

**Institutionalised, Parentless, and Racialised as Other:
Understanding the Formation of a Racialised Self for Women of African-
Irish Descent who grew up in the Irish Industrial School System**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been previously submitted as an exercise for a degree, wholly or partially for any other academic award at this or any other university. This work is entirely my own.

I agree that the Library may lend or copy this dissertation upon request.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Philomena Mullen', written in a cursive style.

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Mary Philomena Mullen

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Abstract

This research investigated the identity(ies) construction of 15 women of mixed African-Irish descent, with white Irish mothers and African fathers, who as children grew up in the Irish institutional care system in the 1950s-1980s. The conceptual perspective of critical mixed race studies led me to conduct qualitative research. My experience of growing up in an industrial school led to the application of autoethnographic principles. Semi-structured interviews were used and were thematically analysed. Data analysis suggested four themes: 1) mixed race experience and racialised discourses; 2) social relations and social racialisation; 3) life in the institution; and 4) life after the institution.

There are four key findings which emerge. First, many of the participants experienced the deleterious impact of being racialised in the institutions as children. Secondly, the denial of and/or failure to create a relationship with their white mothers and black fathers played a significant part in their (re)construction of individualised identities made up of the constituent elements of racialisation and institutionalisation. Thirdly, many expressed a deep desire to discover more about their Irish mothers and African fathers with a view to establishing a potential connection to this imagined presence. Finally, the combined effects of being parentless, institutionalised and Othered resulted in a subjective (re)construction of a racial self that is realistic and accommodating of the social reality of how they are perceived in a racial state.

The research theorises that this was a fundamental factor in how they became racialised inside the institutions before they ever encountered the wider community where they continued to be racialised as other and perceived as not belonging. For some, this led to them leaving Ireland almost on discharge from the institutions to forge an identity in Britain, Europe and the US. For most, however, their identity(ies) was framed, along with their white fellow inmates, within a collective identity of being an incarcerated industrial school child. Socialised as Irish but racialised as Other, the treatment of the mixed race children in the industrial school complex was based on the racialised abuse received at the hands of the religious orders, the staff in whose care they were placed, and the other white children. This is expressed through the individual narratives of the people who took part. The research asserts that mixed race children in institutional care were singled out for a particular form of abuse. Some of the participants have unproblematic memories of their times in the industrial schools. Others, however, speak of being denied access to mother, father, and siblings; of having to work, cleaning and caring for other children (while being little more than small children themselves); of not going to school but instead being put to work either within the institution or being sent out to do adult work in laundries or as domestic workers; of being fostered to families on weekends and in school holidays where they suffered emotional, physical, racial and even sexual abuse before being summarily returned to the industrial school; and through a corruption of care, suffering harsh, demeaning and damaging treatment within the total institutional context.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine the self-perceptions and understandings underlying the construction and negotiation of identity for a generation of Irish women of African-Irish descent, with white Irish mothers and black African fathers, who grew up in the Irish institutional care system. It will critically interrogate how women of mixed African-Irish descent negotiate and renegotiate their Irish identities where identity as a construct is understood to be shifting, in a country where white equates to Irishness and anything else is Other. The marginalisation of children of mixed African-Irish descent within the story of Irish institutional care is part of the complex social mechanism that is Irish racialisation of the Other since children of mixed African-Irish descent were an integral part of the industrial schools, but occupy a hidden position within official and academic discourse on institutionalisation.

This research contextualises the experience of mixed African-Irish descent¹ and analyses the role played by the care homes and industrial schools in the construction of this sense of identity. As such it addresses a gap in the current canon of literature on the care of children who grew up in the care of the State.

The central aim of the research is to open up this previously untapped vein of research on Irish mixed race for study both within Ireland and worldwide. My research on survivors of mixed African-Irish descent in the Irish institutional care system of the 1950s-1980s will be of interest for two primary academic areas, namely: the Irish institutional care system, especially during this closing period of its existence; and the experience of being mixed race and Irish for an older generation.

As regards the former, there have been numerous and varied books and articles on the neglect and abuse of children in institutional care (Buckley, 2013; CICA, 2009; Ferguson, 2007; Ferriter, 2009a, 2009b; Finnegan, 2001; Garrett, 2010, 2013, 2015; Greene, 2011; Milotte, 1997; Pembroke, 2013, 2017; Raftery & O'Sullivan, 1999) where the term institution is used to refer to industrial, residential and reformatory schools as well as children's homes and orphanages, Mother and Baby Homes, and adult Magdalene Laundries, that were run by religious orders and managed/funded by the Irish state.

¹ I, personally, am aware of other mixed race children who grew up in the industrial school in which I was an inmate, who were of Indian and Hawaiian origin. The participants in this research, however, are all of mixed African-Irish descent.

However, most of these books, with the explicit exception of any that reference the experiences of Christine Buckley in Goldenbridge,² do not mention the experiences of inmates of mixed African-Irish descent and content themselves with the very limited conclusions of the Ryan Report that observed of female inmates of mixed African-Irish descent that they presented ‘a problem difficult of any satisfactory solution’, that their ‘prospects of marriage in this country [were] practically nil,’ that their ‘future happiness and welfare can only be assured in a country with a fair multi-racial population, since they are not well received by either ‘black or white,’ and that they ‘are at a disadvantage also in relation to adoption’ (CICA, 2009: 4.93). The story of children of mixed African-Irish descent in the industrial schools evokes what Rousseau (2016: 309), in the context of Irish Magdalen Laundries, terms a ‘presence of absence.’

To illustrate this, just within my circle of knowledge, I can identify sixty-three people, whether former inmates or fostered/adopted from the industrial school, of mixed African-Irish descent (living or dead). I would suggest that the number of children of mixed African-Irish or other descent present in Irish institutional care in the 1940s to the 1980s was greater than has hitherto been acknowledged or understood. Yet their presence has been elided from the record. The voices of mixed African-Irish women are centred in a way that has been omitted by the canon on the institutional care complex, which invariably presents the inmate cohort as being homogeneously white.

My research will expand upon this important and somewhat egregious gap in the study of the institutional care system by examining this aging generation who offer a glimpse into the racialisation process that took place in Ireland in the second half of the last century and open up the discussion on race and racialisation in Ireland long before the large numbers of African (and other) migrant groups began to populate Ireland in the 1990s (Michael, 2015). It foregrounds the process by which these older mixed African-Irish women read racialisation in white Irish culture both as inmates of the institutional care system and in the post-incarceral period and reflects on both the gendered and classed aspect of this racialisation.

² Christine Buckley was born to a married white Dublin woman and a visiting Nigerian student. At the age of three weeks she was given up for fostering. Having been in a number of foster homes at the age of four Christine Buckley was sent to Goldenbridge, an orphanage run by the Sisters of Mercy. The story of the abuse she endured in Goldenbridge, and her subsequent search for her family upon her release forms the basis of *Dear Daughter*, a Louie Lentin documentary which was broadcast by RTÉ on 22 February 1996.

The future of Ireland, like any modern nation-state, is inextricably linked to its ability to understand and accommodate the experiences of its diverse citizenry. This thesis will strive to bring attention to the Irish context of mixed race studies, a field that has been long dominated by research in the US and latterly, the UK and Europe. This empirical research will thus open up a new area of study for researchers from all over the world.

Ireland has historically viewed itself as a monoracially-oriented society which means that racial identity is treated as a singular identity category (Garner, 2004, 2009; Lentin & McVeigh, 2002, 2006). This research project will investigate the processes underlying the construction and negotiation of identity for a generation of Irish women of African-Irish descent, with white Irish mothers and black African fathers, who grew up in the Irish institutional care system.

Despite Ireland changing to a country of inward migration since the mid-1990s and thus bringing about concomitant demographic change that reproduced multiracial populations that align more with the rest of the globalised world, mainstream media and academia capture how the struggle for acceptance pervades the lives of Irish mixed race people living in 21st century Ireland (Dabiri, 2019; O'Malley, 2020; RTÉ, 2019; The Sun, 2019). This emphasis on identity and the accompanying pressure of racialisation would not be the case were these mixed race women of mainstream white Irish descent. Previous commentators have pointed out that identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis or is characterised by doubt and uncertainty (Ahmed, 1999; Alexander, 1996; Alibhai-Brown & Montague, 1992; Botts, 2016; Ifekwunigwe, 1997). Being of African-Irish descent stresses the two ethnic identities, even though research such as Garner (2004, 2009) and Lentin and McVeigh (2002, 2006) suggests that mainstream Irish society sees African-Irish descent only as black. Researchers of mixed African-Irish descent such as Asava (2013) and Dabiri (2019) would support this view.

Exploring African-Irish descent

Existing literature suggests that mixed race Irish women inhabit blackness and whiteness equally – but in what has been termed a racialised society, they inhabit whiteness invisibly (Lentin & McVeigh, 2006). This sense of being Othered in relation to the ‘normal’

constitutive subject of dominant interiority (Aspinall *et al.* 2006, 2008) may, in turn, be further compounded by the alienation of growing up in Irish institutional care.

This research seeks to make an important contribution to the study of Irish identity in the 21st century as well as augmenting the existing literature on children in the care of the State. The role of religious institutions has been examined in some detail regarding the upbringing of children in Ireland (Leane, 1999; Logan, 1992; Powell *et al.* 2013; Robins, 1980; Stevenson, 1989; and tangentially in O’Sullivan & O’Donnell, 2007, 2012). However, no work exists in the public arena on their role, if any, in the racialisation of children of mixed African-Irish descent who were placed in their care. Some of these children had no birth certificates (CICA, 2009) and some were abandoned by mothers who were unable to provide a home because of fear of being vilified and ostracised from the wider community due to the colour of the child (Gleeson, 2020). Commentators have argued that in addition to providing material support for women who had ‘sinned’ (Mahood, 1990; McAleese, 2012; Nicolson, 1968) the primary ideological function of these homes was to discipline and punish the women who had transgressed conventional gender relations (Garrett, 2016; Quinlan, 2017). In an historical analysis of homes for unmarried mothers in Britain in the 1950s, Martine Spensky has argued that ‘they served as a means of regulating women’s sexuality and way of life. The woman who came out of the home was supposed to be very different from the one who had entered the home: mended,’ respectable,’ employable and a ‘good’ mother (i.e., one who provided for her child)’ (Spensky, 1992: 101).

The nuns, lay people and auxiliary staff associated with these care homes were often untrained in any form of child care (CICA, 2009). In the case of mixed race children who were reared in these environments, racialisation and negative stereotyping were customary despite the fact that the children, in the main, had no links with any wider community or family from their African side (AMRI, 2019; MRI, 2014). The proximity of these children to whiteness was total (Ahmed, 2004, 2005, 2010).

Researcher’s experience

Born in Dublin in the early 1960s, I grew up in the care of the State (from birth to 16) and am of mixed African-Irish descent myself – my mother being a stereotypical Irish type, fair skin with powerful red hair, my father a Nigerian pathologist from Lagos who

studied medicine in Ireland. Consequently, I have a unique access to the community I am studying and this greatly facilitated the research, as discussed further in Chapter 3. Song and Parker, (1995: 248) argue that ‘interviewees’ attributions of difference or commonality, in relation to the researcher could affect what they chose to reveal ... as well as the manner in which they did so’. Commonality of racial or ethnic identities and experiences may result in potential respondents being more willing to engage with you or the research process; they may see you as having greater understanding and therefore being worthy of sharing their experiences. Johnson-Bailey (1999: 669) contends that interviewer/interviewee relationships work better ‘when there are fewer barriers to mitigate.’

I am actively interested in this topic and feel that it has a resonance for many groups and stakeholders within Irish society. According to organisations set up to campaign for the rights of the children of African fathers and white Irish mothers who grew up in the Irish institutional care system in the 1940s, 50s, 60s and 70s, there is strong evidence that many grew up to have serious mental health problems, substance abuse issues, social isolation and trans-generational issues³ (CICA, 2009; Walshe & O’Connell, 2019) relating to racial abuse and poverty (AMRI, 2019; CICA, 2009; MRI, 2014). Furthermore, Riegal (2000) contended that residents of Ireland’s industrial schools accounted for almost 80 per cent of homeless people aged over 40 years.

My own experience of growing up, first in two Irish care institutions, and then in a white town, with my white mother and an absent black father, have informed my interest in how it is that notions of family and home are central to constructions of identities in specific emotional and cultural contexts. Though ethnically Irish and Nigerian, I was racialised as Nigerian and essentialised as a black woman (albeit with a strong Dublin accent) which corresponds to research that suggests that very often people are forcefully included in groups and attributed ethnic identities which are not the same as their own

³ The largest study on victims of institutional child care by religious orders (n=247) was conducted by Professor Alan Carr and colleagues and was included in the Ryan Report (CICA, 2009), at Vol. V, pp78-350.

The Ryan Report is a 5 volume piece of research documenting the abuses experienced by survivors of institutional child abuse in Ireland as part of Ireland’s *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, a term which refers to the collective process of grappling with problematic truths of the past. It was established on foot of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse Act, 2000. Sadly, the report does not disaggregate for either mixed race or other minority groups but merely concludes that ‘A small number of witnesses were of Irish Traveller or mixed-race backgrounds and to maintain anonymity no further information can be provided’ (at 3.16).

sense of identity. This emphasis on identity and the accompanying pressure of racialisation would not be the case had I been mainstream white Irish.

Background to the industrial schools

The term institution is used to refer to industrial, residential and reformatory schools as well as children's homes, Mother and Baby homes, Magdalen laundries and orphanages that were run by religious orders and funded by the Irish state (Barnes, 1989; Richards, 2012). From the mid-19th century a vast network of these State-sponsored and Catholic Church-administered institutions, described as an 'architecture of containment' (Smith, 2007: 1) and 'carceral archipelago' (Foucault, 1975; Gleeson, 2020: 2),⁴ was developed to care for children whose parents were deemed unable or unfit to look after them (Brennan, 2008; Buckley, 2016; Simpson *et al.* 2014). Ideologically, Ireland relied heavily on an institutionalisation approach for the care of children that contained a punitive element to deter parents from relying on the system (Earner-Byrne, 2007, 2008), an approach that flew in the face of the original 19th century conceptualisation of these British institutions (Crossman, 2009).

It is worth noting that several commentators have observed that involvement of the Catholic Church in running these institutions initially stemmed from its fear of proselytism from non-Catholic organisations and churches who were engaged in maternity and child-welfare work during the early decades of the growth of these care institutions in Ireland (Inglis, 1987, 1998; Ó Cathaoir, 2009). Deprived of a balancing Protestant minority (Clarke, 1984; Ó Cathaoir, 2009; Whyte, 1980), and sustained by a 'self-interested silence' (Tyrrell, 2006: 17) on the part of state and society, eventually the Catholic Church would find herself with 'unrivalled authority – in charge of an educational system, a hospital system and a rudimentary welfare system' (Ó Cathaoir, 2009), in addition to the majority of the industrial, residential and reformatory schools (CICA, 2009). CICA (2009: 2.7) stresses that a primary concern for the Catholic Church was to prevent Catholic children being placed into better-sourced Protestant schools or homes.

⁴ In total, 61 schools (56 for Catholics, 5 for Protestants) were managed and run independently by religious orders, 'subject to state approval and inspection' (CICA, 2009). See Appendix I for map detailing the extent of this network.

The reasons for institutionalisation varied over time but poverty was the persistent theme (Barnes, 1989; Buckley, 2008, 2013a, 2013b, 2016) as the religio-political entity that was the Irish Free State (Cooney, 1999) treated poverty as a moral failing and built a brutal carceral state to contain and correct it (Buckley, 2016). This mindset was predicated on a 'culture of honour towards the Church and its agents' (Richards, 2012: 395). The social roots of poverty thus became reshaped in a protean manner into moral issues which were to be solved by institutionalisation (Finnane, 2001), and fostered the ever-present threat that poorer families could be broken up by putting children into such places (O'Hagan, 2006). This institutionalisation, in turn, was buttressed by the medical profession, the courts, the police, politicians, social workers, families, and voluntary organisations (Garrett, 2000, 2004, 2008). The aim of the State and church authorities was to exhort these institutions to discipline rather than nurture children (Glynn, 2015; Mik-Meyer & Villadsen, 2013), and the children were expected to work in the institutions (operating right up to the end of the 1970s in Ireland), being trained for jobs deemed suitable to their attributed social standing (Conrad, 2004). It is worth noting that the industrial schools needed a steady supply of children to ensure they made a profit (O' Rourke, 2009).

This approach to institutionalisation was not unique to Ireland, of course, nor was the abuse. For example, in Germany, Wensierski (2016) details how an estimated 500,000 children were detained, exploited and abused in Catholic and Protestant-run foster homes during the 1950s and 1960s. Malinen *et al.* (2020), Stanley (2015), and Waterhouse (2000) examine abuse in institutional care in Finland, New Zealand, and Wales respectively. Death (2013), Wolfe *et al.* (2006) and Frawley-O'Dea and Goldner (2007) outline similar examples of church-run abusive institutions worldwide.

Following a steady stream of controversies and inquiries involving the neglect and abuse of children in institutional care (Arnold, 2009; Arnold & Laskey, 1985; Coldrey, 1993, 2000; Coleman, 2010; Corby *et al.* 2001; Raftery & O'Sullivan, 1999; Stanley *et al.* 1999; Stein, 1993) and the publication by survivors of best-selling books on their lives and on the failures of State and care institutions to protect them (Doyle, 1988; Fahy, 1999 Flynn, 1983, 2003, 2020; Galvin, 1991; Greene, 2012; McKay, 1998; Touher, 2007, 2008; Tyrrell, 2006; Wall, 2014) it is now accepted that these 'care' institutions, an 'unremarked aspect' of everyday Irish life (Simpson *et al.* 2014) were brutalising environments. In fact, child

‘care’ in this context requires inverted commas to highlight its ambivalent meaning in the context of the history of Irish industrial schools as a corruption of care (Garrett, 2010; Wardhaugh & Wilding, 1993). This architecture of containment was, in the words of one Dáil Deputy, Dr. Liam Twomey (FG), a ‘stain on the entire nation’ (Twomey, 2003).

In the late 1990s, the Irish state broadcaster, RTE television, ran a series called *States of Fear* (Raftery, 1999), which was an exposé of the abuse of children in industrial schools in Ireland until their closure in the late 1970s, told mainly through the experiences of adult survivors. This series and the book based on it, *Suffer the Little Children* (Raftery & O’Sullivan, 1999), offered compelling evidence that children in the care of the State, who were reared in industrial and reformatory schools run by religious orders, were systematically abused. It showed that in the industrial school system children were often routinely starved, beaten, humiliated, sexually abused, deprived of education and basic knowledge about life, and their emotional needs were often totally neglected. No doubt, not all religious and lay carers were abusive (O’Faolain, 1996), but the evidence shows that the industrial and reformatory regime was an abusive and cruel one.

The Catholic commentator, Mary Kenny, was moved upon the airing of *States of Fear* in 1999, to lament the scale of the abuses experienced by survivors of institutional child abuse in Ireland:

The scale of the cruelty seemed so systematic that it was as though it was inherent in our history: not only were the religious who ran these institutions accused before the bar of history, so was the Irish state, which utterly failed to take responsibility for those in its care. So, indeed, were the complacent middle classes, who used these reformatories as a source for servants, and so too was the media, which remained indifferent to the punitive regimes around them. (Kenny, 2000: 76)

Within the Irish Free State, which gained its independence in 1922, the Roman Catholic Church promoted an understanding of the family as central to a particularly Irish way of life (Brennan, 2013; Daly, 2009; Inglis, 2002, 2005; Luddy, 1995), as well as to the nation (Ryan, 2002). As Fahey (1998: 147) has cogently argued, the primary purpose of Catholic social service provision was to ‘disseminate and safeguard the faith, not to combat social

inequality or reform society.’ In fact, Breen *et al.* (1990) and Fuller (2002) argue that the Catholic Church was an obstacle to redistributive policies on the part of the state.

The concern of Catholic social teaching is captured in the following jeremiah by the Jesuit and writer, Fr. R. S. Devane, who summed it up thusly in 1931:

Since the Great War there has been a slow but growing change in the moral condition of our people. There has been a perceptible lowering of moral vitality. The moral health of the nation is not quite sound and shows signs of being gradually undermined (Devane, 1931a: 20; *cf* Devane, 1931b).

Devane and others would identify a number of things which plagued and undermined his vision of a Catholic, dancing-at-the-crossroads Ireland,⁵ such as pro-British sentiment, literature, cinema, and dancehalls; especially those playing that negro and savage Jazz music (Brown, 1985; Inglis, 1998; Whyte, 1971). For example, Patrick Campbell,⁶ writing in *The Irish Times* of 23 February 1940, recalls the ‘furore’ caused ‘by a negro girl named Maxine Sullivan, who dared to ‘swing’ or ‘jazz’ *The Bonny Banks of Loch Lomond*’ (Pierce, 2000: 530).

The primordial illness, however, at the heart of the ‘moral health of the nation,’ for Devane and many others, was the perceived challenge to the veneration accorded to the Irish married family occasioned by illegitimacy (Devane, 1931a). The unmarried mother and her illegitimate child have historically sustained a deeply problematic relationship within the social order (Figal, 2008; Saeger, 2001). Earner-Byrne, (2003) remarks on the peculiarly Irish demographic profile. By 1935, despite Ireland’s low marriage rate (the lowest in Europe) and high marriage age, a high fertility rate resulted in a birth rate close to the European average. According to the prevailing and

⁵ The phrase most commonly cited from then Taoiseach (and future President), Eamon de Valera’s celebrated St. Patrick’s Day (17 March) 1943 speech extolled the virtues of ‘comely maidens dancing at the crossroads.’ The speech in fact made no mention of crossroads dances, a rural tradition then dying out. Although de Valera actually said ‘happy maidens’ in the broadcast, the phrase was ‘comely maidens’ in the prepared text sent in advance to the newspapers, printed in the following day’s *Irish Press*, and is also the term which has gone down in posterity.

⁶ Patrick Campbell wrote in the 1940s under the pseudonym ‘Quidnunc’ for the *Irish Times* column ‘An Irishman’s Diary.’

pervasive social code, the high level of illegitimate births violated all understandings of family and morality (Brennan, 2013; Keating, 2008, 2014). O'Danachair (1962: 195) argued that protection of the family's reputation was perceived as extremely important to the traditional Irish family: the good name of the family was 'more important than any notion of good citizenship.' The unmarried mother and her child were not valued or even interpreted as a family unit. This view was emphasised in such doctrinal teachings as the Papal encyclical, *Casti Connubii (On Christian Marriage)* in 1931. While the unmarried mother was held legally responsible for the welfare of her child there were very few attempts made either officially or socially to keep mother and child together (Buckley & McGregor, 2019), though Earner-Byrne (2003: 54) suggests that the Legion of Mary⁷ was a notable exception as their principle aim was to keep mother and baby together.

The notion of moral degeneracy, and even moral criminality, was ingrained in most public debates on the issue of illegitimacy – linked, as it was, with prostitution and sexual crime – in the early decades of the Irish Free State, and consistently crossed boundaries of morality with those of social and health matters (Earner-Byrne, 2003, 2004; Luddy, 2007). This peculiarly Irish response to poverty and moral hazard had distinct gendered overtones (Fahey, 1987) as summed up by the writer, Oliver St John Gogarty, speaking in Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate) in 1928: 'it is high time that the people of this country find some other way of loving God than by hating women' (in Ferriter, 2010: 326). The clergy made regular pronouncements on sexual immorality, particularly against 'modern' (Beaumont, 1997: 566) and young women (Fallon, 1998; Luddy, 2007a, 2007b; O'Hagan, 2006; Valiulis, 1995) with the common theme being the immorality of the women and men being 'portrayed as degenerates or dupes who fell for the charms of these dangerous and wily women' (Keating, 2017: 65). The end result of this view of illegitimacy was that children in poverty and in state care were neither 'cherished' nor 'provided for,'⁸ and policing families took precedence over providing a social safety net. As Buckley (2016) argues:

⁷ The Legion of Mary is an international association of mostly lay members of the Roman Catholic Church who serve it on a voluntary basis. It was founded in Dublin by Frank Duff.

⁸ The 1916 Proclamation contains the words 'The Republic guarantees [...] equal rights and equal responsibilities to all its citizens and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally.'

Child neglect was the primary offence investigated by public inspectors, but the notion of neglect itself was an empty vessel. Poverty, desertion, alcoholism, illegitimacy, mental illness, and spousal abuse were all included under its umbrella — an ever-expanding category that manifested fears about changes in family life.

There are varying estimates of the number of children incarcerated in Irish industrial and reformatory schools. Earlier figures suggested that 150,000 children (mainly female) were placed in industrial schools between 1869 and 1969 and 15,000 children (mainly male) between 1858 and 1969 (Raftery & O’Sullivan, 1999), and the Ryan Report (CICA, 2009) estimated that, during the period 1936-70, ‘a total of 170,000 children and young persons (involving about 1.2 per cent of the age cohort) entered the gates of the 50 or so industrial schools’ (CICA, 2009: 3.01-3.04). However, in 2019, new figures from the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse suggested that there was a ‘seriously erroneous statistic’ in the Ryan Report (Carswell, 2019). Mr. Justice Ryan, chair of the commission, said that the figure was closer to ‘around 42,000 – around a quarter of the original figure’ (Carswell, 2019). The significant discrepancies between these estimates are not easy to account for but seem to be primarily due to an overestimation on the part of the Ryan Commission, which appears to have used the stock figure rather than the flow figure in estimating the number of children in industrial schools (Carswell, 2019). Justice Ryan added:

The Commission has ... consulted Prof O’Sullivan, Prof David Gwynn Morgan, the Department of Education and Skills and the other Commissioners and is of the view that the number stated in the report is not correct. [*While*] it is not possible to establish a precise figure, the Department’s calculation of the number of children in Industrial schools and Reformatories from 1930–1970 and beyond is approximately 42,000 or somewhat higher. (Carswell, 2019)

In either case, the annual inmate population peaked in 1946 at 6,800 and steadily declined thereafter to 4,300 in 1960 and 1,740 in 1970 (CICA, 2009). In the case of reformatory schools, the numbers were much lower, amounting to approximately 2,000-3,000 children and young persons (CICA, 2009). In relation to reformatory schools, the divergence between the two estimates can be accounted for by the closure of most of Ireland’s ten reformatory schools by the early twentieth century, which were reduced to

two. However, the reality was more complex because industrial and reformatory schools began to merge into a common system, with Letterfrack Industrial School in the West of Ireland being described as a junior reformatory in 1954.

Poverty, causality and institutionalisation

A dominant explanation, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, for the industrial school regime is encapsulated in Fintan O'Toole's words, the 'criminalisation of poverty' (O'Toole, 1999), namely that the State and the Catholic Church took the children of the poor into care rather than give their families an adequate subsistence. The thinking is captured in an infamous letter by William Cosgrave, the son of a successful publican, head of the first Irish Free State government, founder and leader of the Fine Gael (FG) party, and father of a future FG Taoiseach. Writing to Austin Stack, Minister for Home Affairs, in May 1921, the socially conservative Cosgrave showed that the elite was not prepared to cherish all the children of the nation equally:

People reared in workhouses, as you are aware, are no great acquisition to the community and they have no ideas whatever of civic responsibility. As a rule, their highest aim in life is to live at the expense of the ratepayers. Consequently, it would be a decided gain if they all took it into their heads to emigrate (Gallagher, 1997)

Cosgrave's industry minister, Patrick McGilligan, added in 1924: 'There are certain funds at our disposal. People may have to die in this country and die through starvation' (Mitchell, 1974: 197).

The Ryan Report (CICA, 2009) concluded on the basis of an analysis of court archival records:

Although the balance varied from decade to decade, the great majority of children were committed because they were 'needy'. The next most frequent grounds of entry were involvement in a criminal offence or school non-attendance. Each of these grounds involved committal by the District Court. The remaining two grounds, which over the entire period from 1936 to 1970 were less frequently used, were being sent by a Health Authority and voluntary entry (CICA, 2009: 3.03).

Maguire (2009: 37) in her study raises the issue of ‘defaulting parents’ and links child poverty to family dysfunction as a significant factor in institutionalisation. Maguire (2009: 13) drew upon ‘a wide array of sources including: legislation; parliamentary debates, commission reports and annual reports from government departments.’ She also had access to ISPCC files for three counties (Wexford, Wicklow and Mayo) from the late 1930s to the mid-1950s (2009: 14).

