong". Ní Laoire (2008) finds that returned migrants complicate the terms of social belonging, positioned as they are somewhere between 'newcomers' and 'natives'. This is relevant to participants in this study in the sense that although they are 'natives', on occasion, they are also perceived as 'newcomers', which is an indication that they may also be subjected to similar (if not the same) ascriptions of sameness and difference as returned migrants. Consequently, the ways in which returned migrants resist conforming to Irish social norms and manage occurrences of sameness and difference during their everyday negotiations of belonging resemble the ways in which participants in this study negotiate their experiences.

Although identity is complex, interactive and always changing, racial descriptions have been fashioned to force individuals into fixed categories (Root, 1996). The participants in this study express that on many occasions they are required to explain why they look certain ways. For example, due to her appearance, Sally said that:

> I've had to grow learning that I have to say [my mum's Irish and my dad's Bengali] as a little disclaimer.

Although not all participants mentioned using a disclaimer, they all said that during everyday interactions they found that an explanation was necessary as most people they met for the first time would ask them where they were from. Williams (1996) explains that because there are assumptions and social meaning attached to different racial groups, these are the ways in which members of society gauge and interact with members of minority groups. In addition to these questions, at times, participants were subjected to more intrusive interrogations such as 'where were you born'? 'Where are your parents from'? As mentioned earlier Morrison (2004) also found that people of mixed-race in Ireland must often explain their lineage to strangers, sometimes in detail.

The following excerpt taken from Sally's interview provides an example of a blatant and violent encounter where a person makes presumptions about her identity, where she is from and positions herself in judgement of her. It sums up encounters that some multi-ethnic young people may face. She spoke openly about an incident that occurred on a university campus. She stated that:

> Recently I was in college … I was having lunch and there was a friend with me. We were just sitting there not bothering anyone, talking away, and the next thing there was this lady across the way from us and she started yelling at me. She was, like, 'where are you from', 'where are you from' and she started cursing…she started making racial comments and stuff and my friend was, like, trying to tell her to mind her own business, but it was horrible … I ignored her … but then she … was, like, 'you have Romanian eyes' and she was, like, 'you are adopted, and your parents aren't telling you'. … I remember I was so embarrassed because my friend was there, and I was, kind of, thinking do they think this happens to me all the time?

The nature of the attack on this young woman highlights one of the ways in which the power dynamics surrounding what it means to be Irish are sustained. Here the reference to 'Romanian eyes' may have been an implication that Sally was Romanian or Roma and has negative connotations, as Romany people have been collectively stereotyped as beggars in Irish society since their arrival here during the 1990s (The Logan Report, 2014). This links into the idea of white superiority, which places those who are considered non-white in inferior positions. Bonds and Inwood (2016: 720) claim that "rather than being a relic of the past or an ideology of extremists, white supremacy continues to produce social and spatial relations that frame broad understandings of difference". While the idea of white superiority claims that lighter skinned or white people are superior to those who are darker skinned, the above demonstrates one of the more blatant and violent ways in which multi-ethnic young people can be affected.

Like incidents mentioned in the previous chapter, participants in this study were more impacted by what Sue et al. (2007) term the micro-aggression 'alien in own land' (the assumption that all [Asian/Irish] are foreigners or foreign-born). Micro-aggressive forms of being perceived as an 'alien in your own land' came to light during the research as participants said that almost everyone, they met for the first time asked them the question 'where are you from'? This questioning carried negative connotations for those viewed as visibly different to what is perceived to be Irish. Morrison's (2004) research also draws attention to the difficulties her participants faced during their everyday encounters, despite being born and brought up in Ireland.

As discussed earlier, Kitching (2014) found that having a light skin tone helped some multi-ethnic children in his study to identify as Irish, although they had been born outside the country and were of different nationalities. Conversely other children who were born in Ireland who had darker skin tones were not considered Irish. This implies that to be accepted as Irish an individual must first and foremost be white. This became apparent during Danny's interview when he said that:

> What really would confuse me would be that a lot of people ... would have Irish parents but they would have grown up in England. There was a thirty-year-old lad from Birmingham ... he grew up in Birmingham and he's coming up asking me to say I'm not truly Irish and I'm, like, what are you on about? I was born here.

Although six participants in this study said that they felt that people only asked them this question out of curiosity, Lee (1999 cited in Sun, 2016: 7) argues that while the question 'where are you from' is often benign, "it is never completely innocent". Morrison's (2004) research with her multi-ethnic friends in Ireland also found that, at times, other people did not automatically accept them as being 'really' Irish either, based on the colour of their skin. This is evident in some of this study's participants' accounts of their experiences. For example, Conor said that when people ask him 'where are you from', when he answers [Ireland]:

> They look at me and they are, like, you're obviously not Irish.

Susan said that when she tells people that she is from [Ireland]:

> They scrutinise me and they are, like, where are you really from?

Most participants relate similar stories and suggest that such questions alienate them. Susan claims that these experiences:

> Just kind of make me feel more foreign it actually makes me feel like I don't belong here.

Danny also expressed a sense of being positioned as 'other' saying that he had never felt that Irish identity was his to claim. Rather he stated that his "existence was as other". Although other participants did not use the word 'other' during the interview sessions the stories they told of their experiences certainly positioned them as such. Fleras (2016: 10) draws on Runyowa (2015) to bring to light the actual nature of racial micro-aggressive acts which she suggests "imply cultural differences and social inferiorities" and that emphasise the recipient's non-belonging when differences are magnified in alienating ways.

During the interviews two participants demonstrated that they understood the ways in which the process of racialisation functions within Irish society to maintain racial hierarchies. This was evident when two participants pondered what the outcome would be if they asked someone who was (in their words) 'fully Irish', where they were from. Danny said:

> If I asked someone 'where they were from' and they'd say where, I'm not going to go along and say, 'really are you really from Wexford'?

Connor also suggests:

> Imagine me going up to a person who looks fully Irish, white, ginger haired with freckles and everything and I go 'where are you from' and they say 'Kerry' and I look at them and say, 'oh, no you are not, where are you really from'? Like, imagine me challenging them about that and telling them, 'oh, no I don't think you're from Kerry, where are you actually from'? The same way they say it to me so it's, kind of, like, it's a bit annoying sometimes.

It is clear that the participants quoted above are not entirely happy with the positions they are forced to accept through this questioning and they are drawing attention to a power dynamic whereby they do not hold the power to question those they perceive as 'fully Irish'. Kahn (2011) argues that a system of racial hierarchy persists in which members of white racial groups are privileged over those in non-white groups. Some of these privileges are maintained structurally but they are also sustained through social interaction. Participants in this study reveal that they are aware of such categorisations, as 'race' discourse continues to be applied to those who appear different to the perceived norm in Irish society. This system of social hierarchy persists, where white Irish people are privileged in the sense that they are seen as 'real' Irish people over those who are non-white (Asian/Irish in this case).

7.5 The use of identity markers

These systems of categorisation continue to maintain group boundaries that perpetuate an understanding of 'us' and 'them' and, according to Joyce (2010: 59), group boundaries are also maintained through different identity markers such as accent, which "can instantly mark a person out as either belonging or not". In research carried out with second generation Irish returnees, Ní Laoire (2008) found that participants in her study felt that speaking with an Irish accent enabled them to assert their Irishness. She maintains that they "equate 'being Irish' with having an Irish accent, thus accepting the role of accent as a signifier of belonging/otherness" (Ní Laoire, 2008: 9). This became apparent in Amy's interview when she said that although she was born in Ireland because she is now living in England her accent is problematic in the sense that although she identifies as Irish, people "say, 'oh, you're British". She said that:

> I suppose because of school I've regrettably a strong British accent now ... but I always make a point that I'm Irish.

Although a number of identity markers are identified through the course of this research, possessing an Irish accent arose as one of the most essential, in the sense that it was considered to contribute to legitimizing participants' claims to Irishness. Ronan said that "once I start speaking, they realise 'oh, hang on this person is Irish", an indication that if he did not possess an Irish accent people would not believe his claims. Alice, who was born in Ireland but had spent some time living

in another Asian country, explains just how important developing an Irish accent was in her case. She explains that when:

> I first moved to [Ireland] ... there was a bit of racism there, people were, like, go back to China and all this but it's just, like, I'm from here, you know, my mum's Irish, I'm entitled to be here.

Nevertheless, she said that once "I developed an Irish accent people believed that I was Irish". Although most participants had Irish accents, two participants, Steven and Sarah, said that because their accents did not sound Irish, it was difficult for other Irish people to accept that they were Irish. Steven who was born in America but moved to Ireland as a young child said that:

> At home [Ireland] people might say I had an American accent.

And explains that "people are going to notice what's different" and therefore, this is why "some Irish people would see you as an outsider". In a similar way, Sarah said that:

> My accent would be mentioned ... if I said I was born here [Ireland], they would be, like, you must have spent time in England, America or somewhere, your accents not from [Ireland].

It is clear that accent plays a pivotal role in participants' acceptance as Irish and that having an Irish accent helped legitimise some participants' claims to Irishness in the sense that once they started to speak their claims were substantiated unlike those without an Irish accent whose claims were rejected.

7.6 Participants' claims to Irishness

Nevertheless, participants did identify themselves as Irish, or even as half Irish, at times, and in doing so, claimed their right to be considered Irish. Ronan, Larry, Connor, Steven and Danny found ways of establishing what they felt made them Irish. For example, Ronan said that "you're Irish because you were raised in Ireland and you've an Irish parent", therefore claiming his Irish identity on this basis. Larry makes claim to his Irish identity when he asserts that:

> If somebody asked me about my nationality ... I would say Irish, my dad is from Hong Kong, I've never been to China or Hong Kong or anywhere, so I'm full Irish.