This conclusion that social need was the key factor leading to institutionalisation is important. It broadly supports Raftery and O’Sullivan’s (1999) contention that poverty was the root cause of institutionalisation:

Approximately eighty per cent of all children committed, and over ninety per cent of girls, came under the category ‘lack of proper guardianship’. In practice, this was a catch-all heading, which included children of unmarried mothers not eligible for adoption, children who had lost one or both parents, those whose parents were incapacitated through illness, or whose families were unable to look after them due to poverty. Homeless children came within this category, as did those whose families had been broken up because of desertion or the imprisonment of one parent. However, in all these cases, the language and procedure of the courts was to place the onus of guilt on the child. And the State, rather than attempting to address the poverty that existed in these families, chose instead to fund religious orders to effectively incarcerate these children (Raftery and O’Sullivan, 1999: 22).

For the purposes of this study, attention should be drawn to the above sentence of ‘children of unmarried mothers not eligible for adoption’ as the data will show that phenotype blackness (i.e. being mixed African-Irish) was grounds for this ineligibility.

Why children were taken into care

For most of their existence in the twentieth century, children were committed to the industrial schools through the 1908 Children’s Act (CICA, 2009). While the Catholic Church totally dominated institutional child care provision, at least some accountability to the State was also required through this legislation and Department of Education

Rules and Regulations for the Certified Industrial Schools guidelines. On the foundation of the modern Irish State the responsibility for reformatory and industrial schools was placed with the Department of Local Government, a responsibility it kept until 1924 when it transferred briefly to a reluctant Department of Justice. However, later in 1924 responsibility for the reformatory and industrial schools was transferred to the Department of Education, a responsibility and cost which the Department of Education ‘did not want’ (Keating, 2015: 98).

Remarkably, despite the formation of the Irish State in 1922 and the fact that it soon became outdated – as changes in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the UK reflected – the 1908 British legislation continued to govern Irish child care practice until a new Child Care Act (1991) was fully implemented in 1995. The essence of the 1908 legislation was that inspection was required to ensure that the welfare and protection needs of children were being met (Buckley & McGregor, 2019). In practice, however, annual inspections of the industrial schools did not always happen, and those that did take place were often superficial (CICA, 2009). Serious physical abuse of children was routinely practised, and often openly so to the knowledge of government departments, under the guise of reasonable corporal punishment (Raftery & O’Sullivan, 1999).

Department of Education figures analysed by Raftery and O’Sullivan (1999: 22) show that during their lifetime, 80 per cent of children were committed to the industrial schools for ‘lack of proper guardianship’, which included over 90 per cent of the girls committed. This, they suggest, included children of unmarried mothers; children who had lost one or both parents, or whose parents were incapacitated through illness, or whose families were unable to look after them due to poverty; children who were homeless, or whose families had broken up due to the desertion or imprisonment of one parent. Raftery and O’Sullivan (1999) show that in the 1940s the Department of Education estimated that about one-third of the 6,000 children then in the industrial schools were there because their parents could not support them. O’Sullivan and O’Donnell (2007, 2012) chart the extent of this system as part of the wider coercive confinement approach which characterised post-independence Ireland’s approach to welfare for those most in need. O’Sullivan and O’Donnell (2014) estimate that approximately 1 per cent of the population of the state was incarcerated in these

institutions. Along with mass emigration, this institutionalisation ‘absorbed the surplus, deviant and ‘undesirable’ in society’ (Buckley & McGregor, 2019: 4).

Reformatory schools were constituted by a legislatively separate regime, although the institutions were closely linked in practice and in the public imagination (Arnold, 2009). Essentially, reformatory schools catered for known or repeat offenders (Osborough, 1974), while industrial schools were set up to care for what today would be called youth ‘at risk’. Four reformatory schools were in operation at various times in Ireland between 1858 and 1969, during which 15,899 children were committed to them: 13,428 boys and 2,471 girls (Raftery & O’Sullivan, 1999: 27). This demonstrates the profoundly gendered nature of the system as industrial schools overwhelmingly catered for girls – the tendency being to commit them for reasons of ‘protection’ – and sought to regulate and control female sexuality, while reformatory schools regulated deviant boys whose identities were constructed in terms of criminality (CICA, 2009; Mahood & Littlewood, 1994). Arnold and Laskey (1985) – one of the first books to examine the industrial school system⁹ - suggest that although the purpose of Industrial Schools was to meet the needs of orphaned, destitute and abandoned children, they were always linked in the public mind with reformatories and criminal activities. The schools survived in Ireland until their closure in the early 1980s following the criticisms of the government sponsored investigation into them, published as the Kennedy Report (1970).¹⁰

The Kennedy Report (Kennedy, 1970) painted a damning picture of life in industrial schools and reform schools. Among its findings: children were being cared for in a ‘haphazard’ and ‘amateurish’ manner (*ibid.*13) by ‘untrained’ and inadequate staff (*ibid.*15) in ‘unsanitary conditions’ (*ibid.*15) which lacked ‘stimulation and companionship’ (*ibid.*18); children were deliberately ‘depersonalised’ by being made to sleep in communal dormitories, eat in refectories and wear institutional clothing (*ibid.*15); no records were kept and children had no identities (*ibid.*22); 80 per cent of detained children were ‘deprived’ and suffering from the effects of bereavement, separation or illegitimacy (*ibid.*11); children who had ‘emotional scars of a deep and abiding nature’ (*ibid.*16) were

⁹ And which only found a publisher outside Ireland.

¹⁰ The 1936 Cussen Report into the industrial and reformatory school system was the first investigation into the schools in independent Ireland. Historically, State inquiries into the care of children in Ireland can be divided into three periods: The 1930s-1970s, from the Cussen to Kennedy reports; the 1970s-1990s and a series of inquiries into abuse within intra-familial contexts, clubs and schools; and the investigations into institutional care arising from the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse Act 2000 and Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (Amendment) Act 2005 (*cf.* McAlinden, 2013).

being cared for by staff with ‘a lack of awareness of the needs of the child in care’ (*ibid.*13) and who ‘did not meet their needs for love and security’ (*ibid.*13); there was no psychological or educational assessment and children convicted of indictable offences were mixed with children with no criminal records (*ibid.*38) and those with intellectual disabilities¹¹ were mixed with those of normal intelligence with about half the children being deemed ‘backward’ (*ibid.*47). A core finding was that the schools were understaffed (*ibid.*48). In 1968, for example, the ratio of children to staff was 50:1. Untrained lay workers outnumbered the religious by five to one, many of whom were former pupils. Many abuse victims describe abusive ‘teachers’ who were grown up former pupils who had been unable to leave the orphanages and make their way in the world (Irish Times 1996).

An important footnote to the Kennedy Report, and to its chair, District Justice Eileen Kennedy, is that despite this excoriating dissection of the failings inherent in the industrial school system, the judge continued to send children:

[...] shortly after the publication of the report, the journalist and activist Nell McCafferty castigated its chair, Eileen Kennedy, for still sending children from her court to institutions she had condemned and which the government had failed to reform. (Keating, 2014: 314)

Gendered and classed nature of the system

The Catholic Church in Ireland for much of the twentieth century was ‘a formidable and powerful institution, virtually unchallengeable’ (Inglis, 1998: 14), with influential powers in a range of settings including education, healthcare and censorship. The 1922 Constitution, for example, was entirely secular despite the robust Catholic ethos of the newly formed Irish Free State (Leane, 1999). Under the 1937 constitution of the modern State of Ireland, the Catholic Church was enshrined with a ‘special position’ in Irish society (Keogh & McCarthy, 2007). This reference, however, had no particular legal significance and was in fact removed via the Fifth Amendment in 1972 (Keogh & McCarthy, 2007). Nevertheless, commentators such as Gaffney (1999: 8) have argued that there was an ‘unholy alliance between a power-hungry Catholic Church and a State

¹¹ The report uses the term ‘mentally handicapped’ (at p.40).

unwilling either to take responsibility itself or to make the church accountable.’ O’Hagan (2006: 66) has suggested that the Church was a key plank of the ‘ideological state apparatus’ of post-1922 Ireland.

Historians such as Inglis (1998), Whyte (1980), and Brown (1985) trace the historical development of the power of the Catholic Church which saw it involved directly not only in the provision of institutional care but also in healthcare and social services. The church’s morality had a monopoly on all aspects of personal and social life, and conformity to church teaching was brought about through ‘a systematic process of socialisation exercised in churches, schools, hospitals and homes’ (Inglis, 1998: 64).

The Church-State relationship in the Republic of Ireland is highly complex and multi-layered (Valiulis, 1995). Given the historical power and position of the Catholic Church in Ireland, it is not surprising that many institutions, such as industrial schools, were run by religious orders on behalf of, and as a de facto adjunct of the State; and the political and social deference to Catholicism which collectively meant that the actions of the church were largely beyond reproach (Murphy, 2009; Quinlan, 2017; Travers, 1991). The children’s moral welfare, as understood by the Catholic Church, could also be a reason for committal (Goode *et al.* 2003; Richards, 2012). This included children considered ‘illegitimate’, that is, born out of wedlock. Committal to an industrial school could last until the child was 16, and since children ‘were often of tender years, they could be there for many years’ (CICA, 2009: 34):

The industrial schools were run by a broad expanse of religious orders including, inter alia, Sisters of Mercy, Christian Brothers (both French and Irish varieties), Rosminians/The Institute of Charity, Good Shepherd Sisters, The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, The Hospitaller Order of St John of God, The Religious Sisters of Charity, De La Salle Brothers, The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge, Sisters of St Clare, Sisters of St Louis, The Presentation Sisters, The Dominican Fathers, The Daughters of the Heart of Mary, Brothers of Charity, and Sisters of Nazareth. The Sisters of Mercy, under whose care I was raised, were the biggest single provider; their institutions alone detained a total of over 40,000 children. It has been noted that the ‘Bishops far preferred Sisters of Mercy than other Congregations, they were easier to control’ (CICA, 2009: 6.237). Boys and girls were kept in separate institutions - sometimes misleadingly referred

to as ‘orphanages’ (Molina, 2001: 38) - and, as mentioned earlier, girls always significantly outnumbered boys for most of the 100 years of the industrial schools in Ireland. A significant factor in this was that girls tended to be committed at an earlier age than boys and spent longer periods of time in the schools (Powell *et al.* 2013).

Children were viewed as being in moral danger because of how child welfare was framed within the prevalent Catholic notion of childhood innocence (Brennan, 2008; Buckley, 2016), the child being born innocent, but corrupted and contaminated with adult knowledge through abuse. This viewpoint was gendered as Louise Jackson has argued: ‘In boys, corruption began as petty thieving and led into a downward spiral of criminal activity. For girls it took the form of immorality or sexual precocity’ (2000: 6). This is why in Ireland so many boys who either committed crimes or who were seen as at risk of doing so were placed in reformatory schools and why so many girls who had committed no crimes at all were placed in the industrial schools (Raftery & O’Sullivan, 1999; Simpson *et al.* 2014). Boys were often incarcerated for criminal offences, while girls were more likely to be incarcerated for status reasons: wandering, being neglected or living in unsatisfactory homes. For girls and women, sexual practices were the key marker of their status, in the same way that criminal activity marked boys (Mahood, 1995).

Unless worked with, such children would be a huge threat to future social order (Jones & Fowles, 1984). Treatment was framed in terms of moral reclamation and a return to the lost state of childhood innocence. The moral status of abused children was seen as dubious (Smith, 2001). Children were not worked with in terms of what they were – such as victims of abuse and neglect – but what they were going to be. They were seen as future threats to social order as much as victims. The child in danger would in time become the dangerous child (Creighton, 2017). The challenge then was to catch these children early and channel them into an appropriate regime of moral rehabilitation (Mahood & Littlewood, 1994). The whole point of the schools’ regime was to mould children into the kind of good citizens that the Church and State wanted them to be (Smith, 2001).

In the Irish industrial school regime, however, ‘forgetting’ the past extended into systematic abuses which involved the annihilation of identity itself, such as being given

and only being known by a number, or being sent as far away as possible from one's family and community of origin (Al Jazeera, 2020).

Herein lies one of the paradoxes of the industrial schools: students entering the schools were often forced or expected to sever ties to any existing family in order to align themselves with the industrial schools and their managers. Any failure of the industrial school 'family,' thus, resulted in a betrayal of the values the schools espoused. (Molina, 2001: 37)

Garrett (2013: 59) has stressed the social-class dimension of the abuse of children he identified 'throughout the five volumes of the Ryan Report.' In discussing the Daingean Reformatory, Co. Offaly, he observes:

Tellingly, in their evidence to the Inquiry, the 'Oblates stated that the typical social class of the pupil was urban working class. The boys were mainly from the larger Irish cities of Dublin, Cork and Limerick... Of the complainants who gave evidence to the Committee, many had ended up in Daingean for trivial offences that owed more to poverty than criminality' (Garrett, 2013: 59).

He further adds that 'low status of poor children in Irish society was reflected in the low status of those members of the religious orders who worked in the schools' (59). As religious conversion was seen as central to saving the souls of these impure children, they were systematically regarded as second-class citizens, as undeserving of the kinds of love and care afforded to uncontaminated children (*ibid.* 58).

There was nothing unique to Ireland in having such beliefs and child care practices (on Australia, for example, see Coldrey, 1993, 1999). In their study of the Scottish industrial and reformatory school system, Linda Mahood and Barbara Littlewood (1994: 559) suggest that 'Corporal punishment was widely used, and school officials reasoned that whipping was necessary because many inmates were from abusive homes and did not understand anything else.' Nor was anything unusual about the other non-abusing staff colluding by their silence in the pervasive abuse. But there was an added dimension to the Irish experience arising from a particular Catholic, Christian, moral economy as outlined earlier in this chapter. In the context of a newly-independent Ireland, post-1922,

child care practice drew on deeply racial imagery, in the sense that the regime was deliberately constructed to assert the difference of the Irish from the former British coloniser. This was done in terms of purity, and sexual purity in particular, and found expression in clerical obsession with such things as ‘evil literature,’ contraception, dancehalls and extremely repressive approaches to the unmarried mother (Finnegan, 2001). The treatment of the children mirrored the freeing of the State from the contaminating influence of the oppressor group. This also had a distinctly racial tone especially evident when it came to the anti-Jazz movement of the 1930s. Leitrim Council, for example, declared jazz was only fit for African savages (Twamley, 2015). Jazz was viewed by the Catholic Church as a Jewish/Negro conspiracy. In Mohill, 3,000 people marched against jazz, and the Leitrim Observer warned its readers not to ‘disgrace our Irish Saints and expel the music of John Bull, niggers and cannibals’ (Twamley, 2015).

The industrial and reformatory schools were part of an elaborate network of institutions and practices that controlled women’s, and to a lesser extent men’s sexuality. Unmarried mothers, for instance, were incarcerated in the Magdalene Asylums (more familiarly known as Laundries) and which in Ireland were still admitting women well into the 1960s¹² (Finnegan, 2001). Fathers did not escape being policed, but this occurred on quite different terms to women. As long as a man was viewed as a good provider for his wife and children, he could drink and do basically as he liked. It was also up to him to ‘correct’ his wife and ensure that she was a good enough mother. And when he failed in this, the church and State stepped in to take charge (Smith, 2007).

This helps us to see the norms that structured social work practice and the types of work boys and girls were made to do in the industrial and reformatory schools. What was thought to be a fit education for boys and girls was closely related to their projected roles in a division of labour marked by class and gender (Mahood, 1995). In the schools, boys were put to work on farms and workshops. They were not being trained to run their own businesses but simply to work diligently and punctually for others. The aim of the boy’s education was to build character: a distinctly working-class character. What was important in practice was the inculcation of the right attitude (Mahood & Littlewood,

¹² Though a caller to RTE’s *Liveline* [5 March 2017] pointed out that she was incarcerated in what was effectively a similar institution as recently as 1989, and provided proof of this assertion. The author and researcher, Caelinn Hogan points out that the Donegal mother-and-baby home known as The Castle only finally closed its doors in 2006, and received 10 admissions as late as 2001. <https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/caelinn-hogan-the-castle-5178051-Aug2020/>.

1994: 561). Nor was it expected that girls would rise above their station. They did cleaning, rosary bead making, laundry work and other domestic-type things in the schools, and were essentially trained to do appropriate ‘women’s work’ as domestic servants (Raftery & O’Sullivan, 1999). The standards that she learned and the skills that she exercised were also expected to stand her in good stead when she had a home of her own (Mahood & Littlewood, 1994: 562). The entire regime was constituted in terms of creating particular gender roles and the disciplining of sexuality, as well as class, as the Church and State sought to produce their ideal masculinity and femininity (McGarry, 2002, 2009). This was the well-trained labourer who would become the good bread-winning father; and the well-trained domestic servant who would eventually become the ideal of the virtuous Irish mother: she who was ‘the living embodiment of Our Lady – humble, pious, celibate and yet fecund’ (Inglis, 1998: 248-249).

Hidden aberration to the norm

In February 2020, before the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic reached Ireland, a number of newspaper articles appeared which reported that mixed race children, as well as Travellers and children with physical and intellectual disabilities, were treated in a cruel manner which reflected the perception of their inferiority within the industrial schools. An article from 23 February, in the Sunday Independent newspaper, reported on the leaking of a government commission report (Sheehan, 2020) and elicited a great deal of media attention as it coincided with the 21-year anniversary of Mary Raftery’s *States of Fear* documentary on RTÉ (Raftery, 1999). *States of Fear* was a three-part investigation into the history of industrial schools and other institutions since the foundation of the State and was originally broadcast in April and May 1999.

The Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation (officially the ‘Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and certain related matters’) is a judicial commission of investigation, established in 2015 by an order of the Irish government (DCYA, 2015). It was set up in the wake of claims that the bodies of up to 800 babies and children may have been interred in an unmarked mass grave in the Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home, located in Tuam, County Galway, but its remit also covers investigation into the records of, and the practices at an additional thirteen Mother and Baby Homes (DCYA, 2015).

The leaked Commission report made for shocking reading as it detailed racist abuse, racial profiling, and Apartheid-like segregation in Mother and Baby homes towards mixed African-Irish children, as well as Traveller children, and children with physical and intellectual disabilities (Sheehan, 2020). In relation to mixed African-Irish children, the report found that skin colour was often listed as a defect in files and that they were considered unsuitable for adoption. Furthermore, the broadcast media reported that children were ‘eugenically rated’ (O’Sullivan, 2020) based on a nun’s assessment of ‘the intelligence of the natural mother and how ‘negroid’ the features of the infant were’ (O’Sullivan, 2020). Thus differences of skin colour became the signifiers of diminished humanity and intellectual and cultural inferiority. Mixed African-Irish children were represented as savages who had not yet progressed into full humanity. The coverage of this story by the national broadcaster, RTÉ, went on to add that ‘when it came to the child’s records, the religious orders did not record the ethnicity of a child’s parents and that the default description - African - was mainly used’ (O’Sullivan, 2020).

A separate story in another newspaper (Maloney, 2020) reported that in St Patrick’s Mother and Baby Home, on Dublin’s Navan Road ‘[t]here was a room they called the ‘reject ward’, where they put mixed race and disabled babies and they were treated like animals.’ The woman being interviewed for the article, Sheila, further recalled that:

One nun used to drag them around like rag dolls, and I knew something was going to happen to them. Every time I went into the nursery there was another cot empty. Sheila stated that she also saw the nuns giving them injections. It is believed that up to 3,000 children died at St Patrick’s from 1904 until it closed in 1985, many as a result of vaccine trials and other mistreatment, including malnutrition. (Maloney, 2020)

Elizabeth Coppin (aged 70), who was reported on RTÉ television news programmes and in a third newspaper article to have been granted leave to take a case against the Irish State to the UN Committee Against Torture (Holland, 2020; Ryan, 2020), also confirmed that she saw these racialised discriminatory practices and the existence of the ‘reject ward.’

These respective articles and the survivors of mixed African-Irish descent interviewed on the RTÉ television documentary *Redress: Breaking the Silence* (broadcast on 2/3 March 2020) suggest that mixed race children in the industrial schools were a ‘hidden aberration

to the norm' (AMRI, 2019: 11), who suffered: physical and sexual abuse, illegal vaccinations and resulting illnesses, as well as segregation and enforced concealment on the basis of our race, hidden away from prospective adopters and wider Irish society. (AMRI, 2019: 10).

This echoed Fanning (2018a) who observed that the children 'born of relationships between African men and [white] Irish women experienced not just the stigma experienced by other unmarried mothers but also extreme racism.' A view paralleled by a speaker and former inmate, Carole Brennan, of the advocacy group Mixed Race Irish in her submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality on 22 October 2014, noted:

... the parish priest would single out mixed race children and racially abuse them in front of their peers. One person was told, 'You have two drawbacks in life - one is the colour of your skin, and the second is you are illegitimate.' Members talk about a pecking order, with coloured girls in the lower ranks. There was no career planning or work experience given because, as one member put it, 'of the stereotype that we would become prostitutes.' This resulted in many individuals not living up to their full potential. [...] For me, admitting that I was targeted because of the colour of my skin is something that I refused to do for years. I did not want to say that the reason that nun or priest did that to me, or the reason that happened to me in the street or whatever, was the colour of my skin. It is too painful. (MRI, 2014).

Research Questions

In light of the above discussion, the central research questions of this study are:

1) *how did this generation of women of mixed African-Irish descent negotiate their identity(ies) within a total institutionalised setting and throughout the course of their lives after they leave said institution?*

and

2) *how does a person raised in an institution which is predominantly white, with no family or community, and with dual ethnic identities negotiate the world and, independently of all the normative social structures, forge an identity?*

Structure of the thesis

The following chapter discusses key concepts which are related to the analysis of identity and belonging for women of mixed African-Irish descent who grew up in the Irish institutional care system. It will address debates about racialisation, caregiver attachment and the role and impact of the institution in shaping the construction of identity, as well as the corruption of care on the part of those providing said care for the most vulnerable within society.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology for this study. The chapter covers research design, research methods, data collection and data analysis. Reflections on my role and interactions in the fieldwork will also be discussed. Inductive thematic analysis was employed followed by: familiarisation with the data by repeatedly and simultaneously listening to recordings and reading the transcripts; highlighting data related to the research question; producing codes to summarise items of interest; grouping codes manually; re-examining codes to identify themes; re-reading data for coherence and consistency of themes; and defining and naming themes. Data analysis suggested four themes: 1) the Mixed race experience and racialised discourses; 2) Social relations and social racialisation; 3) life in the institution; and 4) life after the institution.

Chapters 4 to 7 present the findings of the research. There are four key findings which emerge. First, many of the participants experienced the deleterious impact of being racialised in the institutions as children. Secondly, the denial of and/or failure to create a relationship with their white mothers and black fathers played a significant part in their (re)construction of individualised identities made up of the constituent elements of racialisation and institutionalisation. Thirdly, many expressed a deep desire to discover more about their Irish mothers and African fathers with a view to establishing a potential connection to this imagined presence. Finally, the combined effects of being parentless, institutionalised and Othered resulted in a subjective (re)construction of a racial self that is realistic and accommodating of the social reality of how they are perceived in a racial state.

Finally, Chapter 8 discusses the findings. It considers the treatment of the children of mixed African-Irish descent in the industrial school complex as expressed through the

individual narratives of the people who took part. The research suggests that mixed race children in institutional care were singled out for a particular form of abuse.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter discusses key concepts which underpin the thesis. The process of identity making is posited as a dynamic, contextual and relational process which is constantly under negotiation (Bolatagici, 2004; Canclini, 1995; Collins, 1990; Hooks, 1995, 1997; Lorde, 1978, 2007; Marable & Agard-Jones, 2008) and can be essentialised as gendered, racialised, nationalised or classed (Bolatagici, 2004; Hall & Du Gay, 1996; O'Connor, 2012). Mixed African-Irish descent stresses the two ethnic identities, even though mainstream Irish society sees mixed race only as black (Asava, 2013; Dabiri, 2019; Lentin & McVeigh, 2002, 2006). Furthermore, it rejects a Bhabhaian hybridity conceptualisation, while its institutional and parentless characteristics necessitate an elaboration of a Critical Mixed Race Studies orientation to adequately encompass its contradictions. Mercer (1990) points out that identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis or is characterised by doubt and uncertainty. Women of mixed African-Irish descent situated as they are in their communities are in a unique position to tell their own tales of being institutionalised and of being Irish.

Understanding the Mixed Race Experience

Identity

Identity is an important aspect of self-definition and begins as an emancipatory project central to the way we perceive others and ourselves (Brah, 1996). Identity is active and performed in order to be recognised and socially legitimated and this is undertaken through cultural practices that secure and anchor recognition (Ali, 2003). Described as ‘a process located in the core of the individual and *yet also* in the core of his communal culture, a process which establishes, in fact, the identity of those two identities’ (Brah, 1996: 13), identity is a multifaceted concept which signifies states of becoming as signposts to guide individuals on their route to identity. It is a process which, according to Craib (1998), involves constant negotiation with those around us as well as within the individual. The discord between expectation and perception is essentially a disconnect between individual perceived identity and how one is perceived by the community.

As cultural identity theorists have argued (Anthias, 1998, 2005; Cheng & Lee, 2009; Frankenberg, 1993; Furedi, 2001; Hooks, 1990, 1995, 1997; Morrison, 1992; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Reynolds, 2002) white is the unmarked and invisible centre of normalisation

from which regimes of truth about difference(s) emanate. Institutional and everyday treatment and classification of people of visible difference are exemplars of the epistemological logic and politics of normalisation. The strategy of control and surveillance locates bodies in particular places in the social and theoretical space according to a produced and legitimated normalcy (Downing, 2008; Foucault, 1979/95). If we take culture to consist of material practices, this requires resources for its realisation, which involves a struggle for the control over the means of production (Bowles & Gintis, 1986; Gramsci, 1971; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1998; Jordan & Weedon, 1995).

Jordan and Weedon (1995: 14) draw on Foucault's work and use the term discourse to refer to the 'forms of knowledge, ways of constituting the meaning of the world, which take a material form, have an institutional location and play a key role in the constitution of individuals as subjects.' The discourses that constitute an individual's identity(ies) may be contradictory and conflicting and some are more powerful than others (Foucault, 1979/95, 2000). Moreover, the extent to which discourses are available to an individual will vary depending on their social position and circumstances (Anthias, 1998). Nagel (1994) discusses the construction of ethnic boundaries in terms of the external forces which determine them. Individuals engage in the process of negotiating meanings of their identities by resisting or internalising available meanings and discourses, or by actively positioning themselves according to newly created meanings and discourses (Anthias, 1998).

The contested site of terminology

The language used to talk about people from 'mixed' backgrounds, and record them in surveys, is a topic of heated and passionate debate (e.g. Agyepong, 2018; Ali, 2003; Aspinall, 2003; Banks, 1999; Barn, 1993, 1999, 2006; Barn & Harman, 2006; Barn *et al.* 2005; Caballero, 2004; Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Sims & Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Tikly *et al.* 2005; Wright *et al.* 2000). Race and ethnicity are not primordial and essential notions, which make some individuals different from others, but are rather social representations, which at a particular historical point of time, have come to define some people differently from others. Defined characteristics of humanity are constructed racially and are affixed differently to identities to make that person representative of a particular race or ethnicity. Since a miscellany of attributes – colour, descent, ancestry, nationality,

ethnicity, but also language, class, gender, religion, skin colour and eating habits – form the basis of social construction, the terminology of mixed remains an unsettled and contested site and the participants in this research are caught within a complex political dilemma over racial and ethnic classification and subsequent description. When discussing mixed identities, it is possible to find oneself caught in the tension between whether to classify mixed race as black (Banks, 1995; Maxim, 1993), black with a white parent (Prevatt-Goldstein, 1999), black, but of mixed parentage, or mixed. There is further debate as to whether they should be called mixed race, mixed parentage, mixed origin, dual heritage, or multiple heritage (Barn & Harman, 2006). The proliferation of mixed race studies emerged *circa* 1990 onwards (Aspinall, 2003; Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Olumide, 2002; Parker & Song, 2001; Root, 1992; Tizard & Phoenix, 1993; Twine, 2004).

Carole Brennan, a survivor of the industrial school regime and a founding member of the Mixed Race Irish campaign group for fellow survivors, for example, refers to the significance of the term mixed race Irish in her submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality on 22 October 2014 observed:

Why did we choose the name, Mixed Race Irish? This is a very important question as it reflects the importance to us, as a group, of our Irish heritage, which was stolen from and denied to us. We grew up in Ireland and are, to all intents and purposes, Irish, yet we were treated differently and unequally in State institutions because of one simple factor, namely, the colour of our skin (Oireachtas, 2014: 3).

I have opted to use the term mixed African-Irish descent. The participants of this research are all of African-Irish descent and so I have been specific in naming that when referring to them rather than using the generic term mixed race, in order to disaggregate the specificities of the attitudes to this cohort of African-Irish descent women, rather than attributing the racialised treatment of the participants to any others of mixed race origins within the institutions.