Therefore, here he disclaims his Chinese identity and claims his Irishness based on being in Ireland and not having visited China or Hong Kong. Conor asserts that:

> [Ireland] is much more my home than India would be, ... I grew up here … I've been to India a few times and it's cool seeing family but … the culture over there is so different to

> our culture over here and I feel very, kind of, removed from over there sometimes, whereas I always feel completely comfortable in [Ireland].

Steven claims his Irish identity based on speaking Irish, being Catholic, understanding and participating in Irish cultural practices, having an Irish parent, and being reared in Ireland. Ní Laoire (2008) said that some return-migrant children claim Irishness through their parents or grandparents who were born in Ireland. Danny identifies himself as Irish by making the claim "I was born and bred here". Conor said that when people ask him where he is from "because they look at me and they are, like, 'you're obviously not Irish' … then I'm, like, [he says] 'I'm from [Ireland]". He is adamant that he is Irish and in his own words:

> I don't say I'm half Irish and half Indian, I just say I'm from [Ireland] ... Then they'd look at me and they'd be, like, 'no you're not, like, where are you really from'? And that, kind of, annoys me a small bit, like, you know… I feel Irish, like, … I guess people look at me and think I'm not fully Irish because of the way I look but I feel fully Irish.

In the above Conor becomes emotional as he tries to explain what it is like to feel Irish but to be constantly told that he is not. The material gathered during the interviews, however, reveals that although challenges are made to their claims to Irishness, unlike returned migrants, these challenges stem, in part, from assumptions made based on physical traits and skin colour (as discussed also in Chapter Six). What becomes clear in this section is that, against the odds participants claim that they are Irish despite the challenges they face. It is clear that because they do not fit in with the perceived norm for an Irish person, they are pressured to explain why they look certain ways and are forced to draw on other identity markers such as having an Irish accent, being born in Ireland, growing up in Ireland and having an Irish parent to justify their claims to Irishness. Although they do not always see themselves as 'fully Irish', they do claim their Irishness.

7.7 Conclusion

The multi-ethnic young people taking part in this study maintain that their cultural practices are different to those they refer to as 'fully Irish', those with two white Irish parents. Owing to the perceptions of others and their own understandings of cultural differences they claim that they are not 'fully Irish'. The ways in which participants differentiate between being 'fully Irish' and being influenced by their Asian parent's culture in their homes indicate why they make such claims.

This chapter focuses on participants' relationship to Irishness and their understandings of what it means to be 'fully Irish'. They based this partially on the opinions of other people who insist that they could not be Irish. They felt that they could not be perceived as 'typically Irish' because they were not white. This is confirmed by their ongoing experiences of the racial micro-aggression

‘alien in your own land’. Based on these encounters, participants felt that they did not fit in and therefore, found it difficult to identify as ‘fully Irish’. This had an impact on them and was one of the most obvious ways in which they were made to feel like aliens in their own country. Consequently, they felt that, at times, they do not belong, and these experiences made them feel like foreigners. In this case systems of categorisation still exist that perpetrate an understanding of ‘us’ and ‘them’ which link to ‘race’ and racialisation. The processes that are highlighted by the data are very rich and do indicate ongoing and contemporary forms of differentiation, positioning and racialisation in Ireland. Their feelings of not being ‘fully Irish’ reflect both negative racial micro-aggressions made by others as well as more positive and active embracing of cultural difference on their own terms and preferring different parts of their cultural heritages. The latter is explored further in Chapter Eight.

8.0 CHAPTER EIGHT:
Negotiating complex multiple identities and mixed cultural practices

8.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the complexities involved in the identity negotiations and cultural practices of multi-ethnic young people taking part in this study. It focuses particularly on the ways in which participants manage to negotiate different aspects of their mixed cultural and religious backgrounds in the context of mainstream Irish culture. It demonstrates ways by which participants manage to not only negotiate their multi-cultural backgrounds, but also embrace their negative experiences as discussed in earlier chapters. The data generated are discussed in terms of participants' reactions and responses to racialised encounters. As participants embrace all aspects of their unique identities and positions, they can exhibit aspects of hybrid identities and cultures and subsequently create spaces in which they take on different cultural influences juggling these in the context of the environments they inhabit.

The chapter examines the complex nature of multi-ethnic young people's identities which encompass not only negotiations pertaining to their mixed parentage but also negotiations taking place around issues such as being misidentified as not being Irish. The ways in which such misidentifications influence multi-ethnic young people's identity choices and sense of belonging here in Ireland are analysed considering their alienating experiences. As these experiences, at times, provide spaces in which multi-ethnic young people can play around with the identity choices they make, misidentifications can sometimes be received as a welcome alternative. Finally, the ways in which multi-ethnic young people embrace their cultural differences and assert intercultural sensitivity are analysed considering their mixed cultural backgrounds, religious practices and beliefs.

8.2 The complexities of mixed-race identity

Terms such as in-between, border, and hybrid have been used to describe multi-ethnic people's identities (Young 1995, Kahn 2011). Kahn (2011: 6) argues that in-between identities are identities that do not fit neatly into the fixed racial identities of either black or white, and instead are positioned "at the margins of multiple groups– neither/nor rather that either/or". Research also shows that individuals with in-between identities are, at times, pressured to fit into single group categories (Tizard and Phoenix 1993, Herman 2004, Harman and Barn, 2005) despite their own understanding that they fit partially in to multiple singular group categories such as, for example, white and Asian. As a result of such pressures, some multi-ethnic people experience feelings of

not fitting in with dominant or mainstream groups. This section focuses on the ways in which participants in this study relate, or not, to their Irish or Asian affiliations.

According to Campbell and Troyer (2007: 750) confusion occurs when "individuals who self-identify with one racial group ...are routinely perceived by observers as "looking like" another racial group". This applies to participants in this study whose claims to Irishness are seldom acknowledged when they are asked the question 'where are you really from', as discussed in Chapter Seven. It can be argued that although negotiations may be difficult for all members of minority groups, they can be especially problematic for 'multi-racial' individuals who must not only negotiate being placed in the margins of society but are also on the margins within their own reference groups. Taylor and Nanney (2011) point out that this exclusion leaves some multi-ethnic young people feeling marginalised and isolated. Taylor (2004: 96) suggests that:

> The "middle margin" can be a lonely place. How do I as a biracial individual construct this notion of "me" and in doing so reconcile seemingly contradictory aspects of myself that are communicated by the cultural nuances of the day? The imposed template does not fit with my reality… I feel the pull from both sides; yet strangely rejected too … I get the impression that no one understands me and that I am destined to walk alone.

This sense of isolation and alienation has been described many times in 'multi-racial' identity literature as an identity that stands apart but remains suspended between two groups (Anzaldua 1987 cited in Rockquemore et al. 2008). In this research, the push and pull between both sides of participants' heritages is evident in the ways in which they express that while they do not feel that they can identify as fully Irish, as discussed in Chapter Seven, they say that they cannot identify as fully Asian either. Taylor (2004: 95) maintains that "they may feel a level of connectedness to both reference groups and readily embrace various racial heritages; yet at the societal level both reference groups may be less than willing to view them as a full-fledged member". The ways in which some participants talk about being attached to their Asian parents' countries highlight that they have developed an interest in the Asian side of their heritage. Many participants said that they enjoy going on holidays to Asia because they get to know more about their Asian parents' origins. However, those participants who had never been to their Asian parents' countries said that they had little interest in them. For instance, Larry said:

> My dad is from Hong Kong, my mum is from Ireland I've never been to Hong Kong I'm just from Ireland.

On the other hand, Susan and Danny maintain that their Asian parents' countries are their homes. They claim that they have a sense of belonging and feel completely at home there in comparison

to Ireland, where they have had difficulty fitting in and being accepted, especially during their early years. Susan said that she:

> Really felt at home there [the Philippines] ... I was so happy because I haven't much family here except for my two sisters but ... with my massive family over there ... I felt really at home.

Danny said that he had:

> Such a connection and draw to the Philippines ... every time I go there it feels ... so homely and I feel like it fits.

It is clear that hybrid identities are related to racialisation and that among the participants, it is not so much that they feel culturally 'in-between' but that their sense of belonging to either group is shaped by the racialisation of their identities by others. Larry made the point that:

> I don't look fully Chinese, but I also don't look fully Irish so, like, I could, kind of, see why people would think I'm not from Ireland … but, like, at the same time I don't look fully Chinese, so it is, kind of, an odd thing yeah…

He said that he normally negotiates these interactions by saying:

> Oh, my dad is from Hong Kong, my mum is from Ireland, I've never been to Hong Kong I'm just from Ireland. I wouldn't just say 'oh, I'm Irish' I would, kind of, say 'I'm half Chinese'.

Larry insists that, as a result of the fight he was involved in when he was bullied in school (discussed in Chapter Six) he learnt how to stand his ground and is now quite clear in stating his identity. Consequently finally, he asserted that:

> Yeah, this is who I am; I am half Irish and half Asian. ... I just accepted that, yeah, this is who I am. Now I'm half Chinese.

Danny said that after reading a lot of 'race' theory he acquired a greater understanding of the diverse ways in which people identify themselves. This highlights the ongoing processes involved in their identity negotiations and the dynamic nature of identity itself. Danny said:

> I'm an Irish citizen but ethnically I'm flexible because people assume that I'm, kind of, one or the other … you feel that you have to pick.