The term ‘racialised’ illustrates how these terms do not remain innocent of meaning but rather are conceptualised so as to include any and all significance extended both explicitly and silently by racial reference over discursive expression and practice. Racialisation is

concerned with the taken-for-granted and normalised formulations that define the terms and conditions of being raced or ethnic. It is concerned with the commonly understood logic that defines what it means to be designated as a member of a particular race or ethnic group. 'Racism' examines the way these formulations, as they are commonly explored and debated, are embodied in discourse and action.

Identity and Hybridity

The dilemma of belonging and not belonging transgresses racialised discourses and enables possibilities for a profound re-configuration of thinking about belonging itself (Ifekwunigwe, 1999). One possible approach to this re-configuration is to see black Irish mixed race identity through a Bhabhaian lens of hybridity. Bhabha's account of cultural hybridity, developed as it is from the influences of Marxism, Bakhtinian philology and psychoanalysis, is discursive and liminal and requires an intervening 'Third Space' for the performance of identity because 'there is no way that the content of the proposition will reveal the structure of its positionality; no way that context can be mimetically read off from the content' (Bhabha, 1994: 53).

While a complete analysis of this approach is outside the scope of this chapter, some essential characteristics and concomitant critiques can be outlined. Homi K. Bhabha, one of the most influential post-colonial hybridity theorists, uses the concept of cultural hybridity in his theorisation to refer to 'the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonisation.' (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000: 118). Bhabha's hybrid colonial subject is characterised as male, agnostic, and inevitably produces a hybridised version of the original (Loomba, 2005). Theorists such as Ella Shohat, Stuart Hall, Marwan Kraidy, and Edward Said have developed this concept by infusing this Bhabhaian hybridity analysis with temporal, spatial, geographic, political, and economic energy (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000). As Shohat suggests, attention must be given to 'the diverse modalities of hybridity, for example forced assimilation, internalised self-rejection, political co-optation, social conformism, cultural mimicry, and creative transcendence' (Loomba, 2015: 150).

One form of criticism of the concept argues that in transcending 'binary categories' (Nederveen Pieterse, 2001: 238) and the 'contestational weave of cultures' (Mudrooroo,

1990: 24), Bhabhaian hybridity exposes its limitations as a concept ‘precisely because of its elasticity and open nature, the hybrid model can be appropriated by anyone to mean practically anything. Since the essence of its borders is oscillation, these boundaries can be conveniently repositioned to include and exclude different peoples and communities’ (Gómez-Peña, 1996: 12–13). Werbner (1997: 15) summarises this point of view when she writes that ‘All cultures are always hybrid... Hybridity is meaningless as a description of ‘culture,’ because this ‘museumizes’ culture as a ‘thing.’... Culture as an analytic concept is always hybrid... since it can be understood properly only as the historically negotiated creation of more or less coherent symbolic and social worlds’ (Werbner, 1997: 15). A harsher criticism is provided by Friedman, 1997: 249) who argues that ‘[a]sserting that all cultures and languages are mixed is trivial.’

A second objection to the use of hybridity is that it is the ideology of a new elite, a ‘postmodern’ cosmopolitanism. (Friedman, 1997: 75; cf. Ahmad, 1992 and Dirlik, 1994) in that it is a form of self-indulgence by diasporic intellectuals who have the cultural and economic resources that allow them to spend time and effort on a form of ‘moral self-congratulation’ (Werbner, 1997: 22). Hutnyk (1997) sees hybridity as a means to trivialise ethnic and identity politics. Kavoori (1998: 201) argues that it is of little use to the academy since it is a term ‘less about the world it seeks to describe and more about the world its users occupy’ and thus ‘leaves all the old problems of class exploitation and racist oppression unresolved’ (Werbner, 1997: 20). Hybridity becomes itself a strategy of cooptation used by the power holders to neutralise difference (Chow, 1993; García-Canclini, 1989/1995). Chow (1993: 35) encapsulates this view, when she writes: ‘What Bhabha’s word ‘hybridity’ [revives], in the masquerade of deconstructing anti-imperialism, and ‘difficult’ theory, is an old functionalist notion of what a dominant culture permits in the interest of maintaining its own equilibrium.’ Consequently, post-colonial hybridity creates a generalised hybrid colonial subject who is ‘undifferentiated by gender, class or location’ (Loomba, 2015: 150).

Finally, hybridity, especially conceptualisations which are closer to the Bhabhaian formulation, can be criticised on grounds that it can only makes sense ‘on the assumption of purity’ (Nederveen Pieterse, 2001: 221; see also Young, 1995), since it assumes a past where cultures were pure (Hutnyk, 2005; Werbner, 2001). This, and its inherent presuppositions of gender and sexuality which relegate the sex/gender axis to a

subordinate and relatively unimportant place in its analytical system Anzaldúa (2007), what Lugones (2010: 747) has termed the ‘coloniality of gender’.

The construct of hybridity is rendered epistemologically unsuited in the present context as Bhabha’s analysis of cultural hybridities has rightly been critiqued for its gender-neutrality (Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Gilroy, 2000). Furthermore, Ifekwunigwe (1999) and Gilroy (2000) problematised the term ‘hybridity’ itself for its epistemological origins in scientific racism. ‘The major difficulty with the concept of cultural “hybridity”’, Ifekwunigwe (1999: 9) contends, ‘is the way in which it has been appropriated by mainstream academic discourse without recognition of its problematic origins in nineteenth century ‘race’ science fiction.’ Hybridity thus brings us into the realm of the ‘treacherous bind’ (Radhakrishnan, 1996) of working with racial taxonomies (Gunaratnam, 2003) that render race, and not culture, as the signifier of irreducible human difference (Gilroy, 1993).

Christian (2000: 116) advanced the following argument as to why hybridity may fail to capture the full context of what he terms multiracial identity:

In regard to international multiracial identity each of these concepts has specific relevance. However, the majority of theorists who write extensively on hybridity and diaspora tend to view the concepts in correspondence with ethnicity, migration and the postcolonial experience rather than interraciality. To put it another way, these postmodern theorists tend to view hybridity merely in cultural terms and tend to adopt narrow ahistorical perspectives.

In light of the discussion above, hybridity did not meet the requirement of being of value in relation to the data or my own lived experience, which plays a role in this research. Critical Mixed Race Studies was deemed more applicable to critically analysing and explaining the data.

Race as Identity and Critical Mixed Race Studies

In contrast to hybridity, Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) offers a more useful orientation for understanding identity construction for these women of mixed African-

Irish descent as CMRS theorises how racialisation perpetuates internalised racism and ‘affects the physical, psychological, emotional, educational, financial, and relational outcomes’ of black and mixed race individuals (Hall, 2017: 71). Racial identity does not imply acceptance of race as real, but acknowledges the social and political reality that people live in societies in which race identities are attributed to them and these have real consequences for their experiences of life (Hayman, 2017; Robinson, 2005; Touré, 2011). Racialisation is a way of recognising that the ‘race’ of an individual is formed through an active process (Yancy, 2005). Racialisation is thus ‘a dialectical process by which meaning is attributed to particular biological features of human beings as a result of which individuals may be assigned to a general category of persons which reproduces itself biologically’ (Miles, 1989: 12). Racialisation is used throughout this thesis as a way of reinforcing the psychosocially dynamic problems arising from ‘racial positioning’ (Gordon, 1999; Kamaloni, 2019), and is often used in shorthand by talking about the way in which, for example, discourses are ‘raced’ and often how this takes the form of ‘racism’ (Barber, 2001). Racism, as Stuart Hall (1996: 445) reminds us ‘operates by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories... [so that race] constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalise the difference between belongingness and otherness.’ Furthermore, the black/white binary continues to have ‘prescriptive purchase on the representation and treatment’ (Alcoff, 2015: 122) of the mixed race Other.

Race is only one aspect of identity, which can intersect (Crenshaw, 1989, credited with coining the term ‘intersectionality’), interlock (Smith, Smith & Frazier, 1977, in Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981¹³), enmesh (Taylor, 2017), or intermesh (Lugones, 1994) with other identifications such as class, sex and gender (Mama, 1995), since the multidimensionality of black and mixed race women’s experience cannot be understood through single-axis analyses arising from ‘discrete sources of discrimination’ (Belle, 2020: 172). Ali (2005), Butler (1989, 1993), Collins (1986, 2000), Mahtani (2002), Newman (2019), Omi and Winant (2014), and Sims (2018) stress that black and mixed race women exist in a traditionally white space which intersects with gendered and classed spaces. Commentators such as Alcoff (2006, 2012), Jansen and Wehrle (2018), Lugones (2010), Ngo (2017), Saji (2014), Sullivan (2015), Sullivan *et al.* (2019), and Yancy (2008) have

¹³ Smith, Smith and Frazier (1977) are further credited with coining the term ‘identity politics.’

argued for an ineradicable ‘correlation between gender and racial oppression’ (Schutte, 2020: 104).

Intersectionality (and its theoretical cognates above) is predicated on the idea that multiple oppressions reinforce one another to create new categories of suffering (Taylor, 2017). Taylor (2017: 301) further argues these systems of oppression can be described as:

...’interlocking’ or happening ‘simultaneously,’ thus creating a new measure of oppression. In other words, black women could not quantify their oppression only in terms of sexism or racism, or of homophobia experienced by black lesbians. They were not ever a single category, but it was the merging or enmeshment of those identities that compounded how black women experienced oppression.

Race making is a social practice made through processes of racialisation that emerge within populations in which race is used to categorise individuals or behaviour (Miles, 1989: 73). Race is made to assign identities that somehow characterise them through a bodily schema and in this way racial identities become fixed and unchanging (Guillaumin, 1995). It is made by people through social practices and is implicit in the way that social meaning is constructed (Dewan, 2008; Knowles, 2005). Investigating the experiences of mixed race people does not suggest that race exists as a discrete entity but that it is actively made by people and has social consequences for the lived experiences of those who are racialised. Olumide (2002) asserts that these processes of racialisation construct the mixed race condition and that mixed race people become subjects situated within discursive repertoires of race and race making. The multiple affiliations of mixedness make it difficult to define as a category (Ali, 2003), and, further, not all individuals experience mixedness in the same way (Dewan 2008). Additionally, mixed people often share more affiliations with others across race, cultural practices, ethnicity or religion than within the category mixed (Lincoln, 2008). They may find themselves precariously positioned in relation to their black peers, exposing them to what has been termed ‘horizontal hostility’ (Campion, 2019: 1) that creates a boundary that places mixed race individuals outside of the imagined black space. Nevertheless, whatever the academic argument behind the concept’s usefulness, there is no denying that mixed race people feel mixed (Song & Hashem, 2010).

Although essentialism is discounted, race becomes reified through discourse and this mediates and informs practices (Gilroy, 2000). Gilroy (1993) suggests that mixed race presents a challenge to national identity and social perceptions of community. Race in these instances is a sign of visible difference read off the body (Guillaumin, 1995; Malik, 1996). However, in the care system, the understanding of racial identity as fixed and visible is significant in how the participants in this research were positioned as children through discourse and practices that played important roles in constructing their identity.

Early theories on mixed race development (Anzaldúa, 1987; Brown, 1990; Bowles, 1993; Cross, 1971; Daniel, 1996; Gibbs, 1997; Hall, 1980; Herring, 1995; Poston, 1990; Rockquemore, 1998; Root, 1990) suggested models specifically with mixed or multiracial people at the forefront that acknowledges the intersectional and situational nature of identity and does not separate race as a phenomenon outside of other variables, such as class, gender, disability and sexual orientation. CMRS further developed these models by foregrounding identity formation within the context of individual, family and community relationships. Song (2003) approaches identity as characterised by a cyclical journey in which there is no end point of maturation or commitment to one race, but in which multifaceted and fluid ideas of identity are practised. Mixedness is considered through connections to others and how these social relations impact on understandings and development of the self.

Mixedness can be a shared experience of ambiguous appearance and mis-recognition. Understandings of identity as fluid, multiple and situational contend with the more orthodox views of identity cited by Erikson (1975) and Cross (1971, 1991) which have specific trajectories and culminate in specific end points, and such models would declare that children 'who display inconsistent identities [are] mixed up' (Katz & Treacher, 2005: 53-4).

Katz's (1996) study from a psycho-dynamic perspective researched the development of identity in the mixed race child. His study shows that children of mixed race do not necessarily identify with the black community and are influenced by their childhood environment and the links that are made with the black/non-white family. He describes the families that he interviewed as being in 'a constant process of negotiating difference'

(1996: 174) and points to the hostility experienced from both black and white extended families. He identifies class as a fundamental factor in all the participant families and concludes that: 'class affected the family life style more than race and culture' (1996: 174). Ifekwunigwe (2001) also stressed the importance of class in her study of mixed race people, as well as highlighting again the prejudices of both black and white people towards them and the coming to terms and appreciation of their mixedness. Tizard and Phoenix (1993: 10) argue that the:

The notion of 'dual (or mixed) heritage' is, however, as much a binary construction as is 'half-caste' or 'biracial'. It suggests that we inherit one (or more) culture(s) from each of our birth parents. But culture is complex, intermixed and not genetically inherited. In addition, the notion of heritage reinforces the notion that culture is biologically/genetically produced and transmitted, and suggests that inheritance 'naturally' gives rights to belonging in cultures and nations. This appears inclusive, but reproduces already common exclusions in its implication that belonging is a birthright.

These same issues are described by Alibhai-Brown (2001) who provides a personal account as well as a comprehensive digest of the discourse of mixedness. She interviews a purposive sample of people of mixed race and, within this, clear class differences emerge. She provides evidence of identity dilemmas within families with mixed children and where there is a sense of loss of one identity as children are encouraged to marry back into the lost identity to redress the balance. 'I sometimes think I betrayed my people' (by marrying a white woman) says one of Alibhai-Brown's (2001: 81) interviewees. Others prefer to identify as black, although having one white parent, and others who 'pass' for white describe the uncomfortable dilemmas which can arise.

Caballero *et al's* research (2012) emphasises the heterogeneity of the mixed population and the variety of ways in which families deal with mixedness to support, ignore or emphasise it. The authors find that the main difficulties anticipated by the families about their children's mixedness is the reaction they will get from the outside world. Okitikpi (2009) picks up this theme from a different perspective in his study of interracial relationships of 20 African and African-Caribbean men and 20 white women. He finds that these relationships are subject to intense scrutiny from wider family and beyond,

unlike mono-racial intimate relationships. In some cases, hostility is intense and partners go through personal crises, a process described by Aymer (2010) and evident in many autobiographical accounts. Although these crises are dealt with subjectively, there is a commonality of approach to the process. Once again it is the interaction with the outside world which creates the tensions for inter racial partnerships, which inevitably affects the children of those partnerships.

Harman (2010) looked specifically at the position of lone white mothers as they manage the upbringing of their mixed race children in the absence of the black parent. Harman was interested in the changing nature of white privilege that these mothers experience as they confront the prejudices of the outside world when they are seen with their children (*cf.* also Lewis, 2009).

Many of the significant factors that can have a deleterious impact on successful identity construction have been identified as arising from parenting and family experiences.

CMRS have been problematised by some commentators as re-essentialising diverse people (Bellos, 2007; Ropp, 1997), where the Other is homogenised into yet another non-descript category, thus implying that all mixed race people have the same values, issues and objectives, leading to appropriation or revisionism (Daniel, 2002). Another critique of CMRS has been to posit that the very construct of a mixed race category may weaken the struggle against racism (Gordon, 1995; Essi, 2018) on the grounds that if people have the ability to identify as mixed, it will reduce the numbers of those who identify as monoracially non-white and, therefore, cripple the critical mass needed to pursue anti-racist strategies. CMRS theorists such as Ali (2006) and Rockquemore *et al.* (2009) have countered these critiques by suggesting that mixedness challenges rigid racial designations, fundamentally destabilising the concept of 'races' by demonstrating how porous these categories actually are. Root (1996: xix), for example, describes the move to a mixed race identity as an attempt 'to point out the archaic and destructive use of race.' When viewed this way, mixedness exemplifies the fluidity and dynamics of identity, which cannot be contained in one singular concept. In this way, and in opposition to Gordon's argument above, identifying as mixed race can serve as an anti-racist strategy by augmenting the critical mass. Notwithstanding the above critiques, Long and Joseph-Salisbury (2019) contend that much race and ethnicity literature ignores the experiences

of mixed-race populations. In light of this, CMRS is proposed as having value in providing a framework against which the data may be analysed.

Family and Attachment

Social organisation plays an important role in racialisation and in shaping identity (Anthias, 2001). Nation-state and family are the most notable ones. The family plays an important role as an important social institution where social rights and obligations are distributed; where social hierarchies are normalised; and where values are transmitted through generations (Collins, 2001). Family is crucial in the development of racial identity (Anthias, 2001).

The family can be understood as the site of social reproduction through processes of socialisation (Knowles, 1996). A Foucauldian framework helps to situate how the mixed child is constituted within specific family productions across time and space (Foucault, 2000: 132; also *cf.* Rose, 2004). Racial identity within a family is constituted by discourse and practices aimed at its regulation and organised through paradigms of race and ethnicity. Families are disciplined, regulated and organised (Foucault, 2000: 294) through techniques of surveillance, assessment and correction. These techniques are both within the family, through traditions, behaviours and responsibilities given through power invested in specific roles and also outside of the family in more formal structures such as schools, hospitals, social welfare agencies and the law. Familial power thus works to name, to position and subject, and to govern.

Academics in the sociology of childhood have made use of Berger and Luckman's (1966) theoretical understanding of social construction as a way to interpret popular perceptions of children. Although childhood has been understood as a universal definition to describe the position of young people who are not yet adults, a growing body of research has shown that childhood is in fact not universal and is experienced differently depending on individual experiences (Alanen, 1988, 1994; Alanen & Mayall, 2001; Aubrey & Dahl, 2006; Davis, 1998; James & James, 2004; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; James & Prout, 1990; Mayall, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2002; Punch, 2002; Valentine, 2000). It is widely accepted that notions of childhood have varied across time and place, meaning

that different expectations are placed on the competencies of children across the world (Aries, 1962; Mead, 1971; Stainton Rogers, 2001).

Equally, adolescence is commonly cited, among psychologists, as a time when identity problems or crises occur and this phase of development has been critically used to examine the development of racial identity among young people (Tizard & Phoenix, 1993: 29).

John Bowlby's 1952 *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (later reworked as the 1953 book *Child Care and the Growth of Love*) focussed on what was known about maternal deprivation as it appeared to relate to the emotional capacities of the child to make subsequent meaningful relationships with others. The report came from a post-war drive to study the needs of children who were orphaned and/or separated from their families, particularly focussing on their mental health. It gathered together studies on maternal deprivation, both from clinical and research data, and concluded that, whilst not all the data had been rigorously collected, there was a striking similarity in the conclusions which were being reached across Europe and in the US.

Bowlby gathered his data to argue that children who were deprived of their mother at the earliest stages of life were vulnerable to mental disorder at a later stage (Bowlby, 1959). While he acknowledges other parental behaviours which have an affect on the child's emotional state and also the role of fathers as supports to the mother, both practically and economically, it is the mother/infant dyad that is emphasised in his research (Bowlby, 1973). There is some discussion about the most vulnerable period for maternal deprivation and about other factors which may be in play (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby was intensely aware that further research was needed to refine the type, time and length of maternal deprivation (Bowlby, 1980). While there are many nuances in the opinions held about Bowlby's work there is general agreement that poor and/or disrupted parenting is a risk factor for children's mental health and can have serious consequences for the child's later abilities to form relationships and parent successfully (Belsky & Rovine, 1988).

Attachment is thus defined as an enduring affective bond exemplified by a predisposition to seek and maintain proximity to a caregiver, especially in stressful situations

successfully (Belsky & Rovine, 1988). Bowlby hypothesised that the attachment system is something that children and parents create together in an on-going reciprocating relationship that serves many developmental functions for individuals throughout their lifespan. Simply stated, secure attachments develop between infants and their caregivers who serve as receptive targets for their attachment behaviours. When individuals have not experienced secure relational strategies early in their lives, these deficiencies are likely to persist throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.

Quality and stability of caregiver-child relationships are factors theorised to play an important role in the general development of infants and young children (Ainsworth, 1979, 1989; Bowlby, 1959). From the perspective of attachment theory, the quality of the caregiver-child relationship cultivates a set of expectations that the child internalises about herself and others, also known as internal working models of relationships (Ainsworth, Bell & Stayton, 1974; Bowlby, 1969). This set of beliefs influences present and future relationship experiences. Children who experience warm, responsive, affectionate relationships with their caregivers develop a sense of trust and confidence, and they perceive their caregivers to be a secure base from which they can explore the environment. This exploration offers children opportunities for learning and exercising diverse developmental skills. In contrast, infants who experience inconsistent, non-contingent caregiving develop feelings of helplessness and distress and behaviourally display a decrease in signalling. Children experiencing this kind of negative care are likely to develop insecure attachment styles, which are risk factors for later psychological, emotional, and social problems as well as delayed physical growth (Ackerman *et al.* 2002; Blizzard, 1990; Johnson, 2000; Landry, Smith & Swank, 2006). Such negative care is rendered considerably more likely when children experience overt, repeated abuse within a regime where a corruption of care holds sway.

Ideally the attachment figure becomes a secure base, from which the baby explores the world, interacts, and establishes relationships with others. Children develop internal representations and working models of relationships based upon their experience of their primary attachment relationships (Thompson, 2008). These are associated with the development of our sense of self (Sroufe, 1988) and relationships with others (Smith, Cowie & Blades, 2015). Furthermore, our attachment experience is believed to contribute to the development of emotional resilience (Crittenden, 1990; Howe, 1995;

Main, 1999). Attachment experiences therefore affect socio-emotional functioning and mental health across the life span (Thompson, 2008).

The factors associated with creating a secure attachment are numerous and complex (Thompson, 2008). However, maternal sensitivity and care that is responsive to the needs of the baby has consistently been identified as one of the most influential factors (Bowlby, 1969; Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989; Wolff & van Ijzendoorn, 1997). In contrast, to the vast literature on attachment there is relatively little literature on claiming. However, claiming is deemed a relevant concept in fostering and adoption in relation to children with visible difference and disability. Research has shown that the presence of foetal anomaly, disability or disfigurement can serve to disrupt the claiming and relationship formation process (Ashton & Ashton, 2000). Barden *et al.* (1989) suggested that the presence of facial disfigurement may affect the parents' ability to respond sensitively to their babies needs as the disfigurement may affect bonding between mother and infant.

Attachment theory has not been immune to criticism. Kagan *et al.* (1984) highlights a number of these. The first criticism is related to the reliability and stability of research on which attachment theory is based. It is argued that some research shows changes in attachment upon retest. Additionally, the role of temperament in the development of attachment has further been questioned (Mosman *et al.* 2015). Thus, a securely-attached child with an easy-going temperament may not get upset when encountering a stranger or separation from his mother (Siegel, 2012, 2017). Furthermore, given that temperament plays a significant role in behaviour, the meaning of crying or the absence of crying may not be applied to all children indiscriminately (Rutter, 1981). Rutter also identifies other factors which play a part in relation to risk for mental ill health, such as the temperament of the child, the level of disharmony in the home and the consistency of the parenting.

Lynne Segal, one of the most prominent writers of the mid to late 20th century feminist movement, drew attention to the links between the archetypal family and capitalism and saw the Bowlby endorsement of the traditional family as a way of keeping women in the home and within restricting family settings (Segal, 1983).

Cultural Concerns, Attachment and Claiming

Cross-cultural research has revealed that culture may also play a role in attachment formation. 'Culture' can be defined as a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a person as a member of a society (Ramokgopa, 2001). A 'culture' can also refer to the sum total of knowledge passed on from generation to generation within a given society (Castillo, 1997). 'Culture' can, therefore, be regarded as those values that are shared by people living together as a group.

Levine and Levine (2016: 129) posit that:

The Bowlby-Ainsworth model of attachment posits species universals in the optimal pattern of attachment and has no explicit place for cultural variations other than as 'suboptimal', maladaptive, or pathogenic.

The necessity of conducting more cross-cultural research is stressed by these authors and by other cross-cultural psychologists and sociologists (Badrudjoja & Motapanyane, 2016; Keller, 2018).

As we saw above, attachment refers to the quality and function of the reciprocal dynamic between parent and child. In contrast, claiming refers to the process of identification by parent of child. These two constructs, have been conceptualised as discrete. However, they are clearly related and as argued by Costello *et al.* (2018) difficulties with claiming could affect attachment by impairing the parent's ability to provide sensitive and responsive care. Furthermore, strategies employed by foster and adoptive families to promote claiming have been shown not only to contribute to claiming but also to the development of secure attachments (Colonesi *et al.* 2011; Costello *et al.* 2018; Kottman, 1997; Juffer & Van Ijzendoorn, 2005; Carnes-Holt, 2012). It is therefore possible that racial differences between mother and child as per the women in this study and their mothers may lead to a perceived lack of physical similarities between mother and child which in turn could disrupt the claiming process.

Studies have highlighted concerns mothers of mixed race children have about the potential impact of racial differences on their relationship with their child (Banks, 1996;

Twine, 1996, 2001). Women interviewed by Twine (1999) expressed concerns about their ability to support their children to manage issues related to race, and that their inability to sufficiently support them with these matters may result in their children rejecting them. Furthermore, women who consented to having their therapy sessions recorded by Banks (1996) also reported fears that the relationship would become disrupted if their child identifies as black. The women reported that they would interpret this as an act of rejection of them and their 'whiteness.' In both studies the women's concerns did not seem to be specifically associated with differences in appearance between mother and child that could be attributed to racial difference, but rather what racial identity and difference might mean for their relationship and their ability to manage the challenges faced by their child as a product of their race.

Research has also documented challenges associated with racial identity development for mixed race children (Healey & O'Brien, 2015). Cauce *et al.* (1992) argued that mixed race children have multiple racial groups with which they could identify. However, they also face being rejected by multiple racial and ethnic groups and therefore are at an increased risk of isolation, as in the case mentioned earlier of horizontal racism from their black peers. Several factors affect the racial, ethnic and social group mixed race children chose to identify with, and the groups that offer friendship and a sense of belonging to them (Cauce *et al.* 1992; Healey & O'Brien, 2015; Lester Murad, 2005; Morley & Street, 2014; Phoenix & Tizard, 2005; Root, 1990). Phoenix and Tizard (2005) found that young people that were described by others as 'looking white' did not identify themselves as 'black.' Skin tone has been shown to influence which parent and/or siblings the young people identifies with (Jones, 2000). Jones (2000) reported that mixed race young people with darker skin tones felt forced to identify with their parent from a minority group as they did not feel able to legitimately pass as a member of the majority group. It is possible that in this scenario the parents identifying as belonging to a majority group may have experienced feelings of rejection, as the women reported in their therapy sessions with Banks (1996).

Interracial families therefore experience unique challenges including managing experiences of racism and the development of a racial identity (Byrd, Garwick & Williams, 2006; Lawton, Foeman & Brown, 2013). Women have reported specific concerns that these challenges could affect their relationship with their child (Banks,

1996; Twine, 1999). Moreover, appearance, specifically skin tone and the degree to which their skin tone resembles the majority/minority, has been shown to affect the relationships mixed race adolescents form and how they define their racial identity (Levine & Staples, 2008). Given this, is it possible that the perceived physical difference of mixed race children, could adversely affect the claiming process of their mother, and consequently the relationship between parent and child.

Parentless Parenting and Attachment

Within the context of institutional care, the question arises, to whom does an institutionalised child attach herself in the absence of a parent? In families, primary caregivers tend to be parents. In the residential schools, primary caregivers were the members of religious societies, the nuns. At a later stage of the period covered by this research (the 1970s) these caregivers were augmented by lay workers – both trained and untrained, usually female but sometimes male.

Parenting can be viewed as an institution insofar as it is ‘a complex of values, beliefs, norms and behaviours centred in . . . the need to care for the young’ (LaRossa, 1986: 11). Simply put, the parental role can be viewed as having three primary dimensions. The physical well-being of the child is the responsibility of the parent as guardian or custodian. The spiritual, cultural and intellectual well-being of the child is fostered by the parent as teacher and mentor. The child’s sense of self as a being of worth and value, is reinforced by a parent’s love, affection, and support. Involvement in a healthy community is beneficial for parents and families to successfully achieve these tasks (LaRossa, 1986; Levine & Staples, 2008).

The parental role of staff within the residential institutions being examined included activities which, on the surface, were similar to those of parents but were directed at achieving very different objectives. Residential staff assumed custodial roles with the intent of exercising complete control over children’s actions and severely limiting their independence of movement. In this, they reflected similar institution-guided motivations as staff implicated in residential care child abuse in Jersey (IJCI, 2017), England and Wales (Browne & Lynch, 1999; Macur, 2017), Germany (Wensierski, 2016), Canada, Australia and Switzerland (Rus *et al.* 2017). Staff in a mentoring role attempted to instil in

children church-sanctioned norms, values and beliefs to replace those that may have existed within the family unit before being institutionalised.