Here, while maintaining that he is flexible about his identity he also talks about the way he feels pressured to choose one identity over the other. Jenkins (1994: 210) maintains that "identity is produced and reproduced in the course of social interaction". Therefore, although Danny resists

these ascriptions, his choices remain limited, considering the opinions of others who influence what his options may be. This, in turn, signifies how his identity is also shaped by racialisation as others ascribe identities to him. Similarly, in his interactions with others, as shown above, Larry is pressured to answer for his appearance by being pressured to choose his Chinese side over his Irish one. This he resists by choosing to identify as half and half, which offers an alternative explanation.

As well as having to negotiate their identities when among white Irish friends, identity negotiation was also evident in the young people's interactions with their Asian families and friends. It appears that some participants feel that neither 'side' fully accepts them. For example, when Ronan was asked about how he felt when he was in Bangladesh, he responded:

> I think that they are equally strange about it as what the Irish are because the thing is that as much as you are half Bengali in Ireland, in Bangladesh you're half Irish … you're never fully, so that's why I say about the identity crisis because you don't ever fit in either place fully.

Two participants, Susan and Danny, go to great lengths to explain the complexity of the situations they find themselves in when it came to identifying as either Irish or Asian. For example, Susan said:

> I wouldn't say I'm Filipino, but I feel like I fit more, I still feel that I'm not fully Filipino, but I don't feel like I'm fully Irish either. So, I'm just, kind of, lost ... I don't belong anywhere.

Danny said that:

> I would not to this day, I know it sounds silly, feel confident ... to say that I'm fully ethnically Irish, for I'm not, I couldn't say I'm Filipino because I'm not actually fully Filipino.

This section has explored how participants attempt to explain the complexities involved in the negotiations taking place and the difficulties they face trying to identify as either one identity or the other. The multiplicity of participants' identities is revealed, as the ways in which they attempt to come to terms with the complex nature of their identities indicates that they feel not fully one or the other. Although they do not all use the terminology 'half and half' they all convey a sense of not fitting in fully, or of being fully accepted, in either the Irish or Asian cultural context. They relate to this identity as either 'half and half' or 'partly both' which for most seems the most appropriate way for them to express aspects of their identities drawn from all aspects of their heritage.

In fact, most participants in this study welcome the opportunity to lay claim to all aspects of their identities, even though it means identifying as 'half and half'. This emphasises that they either no longer want to, or that they are no longer willing to, choose one identity over another despite being pressured to do so by others.

8.3 Embracing cultural difference

This section focuses on the ways in which participants embrace different aspects of their mixed cultural backgrounds and manage these differences on their own terms. In doing so they reproduce what Rassool (1999) refers to as cultural hybridity which he claims is a basic survival strategy used by those in the margins to adapt to new ways of living and to develop a sense of belonging. Albert and Páez (2012:523-524) state that cultural hybridity "constitutes the effort to maintain a sense of balance among practices, values, and customs of two or more different cultures". The ways in which British Muslim women challenge dominant representations of themselves in order to produce new meanings is an example of such negotiation according to Dwyer (1999). As discussed, she highlights that the ways in which young British Muslim women engage in 'identity construction and contestation' illustrates that they actively engage in the process of making new ethnicities. Consequently, "the cultural construction of new ethnic identities thus becomes a process through which differences are engaged with and new forms of representation are produced" (Dwyer, 1999: 51).

Aspects of cultural hybridisation are apparent in participants' narratives as they talk about taking part in different cultural practices, consciously choosing to celebrate some aspects of their mixed cultures while rejecting others. For example, Larry talked about taking part in Buddhist religious practices although he was brought up as a Catholic. He says that there is a Buddha shrine in his home, that he interacts regularly with his Chinese cousins and that they watch anima [Japanese cartoons] together. He said:

> When I see my Irish cousins and my Chinese cousins, they're all into different things. I'm, kind of, more like the Chinese ones, I would say, but my brother is more like the Irish ones, so … I and all the Chinese side are into, you know, computers and video games and all that kind of stuff. But my Irish family is more into football and rugby and all that stuff and my brother's, kind of, like, that way, he's playing football and everything, so.

It is clear he constructs 'two sides' between his Asian cousins and his Irish ones when he relates to different cultural norms and practices that are more peer-to-peer than intergenerational. Larry insists that "you get to experience, like, bits of both cultures" He said that:

> Every … Christmas we'd have a day in my Irish grandmother's house … we'd all have Christmas dinner and that night we'd go to a Chinese house and … we'd be eating duck and … stuff… it was just so different.

Here, Larry expresses how much he enjoys his participation in both cultural traditions simultaneously, especially during times of celebration. Most participants said that they had similar experiences of enjoying aspects of the different parts of their family cultural backgrounds and practices. Steven said that he enjoys Chinese New Year celebrations but talks mostly about his Irish cultural practices in which he seemed to be completely immersed. On the other hand, Susan said that:

> We don't celebrate Christmas in the Philippines so, like, at Christmas they just celebrate the birth of Jesus.

She said that no gifts are exchanged and that in the Philippines they just have a big dinner to celebrate. She expressed that she:

> Prefer[s] having Christmas here [Ireland] and actually having Christmas because it's just really nice.

This indicates that although she identifies as Filipino, she makes a conscious decision to celebrate Christmas the modern Irish way, which includes going out with friends and buying gifts for her family. Although Susan claims that she identifies as Filipino, here she draws attention to aspects of her cultural identity which are Irish, thereby asserting different aspects of her identity according to her own preferences. Similarly, Ronan said that he liked to select certain aspects of his father's customs and traditions, for example, taking off one's shoes when entering the house. He said that:

> It just makes more sense to do things that way rather than doing it the Irish way.

Sarah said that she enjoys watching Bengali soap operas (because she finds them 'hilarious'), using henna [plant dye] and celebrating Eid in Bangladesh. Although she is Muslim, she states that she still likes to celebrate Christmas and St Patrick's Day in Ireland with her siblings and Irish mother. Here, Sarah asserts different aspects of her identity in the sense that although she identifies as Muslim, she celebrates Christmas as this is part of her Irish heritage which forms part of her cultural identity. Participants enjoy being in positions that expose them to two different cultures simultaneously because they have the option of choosing different aspects from each that suit their personalities, preferences and lifestyles. Participants in this study could be said to be selective as they set about negotiating their mixed cultural practices and multiple identities in Irish society. It is also clear that during these negotiations they, at times, take pride in their Asian heritage and are

proud that they are not fully Irish. This way of thinking offers them the ability to suit their individual preferences.

If, as according to Young (1995: 26), "hybridity is a making one of two distinct things" it is evident in the above statements, which represent just a selection from among many, that participants are embracing hybridity, in the sense that they identify with both their Irish and Asian identities simultaneously. In doing so the participants alert us to further complexities and considerations in the sense that although they claim to be (part) Irish they also claim to be (part) Asian.

As a result, they develop strategies to help them fit in with more than one racial or cultural group (i.e. 'both/and' rather than 'either/or'). This is achieved by using flexible approaches to their social interactions and working out ways of adapting to demands or expectations of their cultural surroundings. Miville et al. (2005) refer to this as the chameleon experience and insist that many multi-ethnic people are like chameleons in the sense that they can sit amidst both white and black groups and fit in, despite not fully belonging to either but being accepted none the less.

This section reveals how multi-ethnic young people embrace their mixed cultural backgrounds. They do this through exhibiting aspects of 'cultural hybridity', which highlight the ways in which they feel comfortable in expressing aspects of both parts of their heritages. This occurs despite often feeling a degree of exclusion from both parts as shown in the previous section. This strategy enables them to establish a sense of belonging, despite being in the margins of Irish society. For them cultural hybridity opens a space of negotiation that appears to be particularly significant to their experiences in the sense that it provides a space in which they can adjust to their own unique circumstances and play around with their identity options.

8.4 Selective acceptance of misidentification

In Hall's (1992: 287) opinion identity is "a multifaceted concept which arises, not so much from the fullness of identity, which is already inside us as individuals, but from a lack of wholeness which is 'filled' from outside us, by the ways we imagine ourselves to be seen by others". There is no doubt that participants' experiences have influenced the ways in which they identify themselves (see Chapter Seven where the question 'where are you from' is discussed). In this section participants' identity choices are analysed in light of Root's (1997: 33) claim that in order to make peace with themselves, multi-ethnic young people need to construct a level-headedness "that allows for duality and multiplicity, with an awareness, that one may be perceived very differently from how one perceives one's self". Harris and Sim (2002) found that racial identifications not only differ among nations and different time periods, but also during the

everyday lives of individuals and that each person can have multiple context-specific racial identities.

Despite being forced to choose different identities regularly participants said that there are times when being wrongly identified is a welcome alternative for them, especially if it means dissociation from their Asian heritages. This draws on the process of racial hierarchisation which positions white groups as superior to other racial groups. For example, Sally expressed her delight about the way in which she was misidentified as not being Asian:

> Well, to be honest, I used to be out with my friends and when new people would come up to me when I was like a teenager, well like, younger maybe fourteen, fifteen, people would come up being, like, 'oh, are you from Spain'? trying to guess where I was from and, of course, I was very flattered with that because I, was, like delighted to be Spanish … Like, it was a complement, so I was buzzing off that for a while.

Connor said that:

> A lot of people think that we are, like, Spanish or something or Portuguese or they, kind of, think that we are European. So, I guess people, kind of, identify us as being closer to home, European, kind of, thing.

He went on to say that:

> I suppose we got lucky in the sense that me and my brother and sister don't really look, like, Indian or, like, very different I suppose. We just, kind of, look tanned … No one guesses that we are Indian.