As indicated, parenting is not simply the passing on of knowledge, values and beliefs. The dimensions of nurturing and affection which underpin and infuse the transmission of culture within a family strengthen immeasurably both that transmission and the family unit itself. It is critical for a parent to provide a child with a mirror reflecting the child's value, importance, and sense of belonging to the family. The data seem to suggest that these essential aspects of parenting were absent from the residential institutions.

In general, institutions do not provide rearing environments that promote the development of relationships with caregivers (Rosas & McCall, 2011; Smyke *et al.* 2002; Smyke *et al.* 2007). Infants who enter institutions experience several disruptions in relationships during their childhood, beginning with their separation from their biological parents, and then moving from ward to ward within an institution as they grow older (Rosas & McCall, 2011).

Social and emotional deprivation in institutions stemmed in part from the poor structural quality that typically involved large child-to-adult ratios, large group sizes, and multiple and rotating caregivers (CICA, 2009; Royal Commission, 2017). These institutional characteristics lead to poor process quality characterised by stress in the caregiver, an inclination for caregivers to perform activities in a perfunctory manner regardless of the child's needs at a specific moment, very limited time for the caregiver to respond in a contingent manner to the child's cues or requests, and an environment in which caregivers rarely provide warm, sensitive interactions with children (CICA, 2009; Royal Commission, 2017).

Rutter (1981) argues that growing up in an institution where individualised care may not exist is likely to be more harmful to children than growing up in a family, where care may be mainly from the mother or from a number of adults but within a secure environment. Institutions such as orphanages and industrial schools provide an unpredictable environment characterised by lack of sensitive care, inconsistency of caregivers, and poor caregiver-child interactions that could lead to children experiencing high and chronic levels of stress. Researchers such as Van Staden and Nieuwoudt (2001) have argued that

the core of any residential childcare programme or institution hinges on two key professional issues, namely: (a) the need to maintain order and quality of life in the homes, and (b) the need to ascertain that the work of the home is incorporated in a plan that involves preparing the children for the time when they leave the home.

Hodges and Tizard (1989) monitored 65 children who had been institutionalised in residential nurseries in London for the first 2 years of their lives and compared them with a group of never institutionalised children. The investigators assessed the children at ages 4, 8, and 16 years and found the highest levels of indiscriminately social behaviour in the long-term institutionalised group. At age 16 years, 'over-friendly' behaviour in the formerly institutionalised group had attenuated markedly, although significant peer relational problems were still evident (Hodges & Tizard, 1989). Problems included being adult-oriented, having more difficulties in peer relations, not having a best friend, not turning to peers for support, and being less selective in choosing friends. The findings were strong enough in individual children to suggest a kind of ex-institutional 'syndrome' of problematic peer relatedness. These findings of peer relational difficulties are similar to difficulties associated with insecure attachment in never-institutionalised groups of children (Zeanah & Boris, 2000; Zeanah & Gleason, 2015).

In light of this discussion of attachment, claiming and cross-cultural concerns, focus falls on the institution and its impact on the construction of identity for these women.

Institutions

Residential homes can be viewed as total institutions; a place that is remote and removed from the rest of society, with a structured schedule and set of rules, and limited contact with the outside world (Goffman, 1968: xxi):

a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from wider society for an appreciable period, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life.

A total institution is a place where one lives, works, sleeps and eats in the same location with the same people, under a general, rational planned system, and inmates are restricted from engaging with those outside. These features marked Ireland's industrial school

system: large numbers of children were housed, fed and trained within the walls of these institutions, which themselves were run on a religio-military system of organisation (Touher, 2007: 15).

The primary factor that distinguishes a total institution from civil society is the lack of barriers between the functions of sleep, play, and work (Goffman, 1961: 5-6). Goffman (1961) further states that a total institution has four basic features.

First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same authority. Second, each phase of the member's daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aim of the institution.

Goffman (1961) identifies five categories of total institutions based on the organisation's formal objectives and members. Examples specific to these categories include orphanages for the incapable yet harmless; mental hospitals for the incapable and potentially harmful; penitentiaries to protect the community; army barracks for the pursuit of work; and monasteries for retreating from the world (Goffman, 1961). The basis for these divisions within Goffman's concept has been criticised for being too ambiguous (Perry, 1974) and negative (Mouzelis, 1971). However, in *Asylums*, Goffman (1961: 6) himself recognises that, 'Individually, these features are found in places other than total institutions; for example, our large commercial, industrial, and educational establishments are increasingly providing cafeterias and free-time recreation for their members.' The relationships of power within the total institutions are essentially exercised between the inmate and staff groups, and ideas regarding the shaping of identity, treatment, communication, surveillance, perception of the outside, and personal relationships should be analyzed in terms of the localised social system in contrast to the environing social norms (Goffman, 1961).

Total institutions are an 'idioculture' (Fine, 1979: 733) where new systems of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, and customs that are shared by a small group are formed (Fine, 1979, 2006). Meanings are constructed that often have implications for gender and sexuality (Hall, 1993; Zaitzow & Thomas, 2003). A key feature of total institutions is the binary separation of inmates and staff (Goffman, 1968).

When studying participants, the total institution is often considered an independent variable that is strongly correlated to unique social interaction. Viewed through this Goffmanian lens, the objective of a total institution is to destroy the ability of the institutionalised individual to fully achieve selfhood and become an autonomous, self-actualised human being. Achieving this objective enables the total institution to achieve its own institutional objectives.

Total institutions create and sustain a particular kind of tension between the home world and the institutional world and use this persistent tension as strategic leverage in the management of [people] (Goffman, 1961: 13).

The total institution is characterised by its physical isolation from the community. Within the institution's physical structure, the elimination of the association between a role and a physical place where that role is played out is achieved. There is an extreme power differential between the inmates and the staff. Inmates are cut off from the outside world but staff continue to be integrated with the outside world.

Agre (2000) states that every institution comes with an ontology. The ontology determines the nature of the institution. In formal terms, this ontology comes with a discourse that provides a vocabulary for talking about the world within the institution (Dryzek, 1996). It becomes part of the institution and the key to surviving within the institution. The members of the institution learn how to manoeuvre in the institution by interacting, observing and doing.

In addition, part of every institution's ontology is a set of roles to which people are assigned. The participants in most institutions take these roles seriously. Agre (2000) theorises that the participants in an institution live their roles in at least five ways: 1) They learn characteristic patterns of thought and language that encode an ontology and view

of the world (North, 1990); 2) they invest emotional values in the institutions and their role within it; 3) they accept the roles as part of their personal identity; 4) through their participation in the institution they become embedded in a network of relationships, both with people in the same role and with people in complementary roles; and 5) their activities as occupants of the role expose them to certain kinds of information about the world, while shielding them from other information.

Agre (2000) identifies the purpose of an institution as one that fixes the confines of and imposes form upon the activities of human beings. North (1990) suggests that the purposes of an institution are to impose and teach the rules of the game and devise constraints that shape human interaction. These constraints then are used to structure political, economic, and societal interactions. The role of the institution is to shape individuals' behaviours. Goodin (1996: 19) defines the purpose of an institution as a means of 'organizing patterns of socially constructed norms and rules and socially prescribed behaviours expected of occupants of those roles, which are created and re-created over time.'

A number of actions are taken against inmates to achieve the overall objective of the total institution. One set of actions focuses on the elimination of the individual's social structure. Without institutional intervention there may be the potential for remnants of the individual's existing social structure to be rebuilt within the institution (for example, by continuing to link in with outside family or by maintaining sibling ties within the institution) and this potential is destroyed.

It is highly likely that anyone who has experienced life within a total institution on a long term basis will experience difficulty in taking up her role within the wider society upon release. Chrisjohn and Young (1997: 73) maintain that the 'total institution does not produce a new self but no self at all.' A person who has become institutionalised often experiences a highly eroded, degraded or complete loss of personal identity. Reduced interest in the outside world, lost interpersonal relationships with individuals outside the institution, and diminished perceptions of personal abilities and personal agency for independent decision-making are correlated with long term residency in institutions (Crawley & Sparks, 2006). Adjustment to life outside the institution can be difficult,

given that, after spending years following strictly regimented daily schedules, that structure is suddenly absent.

Given similar experiences within a total institution, many individuals, after release, may exhibit similar behaviours. Individuals tend to gravitate towards who and what they know, towards what is familiar. Consequently, they may maintain links with fellow inmates which last throughout their lives. After a long period of time in a total institution, what is familiar includes the expectation of externally-imposed regimentation and structure, the loss of personal identity, and the feeling of worthlessness (Bennett *et al.* 2010). Such individuals may tend to gravitate towards the same or another total institution environment after having developed an institutional memory (Sider 2005). It is critical to note that this is the case regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, social status or other characteristics (Collins, *et al.* 2005). Children experiencing a total institution during their formative years are likely to be even more damaged than adults. Collins *et al.* (2005) employ the term 'mode of circular causality' to convey that institutionalisation can be interpreted as a repetitive, circular pattern which is negatively reinforced. The traumatic experiences of isolation, institutionalisation, and abuse coupled with the detachment from family and culture, create negative patterns of behaviour which may ultimately result in the re-institutionalisation of many adults and subsequently of their children.

Goffman's analysis contains an implicit critique of cruel and dominant forms of power such as those found in asylums, and he draws on the concept of 'self' to reinforce this point. For Goffman, entry to a total institution involves a series of rituals in which one's sense of individuality is gradually stripped away. These 'mortifications' (1961: 31) include being assigned, upon arriving at an institution, identical clothes and being relieved of personal possessions. There follows a process of merging one's identity with that of the organisation, reinforced by daily rituals of degradation and continued denial of individuality by staff and others. When writing about the self in this process, Goffman draws on a spatial metaphor. The self is a site of continual negotiation; actors struggle to defend the territories of the 'real' self against institutional colonisation (Goffman, 1961: 155). Spaces, or 'territories' of the self can be material, involving the physical body or possessions, or ideal, involving inner conceptions of self-identity (1961: 32).

In a total institution, the opportunity for self-definition is limited; there is little room to exert the normal strategies of defending one's 'self-spaces' and maintaining a coherent self-image in the eyes of other people, and oneself. Without adequate self-definition the potential for a deleterious impact on identity construction is increased.

Institutions and Foucault's Disciplinary Power

Although his theories are a formulation of knowledge, power, and discourse, Foucault's fundamental goal was to understand the role of the individual within dynamic networks of power (Markula & Pringle, 2006: xi). The word 'power' itself has a variety of meanings and connotations and many philosophers, sociologists, and scientists have analysed the concept of power from their respective positions. Foucault approaches the task from the perspective of relationships of biopower of the State and its manifestations (Rose, 2004), and his emphasis on the disciplinary mechanisms of distributions, hierarchical observation, control of activity, social judgment, normalisation, examination, and ultimately panopticism is pertinent to the institutional structure.

The question of how power is actually exercised within particular contexts is critical to theories of Foucault as opposed to others who posit that power is totally a top-down function of societal structure. Foucault (1979/1995: 177) described power as a 'network of practices, institutions, and technologies that sustain positions of dominance and subordination within a particular domain'; and he explained that power is 'relational' and exists in 'multiple forms' (Foucault, 1979/1995; Markula & Pringle, 2006: 38). More specifically, Foucault explained his conception of power as being 'coextensive with the social body; interwoven with other kinds of relations (production, kinship, family, sexuality); a multiform production of relations of domination; ... capable of being utilised; and has resistances' (Danaher *et al.* 2010: 142). Thus the actual arrangement of practices and technologies leads to the subjectivity of the individuals (Foucault, 1979/1995).

Foucault's paradigm of power as being disciplinary in its modalities derives from his concept of detailed exercises acting as control mechanisms beginning with the individual. Disciplinary power 'makes individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise' (Foucault, 1979/1995: 170).

A brief discussion of Foucault's view of institutions is imperative to understanding how the mechanisms of disciplinary power function within the given space of the institution. Power does not originate with the institution but the institution offers an enclosed space for the multiplication of disciplines, and consequently power. In this way, 'institutions must be analyzed from the standpoint of power' and not vice versa (Caputo & Yount, 1993: 5).

Critiques of Goffman and Foucault have largely come from feminist scholars due primarily to their omission of gender as a variable in the development of their social paradigms (Rabinow, 1984; Siegfried, 1996). Bordo (2003) explains it is critical to understand that even though forces of power are decentralised within the paradigm of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1979/1995: 26), they still 'configure to assume particular historical forms [where] certain groups do have dominance.' Specifically, dominance is derived from the regulation of 'the most intimate elements of the construction of space, time, desire, [and] embodiment' (Bordo, 2003: 27).

In conclusion, it is worth noting the contrast between Goffman's (1961) paradigm of total institution and Foucault's idea of a progressive power. Where Foucault articulates a system that can create a sense of empowerment among its subjects, Goffman describes the confinement of such societies as leading to feelings of demoralisation (Goffman, 1961). Essentially, the difference lies in the potential individuality of power for Foucault versus the stripping of individuality leading to a group identity for Goffman. Where Goffman focuses on how individuals negotiate this totalitarian environment, Foucault provides an explanation of how the interaction of the subjected individuals helps to define the institution (Downing, 2008; Hacking, 2004). Foucault describes a process of how the institution is created, while Goffman provides insight into how those within the institution 'function in everyday life' (Hacking, 2004: 300). Traditionally, Goffman and Foucault are viewed in opposition, yet in regard to institutions and their social arrangements of power 'they are complementary' (Hacking, 2004: 277; Jones *et al.* 2011).

Corruption of Care

The final theoretical aspect reflects the existential question posed by Holocaust survivors such as Primo Levi (Levi, 1987) – how could it happen? Given the recognition that Irish

industrial schools were cruel and abusive environments, as outlined in Chapter 1, this question may be relativised but further problematised for current purposes by asking '[h]ow do institutions, organisations and staff, supposedly committed to an ethic of care and respect for others, become 'corrupted' and abuse their power?' (Wardhaugh & Wilding, 1993: 4). Bauman (1988, 1989, 1991) contends that in the case of the Shoah, the Jewish victims had to be placed beyond the bounds of moral obligation, so that 'they had ceased to be those others to whom moral responsibility normally extends, and lost the protection which such natural morality offers.' (Bauman, 1989: 189). Likewise, research into the worldwide neglect, abuse and maltreatment of hundreds of thousands of children in residential care (Browne & Lynch, 1999; CICA, 2009; Erooga, 2012; IJCI, 2017; Katz *et al.* 2017; Kaufman *et al.* 2016; Kenny, 2016; Llewellyn *et al.* 2016; Macur, 2017; O'Leary *et al.* 2017; Palmer, 2016; Parkinson & Cashmore, 2017; Proeve *et al.* 2016; Rus *et al.* 2017; Wensierski, 2016) suggests that the answer is to be found, as argued by Kelman (1973), not by focussing on 'the motives for violence but on the conditions in which the usual moral inhibitions against violence become weakened' (Wardhaugh & Wilding, 1993: 6). That is by examining the factors which threaten or weaken what should be a commitment to the normal canons of good practice in caring for vulnerable and at-risk children.

Wardhaugh and Wilding's (1993) positing of a corruption of care moves the analysis from focusing on the actions of aberrant individual practitioners - 'the bad apple' (Martin & Evans, 1984: 3) onto the culture, the 'rotten barrel' as the source of corruption (Bowie, 2010; Kenny, 2016). Thus cultures that purport to be devoted to delivering child-centred care can become 'corrupted,' with corruption in this context involving an 'active betrayal of the basic values upon which the organisation is supposedly based' (Wardhaugh & Wilding, 1993: 5). The cause of such corruption, they suggest, is primarily labelling and its negative consequences, what Arendt (1951: xi) referred to as creating 'moral distance' by rendering the labelled as less than human and thus undeserving of the natural human pity that might otherwise prevent abuse – the 'silencing of moral considerations' (Bauman, 1991: 132). Corrupted cultures flourish in association with certain features which characterise the total institution of the industrial school regime, including; marked power inequalities between vulnerable children and staff, who are stigmatised and cared for in socially (and even geographically) isolated settings, within settings that are accompanied by routines and working practices that depersonalise and dehumanise both

service users and staff (Wardhaugh & Wilding, 1993: 5). In turn, this is often accompanied by weak local management, inadequate internal and/or external quality assurance systems, inadequate or inappropriate training. They further note that:

in terms of gender, this humiliation was likely to have been particularly acute for young women, given the social construction of the female body and, in particular, the sexualisation of women's experiences as a means of social control.... Power imbalances between staff and residents were accentuated by gender inequalities: for example, male workers were known to have supervised the undressing of young women in their 'care.' (1993: 9).

This corruption of care is further compounded within a racist and racialised environment. Ahmad (1995), Barn (1990, 2006), Cederblad *et al.* (1999); Chand (2000), Constantine & Blackman (2002); Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute (2008); Hill (2001), Morley (2011), Morley and Street (2014) have argued that black children in care may suffer particular disadvantages or incivilities as a result of racism or cultural stereotyping on the part of white workers.

In the classic corrupted culture, the needs of the service user become 'secondary' to the needs of staff (Martin & Evans, 1984: 108). Wardhaugh and Wilding (1993) further assert that where staff feel unjustly disempowered, conformance with rules and procedure enforced by coercion becomes a particular hallmark of corrupted care especially in a hierarchical organisation based on role deference. Adams and Balfour (1998: 1) argue that even in healthy hierarchically-controlled organisations 'administrative evil' invariably results to some extent such that service users are deprived of critical dimensions of their humanity including their dignity. Bowie (2010) suggested however that these indignities can be such as to constitute a form of institutional or organisational violence whose consequences for the individual can be profound.

Finally, Kenny (2016) applied the concept of corruption of care to the Irish industrial schools whose work was ostensibly 'wrapped round with high-sounding terms such as care, reform, rehabilitation' (Wardhaugh & Wilding, 1993: 14) but carried out 'large-scale violence' (Kenny, 2016: 939) on vulnerable children. Drawing on Kristeva's notion of abjection to show how an excluded, distasteful Other is discursively co-constructed such

that violence is seen as acceptable, Kenny then shows that the Other is actively maintained in the abject position as a boundary object. The vulnerable child within the institution is seen as inconsequential, being impoverished to the point of manifesting ‘criminal tendencies’ (*ibid.* 947), and is thus rendered invisible to moral considerations. For the Irish State and Catholic Church, ‘poverty but especially sexuality and the materiality of the feminine form represented a haunting threat’ (*ibid.* 949), leading inexorably to institutions whose aims were the ‘development of a new identity based on the expulsion of the other within’ (*ibid.* 949).

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the key concepts that are crucial for understanding identity and belonging in Ireland for women of mixed African-Irish descent who grew up in the Irish institutional care system. Identity and the contested site of mixed race terminology were emphasised. Identity, and the boundary of racial and/or ethnic differences, according to Alba (2005) and Zolberg and Long (1999), is negotiated through a dialectical process. The boundary is often ‘crossed’ or ‘blurred’ (Zolberg and Long, 1999: 29) where other cultural identities are adopted. To analyse individual experiences of these macro level concepts, the concept of racialisation was examined. Chapter 4 will contend that Ireland is a racialised state and that this view of whiteness as ‘normative’ and, thus, possessed of an ‘invisible’ meaning within an Irish context (Aniagolu, 1997; Fanning, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012; Fanning *et al.* 2011; Garner, 2004, 2009; Haynes *et al.*, 2008; Lentin, 2004, 2005, 2008; Luibhéid, 2013; Moriarty, 2005; and Naughton, 2016).

Differences in early caregiving, the importance of mother-child contact, attachment and claiming by the mother were highlighted as being core aspects of any understanding of the participants’ dataset. Attention was drawn to the Goffmanian conceptualisation of total institutions as viewed through a Foucauldian prism of power relations. Finally, the thorny concept of corruption of care was examined and linked to both racialised and gendered discourses.

I note in this chapter that the notion of identity is a social construct, entailing symbolic meanings and material representations (Anthias, 2001; Blunt & Dowling, 2006), and will mean different things to different people. This understanding reflects the methodology

of the research, especially the use of a qualitative approach which emphasises meanings, perception, experiences and constructions of social world. The details of methodology, the way the research has been undertaken to address the construction of identity for these women, will be discussed in the coming chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The last chapter discussed the key concepts related to the study of identity and belonging in Ireland for women of mixed African-Irish descent who grew up in the Irish institutional care system. This chapter addresses how the research was carried out. It presents the methodological framework, methodology, as well as methods of inquiry and analysis for this study. The framework, methodology and methods were selected subsequent to the formation of the research question with careful consideration as to the purpose of this study. This chapter addresses the processes of sampling, data collection, data analysis, and autoethnography. Reflecting on the co-construction of knowledge by researcher and participants, it will review the positionality of the researcher and the impact it had on the interactions which took place in the fieldwork.

Research design

The design of this study reflects a social constructivism perspective, which understands that people derive meanings through interactions with the outer world and emphasises actors' definitions of situations and how they come to share a subjective understanding of specific life circumstances. The interview is understood to be a dialogical event within which understandings of identity construction of women of mixed African-Irish descent will be co-constructed both by the participants and the researcher. My research perspective is built upon the understandings that have built up over years of personal and professional interest in the identity of people of mixed African-Irish descent. A central theoretical concern for this research is to find a way to theorise the possible multiple ethnic/racial identifications of these women as it arises from the interviews. However, the researcher is of the opinion that the sense of 'race' is not a prioritised and constant factor. It is impossible to untangle family and 'race' from these subject positions and the effects of wider social change. These influences do not act upon us while we absorb them in a passive way; it involves agency and thought on our part.

This study is a qualitative investigation about the meanings, experiences and feelings of a diverse sample of women of mixed African-Irish descent who grew up in the Irish institutional care system. Qualitative research is context-sensitive, fluid, flexible, and exploratory (Mason, 2002). The study is a response to identity debates about community and multiple identities, which suggests the need to explore individual negotiation of

identity (Song, 2005). Qualitative research is especially appropriate in addressing such a micro-level issue, as it studies the phenomenon in its everyday context by starting from the subjective and social meanings related to it by the participants (Flick, 2018). Qualitative research enables this study to explore the complexity, roundedness, nuance and depth of the ordinary experiences of negotiating identity for women of mixed African-Irish descent who grew up in the Irish institutional care system.

When those working under a social constructivist worldview conduct research they do so by talking to participants, listening intently and studying their behaviour in social situations (Creswell, 2006). Researchers who follow this paradigm will focus on ‘specific contexts in which people live in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of participants’ (Creswell, 2006: 21). Researchers also take into account their own background and should be mindful of how their pre-conceived ideas may influence the way they interpret behaviours (Neuman, 2011).

According to Yin (2008: 1) ‘case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.’ The Case Study as a research approach is flexible and open-ended. Moreover, the fact that case study results are more easily understood by a wide readership, are less dependent on specialised interpretation than the conventional research reports of the positivist, quantitative tradition, are immediately intelligible, and have a three-dimensional reality, all add to the strength of this research approach. The Case Study also offers the possibility of identifying a pattern of influences that is too infrequent to be observed by statistical analysis. However, its most obvious shortcoming is that it is limited to a unique, stand-alone, highly personalised situation.

Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and cataloguing emerging themes in data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2006), by locating and grouping the themes from the transcription of the interviews (Evans & Lewis, 2018). This data analysis is part of an iterative process. The great strength of thematic analysis is its flexibility, ‘not simply theoretical flexibility, but flexibility in terms of research question, sample size and constitution, data collection method, and approaches to meaning generation’ (Clarke & Braun, 2017: 297). Thematic analysis, as with grounded theory and the development of

cultural models, requires more involvement and interpretation from the researcher (Hambræus *et al.* 2020) which further suited the autoethnographic inclination of this research. A further strength of thematic analysis is that it ‘offers a method – a tool or technique, unbounded by theoretical commitments – rather than a methodology (a theoretically informed, and confined, framework for research)’ (Clarke & Braun, 2017: 297). This permits the application of thematic analysis across a range of theoretical frameworks and indeed research paradigms since it can be used for both inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven) analyses, and to capture both manifest (explicit) and latent (underlying) meaning. Finally, thematic analysis can be used to analyse large and small data-sets, as well as ‘homogenous and heterogeneous’ data (Clarke & Braun, 2017: 297). The steps involved in conducting a thematic analysis will be addressed below under data analysis.

Sampling and Access

Purposive sampling

My dissertation has a very explicit focus: to critically examine the processes underlying the construction and negotiation of identity for women of mixed African-Irish descent, with white Irish mothers and African fathers, who grew up in the Irish institutional care system. I spent a considerable amount of time trying to come up with a suitable sampling frame that would theoretically and substantively answer the questions I had about this construction and negotiation of identity.

One of the benefits of adopting a qualitative approach is the possibility of theoretical and purposeful sampling (Berg, 2007; Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Although similar in application, there are substantive differences between the two sampling techniques (Coyne, 1997). Purposeful sampling is similar to theoretical sampling in that they both identify a specific subset of the population for study. The primary difference, however, is that while purposeful sampling seeks to gain a deeper understanding about the lives, experiences, and worldviews of certain individuals, theoretical sampling is more concerned with building a general theory about a specific process or phenomenon (Berg, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Coyne, 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As Maxwell (1996: 97) notes, with purposeful selection, ‘particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately to provide information particularly relevant to your

questions and goals, and that can't be gotten as well from other choices'. Ideally, though, both purposeful and theoretical sampling identify and recruit a specific group of people that all have the unique ability to speak of a particular process and/or issue. Thus, the data collected from these individuals is considered to be reliable, rich, and relevant to the topic of study.

From the beginning stages of conceptualisation through numerous stages of data collection and data analysis, I wanted to examine the processes underlying the construction and negotiation of identity for a specific cohort of women of African-Irish descent, with white Irish mothers and African fathers, who grew up in the Irish institutional care system. Although I designed this project with the explicit intention of gaining a deeper understanding of the impact that being racialised within an institution had on these women, I did not seek to generalise about racial space and racial identity more broadly. Throughout this write-up, I feel comfortable using purposeful and theoretical sampling interchangeably.

Recruitment/ Snowball Sampling

In addition to using purposeful and theoretical selection, I also made use of a snowball sample (Berg, 2007). Snowball sampling – also known as chain referral sampling or respondent-driven sampling – while often times done out of convenience, is not simply a convenience sampling technique (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Heckathorn & Jeffri, 2003; Mutchnick & Berg, 1996; Penrod *et al.* 2003). As Bruce Berg (2007: 43-44) notes, convenience samples rely on 'available subjects' or 'those who are close at hand or easily accessible,' while snowball samples are a reliable way to 'locate subjects with certain attributes or characteristics necessary in the study'. At its core, snowball sampling entails the intentional enlisting of research participants in the locating and recruitment of additional research participants (Babbie, 1998; Berg, 2007; Mason, 2010). For me, this process involved asking women of mixed African-Irish descent within my networks with whom I grew up if they knew others who fit the specified research parameters and would be willing to speak to me about the possibility of an in-depth interview.

In order to maximise the benefits of a snowball sample, I first had to locate and recruit research participants on my own. To begin, I turned to several personal friends that met the requirements of the purposive sample. After explaining to them why I was

conducting this research, what my research questions were, and how I planned to proceed, they each agreed to participate in interviews. I then asked each of my friends to recommend other women who 1) fit the stated research criteria, and 2) might be willing to participate in this research project.

The early participants recommended others and made contact with them to explain who I was and to give some brief details of what I was trying to achieve. Fifteen out of 24 potential participants agreed to take part. Others were interested but were not deemed suitable as they did not fulfil all of the necessary criteria. After gathering a list of names from each of my initial interviewees, I either telephoned or made contact by email with the new names. I introduced myself, explained how and where I obtained their contact information, and briefly described my research project. I closed my email solicitations with an invitation to speak on the phone, thereby affording me the opportunity to build rapport with each potential interviewee, and also giving me the chance to explain my research project in greater detail. However, several research participants, even after our phone conversations, showed up to the interview still unsure about what to expect. Therefore, I redesigned my phone conversations to focus less on building rapport and more on better describing the purpose of the project. While I did not completely abandon my rapport-building efforts, I did give primacy to properly communicating why it was I wanted to interview them. This change paid off, as the majority of subsequent interviewees came into the face to face interview with, at least, a working knowledge of my research.

As I began conducting interviews with this initial set, I enlisted help in the locating and recruitment of others. With my interviews going well, I conducted another round of snowball sampling. I had contact with several women in the early 1990s through a black Irish women's group set up at that time. Women of the African Diaspora came together to form a support group at a time when there were many hostile stories appearing in the newspapers and the media in general about the numbers of Africans entering the country. Some of the women who joined this group had, like me, grown up in industrial schools in Ireland. Two of them engaged with the research themselves. I used these contacts and set up information sessions to outline my research. I enlisted their help in the locating and recruitment of others, only this time, I broadened the search to include UK-based individuals. This yielded an additional respondent who agreed to be

interviewed. After a final round of snowball sampling, 2 more women agreed to participate in the study. Including my eight personal acquaintances, all eight women agreed to participate in this study. Through the snowball sampling method other potential participants were identified in the US but only one agreed to engage in the research process and this was carried out in a phone interview. My final participant was suggested to me by a mutual friend and I made contact by text giving a broad indication of why I was contacting her and requesting her to contact me if she was interested. She made contact and an interview date was set up.

The combination of purposeful, theoretical, and snowball sampling was very successful in locating and recruiting potential research participants. Together, these sampling techniques yielded a sample of over fifteen women that met the purposive sample.

The participants are self-selecting through contact between the author and the women in question, and are drawn from the group of women of mixed African-Irish descent who satisfy the research criteria of: White Irish mother/African father; grew up in an Irish care institution for some, or all of their childhood. I have been facilitated in this sampling procedure by working with the Association of Mixed Race Irish (AMRI) which was founded by three survivors of mixed African-Irish descent. This is an NGO set up to promote and support Irish people of mixed race backgrounds of the Irish care system and their families/relatives. Through its Facebook page I posted information on the research reaching out to any potential participants who may have been interested in taking part. The women in this study come from many parts of Ireland, the US, Europe and the UK which adds to the representativeness of the study.

Access and positionality of the researcher

My identity as a woman of mixed African-Irish descent and as a survivor of the industrial school system was advantageous for my ability to engage women of mixed African-Irish descent in discussions about their identity. Many of the women stated that they were willing to participate in the interview to support my work as a female scholar of mixed African-Irish descent. Our shared racial, institutionalised and gendered identities likely contributed to the participants' comfort with sharing their personal beliefs and stressful experiences with me. Due to our shared identities, I may have been afforded greater access to their otherwise private thoughts compared to someone who they perceived as

having vastly divergent experiences (Schuman & Converse, 1971). My racial and gender identities, as well as my academic training, contributed to my ability to be empathetic during the interviews (Lambart & Barley, 2001). As an empathic listener, I created a safe space for them to honestly reflect on their experiences (Gair, 2011).

My starting point for this search was Oakley (1982, 1989) who suggests that to achieve non-hierarchical, reciprocal relationships between the interviewer and the participant, researchers should emotionally invest in the research and be prepared to self disclose. The complexity of self-disclosure can lead to an exploitation of power in relationships as self disclosure can be used to strategically ingratiate, so that ethical considerations may become displaced (Gunaratnam, 2003).

While the research will collect participants' experiences of meaning-making, it also will involve my sense-making as a researcher. As Flick (2018: 14) notes, the essential features of qualitative research are 'the researchers' reflections on their research as part of the process of knowledge production'. Other scholars have also argued that participant's experiences can only be seen through researchers' experientially-informed lens; and what a researcher writes and speaks is in context, stemming from their particular history, culture and personal experience (Hall, 1993).

I share commonality with the participants in some ways while differing from them in other ways which became very apparent to me during the interview process. Hence, my insider status helped me to gain access and understand the participants' experiences; and I tried to use my outsider position as researcher to reconstruct the narratives and view them in a bigger picture. Through these, I endeavoured to interpret the participants' narratives better as a researcher. Again due to our commonalities and differences, our interaction during the research was multi-layered, shifting and dynamic.

It is germane to state that while I actively resist the constraints of binary modes of thought around 'race' (Botts, 2016; Root, 1992a, 1992b, 1994; Twine, 2010), I recognise that this is still often the way that race is conceptualised. This has led to my desire to develop work in the area of 'mixed race' identities, a highly complex and theoretically difficult area of study which needs to be developed more within Ireland. The limitations of current terminologies are real and frustrating and, for the most part, will be avoided in

this research as my attention is predominantly focused, and led, by the participants and the language they employ.¹⁴

This research set out to decentre ‘race’ as a primary identity marker (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Scales-Trent, 1995; Zack, 1996) so as to make space for the interplay of other hierarchically positioned signifiers (Hall, 1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1996, 1999; Reay, 2000; Sayer, 2005; Skeggs, 1997, 2004; Young, 2000) such as ethnicity, religion, sexuality, locality, generation, gender and social class. The research strategy I will employ is the critical race framework. Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) views ‘race’ and ‘races’ as socially-constructed concepts and relations that have no bearing on either objective reality or biological traits. CMRS, as we saw in Chapter 2, is not without its flaws (Bellos, 2007 for discussion; *cf.* Gordon, 1995; Ropp, 1997) but it provides a mechanism by which intersectionality and anti-essentialism can be examined while challenging attempts to allocate a fixed and homogenised identity to individuals, even when realities suggest that ‘everyone has potentially conflicting, overlapping identities, loyalties, and allegiances’ (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001: 9). CMRS is a useful framework for analysing the peripheral conditions of minority and marginalised groups so as to provide a more nuanced and complex understanding of the dynamics of these constructions of identity.

Data collection tools

Since the negotiation of identity for women of mixed African-Irish descent who grew up in the Irish institutional care system is revealed in individual stories, this study uses semi-structured interviews and guided conversations to collect these narratives. Interviews create a social situation similar to everyday interactions and conversations (Mason, 2002) where participants make and tell their stories, and will be discussed below. Research participants are given much freedom and control in constructing the situation, setting the agenda and generating the themes in the ways that they deem important. This maximises their capacity to produce situated knowledge (Mason, 2002).

The interviews focus on individual construction of identity and require an in-depth discussion to explore an individual’s personal story. The data collected demonstrates rich, in-depth and diverse experiences of identification, and is the main source for data analysis.

¹⁴ This was discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2

Autoethnography.

Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that focuses on self as a study subject but transcends a mere narration of personal history. This definition highlights two vital aspects of autoethnography: (1) the use of autobiographic data; and (2) cultural interpretation of the connectivity between self and others (Anderson, 2006; Bochner & Ellis, 2002; Denzin, 1997; Ellis, 2004, 2007; Reed-Danahay, 1997); what Foster *et al.* (2006: 47) terms 'subjectivity and researcher-participant intersubjectivity.' Berger (2001), citing Fasching (1992), described the importance of embracing subjectivity, as no human experience is ever free of subjectivity:

[...] all human experience is subjective ... that rather than proceeding through a scientific method, which requires that a hypothesis or a set of questions be answered, researchers cannot know what to explore until they have finished exploring (p. xvi). This method unlayers the world of the field to readers, providing them with a deeper comprehension not only of the people being studied but of the researcher as well. (Fasching, 1992: 93)

The assumption that objectivity is at all possible has been solidly contested just as classic norms of objectivity in the social sciences have been eroded (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Postmodernists believe that the methods and procedures that are employed in research are ultimately and inextricably tied to the values and subjectivities of the researcher (Bochner, 2000). Any efforts to achieve objectivity are foiled from the outset because ethnographers always come with ideas that guide what they choose to describe and how they choose to describe it (Wolcott, 1999) and that are grounded in a 'set of intellectual assumptions and constitutive interests' (Stivers, 1993: 410).

The autoethnography approach to research challenges the hegemony of objectivity which sees the researcher and researched as two distinct groups, creating a them-and-us notion, which is problematic for two reasons. First, the researcher and researched divide situated identity as singular and fixed. Postmodernity views identities as multiple and fluid (Butler *et al.* 2000; Fukuyama, 1992; Grillo, 1998; Sim, 1986). This has important implications when applied to the notion of memory. Autoethnography defies the assumption that there is a singular truth out there by giving equal weight to different voices offering

different experiences (Spry, 2001, 2011). Thus contradictory and conflicting experiences become fuel for further research instead of being dismissed as having no statistical significance.

Second, the researcher and researched divide situates the researcher as the creator of knowledge and the researched as the source of knowledge. Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) contend that in proper research, authors are expected to remain on the sidelines and keep their voices out of their reports. In contrast, autoethnography decentres the researcher's role as the excavator of existing knowledge. Instead, researchers create data with the researched (Tierney & Lincoln, 1997).

Another reason for embracing autoethnography is to empower alternative voices to speak from the liminal position of marginality and authority (Meerwald, 2001). It is a liminal position firstly because of the position of subjugation, as a participant, and simultaneous privileged position of authority, as the participant accesses the dominant discourses. Autoethnographies are thus 'highly personalised accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding' (Sparkes, 2002: 21).

According to Thomas (1993), there can be a number of pitfalls in using autoethnography that can threaten the scientific merit of a study; these include seeing only what serves the researcher's purposes, placing passion before science, making claims beyond the evidence, and replacing reason with stridency. Thomas has claimed that the trick to doing 'objective' critical ethnography lies in avoiding the traps of creating a product of assertions and imposing our views on our audience. Stivers (1993) observed that although personal narratives might be entertaining and even edifying, they fail to qualify as useful knowledge and that this epistemological framework may not be useful. Furthermore, autoethnographic writing must be balanced delicately so as not to tread on the side of essentialism (Buzard, 2003).

The approach taken here is that of using autoethnographic detail to supplement or triangulate the data coming from the interviews with the participants (Anderson, 2006). Anderson (2006: 374), was concerned that a narrow focus on 'evocative or emotional

ethnography may have the unintended consequence' of stymieing the development of this approach.

At the forefront of my mind is a concern for the participants' data and the validation of their lived experience. As outlined above, autoethnography is traditionally employed to insert the researcher's narrative into the research and to explicate and mine the data through the lens of self-exploration. However, in this research I set out to disrupt this by asserting that autoethnography can augment the data that is contained in the text through use of the researcher's conceptualisation of the project and by the co-construction of the narrative with the participants during the interview process. By mining the field data and the diaries, the researcher can with validity make subjective judgements about what appears in the final text. This adds to the variety of ways in which the researcher contributes to the whole embodied notion of ethnography and allows for the inductive and intuitive element that is built into the paradigm of qualitative research.

Semi-structured Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews allowed me to draw out rich descriptions of the experiences of the participants in ways that surveys and other methods could not. Interviews facilitated an understanding of each participant's experience, knowledge, and worldviews (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Lofland *et al.* (2005) described an interview as a directed conversation. With a schedule of questions, I guided the conversation with the participants in a way that allowed their stories, accounts, and explanations (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) to be centred in the moment of the interview. Interviews served as an ideal tool to explore the varied experiences of the participants in a way that provided both structure and freedom along with pre-planned goals and emergent directions. The in-depth interviews started with some casual conversation to establish a good rapport.

It is essential for the first encounter to mark the initiation of the interview (Mason, 2002). Patton (2002) postulated that what the researchers say and do in the research process is very much noted by the participants; additionally, the words spoken by the researcher can be taken literally by the participants and that participants are also interpreting and acting based on what's seen and heard during the interaction. Therefore, it was crucial that I explained to the participant her role and the purpose of the study to avoid

misunderstandings and provided clarity about how the data will inform the study. Anyan (2013) also suggested that it is important for researchers to discuss the academic rationale and objective of the research before the study begins, and to provide explanation to the participants about how potential data will be used.

At the outset I made clear the purpose and objectives of the study. This helped the participants feel confident about their involvement. Fourteen face-to-face interviews were carried out by the researcher, and one over the phone, all were recorded using an Olympus DSS for transcribing at a later date. Each of the interviews varied in length from one to three hours, (one interview was conducted over a weekend having been invited to meet and stay at the participant's home). Some of the interview data was not deemed suitable for or amenable to transcriptions and consequently some transcripts are shorter than others of equal time duration.

At all times the person being interviewed selected the time, date and venue for the interview to maximise their level of comfort and relaxation, five of the interviews took place in the participant's home. At the start of each interview, as I prepared – setting up my audio recorder and looking over my interview protocol – I would double check to see if the participant wanted to go through with the interview. For the most part, the tenor and tone of my interviews followed a familiar pattern. Some of the interviewees would express trepidation about speaking openly about their experiences while others were excited and anxious to have their stories captured and recorded. Next, I reassured them that the interview was confidential. Then, slowly but surely, their comfort level with me and the subject material would grow, encouraging them to open up about their experiences. Finally, the words, stories, and experiences would flow but usually after I was first obliged to share mine. Moustakas (1990) claims that researchers engage in a journey of discovery too, which draws on their capacity to learn and know, stating that qualitative discoveries cannot be forced; they emerge through waiting and patience. In summary, the role of the researcher's biography was used to help lead to insightful knowledge production and develop a capacity for empathy enabling a research relationship based upon trust and reciprocity.

Negotiating safe and ethical boundaries for the research relationships was also a key way to understand the vulnerability and circumstances of both my role as researcher and the role of the participants.

Interviews were approached as a collaborative effort, giving participants the power to express what was most important to them (Patton, 2015). Collaboration allowed the discussion to evolve as facilitated by the researcher, placing value on the participants' engagement and their willingness to be involved (Patton, 2015). Not only did my research participants go into great detail about a whole range of experiences, but they also, with the help of my probing, expressed and examined their interpretations of those experiences. I tried to engage in being a good listener and made an effort to gain an understanding of the meanings behind the stories I was told and the accounts I was given. In the end, this led to the collection of rich and sophisticated interview data.

Keeping a research diary

A research diary enables the researcher to be reflective about the study by noting problems and achievements, thoughts and emotions (Moustakas, 1994). It is preferably kept on a daily basis, thus the process or strands of ideas and analysis during the course of the research will appear in chronological order. It includes informal conversations, e-mail communications and anything else from the everyday process of gathering data. Keeping a research diary is also important in this context as Hodder (1994: 394) mentions:

The text can 'say' many different things in different contexts. But also the written text is an artefact, capable of transmission, manipulation, and alteration, of being used and discarded, reused and recycled - 'doing' different things contextually through time.

I used a research diary to gather further information about the research in both formal and informal ways. It was utilised when the interview data were analysed. It included anonymised data that were quoted in the thesis. My research diary was studied to see how I thought about and solved any challenges that arose during the research (samples of which are included in Appendix III).

Field notes were taken and recorded in notebooks. Then the notes were transcribed into a Word document. Depending on the nature of the field visit, I would either record my notes contemporaneously or record notes from memory as soon after the visit as was feasible. Every attempt possible was made to immediately code my field notes to improve the validity of this time sensitive.

Data Analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1998: 157) described data analysis as ‘the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others.’

Data analysis began as early as the interviews when I started memoing and organising information during the collection stage. The interviews were transcribed in Microsoft Word into a zipped file which was password protected. I chose not to use qualitative data analysis software and engaged in the coding process by hand. Qualitative codes demonstrate the interpretation of data, which involves a process of selection and sorting. Codes fragment data into segments, name, and then categorise them in order to interpret them to further levels of abstraction (Charmaz, 2006). In this coding process, I conducted open and axial coding, (Strauss & Corbin, 1997, 1998) through which I first began to label and name the phenomena indicated in the interview transcripts and confirmed the categories and labels by comparison and consolidation.

Interview transcription was a laborious task. Due to the sensitive nature of the data there was never an option of outsourcing this assignment. Furthermore, I decided to undertake it myself in order to familiarise myself with the data prior to analysis. I have not corrected grammatical or lexicographical mistakes so as not to dilute the dignity of the participant. Equally, I have avoided the use of the abbreviation ‘*sic*’.

The data were transcribed safeguarding the anonymity of participants and individuals were assigned a pseudonym. Thereafter, the transcribed data were coded by theme. Mangabeira *et al.* (2004) explain that the code-based approach is valuable because it allows some respondents’ questions to be related to reports by others, and such unexpected contingencies often happen in fieldwork. A code-based analysis allowed me

to seek connections between my fieldwork contingencies and the themes developed during the analysis.

Bazeley (2004: 149) underlines that '[c]oding or categorising of data is undertaken to facilitate understanding and retrieval of information in almost any approach to analysis.' Corbin and Strauss (2008: 66) state that:

A researcher can think of coding as 'mining' the data, digging beneath the surface to discover the hidden treasures contained within the data. [...] In interacting with data, analysts make use of thinking strategies.

The data analysis strategy used in this study, presented in Figure 3.1 below, follows the constant comparative method outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2008):

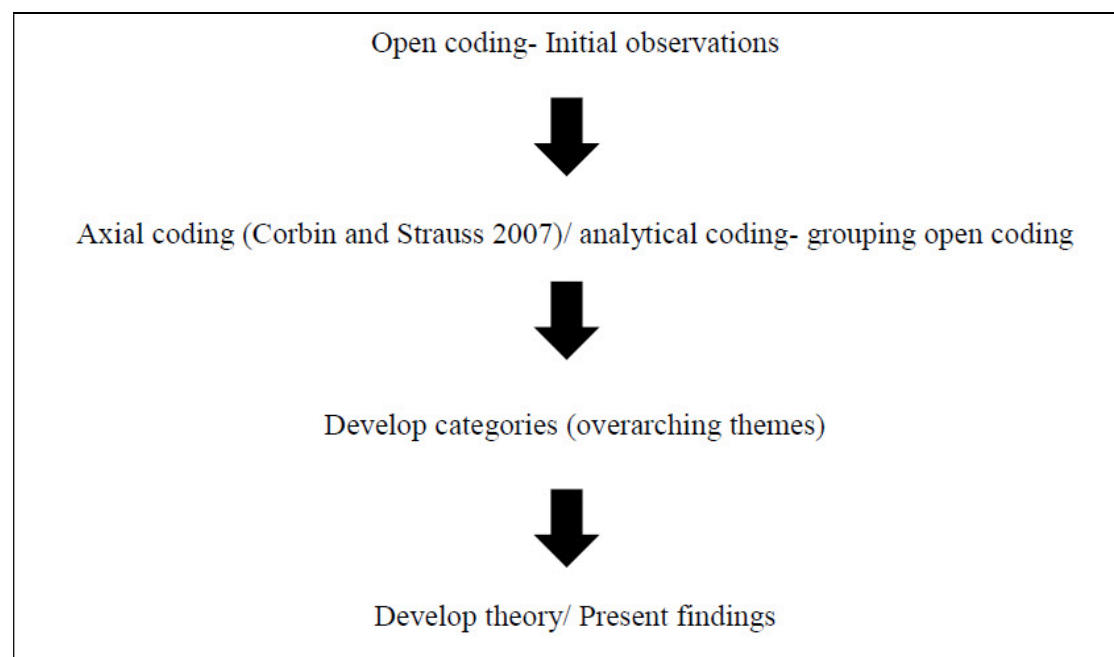


Figure 3.1: Corbin and Strauss's Constant Comparative Data Analysis Strategy

The first phase of open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) involved an analysis of two initial interviews to establish that the interviews were providing information of interest and to help refine interview questions. The next phase consisted of a reflexive interpretive process (Schatzman, 1991) to identify conceptual themes and deselect evidence in the data (Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

As thematic constructs emerged during analysis, the researcher constantly returned to the interview transcripts, staying grounded in the individual cases (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2009). The process of open coding included an examination of some of the transcripts. The coding process revealed thematic variations and similarities across participants' beliefs about the importance of factors relating to their identity construction and negotiation. Categories were determined based on the extent to which the data in a certain category held together in a meaningful way (internal homogeneity) and the extent to which differences among categories were clear (external homogeneity; cf. Patton, 2002).

Table 3.1 below shows an example of coding categories.

| Label | Definition | Examples |
|---------------|---|---|
| Racialisation | Racialised as phenotypically 'black' in a 'white' monoracial culture and society regardless of the use of the term 'coloured', which was used in the main to describe the children in their official files. Unofficially they were half-caste... Although the term 'coloured' has boundary connotations as a race descriptor it was not used or understood to denote a mixed race heritage. | 'Everybody who was black was called 'coloured' as a term of politeness rather than as black which appears to have had negative or racist connotations to those in authority.' 'black used as a pejorative, black bitch, black bastard, etc.' |

Table 3.1: Example Coding Categories

Miles *et al.* (2014) and Willms *et al.* (1990) suggest that researchers start with several general themes that emerge from their literature reviews and add more themes and sub-themes as they analyse their data. In this research, the key elements, when analysing the processes underlying the construction and negotiation of identity for a generation of women of mixed African-Irish descent, with white Irish mothers and African fathers, who grew up in the Irish institutional care system, were: the institution,

caregivers/fostering/parents (and lack thereof – ‘parentless parenting’), and the racialisation process. More themes were expected to be generated during the inductive process of coding the data: as Miles and Huberman (1994: 10) suggest ‘coding is analysis’. As noted by Janesick (1994: 389), ‘the qualitative researcher uses inductive analysis, which means that categories, themes, and patterns come from the data. The categories that emerge from field notes, documents and interviews are not imposed prior to data collection’.

I realised that there is no one way to categorise or code data, but that it is ever-changing and very fluid. It could vary from one day to the next, so making a determination about the most likely place the data would fit proved to be an arduous task. My own constructions of the context were enhanced and more informed as my reviews of the data increased. This greater understanding can be attributed to what Guba and Lincoln (1989) refer to as ontological authenticity – an understanding derived about the researcher’s own point of view.

I coded the entirety of every transcript and the research diary, starting at the chronological beginning and working steadily through to the end. I felt that part of my accountability to research participants was a responsibility to be honest in my coding, ‘rigorously ethical’ as Saldana (2016: 37) calls it. This meant paying the same careful attention to all of each participant’s contribution and not valuing some over others; trying to ensure that I kept each piece of coded text within its rightful context without transposing it to a non-relevant situation, whether by design or error; and doing my best not to ignore or downplay data because I disagreed with it or was made uncomfortable by its content or source. Constructing the narrative, is in itself, a form of analysis (Richardson, 1994).

Internal and External Validity

According to Merriam (2002), triangulation contributes to internal validity through the ability to compare multiple sources of data for consistency. The second strategy I used was to have each interviewee review their transcript. This strategy, suggested by Maxwell (1996), allowed the interviewee to confirm that the content was accurate and thorough from their perspective. This empowered the participants to take ownership of what was

being written and led to occasional debate on the inclusion or exclusion of certain topic areas. A considerable area of interest during these discussions was the need to ensure that no identifying elements were retained due to feelings of embarrassment and threat. Several participants also sought to qualify other elements and explain the importance, or lack thereof, being attached to what was being said. This process added to the authenticity of that which was said during the interview as the corrections of language and clarifications reflected a confidence in the relationship between researcher and participant.

The third strategy related to gaining an ‘in-depth understanding of the phenomenon’ (Merriam, 2002: 26). This was accomplished by collecting data over a long enough period of time to determine that the findings were saturated. After several interviews, I noted similarities in their responses to the same topics and felt confident that I had reached the saturation point to determine an accurate perspective.

The Thematic Analysis Process

Inductive thematic analysis was employed. The following steps were taken: familiarisation with the data by repeatedly and simultaneously listening to recordings and reading the transcripts; highlighting all data related to the research question; producing codes to summarise items of interest; grouping codes together manually; re-examining codes to identify themes; re-reading data to check coherence and consistency of themes; and defining and naming themes.

Navigating the world of thematic qualitative analysis can be challenging. Following the literature review and in keeping with Bazeley (2004), Mangabeira *et al.* (2004), Braun and Clark (2006) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) the following steps were undertaken:

a) the recordings were listened to multiple times in conjunction with reading the transcripts as a means of establishing a close familiarisation with the dataset. The process was iterative as the tone and tenor of the recordings would often suggest a fresh perspective on the contents of the transcripts.

Comments were inserted into the margins with the researcher’s initial thoughts and ideas.

b) a number of techniques were applied in a sequential manner. Word repetitions, key-indigenous terms, and key-words-in-contexts (KWIC) were used since 'perhaps the simplest and most direct indication of schematic organisation in naturalistic discourse is the repetition of associative linkages' (D'Andrade, 1991: 294). He further observes that 'indeed, anyone who has listened to long stretches of talk, whether generated by a friend, spouse, workmate, informant, or patient, knows how frequently people circle through the same network of ideas' (287).

Another way to find themes is to look for local terms that may sound unfamiliar or are used in unfamiliar ways. These 'indigenous categories' Patton (1990: 393-400) can be identified using in vivo coding (Strauss, 1987: 28-32, Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 61-74).

Key-words-in-context (KWIC) are closely associated with indigenous categories. In this technique, researchers identify key words and then systematically search the corpus of text (transcripts) to find all instances of the word or phrase. Each time they find a word, they make a copy of it and its immediate context which also helps with identifying themes.

c) the iterative process of reading and listening permitted the researcher to colour code data that was related to the research question and/or was of interest (Mangabeira *et al.* 2004). A code was then produced that described the theme of the 'chunk' of data.

The title of the code was revised repeatedly as the process evolved to ensure it accurately captured the content and context of the coded data. This was a fluid process; chunks of data were moved around as the code developed.

One way to identify themes is to examine any text that is not already associated with a theme (Ryan, 1999). This technique requires multiple readings of a text. On the first reading, salient themes are clearly visible and can be quickly and readily marked with different coloured pencils or highlighters. In the next stage, the search is for themes that remain unmarked. This tactic – marking obvious themes early and quickly - forces the search for new and less obtrusive themes.

The coding (and colour-coding) and samples of how the text was analysed are detailed in Appendix IV.

d) it is important to note that certain chunks of the data could be coded in multiple ways and consequently a number of codes could be applied to chunks of data if the researcher felt that the 'chunk' of data related to a number of different codes. During this stage data continued to be recoded, moved from one code to another and the name and content of themes also continued to change and evolve.

e) the iterative process was continued at this stage to examine each code in relation to other codes so as to establish relationships between codes and indicate how they combined to form a theme. The data was then reread in this repeated manner to ensure that there was a coherent pattern across the extracts and that all data relating to each theme had been included in the initial coding process.

f) during this stage the data from each theme was examined to create a name which satisfactorily captured the content of each theme. Furthermore, the content of each theme was examined to construct a coherent description of each theme both individually and its relation to other themes and the dataset as a whole.

g) a final scrutiny-based approach which was undertaken was to think about what was missing in the text. Much can be learned from a text by what is not mentioned. Sometimes silences indicate areas that people are unwilling or afraid to discuss. Other times, absences may indicate assumptions made by the participants. Spradley (1987: 314) noted that when people tell stories, they assume that their listeners share many assumptions about how the world works and so they leave out information that 'everyone knows.' He called this process abbreviating (*ibid.*314).

There are many reasons participants may not have mentioned topics such as to avoid sensitive issues or assuming the researcher already knew about the topic. Some of the participants made the comment 'I don't want to talk about it' during the interviews but would then come back around during the conversation to actually addressing the matter they had previously avoided. Distinguishing between when participants are unwilling to discuss topics and when they assume the researcher already knows about the topic requires a lot of familiarity with the subject matter.

Institutional living also throws up the issue of the era in which you were incarcerated, as well as age differences amongst people who resided in the same institutions citing very different experiences due to changing staff or other circumstances. Some participants lived in institutions when they were called orphanages or industrial schools while the researcher lived in an industrial school from 1963 -1979 but which was rebranded as a Residential Home after the Kennedy Report in 1971. Group identity within and outside the home reflects the kind of identity many of the participants manifest. Some of the participants grew up in homes with multiple mixed race children while others grew up as the only mixed race person in the home during their period there. The networks that were formed after leaving the institutions were also influenced by the relationships in the institution. Some were in multiple homes with differing regimes and characteristics.

h) Examples of each theme, subtheme and code continued to be reviewed and moved until agreement between the coders as to what determined sufficient demonstration of a true representation of a theme became evident. This involved reading and re-reading the subset of transcripts multiple times until theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 188) was achieved. Of note, Wilson and Hutchinson warn against premature closure where the researcher ‘fails to move beyond the face value of the content in the narrative’ (1990: 123).

Data analysis suggested four themes: 1) mixed race experience and racialised discourses; 2) social relations and social racialisation; 3) life in the institution; and 4) life after the institution. Pseudonyms for both people and identifiable place names are used to preserve anonymity.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations for this study included issues of informed consent, confidentiality, and researcher bias.

Mason (2002) argues that all qualitative research raises ethical issues as they engage participants deeply with their affective, private and public experiences. Murphy and Dingwall (2001: 339) speak of ‘ethical theory’. They suggest that researchers should avoid harming participants and that participants’ values and decisions should be respected. Research on human subjects should also produce some positive benefit for the group being studied or for society as a whole rather than be carried out for its own sake.

This means obtaining informed consent from participants, respecting their decision about what they should be called in this research, protecting confidentiality and anonymity. As Flick (2018) suggests, it is essential that participation in research is voluntary and takes place on the basis of the fullest possible information about the goals and methods of the research. The researcher should also be conscious about treating the fieldwork as a learning opportunity, but also making the research as beneficial as possible for the participants.

Information about the voluntary nature of participation and the participant's right to withdraw from the research study or to terminate the research interview at any time was clearly explained. Participants were also advised about confidentiality issues; namely that information pertaining to them would be stored on a password encrypted system; that identifying information would be removed and pseudonyms would be used to ensure confidentiality; that names and contact details would be stored separately to interview and transcript material; that quotations from research interviews would be used in the research write-up and may be published or further disseminated for academic or scientific purposes, but that all identifying details would be removed from quotations. Participants were also advised that they could request a summary of the research findings.