Connor's brother, Donald holds a similar view:

> I'm a lot lighter skinned than a lot of Indians would be, me and my family are definitely just, like, a lot lighter than my dad would be, for example, and I think because of that … it was easy for us to pass as something, like, a bit more, like, … European, kind of, thing. A lot of people would say to me, you look, like, Portuguese or Spanish or something like that. ... I'm not sure, but I think because you are a little lighter skinned that it easier, like ... you can almost take on the whiteness a bit so ... we stood out, but it wasn't, like, a lot, if you know what I mean.

There is a correlation here between the participants in this study and those in Vasquez's (2010) research where he found that as a Latino in the US one has the possibility of being identified as white and then treated as non-Hispanic. He also found that skin colour and physical features did play a role in their acceptance into different groups, especially white groups. They claimed that it

was good not to 'look Mexican', as people did not then make stereotypical assumptions about them but then they had to listen to the 'in jokes'.

Similarly, some participants in this study said that they could pass as European due to their lighter skin tones. Comparable to the participants in Vasquez's (2010) study, my participants' identity experiences are also shaped in two ways, by enacting flexible identities and through the process of racialisation. In other words, they are exposed to practices of whitening and racialisation. For example, Donald felt that because of looking paler:

> I never experienced any, kind of, like, that stereotypical Asian stuff.

He talks about:

> Taking on the whiteness a bit

So rather than being identified as Indian he welcomes being seen as European, noting however, that this only becomes possible because of his pale skin. Similarly, Amy said that:

> I'm not visibly Indian, I think I'm lucky I wasn't socially disadvantaged … my name is [Irish] so people can't pick up on [the name] so it's not necessarily visible and then I think, to look at me … I'm a bit darker, but it's not obvious that I'm Indian. I think being mixed-race can really depend on how different you look from the mainstream, which is unfortunate, I think. I guess, I was lucky in terms of just looking a bit ambiguous, but not necessarily Indian.

What is important here is that it is whiteness or lack of whiteness that is brought into question for most of the participants who are misidentified.

In this study, participants are happy to go along with people's assumptions that they are white Southern European because they are operationalizing the racial hierarchies that were constructed through the idea of 'race' and racial categories of people. It is evident then that by not objecting to such ascriptions they are passively passing[15] as it suits them to be perceived in this way. It appears that they are willing to both contest and strategically accept singular categories when it suits them, which highlights one of the ways they strategically respond to categorisations. They achieve this by playing around with identity in the sense that they do not feel that it is necessary to correct other people when they make assumptions that they are southern European. It is a welcome source of

[15] Passive passing can be unintentional, e.g. a reactive process whereby individuals are miscategorised or mislabelled by others (Kahn 2011).

amusement for them because it suits them to be seen in this way, they believe that there are fewer negative connotations attached to being European, and they consider such identities to be sophisticated in comparison to other identities that could potentially be ascribed to them. According to McVeigh (2010: 259) "the quality that *increasingly* defines Europeanness is simply being white". This is significant in the sense that their experiences and reactions demonstrate the processes through which these young people become whitened.

The persistence of racial hierarchies and notions of playing with identity are also evident among family members as siblings within the same family can have different experiences. Sarah shed some light on this when she said that some of her brothers could pass as Irish, while she herself could not because she was too dark. She elaborated that:

> We'd split it down the middle and we'd say, 'oh, three of us could pass but three of us couldn't'. Whenever we'd go abroad, we could say, 'oh, those three say that they are Irish', people will believe them but us three, they'll start guessing countries.

Her comments signify that the paler or whiter the person looks the greater chance they have of being perceived as Irish indicating the persistent association between being white and Irish. The idea that those who are not white cannot possibly be Irish stems from the system of racial hierarchy. While this system, as discussed, places whites at the top, black people at the bottom, and other coloured people in an intermediate category (Spickard 1989), their experiences show how it persists within contemporary Irish society.

This section has focused on the ways in which participants recognise the duality and multiplicity of their identities and, in doing so negotiate the outcomes of being misidentified. Misidentifications feature strongly in their experiences and at times they are even considered a welcome alternative. It is evident that participants can be strategic about how they identify and how they respond to categorisations and that 'race' and racialisation are inherent in these categorisations and their negotiations of them. Happy to pass as white Irish or to be misidentified as white southern European, they are grateful for their ambiguous appearance, in the sense that they are not directly exposed to stereotypes that can be associated with being Asian. Participants also embrace aspects of racial hierarchical thinking, especially when it positions them in more 'superior' racial category, such as southern European, which serves as a whitening tool. This shows that whiteness continues to be a racial marker of difference and inequality in Irish society

8.5 Intercultural positioning

As a result of being exposed to two different cultures simultaneously throughout their lives, participants claimed to be culturally sensitive. Bennett (1993: 60-65) claims that "people can

function in relationship to cultures while staying outside the constraints of any particular one" adding that "marginality and the experience of transcendence are not only possible but that they are the most powerful position from which to exercise intercultural sensitivity". Miville et al. (2005) claim that this occurs because multi-ethnic young people have encountered racism and are therefore, made aware that they belong to one 'race' or another. Consequently, they are subjected to a dual experience firstly, as people of colour and secondly, as people who are 'multi-racial'.

This theme emerges as part of participants' experiences in the sense that they very often find that they get along well with people from different cultures and ethnicities. Therefore, they can find themselves acting as mediators between newly arrived immigrants and different acquaintances during everyday interactions. Referring to multi-ethnic young people in Britain, Parker and Song (2001: 4) say that "they have become the acceptable face of diversity, the embodiments of a cosmopolitan progressive society, and examples of contemporary cultural creativity". Reflecting this, some participants do say that they are aware of other people's cultures and they assert that they respect belief systems that may be different to their own. For example, Conor said that he is sensitive to other minorities:

> Myself and my siblings would be a lot more conscious of other people's cultures; more than a lot of Irish people would be... Not even just in terms of our own culture but being a little bit more sensitive to the fact that other people have different cultures and traditions in their families ... even if they are living over here, they still have their own, like, cultural backgrounds and heritages that they still identify with. I would be, kind of, sensitive to that and I would allow them to express that.

While Sarah talks about being a member of a minority, she said that she did not mind talking to people about her family background and religious beliefs. She said that:

> I guess, its fine because ... like, people are interested to know about other countries … not in a bad way. There are so many horror stories about migrants coming into the country, if you can show a nicer side … pride of country and that it's all fine … I've never had a negative experience because of it, I've always just been open and answered the questions … they've gone away knowing more hopefully.

Here Sarah expresses that she does not mind explaining about her ambiguous appearance and religious beliefs when questioned as she tries to contest or resist stereotypical understandings. In the process, she becomes a support not only for Muslims, but for immigrants and other minority group members. She also plays a role of cultural mediator and educator – promoting cultural

awareness among wider society. Similarly, other participants gave accounts of occasions when they acted as mediators. Larry, for instance, recalls that during his school days he:

> Was always the first person to befriend the, like, foreign students that came in.

He said that he was good at communicating with them because he was used to speaking broken English with his Chinese family. He said that by:

> Speaking that way to some of the foreign students, like, it was a lot easier for them to understand me just using simple words and not over complicating something, leaving out one or two things as well. I am used to that and I do think it did help me to make friends and stuff ... because I made friends with them.

In other words, Larry holds a position in which he can communicate effectively with newly arrived immigrants because of his interactions with family members who are not accustomed to the Irish accent or who are not familiar with the English language and therefore, acts as a link between them and their new surroundings. When people communicate between different groups and mediate their interactions, they take on the role of language broker. A "language broker facilitates communication between two linguistically and/or culturally different parties. Unlike formal interpreters and translators, brokers mediate, rather than merely transmit, information" (Tse, 1996: 485). Larry explains that:

> I'm very good at, kind of, talking to people who don't know English properly because I'm just used to talking to my dad … He has good English but it's just, kind of, like, he'll understand anything you'll say to him, definitely, and you'll understand him, but sometimes he might leave out a word or, like, mispronounce a word. The one that's the most noticeable is no, he can't say no, he says 'mo' every time.

Participants also appear to act as cultural brokers, a concept that was developed in anthropology and applied to social situations where the presence of a mediator was necessary to link different groups. In other words, cultural brokering is a "bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change" (Jezewski, 1990: 497). This seems to be exactly what Amy had in mind when she said:

> Being mixed-race, you have the ability to communicate in a multi-cultural context and ... you act as an important link in terms of that social integration link, I think.

Here, Amy draws attention to the possibilities that she believes her unique position affords her in the sense that she possesses the knowledge to assist people from various cultural backgrounds. It

is necessary to mention, however, that although some participants assume such roles, there is evidence that indicates that they feel more comfortable with people in marginalised groups.

Participants were sensitive to other minorities and claimed that they could be more open with them, rather than those they considered 'fully Irish', displaying signs of what Mas Giralt (2011) refers to as strategies of invisibility. Participants enacted strategies of invisibility by withholding the details of their backgrounds from those they felt posed a threat to them. For example, Ronan said that:

> It depends on who I'm talking to. If ... I don't think they have any bad intentions or bad thoughts about where I could be from ... then I have no problem in saying, 'Oh well, my dad is from Bangladesh.

Although most participants said that they got along well with their 'fully Irish' friends, some also said that they felt that they could be more open with other multi-ethnic young people and even with young people within LGBT communities. Susan said that her:

> Friend group is quite vast, like, I've friends from Vietnam from, like, China I have a few Filipino friends as well, like. Another weird thing as well is that I really get along with a lot of people from, like, the LGBT community. I have a close group of friends who are gay and lesbian because I feel, like, they're very open minded as well.

Therefore, strategies of invisibility allow participants to remain invisible when it is necessary to silence their differences during some interactions, and, visible when it is safe to make their backgrounds known.