After the discussion, each interviewee consented to be digitally audio-recorded, and was assured that the audio, transcripts and any other identifying information would be secured in a locked location.

Gathering and interpreting data may be clouded by the researcher's biases or perspectives about the phenomenon of study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). My reason for conducting this study was to gain insight. I did not come into the study with the goal of manipulating data to fit preconceived notions.

During our conversation, I encouraged the participants to talk freely, as it normally led to a further discussion and a deeper understanding. Participants may well have been keen on telling their stories sometimes thinking about identity for the first time, and may have found the interviews helpful for their own self realisation. I consider the fieldwork as an

opportunity for me to learn from the participants, rather than just taking knowledge about them.

Despite having consent from each participant at the start of each interview, I sought their on-going consent at the beginning of each recorded session. Most of the topics were sensitive and this offered them the opportunity to let me know if it was okay to use this material in an anonymous way under their chosen pseudonym. Confidentiality was discussed.

Ethical approval was sought and secured to carry out this study from the Department of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin. My research project adheres to guidelines set out by the Irish Sociological Association (SAI, 2020) and defers to the Trinity College Dublin guidelines on research (TCD, 2020). The storage, use and disclosure of data are within the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (*GDPR* which came into force across the EU on 25 May, 2018). All data is stored in a locked filing cabinet and secured on a computer that requires a password.

Finally, I have taken pains to ensure that identifiable elements within the women's narratives have been removed so as to prevent any unintentional Deductive Disclosure (Kaiser, 2009). Deductive Disclosure occurs when the traits of individuals or groups make them identifiable in research (Sieber, 1992). In the current context this has meant not using large sections of data which, though valuable as research data, were potentially far too identifiable.

Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology of this study. It illustrated the methods used, people involved, and the generation of knowledge in and after the fieldwork. It demonstrated the suitability of qualitative research in addressing the research questions. In the next chapter the mixed race experience, the first of the four themes identified, will be discussed.

Chapter 4: Mixed Race Experience and Racialised Discourses

Introduction

Four key themes emerged from the data analysis: mixed race experience; family and attachment; the institution; and (re)constructing identity after the institution. This and the next three chapters address each of the themes in turn. It is important to note that each of the themes should not be viewed as isolated from one another but as constituent parts of an interconnected experience. The purpose of this chapter is to explore and capture the nature of the mixed race experience of this cohort of women as a narrative. The participants in the study provided rich, detailed accounts of their unique experiences. Knowledge is predicated on experience and ‘experience happens narratively’ (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 19); that is, we think of our experiences as stories and re-tell them in a narrative format. The women described the process of forming an identity as an ongoing process and identified challenges they experienced as they grew up in the institution and from where, in some cases, they were fostered/adopted out. The impact of racialisation and its effects on the process of constructing an identity and a sense of belonging is evident throughout the dataset.

Growing up in the institutional care system covers a wide spectrum of experiences. Some of the women in this study were born in mother and baby homes until they were moved to another institution as toddlers where they remained until the age of sixteen, at which point they were obliged to leave.

PM: Did you finish school?

Nelly: No, sure I had to leave before I finished cause I was pregnant with [name]. I didn’t really care cause it meant I left the school too and so I was away from them (the nuns) and I could live me own life and not be having to think about who was going to call me names or having me hair pulled out or anything like that.

Occasionally the children would leave before the age of sixteen and on even rarer occasions some would stay for short periods past this age depending on the circumstances within the individual institutions. Several reported being transferred to local boarding schools when the institution closed down and they were still too young to be discharged from care, while others were transferred to institutions such as

reformatories or Magdalen laundries for infractions of rules. Children not born within the institutional care system, would enter the system at different ages, mostly still in infancy and their duration was also constrained by the diktat that they leave at sixteen. Children were fostered for varying amounts of time from months to years with some being caught in loose adoption frameworks. One woman reported being returned to an institution from foster care after three years with the family. She was not told why by either the family or the institution, she was merely folded back into her 'set' and returned to the daily grind of institutional living:

Eileen: I was fostered to (name) in (name) to a family and there was an incident with their daughter. I think she was much older than me. She was a few years older than me - she was about 16, I was about 9 or 10 but em, she hit me for some reason or other. I can't remember why or what I did, and of course I went screaming crying, and the mother came up and the next thing I knew I was being sent back to (institution). I can't remember now what actually happened in that incident...

PM: They had fostered you for almost 3 years and then just suddenly they brought you back?

Eileen: Mmm.

PM: What was that like?

Eileen: It was...I didn't know, I didn't know I was getting fostered and I didn't know that I was being sent back. It didn't have any effect on me because I knew a good few of the people there in the school.

PM: But had you bonded with the family did you feel a part of it, did you feel rejected?

Eileen: Oh yeah, well I did when they sent me back. They were actually very good to me, I know she gave me a slap in the face anyway, the daughter did, and of course I start screaming crying and there was all hell so...

PM: Did the nuns say anything to you when you were brought back?

Eileen: No, just put me into the set [...] that I was in [the girls in that industrial school were allocated to different groups, called 'sets' and designated by colours]

The participants explained how they were racialised as phenotypically 'black' in a 'white' monoracial culture and society. 'black' children were officially referred to as 'coloured' (see Appendix V for an example of just such a label being applied to my transfer admission sheet from one industrial school to another), as evidenced by the descriptor used on their admission forms to institutions and shown to the author by some of the participants. This term appeared to adequately address their racialised difference as opposed to the term 'black' which appears to have had negative or racist connotations to those in authority. Participants reported the word 'black' was almost always only used as part of some other pejorative such as black bitch, black bastard, black savage etc. Although the term 'coloured' was used to describe the children in their official files, unofficially children were referred to as 'half-caste' by nuns, staff and caregivers, as well as the other children in the institutions.

Half-caste and racialised terminology

Terms such as half-caste and coloured reflects a position of being in a no-man's-land or a type of racial limbo, whereby, the afflicted could never attain racial parity with either of the groups to which they were perceived to belong. In fact, in Ireland, just as in Britain and the USA, a form of hypodescent was applied. Half-caste and coloured was imported from these racialised societies to where many generations of Irish had emigrated. Half-caste was a delineating term used in Ireland just as in those jurisdictions where, 'the caste endemic in the race and colour of blacks is defined by the British as hereditary. Racism therefore underpins the use of the concept Half-Caste' (Watson, 1975: 313). Within Irish institutional settings it was seen as a particularly heavy blow to be doubly disadvantaged by being both illegitimate and half-caste. Attitudes to the children in institutions show that the term was not merely a benign descriptor of a mix - between white and black, but was more affiliated to Watson's description, '[i]n short, we must invest the concept with a specificity not only in the social (relational) sphere, but also, crucially, in the cultural (definitional and ideational) sphere.' (ibid: 319). The impact of this contextualisation of mixedness is evident in Olivia's observation: 'I was Irish, but my skin was a different colour. I felt uneasy about that in the middle of all white people, [...] they called me a half-caste, and I didn't even know what that meant', or as Michelle stated: 'We were always described as coloured or half-caste. I hated half-caste cause it was like you were a half of something but a not a whole lot of anything really, in my mind'.

From the interviews that I have carried out, racism was fairly typical for mixed race children in general, regardless of where they were in care in the country, and included not just physical abuse, sexual abuse, racial slurs and name-calling by the other children, but by the nuns and other adults in charge. In 2014, an organisation representing Mixed Race Irish (MRI, 2014) made a submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Equality and Justice, drawing attention to the attitudes of people in authority when referring to children of mixed African-Irish descent in care. The pathologised nature of reports from officials sought to essentialise the issues that children of mixed African-Irish descent faced in their lives and the problems they believed they would continue to face in the future. One doctor in a report to the Department of Education in 1966 claimed children of mixed African-Irish descent were 'hot tempered and difficult to control' (CICA, 2009: 4.93). By interrogating the findings in this chapter it is hoped that the impact of the lived experiences of this group of women of mixed African-Irish descent will shed light on beliefs that existed in Ireland and in the institutions where they were incarcerated and the extent to which this shaped their own social and cultural spheres.

I will use the term 'everyday' in keeping with Henri Le Febvre and Michel De Certeau (in Sheringham, 2006) and Highmore (2011), namely: 'Everyday life is the observable manifestation of social existence, and therefore always includes relationships with other people' (Sztompka, 2008: 31). Everyday life is localised in a Bourdieusian space – that is as a 'system of relations' (Bourdieu, 1989: 16) - with the characteristics of the place reflected in the 'character, style, form and content of social events' (Sztompka, 2008: 31). Sztompka also argues that even when we are alone 'others are virtually present in our thoughts, memories, dreams' (Sztompka, 2008: 32).

The women in the research report varying levels of racist taunting. Name-calling is prevalent throughout the system but their capacity to link it to, or name it as racism, is limited during their time in the institutions. It becomes mundane i.e. is part of the infrastructural everyday language of the institution. This impacts on how they view their experience while diminishing the racialisation process that took place. The damage done was not recognised by all of them as being connected to a racist regime but was viewed as being separate to the treatment of other children who might have been marked out as different within the system, e.g. disabled or fat.

In the official records of the participants, homelessness is the reason given for their incarceration in an industrial school, but several of the participants identified race as being at the core of their placement into an institution in the first place.

Chrissie: She had [...] children, older [...]and younger than me and she kept them... so it's clear to me that my mother couldn't handle the fact that she had a black child because she kept her children, she just didn't keep me... She kept (siblings) and put me in, I believe it's because I was black. I believe it and I've always believed it.

Rosaleen: It's all relative, I think because we were black we were there ...that in itself...you know that's its own issue ...because if we were white we wouldn't have been there [...] my aunt [her mother's sister] was over there and she had a white child [...] (name) was sent home to the family to be reared but we were put into the home.

Some of the children were not put in care until as late as eleven months old indicating that their mothers had made an attempt to keep them but were, for various reasons, unable to do so. Chrissie, whose mother applied to the courts to have her put into care, reported:

Chrissie: So I'm told (name) kicked us out because he didn't want a coloured child in the house... So my mother had nowhere to go with me so I was put into the care of the courts, the State I guess, and the court sent me to [name of industrial school]

When trying to understand why she had been placed in the institution, Kathleen indicated that her mother had tried to take her out of the home at some stage as she explained: 'In my records it said that she wouldn't be ...she tried to get me...' Then Kathleen reflected for a few moments before adding: 'And as time went on I grew to understand it had a lot to do with my colour. That was my understanding.'

Dolores, who was placed in care at eleven months old, also stated her mother had attempted to raise her:

Dolores: It's on my file that she did try, it's on my file that somebody complained about her to the courts and they took her off me... I was sent there because I was homeless. I don't want to talk about my mother or anything...

Other women however did not keep their children and appeared to abandon them as quickly as possible:

PM: Had your mother disappeared by then?

Jennifer: Yes, she was declared missing from I was a baby [three weeks old] ...She left me with [...]. (named Person) was the one who handed me over to the social.

Early forms of racism on the part of the other girls and those who were charged with caring for the children in the home were identified by Olivia and others. The institution as a safe haven is not apparent for many in their reporting. Name-calling is typical for all in the reported findings and many perceived it as part of the currency of childhood and a normalised way of life in an institution. This can be seen in the comments about the inaction and inertia on the part of carers to intervene, failing to recognise that the name-calling was in any way damaging, hurtful or marginalising.

Many of the participants reported that they began to notice their colour from around the age of four or five when they became aware of the name-calling and the imposition of a racialised identity:

Olivia: When I was in the school. I think I was about four or five and I remember they were all white and I just had a different colour. I was black, ya know. That's when I realised I was different. [...] Oh yeah, the kids were really brutal. They called you all names and everything like golliwog and choc ice, it was very hurtful... [she laughs]

As this racialisation process began for participants a process of marginalisation which would continue throughout their stay in the institutions took hold. The negligence of the

institution by not asserting control over the racist name-calling created an environment for socialising the children into racism.

Olivia: I never fitted in at the home but I was more conscious of it as I was growing up, more conscious of my colour and everything. No, I didn't have a lot of friends in the home. Well, I was the only black kid there and all the kids kept together. They stayed together. They didn't know how to relate to me. The only way they could relate was calling me names. Yeah, really annoyed and hurtful. The staff never stopped them. They thought it was funny sometimes.

PM: They thought it was funny?

Olivia: Yeah, when they were calling me names, you know, like when they would say 'go back to the jungle' and all that, they [nuns/carers] didn't say anything to them.

The inability or unwillingness of those in charge to create a safe place for children of mixed African-Irish descent in their care is evidence of a vertical (staff to child) as well as a horizontal hostility (white children to black child).

PM: What kind of names did they call you?

Nelly: The usual ones, Nigger, wog, savage, blacky, oh and there was one who always called everyone a bitch, but I was always a black bitch.

PM: Did anyone protect you or how did the nuns react if you told them?

Nelly: What! The nuns? You must be joking; they didn't care what went on. Except if someone was there to visit or they wanted to make a good impression. It was only the girls together either looking after each other or killing each other.

The passive response suggests that they also viewed the racial name-calling as part of the cut and thrust of institutional life. This further implies wilful ignorance or deliberate malice on the part of the adults in the care system as is evident in this exchange with Veronica:

PM: How old were you when you realised you were different?

Veronica: I would say five.

PM: Can you remember incidents?

Veronica: I can remember being called the n-word and people staring, always staring. Staring!

Other participants corroborated the range of names used to denigrate children of mixed African-Irish descent as reported by Olivia and that there were no sanctions on children for such deeds. Whether this silence on behalf of those in charge was wilful or not it places the institutions in the spotlight of a culture of neglect in this regard and centres race as a factor in what MacPherson (1999: 3) asserts was:

...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 unwilling prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

This culture of institutional racism as defined by MacPherson (1999) fostered a hostile environment for many children of mixed African-Irish descent.

Michelle: [In my files] I saw that it said it would be detrimental to send the black child out to school in Limerick. I don't know whether they meant to me or to the other kids, I suppose to the other kids.

PM: Do you know who wrote that?

Michelle: I don't know; I suppose the nun in charge of the reformatory school.

PM: And colour didn't come into any of that?

Dolores: I mean there was racism of course you understand.

PM: What kind?

Dolores: Well not to the extent that Christine [Buckley]¹⁵ got it, or not to the extent that the older [mixed race] ones got it. Of course there was racism.

In their submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality the MRI group (MRI, 2014), highlighted the variety of the more common terms used to denigrate

¹⁵ See Chapter 1, footnote 2.

children of mixed African-Irish descent in institutions including, ‘Monkey’, ‘Savage’, ‘Useless black bastard’, ‘blackey’, ‘Wog’, ‘Beluba’, ‘Nigger’, ‘Go home you black Bastard.’ In not taking action against the name-calling the institutions abdicated their responsibility to the children. The discriminations experienced by minorities may be unintentional but they are often profound’ (Fanning, 2002: 32). The MRI claimed in its 2014 submission that many of their members had suffered indignities from which they never recovered in their adult lives, ‘there is strong evidence that many Mixed race Irish grew up to have serious mental health problems, substance abuse issues, social isolation and trans-generational issues relating to racial abuse and poverty.’

The influence of media and television was also a factor in how these women negotiated their identity on a daily basis.

Evie: But then you grow up then in a very, very awkward situation. And remember that film on the television, *Kizzy* and everyone¹⁶. I used to hate it, know what I mean? So it was a continuous battle.

Chrissie: Yes, oh yes. Sure, the insults were the same: look at the nigger. I was the nigger they were talking about, the nigger on the box, they were talking about a nigger on the television, and they were talking about a nigger in a movie in Hollywood. The names were the same, so I knew that I was the same and not only did I know that I was the same, but that I was the lucky one, and somehow that message was told, that I was actually... that I was here and I wasn’t in dark Africa where the savages lived, and they were called savages. And that I was one of the lucky ones...

Eileen went on to point out that she was treated this way because ‘...yeah we were considered Negroid and coloured.’

It has been claimed that prior to the 1990s Ireland did not have a ‘race’ problem, owing to insufficient numbers to engender one (Connolly & Khaoury, 2008). It should initially be noted that such arguments are inherently problematic, implying that racism is a

¹⁶ A central character from Arthur Haley’s 1977 mini-series *Roots* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0075572/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1) which was broadcast on Irish television in 1978.

problem of numbers, with cultural proximity inevitably generating tensions. Moreover, it is simply conceptually and historically erroneous, and overlooks the racialisation of these participants as young children of mixed African-Irish descent.

As argued in the earlier chapter reviewing the literature on race, racial discourses continue to be discredited by natural and social science. Commentators such as Garner (2004) and Lentin and McVeigh (2002, 2006), for example, address ethnicity and culture such as shared ancestry, folk practices, geographical boundaries, group consciousness, and sense of belonging rather than race. However, relational processes whereby a particular group becomes racialised, invested with a particular set of meanings ‘society invents, manipulates or retires when convenient’ (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, in Connolly & Khaoury, 2008: 194) continue to be treated as though fixed. Crucially, racialisation is never neutral, but rather implicated in relations whereby one grouping asserts its identity by establishing difference or boundedness from another in a binary that is inherently hierarchical (Anthias, 2008). Critical mixed race studies reveal how whiteness provides the ‘central reference point by which all other groups are ‘Othered’ (Connolly & Khaoury, 2008: 195), but does so without explicit recognition of either itself or of the process of determining the Other to have a bounded, static and insoluble identity. Walter (2001), for example, used white Irish women emigrating and compared the women’s experiences in the United States and Britain, highlighting the importance of ‘whiteness’ in rendering these women (in)visible within the host societies.

In Ireland whiteness has been ‘a constitutive and founding element’ (Connolly & Khaoury, 2008: 208) of what it means to be Irish. Garner (2004: 17) posits that the Irish, themselves long ‘racialised’ by other cultures, adopt a ‘Janus-faced’ racialisation of the Other. A pernicious example of this ongoing mindset, what Garner calls the ‘alluvial build-up of stereotypical vilifications,’ is evident in the South Tipperary Senior Hurling Final Match Programme 2000, produced by the Gaelic Athletic Association¹⁷, which reproduces a line from P.J. Devlin’s 1934 book, ‘Our Native Games’ (Devlin, 1934) which highlights the concern about ‘racial perversion’: ‘The grip of the native ash [hurley] fortifies [the players] against national submission and racial perversion.’ This racialisation

¹⁷ The GAA is the Irish international amateur sporting and cultural organisation, focused primarily on promoting indigenous Gaelic games and pastimes, which include the traditional Irish sports of hurling, camogie, Gaelic football, Gaelic handball and rounders. The association also promotes Irish music and dance, as well as the Irish language.

of Irish identity and an affirmation, conscious or otherwise, of the ‘whiteness’ of that identity creates a situation where the dominant group extends, in the words of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, ‘tools of self-definition’ (Thiong’o, 1986: 16) to the Other. Even at the level of everyday common culture, a street ditty of the 1970s and 1980s, very popular in the Dublin schools in particular, ‘I’ll tell me Ma,’ the whiteness of the object of everyone’s desire is emphasised: ‘All the boys are fighting for her. They knock at the door and they ring at the bell...Out she comes as white as snow, Rings on her fingers, bells on her toes.’

Against this background, the data suggests that the participants sometimes found themselves part of a racialised discourse where ‘attention is shifted to the forms in which class, gender, sexuality or religion, for instance, might figure within these racisms, and to the specific signifier(s) – colour, physiognomy, religion, culture etc – around which these differing racisms are constituted’ (Brah, 1996: 185).

The impact of this abuse was brought up by many of the participants. They indicated that this racial and racialised abuse was compounded by a sense of abandonment with no particular emphasis or protection based on the fact that racist epithets were being hurled at young children. **Olivia:** ‘Yeah, cos there was no one there to look after you or take your side, you were just let go and whatever happened, happened’.

Rosaleen: ...and I always remember not feeling protected for being different. I always think If you were disabled you got more protection from other kids bullying you or calling you names or hurting you, you know what I mean?

The abuse could manifest itself in manifold manners: including vertically from the hierarchical power structures. Michelle, for example, reports being victimised by a particular nun while Eileen recognised the pernicious impact of racism on her opportunities within the care system as the girls were sometimes sent out to live with host families, often as a prelude to being fostered or even adopted:

Eileen: But I was saying before that happened, me summer holidays I used to be sent to families and one was just outside [city]. I think I was about 11 or 12, I was sent to a family in [town]. It was a farm. They had two kids and they worked all day on the farm. It was only across the road and I had to mind them two kids

and to cook and all such. I didn't know how to cook and sure she came home one day to get something and she complained. [...]. I never cooked in me life and sure to be in the situation like that, do you know what I mean?

Reports of racialised and abusive language and behaviour are apparent throughout the lives of the women while in the institutions. One participant reports the following incident happening at age eleven. Having being transferred to a reformatory from an industrial school she was put to work in the kitchen. That the participant does not report shock or hurt when recounting this story is evidence that even at this young age she processes it as mundane and a normal form of interaction as she brushes it off, focusing like any prisoner on doing her time and getting out.

Michelle: The nun in charge came down one day and asked how I was doing?... and the other nun said oh, she's a great worker, and then she [the nun in charge] came into me and she said, 'you may be a great worker but there are some nuns if they knew a black pig like you was washing their plates they'd never eat off them again.'

PM: How did that make you feel?

Michelle: I just thought, say what you like, I'll be out of here soon.

PM: But it must have had an effect on you?

Michelle: Yeah, for a holy person to say that, and these'd be the ones that'd be sending people out to the missions [...]

Lily: ...and the principal of the school when I went to do the entrance exam she said to me 'remember you are different' and I remember how I felt cos I always felt different

PM: Was she offering this as friendly advice?

Lily: No, it was keep your head down and don't cause trouble cos you're easy identified. You know it, (referring to the researcher).

Chrissie: There was a woman who was ten years older than me and she remembered me as a baby and she said, [name] they used to separate you in prams, they'd have ye all on one side and the white babies on the other, and they

wouldn't give ye the full strength of the milk, they'd water it down for ye and give the full strength to the white babies, cos there wasn't always enough food, and so ye got the worst of it.

Vera, however, was adamant that the nuns in her institution did not differentiate on the grounds of colour:

Vera: I don't think so. I can't remember them ever referring to us by the colour of our skin or it's because of your colour that da da da da da, no - no I don't remember that.

This point was taken further as Vera continued:

[...] so no I don't remember. And you know there was bath night once a week. We all got into the same bath. Didn't matter what colour you were you still went into the same bath.

Location, time and place significantly influenced participants' sense of racial identity and security within the institution. For those who were in institutions in rural areas the numbers of children of mixed African-Irish descent appear to have been higher than anticipated by the researcher. Some participants reported up to fourteen children of mixed African-Irish descent all at the same time in their institutions and known to the participants in this study. Two other participants claimed there were eight children of mixed African-Irish descent in their age cohort in the institution they grew up in the 1950s/60s. They made it clear that there were many more in older and younger age cohorts in the institutions during their time there. In institutions with large cohorts of mixed race girls the older girls provided protection for the younger ones from bullying but also from the nuns and staff.

Vera: Yeah, yeah. Ah sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah, definitely, because the older girls used to mind the younger girls, so there were a couple of older mixed race girls there and one of them was absolutely beautiful and I would have always looked up to her, do you know? And then there was that girl there and she was, I think about 4 years older than me, I think, but she acted like she was 5 years older than me. So she would have protected a lot of us. From physical abuse from the nuns.

She would have spoken up to and even argued for us like ‘don’t be hitting her’ or whatever you know. I kind of had that protection as well in the school. [...] That was tough in those days trying to survive and having a very aggressive caregiver who literally beat the shit out of you.

At other times some of the participants contextualised name-calling as being part of the general exchange of name-calling between children, especially during moments of conflict. This racism is part of the currency of everyday language. It is a common element within the data and underscores the normalisation of racism that many of the participants experienced during this period of their lives.

Michelle: ... [they had] Loads of names for us...doorbell nose, monkey face and all the racist rhymes, you know, like, eeny meeny miney mo, catch a n...r by the toe... and if [name] and a monkey were sitting on a rail you couldn’t tell the difference if [name] had a tail... and all this kind of carry on and nobody was ever told not to say it or not to do it or whatever...

You see I can’t say that black was negative because there was nobody black... even with the name-calling... loads of people were called names and if you were red-haired you were called Redser and if you were fat they called you Fatty, and you know, there is nobody crueller than kids for picking on imperfections and honing in on them.

This benign view of her experience in the institution sees Michelle firstly negate her own racialised identity as well as that of the other children of mixed African-Irish descent within the institution ‘there was nobody black’, while also referring to being mixed race or black as an ‘imperfection.’ This diminishing of the racialisation process that took place appeared in data provided by several of the participants. However, it should be noted at this point, that unlike the children of mixed African-Irish descent, those children with red hair or who were fat were not in the care of an institution because of these characteristics. The mixed race child may also have become fat but it was not the defining feature that led to them being placed in the care system by their mothers or the feature that was highlighted during fights that led to name-calling. What is significant about name-calling incidents is that while racial epithets were hurled at the children of mixed African-Irish descent, the return salvo on the part of the mixed race girls usually

addressed individual characteristics such as red-hair (Redser) or if their antagonist wore glasses (Speckie or Four Eyes) but never racial elements such as Cracker or Honky. When questioned about this, the participants pointed out that such terms, though they had encountered such terms in films around that time, they never gained the same currency of usage that racial slurs for black people did. Moreover, it never seemed to make sense to the mixed race girls to use racial insults in such instances as calling someone white had no negative connotations. Everyone was white, that was the standard.

Eileen: The only time anyone ever made reference to me was say in an argument and they would call you Blackey say, or nignog, otherwise we all got on well...

Rosaleen's memories of the institution were also positive:

PM: Do you think the nuns treated you differently to the other kids?

Rosaleen: No, No I actually don't think so...like I said to you before, you know, I haven't actually, really come across much racism even in my growing up life and even then I don't think it was to my face...

In stark contrast, however, this positive view of black child and nun/staff relations is contrary to what she says in the following statement, which is more indicative of what other participants had to say. When asked to elaborate on this point, she remembered that she did not feel protected and wondered, at times, why she had been born. Preferential treatment was given to other children if any name-calling occurred, while the children of mixed African-Irish descent were ignored or left to fend for themselves:

Rosaleen: [...] but there would have been times when you were called names and nobody ever got told off...a lot of name calling, kids get frustrated they pick on things...there was no awareness or no protection for me... nobody ever got told off, that's what I probably felt.

Like if you called [another child] a cripple you would be in huge trouble but if you said you were called a nigger [the nuns/staff] would say get on with it, and say stop telling tales.

Factors external to the home sometimes impinged and played an aggravating role in how the participants were viewed by white children and staff. The next participant references the 1963 case of Shan Mohangi, a 22-year-old South African student of Indian descent, studying at the Dublin Royal College of Surgeons, who murdered his 14-year old girlfriend, Hazel Mullen, on Harcourt Street. Rumours, with no backing in fact, abounded that he ate some or all of his victim and this unfortunate tale entered into Dublin mythology. In the following statement Michelle's sense of personal identity is threatened by this event, meanwhile she creates a moral distance as she refuses to identify with 'this black person'.

Michelle: I remember they were all talking about it, the black person who committed the murder...and I mean everybody was talking about it, and it was just such a negative thing that this black person had done this murder...

Trócaire is the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Each year it runs a fundraising appeal during Lent, with Trócaire boxes distributed nationwide through churches and schools that are then collected after Easter. The underlying concept is that through fasting from certain luxuries surplus funds can be given to the poor, in this case the poor of what were termed Third World countries at this period. The Trócaire box then became a symbol of the poor in these countries – much as the penny for the black babies' box was for earlier generations of Irish (Fanning, 2002: 16). The particularity in Ireland is that Trócaire boxes became an everyday object in the homes of many people in Ireland from 1973 to the present day. Trócaire boxes have been distributed through Catholic schools and Catholic Churches since the 1970s leading to this object becoming a normal part of the Bourdieusian habitus for at least six weeks each year for countless generations of Irish people.

Consequently, generations of Irish people grew up with this concept of people from Africa and Asia as being people only to be pitied, in need of charity, and of having their souls saved by generations of Irish missionaries (O'Sullivan, 2014). This, in turn, had an impact on the everyday experiences of the participants. Chrissie, in particular, felt this was an event that had a considerable impact on her identity as a mixed race African/Irish child.

Chrissie: You had the Trócaire box, year in year out. I dreaded it because it opened up a lot of abuse, and there were different particular times of year where I would experience more racism... and Lent was one of them, six weeks of Lent... You saw poor black babies everywhere, and poor black kids, and poor [Irish] kids being forced to give up their pennies and they'd take it out on you.

It is not possible to interpret whether the institution was more hostile than the outside world but for some who were schooled, fostered or adopted out of the institutions, racism followed them outside the institution as well:

Michelle: I hated going into strange places ...I knew I was different when we'd go to B [...] or D [...], maybe kids would shout at you and call you names, call you Blackey...

Veronica: I hated it. I was the only black child in the school. I was called nigger, I was stared at all the time. I remember turning around once and screaming 'what are ye all staring at?' And they would ask all the time where are you from? Where are you from?

PM: Did you understand the concept of racism?

Rosaleen: No, no, but this is something like when I was a child ...not a little, little child but not a big, big child, but I remember thinking why was I born...but not in a positive way... but things must have happened ...I remember going to secondary school and being called blackey.

Attitudes to mixed race and Irish identity

Negative attitudes and confusion around identity based on colour was prevalent among the participants. There was no collective sense of identity as mixed race or with minority black populations. What was evident was the forceful attitude that formed regarding 'black' strangers the participants encountered while young and trying to negotiate their own space in a white world. In some cases, there was a total negation of, and aversion to, other people of colour. Participants constantly refer to themselves as 'black' but when they encounter other black people, mostly outside of Ireland, for some participants they

are unable to connect or see themselves as related to the wider concept of black as it pertains to Africans or other Brown nations. The discussion of fear and loathing around meeting non-institution black people suggests that they suffered from a fear of the other by association, and further marginalisation within the homogenous Irish population.

Chrissie: ...and I learned to despise African people, I wanted nothing to do with them, I believed they were inferior people, I believed they were ugly; I believed they were incapable of doing anything for themselves. And why wouldn't I believe? I learned that people who looked like me weren't capable of doing anything for themselves.

Michelle: And I remember he brought me to a party and I told him I wanted to leave the party, that I was frightened. He said 'why are you frightened?' and I said 'cos everybody's black and he said 'you're black yourself'... (Laughs loudly) But I never saw meself as that, even though I knew I was different even from the name-calling.

Rosaleen: Yes, I remember this black fella ...he was from St. Kitts and he was mad about me and I suppose ... I have to say and I didn't know why but there's never been...(whispers) been like a black guy that I fancied...and I don't know why I'm whispering that...

Chrissie: I remember distinctly if I went anywhere in Dublin and I saw another black person, I was petrified. I hated it, you know, like I didn't want to know. I didn't want to look at them or speak to them or that ... I couldn't tell you the reason for that...

While some felt a sense of ease, for others it threw up a feeling of a lack of self being in multiracial spaces.

Veronica: The minute I put my foot on All Saints Road I thought, yes, I can fit in here. In London you get a bit of everything.

Kathleen: And so I shared a flat with this beautiful [...] girl who was also in an institution in England and she had this... like, she was confident, and she was strong, and so I met all of these African and mixed race-women in London who were strong... I felt like a shadow of these women and felt like I didn't have a particular identity

For several of the participants, in spite of their Irishness and upbringing, their mixed racial heritage and phenotypical blackness clearly positions them as not fully belonging. Their racialised otherness (Giroux, 1997) denies them the possibility of an inclusive Irish identity that is not defined by whiteness.

Chrissie: Carrying that, day in day out, it's very painful. You can't even talk to your friends about that void that's inside you, and it's not just that you don't have parents, you are not even allowed an identity... kids who were white in orphanages they don't carry this, they don't leave the orphanage and feel they are not included...they may have a longing for their mothers or fathers but they take for granted their Irishness... but black people, black Irish, we can't take that for granted, we don't have that luxury...'

Giroux (2006: 40) argues that 'heterogeneity is marked as a problem or a pathology' in a racialised state and homogeneity is seen as 'a kind of *idée fixe*; it is a driving force in the construction of a cohesive social identity and moral community.' Chrissie echoes this view as she provides an overarching summation of her precarious positionality within Irish society:

Chrissie: The government have refused to look at the pain of the people they took responsibility for...black people were set up to fail; we were set up to fail. Our parents were set up to fail, because of the institutionalised racism. They singled us out, they put us in an institution, they decided what was best for us, they decided our parents, our white mothers were not a good option and they were not going to support them to keep us because it was considered unacceptable.

The ability to claim Irishness or self-subscribe as Irish from the perspective of an ‘insider’ contrasts with how one might or might not be recognised as Irish from the perspective of the Othered, as outlined by Olivia.

Olivia: Well I was black, as I said. I didn’t know any black people. And they [white children] were ok but they [friendships] didn’t last long cos as I say they weren’t on the same wavelength. They weren’t my colour so they didn’t know where I was coming from and how I felt cos Ireland was all white at that stage.

Olivia felt strongly that skin colour was a racialised determinant in being ‘Irish’ and felt that the white children evaluated and read a person through the visual first. This recognition was rendered acute since she encountered other ‘black kids’ at school during the week, before having to return to the ‘home’:

Olivia: Cos in the school they didn’t make fun of... Cos they didn’t know me that well you know, and I think there was one or two other black kids, so I felt a bit at ease there. No, I just passed them in the corridor. I just said ‘hi’ or whatever. As least I wasn’t there on my own, there was others there. Unlike the home, all whites. Just all white people.

Commentators such as Ali, 2003; Aspinall, 2003; Aspinall & Song, 2013; Caballero, 2004; Caballero *et al.* 2008; Kushner, 2005; Murji & Solomos, 2005; Parker & Song, 2001 who posit that Britain is a racialised state draw attention to the invisibility of whiteness. Fenton writes (2003: 11): ‘in societies such as Britain, which have only recently developed an awareness of themselves as ‘multi-ethnic’, the ethnic majority is also the ‘silent majority’ scarcely conscious of itself as ethnic at all.’ Parekh (2000: 38) argues that ‘[w]hat is often lost sight of in public discourse is that ‘Britishness, as much as Englishness, has systematic, largely unspoken racial connotations. Whiteness nowhere features as an explicit condition of being British; but it is widely understood that Englishness, and therefore by extension Britishness, are racially encoded.’

This view of whiteness as ‘normative’ and, thus, possessed of an ‘invisible’ meaning within an Irish context has been widely noted (Aniagolu, 1997; Fanning, 2012; Fanning *et*

al. 2011; Garner, 2004). The polarity of being racialised as Other seems to weigh heavily on Olivia:

Olivia: I'm just Irish. My skin is black, but I am just Irish. I don't think my colour should have anything to do with it. I'm Irish and that's it, I'm a human being. Doesn't matter what colour my skin is. No, as far as I'm concerned, I'm Irish, you know. If they want to think otherwise that's their problem, I'm Irish and I'm black.

Britton (1999: 152) in her study of collective racialised identities argued that:

having a non-white skin colour does not indicate a related uniform experience specifically because, first skin colour accounts partially for processes of racialisation and, second, defining oneself and being defined as black is always, to a certain extent negotiable ... the common-sense prioritizing of skin colour as the key to explaining the racialised social world tends to disguise the complexity of processes of racialisation.

This negotiation led Olivia to reject the possibility of transposing herself into a black community even after she left the home: 'No, I've never tried to look for a black community you know.'

Instead, Olivia sought to construct her identity through being gay, though this too was fraught:

PM: So do you think you've successfully managed to be black in Ireland? I mean do you think it would have been easier to be black and gay if you had grown up in a family rather than in the home?

Olivia: I don't think it makes any difference if you grew up in a home or in a family cos you're still going to be criticised, you know, and people are going to make comments. You can't help that. [...] When I realised I was gay I was about 12. You can't be 12 and only think you are black, Phil, that's what I'm saying...
[...]

Yeah, black and gay and Irish, it's a bit complicated. (Laughs) Some of them [partners] they wanted to run away... (Laughs) It was very hard; no one knew I was, so I had to hide it for so many years. Maybe they knew but they never said it to me.

PM: So when did you start ... I suppose coming out, was it a bigger deal to be black than to be gay, or the other way around?

Olivia: I think it had the same impact. Ok, at least with black you can't hide it but when you're gay you can hide it, yeah?

PM: So did you feel exactly the same, that being black and being gay was an issue within the LGBT community and in relationships?

Olivia: No, I don't think my colour had anything to do with it. I was like them, I was gay and they embraced me and everything.

In sharp contrast, Michelle did not identify this essentialism, or what Hall (2000: 152) refers to as the 'exotica of difference' where conformity is bound by the presentation of the self (Goffman, 1959, 1963):

Michelle: I identify myself as Irish mixed race, you know, but definitely identify myself as Irish cos that's all I've ever known even though I was in England for 16 or 17 years. I think I became more Irish when I was over there than what I was when I was here.

When pressed about moving to England immediately upon leaving the institution, Michelle added:

Michelle: [...] I was interested in other cultures and I learned about other cultures but my whole grá is for Ireland and you know I'm a huge GAA supporter and I love the Irish musicians and I love the way of life here and when I was in England I just wanted to get home and can't wait to get home.

Michelle had a reductive attitude to being mixed race seeing it as merely a product of a sexual liaison, but in unpicking this and teasing it out with her she then went on to tie it into how contestation of who you are and where you stand on certain matters requires

the mixed race person to identify themselves as such in order to be allowed to challenge racist perceptions:

PM: What does mixed-race mean to you?

Michelle: Well it just means to me the product of 2 different cultures. Yeah, and it's amazing like, really, cos you know somebody in work is saying something negative or making a racist remark and if you say you don't think that's right and you're black and you feel they are being racist and they say 'but you're not black' and you say to them 'well I am cos there's only 2 colours and one of them is white and the other is black you know' and you're being racist and you're insulting me. But people feel free to be racist in front of you because they become familiar with you and don't think, you know [...] people feel comfortable in your company being racist and you have to pull them for it.

In not having access or knowledge of her 'other' parent's culture she feels her ability to call on this is diminished when claiming a dual heritage and, therefore, she is ascribed as black (Caballero *et al.* 2008), and assumes a monocultural identity. Michelle has in the course of her life been challenged about her cultural and racial heritage in different environments, being identified by others from majority and minority groups as both an insider and the other. She has come to her own conclusions on the matter:

Michelle: So you are culturally Irish and that's all they see. Not having the other parent diminished the value, because, as like I say, I don't know what the other culture brings. I do know from studying other cultures what other cultures have, whatever, but because there's such like, even say in the UK there would have been lots of prejudice and stereotypes of West Indians [...] and I don't know how many times people have turned around and said to me [in the UK] 'you're black yourself' you know.

This view was echoed by Rosaleen when discussing the Afro-Caribbean community in the UK:

Rosaleen: No, because, em, I like their culture and I like what their culture involves but it would never overtake from my Irishness. And if someone said to

me do you want to do something West Indian or something Irish? I would always pick something Irish.

The construction of a mixed race cultural identity was addressed by Michelle as necessitating contact, influence and practices in a child's life that underpins a sense of belonging to each culture.

Michelle: You can learn about it, you can read about it, but a culture is something you grow up in, like if you have a French parent and an Irish parent and the kid grows up and speaks French and goes there and is Irish too and knows how to speak Irish and English and French and how to go from one culture to the other, but we never had that so we don't know.

She is clear that this level of integration of multiple cultural identities cannot occur without socialisation in both from an early age, and her own upbringing did not prepare her for such a crossover between cultural heritages:

Michelle: No, no, I always believed you couldn't be half anything - you have to identify with one side or the other, I suppose. I don't know, but I always imagine it's very difficult to go from one culture to the other unless you knew that from you were very young how to do that. I couldn't do it.

Root (1990) looked at assigned identity. This is an identity ascribed to mixed race people by other groups based on how they look. Within this model of mixed race identity these Irish children are racialised as other and this denial of their Irishness in a dominant, monoculturally-white environment is an issue for Chrissie who feels that due to the racialised view of Irishness as white she is 'denied an identity' and this is problematic when trying to articulate what this denial means to her. It is something with which she continues to struggle. She argues that having this contested identity means that she has to constantly fight for the right to be Irish, or to identify herself as such. Chrissie's description mirrors many of the claims that other participants made in not being able to claim an identity they believe is rightfully theirs. The trope of 'where are you really from' when claiming an Irish heritage was alluded to again and again by the participants:

Chrissie: For me it's like, my sense of identity is still a progress... it's still, it's still ... evolving, because I've had to struggle... it's not so much my identity, it's not being allowed an identity has been primary for me... because I've been always reminded that I'm not...

PM: Not what?

Chrissie: Not Irish...that I'm not Irish. So my identity is a reaction... so I can't take for granted my Irishness... but I don't take for granted my Irishness, because I'm not allowed...and I could say every day, I'm Irish I'm Irish I'm Irish, but if I say this and I live in a world that refuses me that identity then it's a reaction and I'm struggling and I'm reacting against them...

Other participants echoed this denial of an Irish identity by (white) Irish people:

Vera: 'You're not Irish, you know,' so the Irish people let me know you know that that's not acceptable. 'You're not Irish you know' so I kind of don't believe I'm Irish because I've been told so often.

This early and sustained racism had a deleterious impact on the construction of an identity for Evie:

Evie: But my thing is I didn't ask to be born and I was born, with black Irish identity...every day, you're fighting your identity, every day, cos you know you are different but it's a sense of not belonging [...] I mean, I am Irish, yeah ok, but that's just a word.

For Vera, however, the constant rejection of her right to call herself Irish appears to have matched her own sense of not feeling Irish. In Vera's case she cannot relate to the racialised Irish markers:

Vera: [...] No I didn't like my Irishness. I couldn't identify with it because to me Irish was Irish music, country and western and I thought this is not me you know. So no, I wouldn't, I would have gladly said 'no I'm not Irish' but I would have loved to have known where my father was from so that I could have said look, I am from such-and-such [...]

Vera's assertion of not feeling Irish is exceeded by Veronica's vehement rejection of anything Irish about her. Comparing her situation of growing up black in Ireland with that of a person who is transgender, Veronica likens it to being born in the wrong country rather than the wrong body. This visceral level of rejection is unique in this group of participants. Veronica has not returned to Ireland since she left 25 years ago.

Veronica: I used to say my father was American. I just hated it. I felt very alone. I hated it. I felt like a transgender except I was in the wrong country. I really feel that I'm not Irish, I might have been born there or raised there but I am just different. When I went to London I felt straight away at home. I felt at ease and then I found out that (I knew) I was conceived in London. [...] But in Ireland I'm not from there. I'm not like them. This may sound terrible but I don't. I am not like Irish people. I don't belong there. I can't say I am Irish it just won't come out.

This rejection of a denied Irish identity both within the confines of the institution as well as the wider, dominant culture, in turn, complicates the construction of an identity for these women.

Vera: I wanted to be darker, [...] yeah, yeah, absolutely, yeah.

Chrissie: [...] Oh yeah it was already decided that we were an unruly lot and an unfortunate people cos we were not likely... that we would not be able to get married. From the age of 6 I never for one moment forgot that I was black, but I bet if you ask one white Irish, never for one moment did they think they were white... and that's how it works [...]

Jennifer: so I can imagine there was a lot of neglect when I was with ...whoever. Then you're going past that into the next system so of course you are going to be confused because you have no one, you know, and then they pick you up from there and they bring you to [...] and put you into another system. And so you start off in these systems and there's no trust really, you never have trust in any situation and I've gone through my life like that, not having an awful lot of trust.

[...] Not trusting, especially in yourself, I mean I know there are people who are far more damaged than me, [name] for example and another couple of people.

Commentators such as Campion (2017), Hauge (2007), Massey (1994), Taylor and Spicer (2007) and Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) argue that place and location play a significant role in the construction of identity. For many of the women, the construction of a viable identity only became possible in their minds by leaving not only the institution on their sixteenth birthday, but like so many Stephen Daedalois, forging a reconstructed identity by leaving Ireland. This process of forging an identity was not without its challenges especially for those who went to England.

Vera: oh I just wanted to get the hell out of here you know, I've had enough. [...] I squatted until I was, I think... I got a place in a hostel, just when I was pregnant... so I had [baby] [...] so for 8 or 9 years or so, I suppose I was hopping around London from one squat to another.

Kathleen: Meeting other people of colour or just seeing them being, I remember going to Notting Hill Carnival, I was just blown away, feeling like I didn't stand out, trying to blend in somewhat, I think all of that is what I was looking for in London. I didn't really know what I was looking for when I got there but when I got there, I mean, I certainly got that

Life in Britain also presented opportunities to the women to feel at ease in a multiracial environment, and to explore their sexuality.

PM: Did it offer you something you couldn't get in Ireland?

Kathleen: Yes, I think it did, it offered me some kind of... yes, it offered me the opportunity to meet women

[...] like for me I steered clear of people, and when I say women I obviously then got involved with... I was living with this woman she was a friend of mine, a beautiful black woman, we became part of the lesbian community, but I couldn't really identify with the black lesbians because I wasn't black enough so I always had white girlfriends, it was really bizarre [...]

Michelle: I can't remember now, it was only when I went to England that I realised, you know, that there was a big culture out there [...] And I had loads of friends of different races or whatever, when you live in a multicultural society... and the one thing about England, and we say a lot about them, but the one thing about England is that their race relations laws are fantastic [...]

Within this environment, Michelle suggested that the trope of 'where are you from?' took on a new, and unexpected, meaning.

Michelle: In the Irish areas and they'd say, 'where are you from?' and if you said you were from [city in Ireland] and they'd say, 'no but where are you really from,' And even to this day, [...] said that to my daughter, and if someone asks her that question... she gets really angry if someone says that to her. She thinks it's really insulting, as if someone wouldn't tell you where they were really from.

Vera echoed this sense of confusion which saw her embrace the white Irish community in London.

PM: So when I went to London I thought so I was going to become black in a way that I hadn't been in Ireland I was going to find a community and I was going to be black. Did you...?

Vera [...] No. I didn't go with that intention. I went with, I suppose, I went with a 'I'm just getting the hell out' of a hellhole of a house that I was in at the time. And it's interesting that [...] by the age of 18 the foster parents wanted me to go but didn't want to have to do it. So I was running away literally. So I didn't know what I was going into but I just knew that when I got to London I thought wow all these beautiful people. I just saw beauty to be quite honest with you there was lots of mixed. It was like a melting pot in London. So yeah I would have hung around the Irish community.

Vera went on to add: 'But I suppose when you tell people that you're Irish, I didn't fit in there. I didn't fit into the community there too. I didn't feel like... I wasn't West Indian; I wasn't African or Nigerian so.'

Summary

In this chapter, I examined the data as it related to how the participants were racialised as phenotypically 'black' in a 'white' monoracial culture and society and the impact this had on their sense of identity and belonging. In the next chapter, I will examine the impact that the failure to establish successful attachment bonds had on the women's sense of being racialised within the institution or within their foster/adoptive families.

Chapter 5: Social Relations and Social Racialisation

Introduction

This chapter will address the second of the four themes emerging from the data, that of social relations such as that with mothers, fathers and other family members, and friends. It will examine the impact that the failure to establish successful attachment bonds had on the women's sense of being racialised within the institution or within their foster/adoptive families, thus rendering problematic a successful social racialisation which would assist the child/teenager in creating both a stable racial identity within a monoracial society and the development of a sense of belonging in Irish society.

Attachment, as we saw in Chapter 2, presents some theoretical concerns when addressing both black mixed race children in institutional care (Banks, 1996; Levine & New, 2008; Twine, 2000 amongst others) as well as the phenomenon of claiming within what we have defined as parentless parenting environments (Ainsworth, 1979). Quality and stability of caregiver-child relationships are factors theorised to play an important role in the general development of infants and young children (Bowlby, 1951). It is germane to this chapter to point out that attachment issues were addressed in the paragraph referencing children of mixed African-Irish descent ('coloured'), namely Dr. C.E. Lysaght's 1966 report on Industrial Schools and Reformatories. As a preamble, Lysaght outlined that his personal instruction by word of mouth 'was not to confine myself to the purely medical and physical condition of the children but to go into and report on their environmental conditions which have a direct or indirect effect on their well-being and health, physical and mental'. He observed 'a certain number of coloured children were seen in several schools,' he went on to report that the coloured girls were:

at a disadvantage also in relation to adoption and, as they grow up, in regard to 'god-parents' and being brought on holidays. It was quite apparent that the nuns give special attention to these unfortunate children, who are frequently found hot-tempered and difficult to control. (CICA, 2009: 4.93)

He concluded that the 'coloured' boys do not 'present quite the same problem. It would seem that they also got special attention and that they were popular with the other boys' (at 4.93).

The mother and the Other

While the placing of the children into the institutions was invariably carried out by the mother, there was great variability in this process. Several participants reported that they had been placed through the courts into the care system by their mothers. Another was taken into care by the local Health Board because of the mother's inability to care for her and her siblings, and perhaps, due to their skin colour as many of them believe, they ended up in industrial schools and reformatories. The data suggests that many of the participants are aware of the symbolic violence of 'forced surrender' of children as opposed to 'giving up' their child (Andrews, 2018):

PM: Do you think she wanted to keep you?

Dolores: 'I was sent there because I was homeless; I don't want to talk about my mother or anything. [Dolores elaborated] 'It's on my file that she did try, it's on my file that somebody complained about her to the courts and they took her off me.

In Chrissie's case the objection to her presence within the family home came from a family member as she reported:

Chrissie: My mother wanted to come home, so she came home to Ireland and she lived at [...] and, so I'm told, [...] kicked us out because [...] didn't want a coloured child in the house [...] So my mother had nowhere to go with me, so I was put into the care of the courts, the State I guess, and the court sent me to (name of institution).

Six participants who were born in the UK were placed in care or physically abandoned by their mother and one reported being repatriated as part of policies such as that enacted by the Children's Committee of London County Council who repatriated hundreds of Catholic children to Ireland during the 1950s and 1960s (Garrett, 2003).

Jennifer: I was born into the system here [UK city] and then because of... well I never quite worked it out but they had a thing called the Daring policy¹⁸. So it was a policy to shift all these Irish children who were in care. It happened over a

¹⁸ Children's Committee of London County Council's policy discussed above.

period of 11 years so I was one of those kids. [...] I was gobsmacked cos like when I was reading this document you might have a chance to read it but its like 90 pages long... it was like bloody hell this is me, this is me. I'm reading exactly me, what happened to me. How I came to be in Ireland, it's right there.

To be an unwed mother in Ireland of the 1940s to 1970s was to occupy a position of outcast (Garrett, 2003; Luddy, 2000, 2011). The unmarried mother and her illegitimate child have historically sustained a deeply problematic relationship with the social order (Farrar, 2005; Fessler, 2006; Saeger, 2001). The subject positioning of unmarried mothers as fallen women inscribed on them a corruption of their Catholic teaching and a flagrant disregard for the mores of the wider society (Earner-Byrne, 2007; Luddy, 1992; McAvoy, 1999; 2004; 2012a; 2012b; 2013). In the case of the 'coloured' children the disregard for said mores is adjudged more flagrant and places the African father centre stage given that the colour of the child belies that this was an ordinary affair with a local Irish lad (Goulding, 1998). The lapse in moral judgement was thus intensified for these women, not just for the perceived sin of sex outside marriage, but one that shows the woman has wandered so far off the path of social acceptability that she has no choice but to relieve herself of the thing that underscores her shame and will stigmatise her and ruin her opportunities for a respectable position in society, including a future marriage, if she fails to do so. Furthermore, the possibility of integrating the child into a family through falsehoods or other manipulations such as the grandmother of the family claiming the child as her own while the birth mother plays the role of an older sibling (Luddy, 2011), was not an option in this case given the racialised appearance of the baby. To avoid the pit of despair that was the Magdalen Laundry, the mother may have felt she had no recourse but to 'surrender' her baby.

PM: Your mother was 29?

Vera: She wasn't a teenager or anything like that, so you know, we think she was protecting herself from going into the Magdalen laundries basically or some sort of laundries and that possibility was, you know... She probably would have felt she was a woman out of wedlock in the 1960s, so no joke.

Rosaleen, born in the early 1950s reported that her mother was embarrassed by her child's blackness because her mother's sisters had children outside marriage but they

were kept in the family and raised by their grandmother in Ireland as she explained, '[...] but my aunt was over there and she had a white child, 4 or 5 years older than us and he was sent home to the family to be reared, but we were put into the home.' This sense of being rejected by their mothers according to this racialised criteria – what Ahmed and Stacey (2001) and Grabham (2009) describe as corporeal flagging – reflected the reality of Irish society during this period where race is coded as culture and visible forms of cultural representation did not include the black baby as part of the legacy of Irish cultural history. Just as the nation is imagined, and produced through everyday rhetoric and maps and flags (Gilroy, 1993), it is also constructed on the skin and through bodies by this corporeal flagging as the nation is embedded on the body through the mundane.

In discussing the role of their mothers the women had varying attitudes and feelings about how they had been abandoned and how they viewed mothers and mothering in their lives. The subject positioning of their mothers within Irish society as 'fallen women' and through their liaison with black men, as sexually deviant, is viewed through the lens of the social mores of the time (Luddy, 2011).

PM: Did you find out much about them in your file when you got it?

Nelly: There was a birth cert with my name, but the file says that they think the name given by my mother was a false one cause they were never able to trace her. It just says 'father unknown.' Nobody even said how I got to be there or anything and the nun in charge was dead when I went to ask for more information. They were very lackadaisical in that manner. Or they didn't want me to know!

Interactions with their mothers when it occurred during the years of their incarceration were emotionally fraught. Subsequent interactions with their mothers later in life appeared to offer only compromised relationships. Three of the mothers were dead before the participants left the institution, two of which were suicides; and for others their search led to further rejection or hostility. Two stated they had no interest in finding their mother and had never attempted to do so. For others the inability to connect remains:

Evie: I met my birth mother she was from the country and she was horrible.

Evie: I met my birth mother she was from the country and she was horrible. This point was re-emphasised later during our interview. **Evie:** So the thing is, my mother, she was from the country, (name of mother) – I did meet her, not a very nice person, but anyway [...]

Lily: I've written to her several times and I've said I genuinely don't want anything from her, it's a bit late now but...but I think in 2000s in the year 2000 [year she tried to make contact] you should at least be able to have a conversation but she doesn't want to, so she'll take it to the grave and that's her decision. I went to Barnardos and tried to make contact with her, and however way they make contact with them and they got no reply and they said once we get no reply we cannot go any further, but we can seek more information, say from my aunt, she had two children out of wedlock as well... so my first cousins...so she was able to ...

we made contact with them [her cousins] and when we met I had more information for them than they did for me, I had a picture of his mother and her address and was able to tell him a few things about her because she always wrote to me, kept in contact with me and I'd say she was pining for her own kids that she's given up, cos she never got married. I think my mother has got married and has other kids, I do believe I have more family in [name] or wherever.

The data suggests that the impact of being 'surrendered' by their white mothers had a lasting effect on the participants:

Jennifer: First I was in [location] for the first four and a half years. I didn't have a mother, which is what's come out of the files, which is awful to know when you come out of your bloody 60s. That you didn't have a mother just because you just didn't know what happened for the first four and a half years of my life, and it's only because of this whole thing with R. that you know, yea, ok, ...let me go and get my files, and that's when I started to get pissed off and that's when I got really pissed off [...]

Maggie: I feel like, not having a mother who loved me was the biggest thing, you know. It really hurt me when I was let go from the home cos I had no one to tell me, ‘Maggie, this is what a family is.’

Nancy: How could..., how could I know who I was, I never had a mother or anyone to tell me?

This feeling of rejection by the mother could impact one child more than its sibling(s), even if both were as Eileen puts it ‘Negroid and coloured,’ especially so when race was viewed through the interlocking mechanisms of intersectional gender (Collins, 1994, 2005; Stack & Burton, 1993).

Eileen: It’s not that I didn’t get on with her. I had a brother as well and he used to come from [name of institution]. She’d come down every couple of months. I was the black sheep; he was the apple of her eye. He is [...] older than me. Like anything that went wrong it was my fault. If she seen him doing something wrong, like break a glass let’s say, she would turn around and say, Eileen what are you doing? Everything was Eileen’s fault. I became very resentful; I feel it still, it’s not very mother-daughtery. But I always resented her for that you know.

PM: Did you not feel or believe that she loved you or cared about you?

Eileen: No, I think she only took me because the nuns wouldn’t let her take one and not the other... I found out afterwards that she used to be going down to [location] to see [participant’s brother] and never came near me. The Christian Brothers in [location] were very close to the nuns so they must have told stories. So then she started taking me out. [...] Do you know what I think it was? she used to always say like, [participant’s brother] is very like his father but she never said it about me, or like, you’re like your father. He was very like his father so she only wanted a relationship with him but she had to take the two of us. Yeah I always had that notion.

Eileen was silent for a few moments before concluding this story of her mother’s reluctance to take her out of the home without what she assumed to be some external prompting.

Eileen: I think that she blames me for her being tied down; like having one child was enough but having the second, like, she resents me. I get that impression. You know, like if she hadn't had me, and that, I always picked up on that anyway. Like she was going down to see him [participant's brother] behind me back, like, I know I said earlier. But I know she was going down to [location] and like the two schools, they always kept in contact.