Although not asked specifically about open-mindedness, many participants said that being open-minded played a significant role in their everyday interactions and that it is essential that their friends are open minded. For example, Sally explains why she believes this is the case:

> I think that people who are in the minority are a lot more accepting naturally, I would be a lot more accepting than if I was with an Irish, Irish, through and through group... I feel like anyone who is in my position would be a lot more open.

She adds that:

> You're more open, I feel like I'm a person who is very open to all cultures. I don't see it, like, as such a labelling thing.

Here, Sally points out that she believes that because she is in the minority, she is naturally accepting which indicates that she believes that she has developed skills which enable her to negotiate between aspects of her own minority status and those of mainstream society. More

generally, participants display aspects of what Ruben (1976 cited in Van Der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2000: 293) refers to as 'cultural empathy' which he describes as:

> The capacity to clearly project an interest in others, as well as to obtain and to reflect a reasonably complete and accurate sense of another's thoughts, feelings, and/or experiences.

For example, Simon said:

> You're more open and accepting of different things.

Susan related her openness to minority groups to her mixed background and said that:

> I would be very accepting and very patient with loads of things than a normal, not normal, but another person would be, like ... I feel like it's, kind of, an advantage for me because I'm more open to things, like, people might say that I'm more open to controversial topics and I wouldn't get offended very easily.

This indicates that for some participants having a mixed cultural background meant that they were more aware and accepting of other people's differences, considering their own experiences. Therefore, they point to a key role that they can play as cultural brokers.

Due to their mixed cultural backgrounds participants find themselves in positions where they are sensitive to intercultural differences and experiences. This indicates that they can act as mediators between newly arrived immigrants, members of other marginalised groups and mainstream Irish society. They put their knowledge of different cultural backgrounds to use by bridging gaps in communication, by befriending and being open minded, which helps to bridge gaps, not only between different minority groups but also between majority and minority groups. This openness and cultural sensitivity are embraced by the participants as part of their identities, and in turn, as part of the strategies to deal with marginalisation from dominant ethnic and racial identities. Through these strategies they position themselves more in terms of what they can do rather than the colour of their skin.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter focuses particularly on multi-ethnic young people's lived experiences within familial and community contexts. It demonstrates how participants explain the identity negotiations taking place with others and the difficulties they face trying to identify with either one identity or another despite feeling a degree of exclusion in relation to both parts of their heritage. There is evidence in Chapter Six that suggests that they experienced some confusion at an earlier age in relation to making identity choices.

Over time, despite pressure from other Irish people to choose one identity over another, participants manage to negotiate their identities on their own terms in the sense that they acknowledge that their identity choices are context dependent and vary from one situation to the next. For some this may mean embracing both parts of their heritage, perhaps expressing them in different spaces and contexts, while for others it is about associating more with one than the other, for different reasons. The participants are strategic and selective in how they deal with these issues.

Although being misidentified is a prominent feature of participants' experiences (something they do not always appreciate) there are times when these misidentifications are received as a welcome alternative, especially if it means dissociation from their Asian heritages. The data shows that some participants are happy to be perceived as white Southern European and are glad that they do not look Asian. They are grateful for their ambiguous appearance, in the sense that they are not directly exposed to stereotypes that can be associated with being Asian and they strategically and selectively engage with these misidentifications.

It is unmistakable also that by not objecting to such ascriptions these participants embrace aspects of racial hierarchical thinking which positions them in more 'superior' racial categories such as southern European. Their experiences demonstrate contemporary manifestations of white superiority present in Irish society.

Participants select aspects of cultural practices and identities that are meaningful to them and in doing so acknowledge the duality and multiplicity of their multi-ethnic backgrounds. By doing this they embrace different facets of their mixed cultural backgrounds, consequently exhibiting aspects of 'cultural hybridity'. It is clear that cultural hybridity facilitates participants' desires to include different aspects of their heritages simultaneously in the sense that it opens up a space where they are free to play with their identities and make choices (though often within limited circumstances) that suit their own unique circumstances. They use strategies of invisibility to evade aspects of the racialisation processes and different strategies for connecting with members of other marginal groups.

These unique circumstances also afford participants advantages in the sense that they are not only culturally aware, but they are also sensitive to other people's cultural beliefs and practices and are potentially great cultural brokers, thus, potentially forging a future in Ireland where multiculturalism may become more achievable than it has been in the past. Participants actively embrace this aspect of their cultural positioning and it shapes how they form their friendship groups.

9.0 CHAPTER NINE:
Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This qualitative study set out to explore the lived experiences and identity negotiations of young people who grew up in Ireland in families with one Asian and one (white) Irish parent. It looks at factors within contemporary Irish society that influence the lived experiences of this cohort of young people and outlines the ways in which members of this group negotiate their understandings and feelings surrounding their mixed parentage. It examines the ways in which they manage and sustain their individual identities within their immediate families, extended families, peer groups, and the wider community. The study explores the ways in which they traverse their everyday interactions and sustain a sense of belonging in Irish society, in the context of their mixed cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. While much research in Ireland in this area has focused on the lived experiences among immigrant, refugee and migrant children (for instance Devine and Kelly, 2006; Devine et al. 2008; Smyth et al. 2009; Horgan, 2011; Ní Laoire, 2011; Curry et al. 2011; Kitching, 2014; Ní Raghallaigh, 2018) this study has focused on the perspectives, identities and sense of belonging of multi-ethnic young people who have grown up in Ireland.

A qualitative study was conducted which involved gathering and analysing data obtained from focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with sixteen young people from multi-ethnic backgrounds. Emerging findings draw on a theoretical framework which is comprised of related concepts such as (i) 'race', which "is about categorisation and classification", (ii) racism which "is about the differential outcomes of those classificatory and categorising practices" and (iii) racialisation which "is the process by which these practices take place, with racialised groups being the outcome of the process" (Garner, 2017: 24-5). The concept of racial micro-aggressions, forms of racism that are subtle and difficult to identify (Sue, 2003, 2004) is particularly relevant in making sense of young people's identity negotiations. Similarly, the concept of cultural hybridity provides a way of interpreting the survival strategies utilized by multi-ethnic young people as they adapt to different social situations and manage their identity negotiations (Rassool, 1999).

The use of these analytical tools helps to identify the complex nature of multi-ethnic young people's identities which encompass not only negotiations pertaining to their mixed parentage but also negotiations taking place around issues such as being misidentified as not being Irish. The ways in which such misidentifications influence multi-ethnic young people's identity choices and sense of belonging here in Ireland are analysed in view of their alienating experiences. Finally, the ways in which multi-ethnic young people embrace their cultural differences and assert intercultural

sensitivity are analysed considering their mixed cultural backgrounds, religious practices and beliefs.

The analysis leads to the following conclusions:

Firstly, for these multi-ethnic young people, issues pertaining to race permeate their lived experiences, encompassing assumptions about colour, culture and religion. For that reason, they are aware that this differentiation system ranks them lower in terms of status than their 'white' peers.

Secondly, the specificity of racism involving Asian stereotypes incorporates assumptions about physical appearance and religious beliefs. It was evident that during interactions between multi-ethnic young people and their peers that they were made aware that they were different. They were singled out with reference to their physical appearance, accent, dress and religious beliefs and this not only influenced the ways in which they presented themselves to others but also impacted on their social positioning among their peers.

Thirdly, dominant ideas about Irishness limit the young people's identity choices and marginalise them within contemporary Irish society. Multi-ethnic young people in this study faced ongoing constraints in terms of individual exclusion and had daily experiences of racism and rejection.

Finally, a promising finding is that multi-ethnic young people are seen to adopt survival strategies and manage their identity negotiations in different social situations by challenging assumptions and negative stereotypes about the mixedness of their identities. They strategically played around with the ambiguous nature of their identities by welcoming some misidentifications when it suited them and keeping detailed information about their backgrounds to themselves under certain circumstances. These key conclusions are discussed in more detail below.

9.2 Race and related assumptions about skin colour, difference cultural practices and religion

For multi-ethnic young people growing up in Ireland, issues pertaining to 'race' permeate their lived experiences, encompassing assumptions about colour, culture and religion. This study concludes that 'race' and related assumptions underpin many multi-ethnic young people's experiences as the stories captured by this research reveal that in many ways, they are made to feel that they are ranked as inferior to their white Irish friends. Their awareness stems from the ways they are treated differently by both their peers and teachers in school, based not only on the colour of their skin, or other physical characteristics but also on assumptions made about their religious affiliations. The research found that some multi-ethnic young people were subjected to overt racist incidents and that these occurred predominantly between them and their peers, as well as through

interaction with their teachers as part of their school going days. It is worth noting that although overt incidents were more often associated with their school days, subtle racism was something with which they have contended right into adulthood. More generally, these findings are consistent with Devine et al. (2008) who found evidence of racist incidents and name-calling among immigrant children in the school context in Ireland. This aspect of the findings suggests that multi-ethnic young people feel different to their peers because they are made conscious, from an early age, of colour and/or physical differences which signify differentiation. The main conclusion that can be drawn is that multi-ethnic young people are aware that this differentiation system ranks them lower in terms of status than their 'white' peers. This impacts on them in terms of the space they have to assert their own views and identities when challenging this ranking and differentiation.

Furthermore, evidence from this study suggests that multi-ethnic young people encounter racial micro-aggressive experiences in the form of racist jokes and racial comments, which leave them confused at times. It is the subtle nature of such micro-aggressive acts that brings about this confusion, in the sense that multi-ethnic young people then have to grapple with the hidden meanings in the jokes directed towards them. The findings confirm that multi-ethnic young people have difficulty in deciphering whether or not they should be offended by insults perpetrated towards them in the guise of 'friendly banter'. Therefore, the broad implication of the study is that despite rapid social change in Ireland from the 1990s onwards, little may have changed in relation to the ways in which members of mainstream Irish society act: these young people's experiences indicate that they continued to be singled out because of their perceived differences. This shows that racism is still an issue in twenty-first century Ireland even for young people who have grown up here with an Irish parent.

9.3 Stereotyping linked to Asian heritage

The specificity of racism aimed at Asian stereotypes incorporates assumptions about physical appearance and religious beliefs. Findings from this study reveal that different stereotypes that underpin the way multi-ethnic young people are singled out are attributed to them based on the 'Asian' part of their mixed heritage. The data indicate that stereotypes are related to skin colour, different cultural practices such as eating rice or presumed (Muslim) religion and manifested in forms of racism that range from racial micro-aggressions to more overt types of racial abuse. Regarding discrimination and stereotyping on religious grounds, schools did play a role in some multi-ethnic young peoples' 'othering' experiences in the sense that they recounted experiences of being subject to ridicule and 'othering' practices by both teachers and students in school settings.

Participants' 'othering' experiences manifested in the ways in which both teachers and students acted upon Asian stereotypes, especially assumptions about religious beliefs.

In addition, the research shows that for some multi-ethnic young people, their school experiences resulted in double subordination in the sense that they also felt different in terms of having an Asian parent who was also Muslim. There was an indication that some multi-ethnic young people, especially Muslims, were insulted and accused due to the 'war on terror' which seeks to justify and legitimise such behaviours. Clearly, within this discourse, multi-ethnic Asian / Irish people were sometimes viewed as 'terrorists within' or 'home grown terrorists', which contributes to their continued subordination.

Broadly translated, the findings indicate that participants were not only aware that Muslim beliefs and practices were different to the perceived norm, but the message was clear that Muslim identity would not be accepted. Therefore, some participants were silenced in the sense that they kept their religious beliefs and opinions to themselves to avoid the negative connotations attached to being Muslim. Their experiences imply that anti-Muslim sentiment exists, which can be related to the broader post 9/11 environment, and that multi-ethnic young people are expected to answer for world events in which they are not involved.

9.4 The limits to dominant constructions of Irishness

Dominant ideas about Irishness limit multi-ethnic young people's identity choices and marginalise them within contemporary Irish society. Firstly, findings from this study reveal that cultural practices play a pivotal role in shaping the ways in which multi-ethnic young people negotiate and sustain their individual identities within their immediate families, extended families, peer groups and the wider community. Many participants believed that their family practices were not understood or facilitated by more dominant assumptions in Irish society. Therefore, the findings confirm that differences from what are assumed to be Irish family norms, can contribute to the alienation felt by multi-ethnic young people.

Secondly, the dominance of ideas about Irishness was evident in participants' accounts when they said that they did not feel 'fully Irish' because of how they were made to feel about their families' 'different' cultural practices. Although this study does not focus specifically on negotiations taking place within multi-ethnic young people's immediate families, the data indicate that parental strictness was one of the participants' main concerns, and indeed some of them considered it to be one of the root causes of the complex negotiations taking place outside their homes. Some claimed that their Asian parents' strictness created difficulties for them among their peers growing up in Ireland and that, at times, they found it difficult to meet social obligations because their 'fully

Irish' friends were not privy to their home lives, their cultural practices or the expectations of their parents.

This is an important finding in the sense that it provides some explanation as to why multi-ethnic young people consider other Irish people (those with two Irish parents) as 'fully' Irish. Although participants identified things such as different parenting styles, cultural practices and beliefs as setting them apart, the broader implication of this finding is that they had little option other than to do so. It is evident that multi-ethnic young people are negotiating in the family context as well as managing these negotiations in the context of dominant norms and practices in the wider community. Therefore, it appears that because multi-ethnic young people do not partake in what is perceived as 'normal' Irish cultural practices this can leave them feeling outside of dominant cultural norms and practices in Ireland. These negative feelings are reinforced by racial micro-aggressions which challenge multi-ethnic young peoples' claims to Irishness.

Evidence from this study suggests that multi-ethnic young people do not see themselves as 'fully Irish' yet do feel Irish. However, findings show that being accepted as Irish is context-dependent and determined by others who could change their opinion from one interaction to another. Therefore, being accepted into different groups is determined by those multi-ethnic young people considered 'fully Irish'. Overall, the findings demonstrate the strong effect of further multiple negotiations taking place, and that which revolved around being asked the question 'where are you from'. Participants sometimes responded to this by using disclaimers to explain why they looked certain ways. This supports the findings of others such as Morrison (2004), in terms of the demands made on multi-ethnic Irish people to explain their lineage to strangers, sometimes in detail, and putting them in a position where they must make a case for their identity. From multi-ethnic young people's accounts, questions of this nature impact negatively on their sense of belonging and even position them as foreigners. This is an indication of just how subtle and yet damaging some 'othering' processes can be.

The main conclusion that can be drawn is that multi-ethnic young people are aware that racial hierarchies persist in Irish society and that they are accustomed to adapting their negotiations around their inferiorisation. Like Considine's (2018: 667) young Pakistani men, multi-ethnic young people are "forced to grapple with the consequences of otherness". This conclusion follows from the fact that, despite increasing diversity in Ireland, participants' accounts indicate that they feel that Irishness remains linked to whiteness and prevailing traditional cultural values. This is an indication that those dominant constructions of Irishness, such as "being 'white'... Irish speaking, Irish born, settled and Catholic" (Marshall, 2000: 16) persist.

9.5 Complex, dynamic and ongoing identity negotiations, influenced by interactions and reflexivity

Multi-ethnic young people adopt survival strategies and manage their identity negotiations in different social situations by challenging assumptions and negative stereotypes about the mixedness of their identities. Findings from this study reveal that only some multi-ethnic young people can pass as Irish, depending on their appearance, their Irish accents, and that feeling out of place and not fitting in could be considered part and parcel of some multi-ethnic young peoples' lives. No matter what the context, some participants felt neither Asian nor Irish enough. These feelings can be attributed to the impact of racialisation and micro-aggressions which influenced the ways in which they identified themselves.

There were times when participants did identify as Irish, although some were routinely misidentified by other Irish people as being from a variety of other countries. While it is clear that skin colour and physical features do play a role in multi-ethnic young people's acceptance into different groups (especially white), we must not forget that negotiations of this nature are very much context-dependent and varied, depending on how multi-ethnic young peoples' skin tones are read by others. In other words, being accepted or not into different groups is determined by other people's perceptions of multi-ethnic young people and this means that they are sometimes misidentified.

Multi-ethnic young people are strategic and active in how they respond to racism and micro-aggressions. Although being misidentified meant that some participants felt like foreigners, there were times when they welcomed being misidentified, especially if it meant being disassociated from their Asian parents' heritages. At times they played around with their identities in the sense that they did not feel always feel that it was necessary to correct other people when they made assumptions that they were Southern European. Therefore, it can be concluded that being misidentified as Southern European was a more attractive alternative, thus suggesting that racial hierarchies persist.

The research reveals that multi-ethnic young people may feel more comfortable with people in other marginalised groups rather than those they consider 'fully Irish', displaying signs of what Mas Giralt (2011) refers to as strategies of invisibility. Multi-ethnic young people in this study were seen to enact such strategies when they withheld details of their backgrounds from those, they felt posed a threat to them. This enabled them to remain invisible when it was necessary to silence their differences, and to be visible when it was safe to make their backgrounds known such ashen in the company of other people who are mixed-race or immigrants. This suggests that multi-ethnic young people strategically identify where and when they can be visible.

The data further indicate that despite pressure to identify in a certain way, at times multi-ethnic young people resist and make the choice to identify as being sometimes 'neither' and sometimes 'both'. Therefore, they draw on 'part/both' identifications in order to assert their identities in their entireties and in doing so, they embrace hyphenated identities. As a result, this casts a new light on the ways in which they choose to identify themselves. By recognising the duality of their identities, they welcome hybrid identities, which enable them to assume positions in which they can assert some control over their own identity choices. In this way they challenge the racial descriptions that have been fashioned to force them into fixed categories.

It is evident that cultural practices play an important role in shaping the ways in which multi-ethnic young people negotiate and sustain their individual identities within their wider communities. Multi-ethnic young people select aspects of cultural practices and identities that both suit their environments and are meaningful to them. There is enough evidence to suggest that as participants matured, they did manage to embrace different facets of their mixed cultural backgrounds, consequently exhibiting aspects of 'cultural hybridity'. This facilitated their desires to include different aspects of their heritages simultaneously, allowing them to make choices that suited their own unique circumstances. This must be considered one of the promising aspects of their mixed cultural backgrounds. Findings reveal that; indeed, these unique circumstances can afford multi-ethnic young people advantages in the sense that they are not only culturally aware but display heightened sensitivity to other people's cultural beliefs and practices, leading to a conclusion that they are potentially powerful cultural brokers. In this sense, multi-ethnic young people also see their marginality as steppingstones which is significantly positive in embedding diversity into constructions of Irishness. Participants took pride in their mixed cultural backgrounds and implied that 'fully Irish' people did not have the ability to fully understand immigrant or other outsiders' experiences.

Overall, this study provides a glimpse at some multi-ethnic (Asian/Irish) young people's experiences in contemporary Irish society. The findings signify that there is a need for further exploration of both multi-ethnic young people's lived experiences and identity negotiations in terms of interviewing larger numbers and more diverse samples. Future investigations are necessary to validate the kinds of conclusions that can be drawn from this study, including further explorations of multi-ethnic young people's experiences and examination of the impact of diversity on what it means to be Irish and what it means to be mixed-race in Ireland today. Future research could usefully focus on the survival strategies used by multi-ethnic young people as this would provide a greater understanding of the ways in which they manage their identity

negotiations in different social situations and challenge assumptions and negative stereotypes about the mixedness of their identities.

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Appendices

Appendix A

INFORMATION SHEET FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Title of the research: An exploration of lived experiences and identity formations of young people living in Ireland with one Asian and one (white) Irish parent.

My name is Barbara Alam and I am carrying out this research as part of an MPhil degree in the School of Applied Social Studies at University College Cork.

> This research will explore the lives and identities of young people, born in Ireland, with one Asian and one Irish parent. There is very little research already conducted on what it is like to grow up in Ireland in mixed Asian/Irish families. If you grew up in Ireland with one Asian and one Irish parent, and you are aged 18-25, you are invited to participate in focus group discussions and interview sessions.

If you are willing to take part, I would like you to participate in two focus group discussions. Focus groups are in fact group interviews in which four to six participants may take part. The researcher guides this interview, and the participants discuss topics that the interviewer raises. The first of these will run for 1 ½ to 2 hours. This discussion group will consist of four to six participants and two researchers (one to facilitate / the other to take notes) and will be recorded with your consent. On the first occasion I request that you bring with you an object that means something to you or that you feel expresses something about, who you are? You will be asked to talk about this object briefly during the focus group discussion.

Approximately, one month later the second group discussion will take place as a follow up to the first and will take approximately one hour. In this we will look at a summary of transcripts of the first focus group and reflect on those discussions. These group discussions will also consist of the original four participants / two researchers and will also be recorded with your consent.

You have been asked to participate because I believe that your views are valuable to the research. You do not have to participate in this research. You have every right to say no and, in this case, I will not contact you again, there will be no negative consequences.

Taking part in research of this nature holds very few risks, if any, as it has been designed carefully to avoid any risks. Nevertheless, the questions that arise may be of a personal nature and you might find that some may make you feel uncomfortable.

Remember that you are not obliged to answer all questions and that you can leave the focus group discussion at any time without any explanation as to why you do not want to participate further. Remember that after the focus group discussion you will have two weeks to withdraw your consent.

If you wish to take part, please contact me on phone no. 0862371643 or by email at 108109605@umail.ucc.ie . If you have any questions about the research or you think that I can assist you in any way, please get in touch.

Appendix B

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Title of the research: An exploration of lived experiences and identity formations of young people living in Ireland with one Asian and one (white) Irish parent.

My name is Barbara Alam and I am carrying out this research as part of an MPhil degree in the School of Applied Social Studies at University College Cork.

> This research will explore the lives and identities of young people, born in Ireland, with one Asian and one Irish parent. There is very little research already conducted on what it is like to grow up in Ireland in mixed Asian/Irish families. If you grew up in Ireland with one Asian and one Irish parent, and you are aged 18-25, you are invited to participate in focus group discussions and interview sessions.

If you are willing to take part, I will need you to participate in a semi-structured interview which will run for 1 hour and will be recorded with your consent. You are also invited to take part in a photograph activity as part of the interview. In advance of this interview, I will meet with you to explain the overall aims of the research and explain the photograph guide, this meeting should take no more than 15 minutes.

You have been asked to participate because I believe that your views would be valuable to the research. If you agree to participate in this research, remember that you are not obliged to answer all questions and that you can stop the interview at any time without giving any explanation about why you don't want to participate further. Please remember that after the interview you will have two weeks to withdraw your consent.

Please remember that taking part in research of this nature holds very few risks, if any, as it has been designed carefully. However, because the questions being used may be of a personal nature you may find that some may make you feel uncomfortable.

You do not have to say yes to participate in this research. You have every right to say no and there will be no consequences. I will not contact you again about this research.

If you wish to take part, please contact me on phone no. 0862371643 or by email at 108109605@umail.ucc.ie . If you have any questions about the research or you think that I can assist you in any way, please get in touch.

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

I agree to participate in the research project 'An exploration of lived experiences and identity formations of young people born in Ireland with one Asian and one Irish parent' being conducted by Barbara Alam, University College Cork.

I have read and understood the information sheet above. [ ]

I understand that the purpose of this research is to explore the ways in which young multi-ethnic people with one Asian and one Irish parent interpret their social interactions and aspects of Irish society that shape their identity choices.

I am participating voluntarily. I give permission for the focus group discussion to be recorded. [ ]

I understand that I have been asked to participate in this research because I am in a position to inform the researcher and that my participation will involve taking part in a focus group discussion which will run for up to 11/2 to 2 hours and a follow up group discussion which will take no more than 1 hour.

I understand that I can withdraw at any time from this discussion without repercussions and that I may refuse to answer any question if I so wish. I am also free to withdraw my consent for up to two weeks after the discussions are concluded.

I understand that the focus group discussions recordings and transcripts will be stored in a safe place at the researcher's private residence and will not have my name or contact details attached to them and will be kept for at least ten years.

I am aware that excerpts from the focus group discussions may be used in a thesis, presentations or other forms of communication arising from the project and that my name or other identifying details will not be attached to them or otherwise revealed in the thesis/ presentations/ publications.

I am aware that I can contact Barbara Alam if I have any concerns about the research. I agree that Barbara Alam has answered all my questions fully and clearly.

I understand that this research has been reviewed and approved by the Social Research Ethics Committee at University College Cork.

…….

Signature (participant): Date:

…….

Signature (researcher): Date:

Appendix D

CONSENT FORM FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

I agree to participate in the research project 'An exploration of lived experiences and identity formations of young people born in Ireland with one Asian and one Irish parent' being conducted by Barbara Alam, University College Cork.

I have read and understood the information sheet above. [ ]

I understand that the purpose of this research is to explore the ways in which young multi-ethnic people with one Asian and one Irish parent interpret their social interactions and aspects of Irish society that shape their identity choices.

I am participating voluntarily. I give permission for the interview to be recorded. [ ]

I understand that I have been asked to participate in this research because I am able to inform the researcher. I understand that my participation will involve taking part in a semi-structured interview which will run for 1 hour.

I understand also that I must meet with the researcher in advance to discuss the research aims and the photograph guide which will take no more than 15 minutes.

I understand that I can withdraw at any time from this interview without repercussions and that I may refuse to answer any question if I so wish. I am also free to withdraw my consent for up to two weeks after the interview is concluded.

I understand that the interview recording, photographs, and transcripts will be stored in a safe place at the researcher's private residence, will not have my name or contact details attached to them, and will be kept for at least ten years.

I am aware that excerpts from the interview may be used in a thesis, presentation or other forms of communication arising from the project and that my name or other identifying details will not be attached to them or otherwise revealed in the thesis/ presentations/ publications.

I am aware that I can contact Barbara Alam if I have any concerns about the research.

I agree that Barbara Alam has answered all my questions fully and clearly and I consent to take part in an interview.

I understand that this research has been reviewed and approved by the Social Research Ethics Committee at University College Cork.

…….

Signature (participant): Date:

…….

Signature (researcher): Date:

Appendix E

CONSENT FORM TO USE PHOTOGRAPHS

I agree to participate in the research project 'An exploration of lived experiences and identity formations of young people born in Ireland with one Asian and one Irish parent' being conducted by Barbara Alam, University College Cork.

I have read and understood the information sheet above. [ ]

I understand that the purpose of this research is to explore the ways in which young multi-ethnic people with one Asian and one Irish parent interpret their social interactions and aspects of Irish society that shape their identity choices.

I give permission to include certain photos in a thesis, presentations or other forms of communication arising from the project. [ ]

I understand that I must meet with the researcher in advance to discuss the research aims and the photograph guide which will take no more than 15 minutes.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent to use the photographs for up to two weeks after the interview is concluded.

I understand that the photographs will be stored in a safe place at the researcher's private residence with no name or contact details attached to them and will be kept for at least ten years.

I am aware that some photographs will be used in a thesis, presentation or other forms of communication arising from the project and that my name or other identifying details will not be attached to them or otherwise revealed in the thesis/ presentations/ publications.

I am aware that I can contact Barbara Alam if I have any concerns about the research.

I agree that Barbara Alam has answered all my questions fully and clearly.

I understand that this research has been reviewed and approved by the Social Research Ethics Committee at University College Cork.

…….

Signature (participant): Date:

…….

Signature (researcher): Date:

Appendix F

Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement

This study: An exploration of lived experiences and identity formations of young people born in Ireland with one Asian and one Irish parent is being carried out by Barbara Alam as part of an MPhil degree in the School of Applied Social Studies at University College Cork.

This research intends to explore the lived experiences and identity formations of young people (aged 18-25) born in Ireland with one Asian and one Irish parent. It will examine factors within contemporary Irish society that influence the lived experiences of this cohort of young people and outline the ways in which members of this group negotiate understandings and feelings surrounding their multi-ethnicity. While this study will investigate the ways in which the identity choices made by these multi-ethnic young people are received by different members of Irish society, it will also explore the ways in which these young multi-ethnic people negotiate their everyday interactions and sustain a sense of belonging, in the context of their mixed cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs.

I, (name of research assistant), agree to:

1. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format with anyone other than the researcher.
2. Keep all research information in any form or format secure while it is in my possession.
3. Return all research information in any form or format to the researcher when I have completed the research tasks (which will be to take notes during the focus group discussions).
4. After consulting with the researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the researcher (e.g. information sorted on computer hard drive).

Research Assistant:

_____ _____ _____

(Print name) (Signature) (Date)

Researcher

_____ _____ _____

(Print name) (Signature) (Date)

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact: Barbara Alam

Address: Gortnaglough, Ballinhassig, Co. Cork

Tel. 0862371643

Email: 108109605@umail.ucc.ie

Appendix G

The focus group schedule: stage one

I will introduce myself and my colleague to the group and then explain the purpose of the research by reiterating that:

> This research will explore the lives and identities of young people, born in Ireland, with one Asian and one Irish parent. There is very little research already conducted on what it is like to grow up in Ireland in mixed Asian/Irish families. If you grew up in Ireland with one Asian and one Irish parent, and you are aged 18-25, you are invited to participate in focus group discussions and interview sessions.

I will confirm that the focus group will run from 11/2 to 2 hours and remind group members that refreshments will be available after the discussion.

Participants will be asked to be mindful about what they disclose during the group session, in order to protect their privacy and to respect the privacy of others.

I will ask participants to sign two consent forms (one for their records and the other for my own).

Once participants declare that they have no questions I will begin the focus group discussions by asking the participants to introduce themselves to the group. I will then invite the participants to talk about the objects that I requested them to bring with them (objects that they feel mean something to them or express something about who they are).

When these objects have been discussed the following prompts will be used to stimulate discussion, as necessary, in participant led discussions.

> You all come from a family with one Irish and one Asian parent – tell me about that; what do you like most about it? What do you like least about it?
>
> Does everyone here feel like that or does anyone here have a different experience?
>
> Tell me about how you see your nationality. Has anyone here ever felt that their nationality was in question? Please discuss how this made you feel.
>
> What are the social settings where people of multi-ethnic background might feel more, or less, conscious of their backgrounds? In a good or bad way, does a person's ethnic background make a difference when it comes to friendship groupings?
>
> What kinds of things make a difference when it comes to how friendship groupings come about?
>
> Do you feel you have strong connections to both your mother's and father's cultures and families – or not? Does everyone feel like that or does anyone here have a different experience?

Does anyone here practice any customs or traditions? If yes, please discuss the context in which you practice them. Can you please discuss what you like most or least about these customs or traditions? How important are they to you?

There is a growing body of research that focuses on what has become known as micro-aggressions. Researchers define micro-aggressions as racism that is so subtle that neither victim nor perpetrator may entirely understand what is going on. For example, what is considered a micro-aggression may simply be someone remarking that you speak good English or being asked the question how long have you been living here in Ireland? Has anyone one here anything to add to this? Can you relate to this in any way? Would you like to discuss it?

Research in the UK, Northern Ireland and in Ireland has found that some multi-ethnic children and young people experience marginalisation in the school setting. Can anyone here relate to this? If yes, would you like to tell the group about the incident or incidents?

Many researchers in the US insist that multi-ethnic young people must develop strong ethnic identities in order to protect themselves against experiences like the ones we have just discussed.

Does anyone here agree with this statement? Why? Please discuss why you feel this way?

Are you aware that Leo Varadkar has one Indian and one Irish parent, do you have? any views about this?

What advice would you give to the parents of multi-ethnic children in relation to their multi- ethnicity?

To conclude the discussion, I will thank the participants for taking part and reassure them that access to the information gathered will be restricted to the research team only. I will assure them that pseudonyms will be used in the research transcripts / findings and that access to audio recordings will be restricted to the research team only. I will remind them that I can arrange to meet with them again to discuss a summary of the focus group transcript or send them on a copy if they so wish to validate it. I will reiterate that although they have signed consent forms that they are still within their rights to withdraw their consent for up to two weeks after the focus group discussion is complete.

Appendix H

Second focus group schedule

I will introduce myself and my colleague to the group and thank the participants for coming back. I will remind the participants about the purpose of the research by reiterating that:

> This research has been set up with a view to gaining an insight into the everyday interactions of young multi-ethnic people, born in Ireland, with one Asian and one Irish parent. It proposes with your assistance to gain access to different characteristics of Irish society that may or may not influence your everyday experiences as a group; it will also try to acquire a greater understanding of how you experience your multi-ethnicity in this context. While the ways in which you wish to identify yourself will be explored the way in which you sustain a sense of belonging will be paramount in the context of your mixed cultural background and religious beliefs.

I will confirm that on this occasion that the focus group will run for 1 hour. Participants will be asked to be mindful about what they disclose during the group session in order to protect their privacy and to respect the privacy of others.

I will ask participants to sign two consent forms (one for their records and the other for my own).

To start, I will provide each participant with a summary of the transcript from the first focus group to read. The participants will be asked to note down any issue or topic that they may wish to talk about further and these will be discussed. Tentative questions and prompts based on the transcript summary will be used to stimulate further discussion.

To conclude the discussion, I will thank the participants for taking part and reassure them that access to the information gathered will be restricted to the research team. I will assure them that pseudonyms will be used in the research transcripts / findings and that access to audio recordings will be restricted to the research team only. I will reiterate that although they have signed consent forms that they are still within their rights to withdraw their consent for up to two weeks after the focus group discussion is complete.

Appendix I

Photograph guide

I would like you to take a maximum of ten photographs of images that you feel depict important people, places, and things in your life, such as things that say something about who you are.

You could for example take photographs of things like:

Places you have an attachment to:

People who are important to you:

Things that are important to you:

The happiest times in your life:

Note that each time you take a photo you should write a short caption explaining briefly why you took that photograph and what it means to you. These captions will help you to recall and act as prompts during the interview sessions.

When you have taken the photographs, you can send them to me through Viber, WhatsApp or by email and we can view them on a laptop during the interview.

On the day of the interview, you can select or disregard pictures before the interview begins if you wish.

Please rest assured that all digital prints will be stored securely on a personal hard drive at my home for at least ten years.

Appendix J

Interview schedule

I will introduce myself and thank the participants for attending our earlier meeting.

> This research will explore the lives and identities of young people, born in Ireland, with one Asian and one Irish parent. There is very little research already conducted on what it is like to grow up in Ireland in mixed Asian/Irish families. If you grew up in Ireland with one Asian and one Irish parent, and you are aged 18-25, you are invited to participate in focus group discussions and interview sessions.

I will confirm that the interview will run for a maximum of 1 hour and ask participants to sign 2 consent forms (one copy for their records and the other for my own). If they have no questions the interview will begin.

Outset of the interview

To begin I will ask the participants about the significance of each photograph and attempt to interweave the interview questions into our discussion. I will use open-ended questions initially as I anticipate that it will not only encourage participants to feel relaxed but also provide them with the opportunity to talk freely. As the interview progresses, I will introduce a series of semi-structured questions to address research questions directly. Please bear in mind that the following are draft questions only and are drawn from issues raised in a review of literature. The final interview questions will be, in part, shaped by the outcomes of the focus group discussions and as semi-structured interviews, the weight given to them of participants.

Sense of self

1) Where do you live? Can you tell me a little about it?

2) Have you ever lived anywhere else? (Yes) can you tell me a little about that?

3) Your parents are from two different countries; how do you feel about this? What is this like for you?

4) Do you ever think about your mixed family background? Does it mean anything to you?

Sense of belonging

5) What has it been like for you growing up in a family with one Irish and one Asian parent?

6) Have you ever felt advantaged because you have a multi-ethnic background / have you ever felt disadvantaged because you have a multi-ethnic background?

7) Tell me about how you see your nationality. Have you ever felt that your nationality was in question? If so, how did this make you feel?

8) If someone asked you where you were from, what would you say? Why?

Identity

9) How would you define your identity?

10) What people in your life influenced you most in relation to the way you identify yourself? How did they influence you?

Religious and cultural beliefs

11) Do you believe or practice any customs or traditions?

12) If someone asked you about your religious beliefs what would you say? Why?

13) Do you keep in contact with your extended families on both sides? What kind of relationship do you have with them? Would you say that they are important in your life?

Societal influences

14) What is your favourite past time? When you go out, where do you go? Who do you spend your time with?

15) What kinds of things make a difference to you in terms of who you become friends with or activities you take part in?

17) What advice would you give to the parents with family backgrounds like yours in general?

18) Overall, is there anything you want to add to help in this research?

To conclude the interview, I will thank the participant for taking part and reassure them that access to the information gathered during the interview will be restricted to the research team only. I will assure them that pseudonyms will be used in the research findings and that access to audio recordings will be restricted to the research team. I will remind them that I will send them on a summary of the interview transcript for them to validate within a few weeks of the interview. I will reiterate that although they have signed consent forms that they are still within their rights to withdraw their consent for up to two weeks after the interview is concluded.

Appendix K

Advertisement for recruiting participants

Were you born in Ireland to a family with one Asian and one Irish parent? If so, this research may interest you.

This is an Invitation to participate in the research project titled: An exploration of lived experiences and identity formations of young people born in Ireland with one Irish and one Asian parent.

My name is Barbara Alam I am carrying out this research as part of an MPhil degree in the School of Applied Social Studies at University College Cork. I am in search of young people born in Ireland to families with one Irish and one Asian parent, aged between 18-25 years, to take part in focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews.

This research has been designed with a view to gaining an insight into the everyday interactions and lived experiences of young people such as yourselves. It proposes with your assistance to gain access to different characteristics of Irish society that may or may not influence your everyday experiences as a group; it will also try to acquire a greater understanding of how you experience your multi-ethnicity in this context. While the ways in which you wish to identify yourself will be explored the way in which you sustain a sense of belonging will be paramount in the context of your mixed cultural background and religious beliefs.

If you have one Irish and one Asian parent and are interested in receiving further information about this research project, please contact me by email at 108109605@umail.ucc.ie or phone number 086 - 2371643. I would love to hear from you

Barbara Alam