This behaviour led Eileen to develop a sense of ambivalence towards her mother. 'I could take her or leave her like. There was a lot of times I was to meet her and I never met her'.

The factors associated with creating a secure attachment are numerous and complex (Thompson, 2008). However, maternal sensitivity and care that is responsive to the needs of the child has consistently been identified as one of the most influential factors (Bowlby, 1969; Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989; Wolff & van Ijzendoorn, 1997). A woman who gives her child up for adoption does so at the cost of losing forever her emotional, legal and symbolic ties with this child, as well as her parental status. Not to be overlooked are also the many losses associated with the guilt caused by this act of relinquishment, which stands in stark contrast to our ideal of maternal feelings that are naturally spontaneous and unfailing (Kirk, 1984; Miall, 1987). The sort of guilt felt by her mother was in Rosaleen's view limited. [...] 'Rosaleen: I know she feels this big guilt. It's Catholic guilt; not guilt for putting us in the home.' The rupture that occurred for Olivia and her mother was permanent and never repaired as she perceived her mother's action as an act of selfishness with no discernible sense of guilt involved.

Olivia: [...] As far as I know my mother couldn't cope with us and she found it hard, the situation, and also we were black as well and she just thought put us in and she fecked off, she couldn't handle it.

PM: How did you feel about that?

Olivia: At the time... abandoned, she didn't give a shit about us, she was just thinking of herself, she didn't care about us, she just put us in.

PM: Did you see her again?

Olivia: No, never seen her again.

PM: Do you have any idea as to what happened to her...?

Olivia: No, no idea.

PM: Do you have any interest...?

Olivia: No, no interest.

The impact of the realisation of being left in an institution on Vera created a vivid sense of hurt and anger.

Vera: I think I was 9 or 10 - yeah about 9 or 10 - so I became quite angry after that like how dare she put me in here? Like how dare she leave me? How dare she? ME? I was disgusted with my mother oh yeah, absolutely. I would have, oh gosh, I don't know I would have maybe have asked why? Why did you leave me? Or whatever you know, and now, I understand now why she did, but back then you know. But I suppose life was so hard you know [...]

The role of the mother as the gatekeeper of why the child was in the home was combined with a prevailing reluctance to give the child any information on the identity of their father and occupied the minds of most of the participants. This reluctance on the part of the gatekeeper led to a general sense of friction between the mother and the child especially after the child had left the institution.

Michelle: No real impact with my mother. I can remember her visiting the school a couple of times back then... I never had a visit from her from I was about 6. When I was in my late 30s I tracked her down and she had been married and had 4 kids of her own and she never told them about me and I was able, kinda, to build up a bit of a relationship with her. But she wasn't very forthcoming about the circumstances in which I was born. She never really told me anything about that, so I never really got a definite confirmation about anything. My sister who was with her at the time asked her and she said you were a one-night stand and that closed the door on that and she wasn't going to talk about it.

Eileen also felt unable to obtain any useful information about her father when she tried to broach the subject with her mother. Furthermore, it had a damaging impact on the

construction of a sense of racial identity as it 'cut off' [Eileen] any avenue for exploring her racial socialisation.

PM: What was her relationship with your father?

Eileen: I don't know, she never spoke about him, never discussed him. Yeah, I asked my mother where I came from, she just said Nigeria, and she shut down then. So I never bothered, do you know what I mean? I mean what's the point? Anyway I wasn't her favourite child so you know, she probably told me off, don't be asking me that and just cut me off. I think getting pregnant once was you know ... but getting pregnant again I think I was the cause of her resentment, yeah do you know what I mean? I always got that impression anyway you know. Like what if I only had the one child and I had me boy?

Rosaleen's questioning of her sister's father's identity also led to a very sharp rebuke and was shut down without consideration for the impact the mother's response might have on Rosaleen.

Rosaleen: It was a fucking one-night stand, she says, and don't fucking ask me about yours, she says, because yours was as well. And that is the sum total of my knowledge and my conversations about my father, ...and obviously they didn't have long-lasting, loving relationships.

Jennifer who was abandoned when her mother failed to collect her believed that there was little her mother could say to repair the damage done following such an event:

Jennifer: This is what she told me. She was very non-committal, my mother. She told me nothing. Like it's going to be hard to say I walked out on you anyway, isn't it? So she never told me. So she just let me be in that sort of awe meeting my mother. She left me in that. But there was something that couldn't sustain so I moved [...]

PM: Well was she here for long [in the UK] before you were born?

Jennifer: Well I don't know, these are the things she wouldn't tell me, she wouldn't tell me anything, she told me nothing...

Evie had reached the end of the road with questioning her mother about her father and felt she needed to back off and let it go now despite her fervent desire to find out more information about her father and where he came from; '[...] she was one of those horrible, horrible people and I've haunted her enough and I can't annoy her anymore [...]'

Familial complexity arises when one views the narratives of the participants alongside the actions and attitudes of their biological families regarding their mixedness. Lily considers this as she discusses how her maternal family fostered a white Irish child and how they colluded in concealing her mother's whereabouts from her when she tried to find her.

Lily: I was about 14, I think, and I met my mother at that time when I was in first year. I had so many questions to ask but too afraid to ask them you know? I didn't feel entitled that I could, I mean I didn't know those words then. She arrived to visit my brother and myself in [name] and she arrived off the train and she had another lady with her, [name]... they had fostered or adopted another girl called [name] but she was white.

PM: What? Was she married at this time?

Lily: No, her family, my grandmother, the family, they had taken her in or adopted her or fostered her, but they gave us up because we were black.

PM: But on the day you met your mother how did you feel?

Lily: I just felt very shy, bashful and I didn't know who the lady was anyway cos she introduced her as a friend, that was ok too, but she since disclosed that she was a family member and that she was fostered... you see we used to have contact then, not visual contact, but letters, letter writing, and my aunt who lived in [name] in the home house in [name], fine house I arrived up there twice just to visit on spec and she was a lovely woman. but she told me my mother was gone away to Australia, but she wasn't, she was in the country all the time. She is still alive but she doesn't want any dealings, she just doesn't want any contact.

Mother's family members

The social emphasis on historically authorising legitimate genealogy through the emphasis on blood relations, has meant children conceived outside of wedlock have been

regarded as a threat to the purity or integrity of a system of kinds, natural or cultural (Figal. 2008).

Several participants had white siblings or cousins who were born in similar circumstances to the participants, i.e. to women who were not married. These siblings and cousins were not automatically put into the care of the state. This led participants to understand their own incarceration as a rejection of them, by their mothers and wider family members, on the basis of their skin colour. Chrissie was clear that her mother made a deliberate choice to place her in care while continuing to care for her other older and younger siblings, 'so it's clear to me that my mother couldn't handle the fact that she had a black child because she kept her children, she just didn't keep me' [...]. Chrissie's siblings had also been born outside of marriage but were raised by her mother and it was not discussed that they had a sibling in care. However, in interrogating this information Chrissie saw that the pressures on her mother were increased by the rejection of a 'coloured' child in the house, as opposed to the fact that there were several illegitimate children in the family home:

Chrissie: She kept [...] and put me in, I believe it's because I was black. I believe it and I've always believed it. My grandfather was a very cruel man and he treated my mother terribly... When the children grew up they left and when he died they didn't even come back. They don't even know where he is buried...My mother's sisters knew about me but ...

Kathleen: No, I think my grandmother was a bit of a tyrant and eh ...Apparently my grandfather didn't know anything about us because it says so in our records 'please don't send letters to the house because [name's] father doesn't know about this' ... so the grandmother was talking to the people who were looking to get money from my mother. Because you know they charged everybody. So my mother was never, you know they were never able to find her. She was a bit of a, I suppose, rebel...

Jennifer: So they brought me to [place] put me in there and found my grandmother, cos there's no other person. Cos there's no consent from my mother, to be the person to sign to have me adopted.

Some interactions with the family of their mother's left the participants feeling even more rejected:

PM: So your mother didn't keep you a secret everybody knew about you?

Chrissie: Well my mother's sisters knew about me because they were living in the same house in London, so it wasn't a secret, but it wasn't talked about. Nobody talked about it.

Kathleen: it was very sad because they say I was more upset by my aunt's death than my mother's. But I think, when you take it all into perspective I spent more time with my aunt than I did with my mother and I couldn't believe that this woman who I'd just met, who'd been very kind was, like a replacement I suppose, had died [...] and so I found out a little bit more about her later on and then after that I didn't have any contact with any relatives. [...] that completely changed me, I was devastated.

PM: Did anybody come to look for you from that side of the family?

Kathleen: No

Pm: Was the connection broken?

Kathleen: Broken, completely, totally

Attachment, as discussed in chapter 2, is defined as an enduring affective bond exemplified by a predisposition to seek and maintain proximity to a caregiver, especially in stressful situations. Bowlby (1969) hypothesised that the attachment system is something that children and parents create together in an on-going reciprocating relationship that serves many developmental functions for individuals throughout their lifespan. While there are many nuances in the opinions held about Bowlby's work there is general agreement that poor and/or disrupted parenting is a risk factor for children's mental health and can have serious consequences for the child's later abilities to form relationships and parent successfully. Simply stated, secure attachments develop between infants and their caregivers who serve as receptive targets for their attachment behaviours. When individuals have not experienced secure relational strategies early in their lives, these deficiencies are likely to persist throughout childhood, adolescence and

into adulthood. We should note again that family is recognised as playing a crucial role in the development of racial identity (Anthias 2001) and that a Foucauldian framework helps to situate how racial identity within a family is constituted by discourse and practices aimed at its regulation and organised through paradigms of race and ethnicity (Foucault, 1979/1995, 2000; Tizard & Phoenix, 1993).

The absent father as missing identity component

Attachment to the father, and the concept of a father, were very strong threads running through the dataset. The father was the person who they identified as the ‘raced’ parent and the one that had passed on the phenotypical gene through which lens most of the women navigated their own lives. While some continue, even to this present day to pursue these identities, others have had more success in locating their absent fathers. The need to find their father, as Maggie put it is to ‘just know who I am, was by finding out who he was,’ was very strong amongst the participants.

Kathleen: so really thinking, [the] fantasy that we all had as kids of our parents being Motown singers, and we didn’t think of our mothers, we thought of our fathers because we knew that our father wasn’t a farmer from up the road, we knew that he was someone exotic from somewhere else, or we hoped that he was [...]

Evie: Every now and again you get a bit more information, but for me really I want to find me father, so that’s the way it stands at the moment, d’you know what I mean? So, I suppose every day you have to wake up fighting I don’t mean fighting, but that connection of belonging, I mean I am Irish, yeah ok, but that’s just a word

Dolores: I missed my father much more when I was a teenager.

Veronica: No record of him on the birth cert. Just says unknown. And that really upset me, what’s the word I’ll use ... messed me up a bit as I didn’t know where I came from.

Even when asked about the participant’s mother, the data suggests that the father loomed even larger within the minds of some of the women:

PM: Can I ask you about your mother, where was she from?

Lily: She was from [name]. My father was from Nigeria he was a doctor in the [name of medical school]. My brother is X years older than me, he has a different father, a doctor as well, but in fairness to him, my brother's father was a great man. A great, great man I have to say he did all in his power to track down my brother. For years my mother wouldn't disclose where she had him hidden in the butthole of Ireland and back then to get information for a foreign person was virtually impossible, but he eventually tracked him down and took him on board and sent him to private boarding school and took him over to London and put him through a [named] course and all of that... [interrupted by waiters]

So yeah. So my brother is older than me, so his dad was a very good man and it was through his dad that I was able to find my dad. And now he said my dad hadn't a clue I existed so he approached him and told him, 'I need to tell you something you have a daughter her name is [Lily].' And he gave him my name and it took him a long time to make contact with me but he did. It hasn't been great...I've gone to Nigeria. I've met him, [...]

Lily's final observation above about meeting her father and 'It hasn't been great' reflects a common theme running through the dataset, that of the shattering of the illusory father figure when the actual father is encountered.

Jennifer: But then my father was a rat, he was a married man with a wife down in [location]. Typical black man, you know, typical black man. They never get enough, they always want the next one and the next one. Right?

Lily: I discovered he was married to a Nigerian woman.... he was shocked to say the least, in fairness he came over to see me and visit us in [name] and see the children, but his only fear is protecting what he has and not protecting me. And I told him, listen, I don't want to disturb [your] family...

The following participant outlines a common journey for many of the women from the fantasy of imagining their fathers to be something exotic to the eventual encounter with a mundane reality.

Kathleen: So when I met my father I was really disappointed that he was a two-bit drug dealer from [name of country]. (laughter!)

Kathleen went on to explain the extraordinary circumstances of her first encounter with her father when she lived in the UK and was sharing a flat with her friend, a black woman who held a lot of parties.

Kathleen: [...] various people would come through her apartment and she would be like this is so-and-so and I would think 'ok, dodgy,' and my father happened to be one of those people but I didn't know he was my father. And so one day she said (Kathleen) this is Moses and I said 'alright' as you do. And then one day, I don't know how much time after, [name of father] came by my restaurant and said something to me about me being his daughter and I said 'excuse me, like who do you think you are even suggesting I'm your daughter?' And he started asking me questions and I said, if you're my father I should be asking you questions. And he said, '[Kathleen], I went to prison after you were born and your mother fucked off after you were born.' And then he brought in a picture of my mother, and I knew he was my father then, and his only premise was that I looked like him. He simply looked at me and thought could this be that daughter I had all those years ago, and I was. And I didn't at the time think this is incredible, but it really is. I mean it's one of those stories.

What struck Kathleen after some encounters with her father was that she 'didn't feel emotionally attached to him' and tried to explain why that was the case.

Kathleen: No, that's because he was, I don't want to say a low-life, but it was because of... He apologised for the life that I'd had. Actually, I think because of my experiences, growing up with men, having being sexually assaulted, [...] - all of those things - I hadn't much respect for men. [...] And I think that was the line I used, actually he was just a sperm donor. He didn't do anything wrong in my books at all, in fact, I was really pleased he wasn't a ripper or an alcoholic who would go, oh it's my daughter. He was very astute; and a guy I used to buy drugs off and he said to me, I saw your picture in this guy's cell, he said. They

called him the mad [...], and it was my father. I think he was much more emotionally connected to me than I was to him because I was this lost daughter. But when he was in prison suddenly it was a thing of like, oh now we're family and I was asked to look after his stuff, and the prison asked if I would put him up? And I said 'no I don't really know this man' and 'it's not my problem.' So I kind of blocked him out of my life, and he would call me every Sunday from prison and I'd be all hung over and I'd be 'what d'you want?' you know? It was kind of like that; and one night I dreamt I hung up on the phone on him and I didn't speak with him, and then he came and picked up his stuff and I never heard from him again and I felt bad, but I didn't feel

For some women the perceived abandonment by the father led to an outright, and common, rejection on the part of the participants:

PM: Have you ever tried to find your father?

Olivia: No, no interest.

Other adults and friends

Without the father figure many of the participants displayed disinhibited or indiscriminately friendly behaviour towards any adult, especially men, who they encountered in the institution. Disinhibited or indiscriminately friendly behaviour, characterised as affectionate and friendly behaviour toward all adults, including strangers, without the fear or caution that is characteristic of typically developing children (Bakermans-Kranenburg *et al.* 2011; Dobrova-Krol *et al.* 2009; Smyke *et al.* 2002; Tizard, 1977; Zeanah *et al.* 2005), is often seen in institutionalised children even amongst children adopted or fostered out of institutions into families (Chisholm *et al.* 1995; Maclean *et al.* 1995; O'Connor *et al.* 2003). In Tizard's study of young children placed in residential nurseries in London in the 1960s (Tizard & Hodges, 1978: 12) 38.4% of the institutionalised children were indiscriminate at age 4, approaching and seeking attention from relative strangers as readily as from familiar caregivers. This behaviour may reflect a distortion or disruption of early attachment relationships resulting in a lack of expected input from a stable caregiver in early life. Chisholm (1998), for example, suggested that

indiscriminate behaviour may well be adaptive in the institutional setting, where friendly children may receive what little attention caregivers are able to give.

Nancy: Sure we were so starved of love, we'd go away with anyone who showed us even an ounce of love, of affection, an ounce of attention even. I know all of us felt that way but I think we black kids maybe felt it the most.

Maggie: We'd sit on everyone's lap that came into the place. You'd swing out of their necks, you held on so tight. We were really badly behaved, but we didn't know that then. [...] at the Xmas parties up in the [name] Hotel, you'd fling yourself up on to the knee of any man who was sitting down. Nothing strange, mind you, as we were just children. Just the need for some attention.

Another significant disruption of relationships came about when their attachment to other kids was suddenly, and usually irreversibly, severed as either they, or the other child, were sent away (whether to a family or to another institution). Several of the participants reflected on the impact this had on them at the time. The lack of psychological insight and input from the institutions for children experiencing trauma are seen in the two stories of loss from Chrissie and Kathleen whose mother died while she was still young:

Chrissie: she was my best friend... she left when she was about 10 or 11, nobody told me she left, and you are not told, one day you just wake up and they are gone and there is no room for that loss, that loss has never been acknowledged just people come and they go and the pain, and you just try and protect yourself, learn to protect yourself. I just stayed quiet. I did not raise my head and I know another person who didn't and she suffered the consequences. I think now... more I think it's hit her hard now.

Kathleen: [...] I wasn't told that particular fact, but I was told she might not make it that's what I was told when I was put in the room on my own and just left in this room, and then the next day I was told she didn't make it and I was still left in this room and the nuns would come in and say 'sorry dear' so it was like those times, well there was no counselling or anything at that time and I was

never the same again and then I discovered later on they'd found her dead it's in my records and everything, [...] So I suppose the reason I think this is interesting is because it does have an impact on your life and about who you are and so that sense of building a connection and then that connection being cut and then having to go back into an institution where that is not acknowledged has to have an impact on you as a child, as an individual and as an adult?

Nancy identified that the impact of losing the attachment to another child of mixed African-Irish descent had on her.

Nancy: Someone could be gone [from the home] for ages and you wouldn't even have been told. Sometimes you didn't even notice until sometime had gone by [...] this was really hard when you lost the other black child in the place. That's when you felt you were really alone.

Chrissie described how she was one of fourteen other black children in the home:

PM: How many of you there were black?

Chrissie: Fourteen.

PM: Fourteen?

Chrissie: Yes, I have a photograph of us, I hope I can find it, a journalist did a write up on us, these coloured kids, the word the journalist used to describe us – 'phenomenon.' They took all us black kids outside and took a photo of us.¹⁹

Having the support of other children of mixed African-Irish descent helped Chrissie understand her own identity development as the following extract shows:

Chrissie: I remember exactly when I became conscious, I was reminded, I was told who I was; it was a television programme, one where you had the big, fat, black nanny who was dumb and she seemed to worship whites and I thought she was hilarious like everybody else did, and I like everybody else did laughed at her, ugly and stupid I thought she was, I thought she was hilarious and then this older woman came to me this older black woman and tapped me on the back and she

¹⁹ Photograph and accompanying article appeared in Ireland's Eye magazine, April 1969 (Kelly 1969).

says ‘and who do you think you are? I knew something was wrong, but didn’t know what was wrong and it hit me in my stomach I could feel the sickness and that’s when I began to realise that I was different.

The severing of this community had a deleterious impact on Chrissie when they left and she remained in the home as the only black girl. Her ability to form close-knit relationships also impacted on her own sense of identity and belonging in the home.

PM: Did you know anything about yourself or wonder why you were black or were you curious about where you came from?

Chrissie: Oh absolutely! I remember looking in the mirror and wondering why people were laughing at me I couldn’t figure it out, I thought I looked ok, I thought I looked fine, in fact I looked a hell of a lot better than some of them. What’s funny about me? I couldn’t figure it out when I started to ask myself the question, I couldn’t work it, I couldn’t work it out and then I just decided it had to be my skin colour I must be ugly because I’m brown, and then I started to close in, and you do, Phil, like even though there were fourteen kids in the orphanage who were dark skinned, brown skinned, they left, because when I went to secondary school they all left and went to boarding school I was the one who stayed in [name] [...] I knew I was going to be singled out I knew I was going to be mocked and laughed at. And you would like... there was no one to say anything to. Or no one to talk to, to say I’m scared. So you just swallowed it back.

PM: But did you not have the other kids to interact with?

Chrissie: They were gone.

PM: Were they all older than you?

Chrissie: No, they weren’t all older than me but you see they were gone [...] they were all sent to [name] boarding school but I was considered too dumb. That’s why I wasn’t sent away to boarding school. I was considered one of the stupid ones, basically, so I stayed in [name] so by the time the [name of secondary school] was built I was the only black child there. I was the only black one because the rest of them were gone.

For Chrissie this isolation would continue past her time in the home as she found herself equally bereft of a community when she was discharged from the institution aged 16 as ‘Most of them [the girls she knew in the home] just left the country, a lot of black Irish left because of the racism.’ For many of the children, their blackness is thus accentuated through the white relational context in which they are located:

Nancy: Who could I talk to about missing...about not having a mother? About not having a father? I was the only black child in a home of homeless children.

Fostering/adoptive families and racial socialisation

Though there is much talk of ‘primary caregivers’ in most recent work on attachment theory, Bowlby in its earlier incarnations prioritised the mother-child relationship, reflecting dominant cultural prescriptions that deem women the natural caregiver of children and develop models of good mothering based on middle-class norms (Contratto, 2002; Símonardóttir, 2016). Nevertheless, for some of the participants fostering, and even adoption, offered a chance to experience a family and a home other than the institution. The data suggests that the racialised responses of the foster/adoptive fathers, as well as other white natural children, created an environment where attachment ties were difficult to forge successfully though many of the participants felt love for their foster/adoptive mothers.

Veronica: I had a good relationship with my mum and still do to this day. They [the biological children] were jealous. I think they resented the relationship I had with my mum and she can’t mention my name to them to this day. [...] They resented that she adopted me, I don’t know why her husband adopted me as he hated me and showed it on a daily basis. I think it was partially because I was mixed race but predominantly because I had such a good relationship with my mum. They hated me. Why did she adopt me? I got so much resentment for that. But I wasn’t the one who adopted me. They adopted me. They just resented me and my mum, we just got on really well. [...]

Vera described how her adoptive father continued to reject her into his old age.

Vera: People would say to him, you know, so he would say I have five sons, and people would say oh I thought you had six? And he'd say no I have five. I have five sons. You have six, [father's name] and he'd say no I have five and he'd add - a wolf. Completely and utterly deny me even though I was there since I was four, long before they had their own children. [...] So complete and utter was the rejection from him that he never even spoke to my husband.

While many of the participants felt rejected by members of the fostering/adopting family, Evie questioned the competency of many of these families and their motives for fostering or adopting racially mixed children:

Evie: So my philosophy is that people who adopted children in those days, where were they coming from? Were they from functioning families? Cos I don't think they were, I think they were dysfunctional people in the sense they had the money, but did they have the tools, did they have the love did they have affection to give to these children. To me it was just, she's black, handy and in the store, or whatever, we'll dress her up show her off, but show any of your own personality we don't want to know you. I left when I was sixteen, I don't even know how I'm alive today

The most important interrelated personal variables that influence adjustment are: self-esteem, the sense of personal competence and control, the degree to which the child feels secure, and the degree of involvement in the family ('I never belonged in that family, they never let me' [**Nancy**]). When there are weaknesses with regard to these variables, children make a more negative assessment of their situation and develop strategies which are less satisfying, such as withdrawal, depression, projecting the blame on their biological and adoptive parents and externalising conflicts through anger, aggressive behaviour, theft or lies. A small number of these children are eventually led to seek psychiatric assistance, in particular those exhibiting disruptive behaviour or who express intense rage.

Maggie: I was angry all the time I was there, Phil, let me tell you. I hated the man. [...] I so hated the rest of the family.

The sense of being alienated and racialised within the family was very strong and pre-empted the construction of attachment ties. Vera was boarded out/fostered to the same family for all of her time in the institution.

Vera: I remember when I was quite young I think I had just gone to live with them or whatever and they had an auntie in [US city] and she used to come home every year and she made this awful statement about the blacks in America, that they were lazy and dirty. And I remember going into the toilet and thinking aaaargh! Bitch, and looking at myself and thinking what's the fucking problem with her? I didn't know what the problem was because it was never said. Colour was never mentioned [in the house] except for this one coming back and saying the blacks were dirty and lazy. And oh he [adoptive father] loves that. He turns to his wife, auntie Kate says the blacks are dirty and lazy, and I remember, and his wife's reaction was its ok, [Vera], you're not black! (Laughs out loud). And I'm going what! Yeah! you're not black! meaning you know, you're not like that, or whatever. And it was the type of household that nothing was ever talked about, nothing, you know, everything was kept and swept under the carpet. So yeah that really hurt me [...]

All the participants who had experienced fostering or adoption echoed the common theme that the motivation to take in a child of mixed African-Irish descent seemed to stem from the wife and was often viewed as contentious by other family members:

Maggie: Yes. I think it was a big part of the problem. I think they couldn't understand why she wanted to adopt a black child.

Veronica: It was probably her idea. She always felt sorry for the poor black children in Africa and maybe she wanted to adopt a black child and feel she was giving back or something. [...] The older [biological child] used to always get into trouble in school and the social worker came and I remember [the sibling] shouting at my mum, why did you adopt her? You love her more than me! I was in the wrong place except for my mum.

The data suggests that harsh racism could also await the girls within their new families. When discussing the foster family with Veronica it was revealed that she experienced racist abuse from her adoptive family. I queried what kind of abuse did she experience, what was said or who said it? Veronica: 'By her husband and her daughter. Black bitch. The N-word...' This visceral sense of being rejected had an interesting consequence for Veronica's later life choices: 'My adopted father was a short man and he hated me, and black or white I can't date a short man'.

The psychological and physiological effects that can come from experiencing racism are linked to a multiple of stressors for both the individual and the family well-being (Horwitz & Scheid, 1999). Sharing the experience places the racial experience in a wider social context, relating race related stressors to historic social issues, which depersonalise it (Billingsley & Billingsley, 1965). The importance of race socialisation in providing a protective barrier against prejudice and racial discrimination and its role in the development of black racial identity is acknowledged by several authors (Harrison, 1995; McAdoo, 1990, 2007). A common theme amongst the participants when discussing family and institutional attachment was the lack of any racial socialisation.

PM: Growing up without parents of your own how did it impact on you?

Maggie: I felt I just didn't belong. I was in the wrong place. Nobody to look up to. It was really horrible.

Familial race socialisation is the process by which families teach children about the social meaning and consequence of ethnicity and race (Banks-Wallace & Parks, 2001). Through this process, children learn about phenotypic or cultural differences, or both, as well as their in-group's history and heritage (Cheshire, 2001; Hughes, 2003). It is argued that families socialise young children to race to prepare for membership in a marginalised racial group (Banks *et al.* 2001; Cheshire, 2001; Hughes, 2003; Knight *et al.* 1993; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Wong *et al.* 2003). Among families with non-white members, several authors (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Stevenson *et al.* 1997; Wong *et al.* 2003) emphasise that race socialisation creates a protective barrier against prejudice and discrimination and nurtures a positive in-group identity within a hegemonic white society. It is interesting to note that a study of white families suggests that the main purpose of race socialisation is to promote white children's tolerance of

diversity (Katz & Kofkin, 1997), while Hamm (2001) found that most white parents are indifferent toward socialising their children regarding non-white children.

For some of the participants this lack of racial analysis contributed to their sense of being unseen while their racial identity continued to inform the ways that they were perceived. This led to the internalising of the pain at not being able to voice their racialised experiences.

Maggie: I was wiped out of the family picture. I had no identity. How could I even see myself as black in such a family? [...]

Several participants observed that they felt that there was a policy not to offer babies and children of mixed African-Irish descent for adoption, based on a presumption that nobody would want to adopt such a baby. An official recognition of this policy is reflected in the biography of the Irish politician, writer, historian and academic who served as a Government Minister from 1973-77, Conor Cruise O'Brien, who along with his wife explicitly sought to adopt two children of mixed African-Irish descent. In speaking of the response from the religious orders, the biographer observed that 'if they [the O'Briens] wanted a child of mixed race, so much the better. In Ireland, these children were especially difficult adoption placements.'²⁰

Nancy: Yeah, People would touch your hair, Phil, and say what a lovely child you were. And how pretty you were. But for some reason you were never adopted. [when pressed] I think the nuns were behind it.

Rosaleen: one of the people I went to were called the [name of family] they lived on [name] road and he was the [...] and I went out to his house for Christmas and I also went to the [name of family]. They owned the [well known business] and I went to them for years. The daughter [name] went to [name] school and she had a school uniform and the mother would dress me in [name's] clothes and bring us to the spring show. I only discovered from

²⁰ Donald Harman Akenson, *Conor, Volume 1: A Biography of Conor Cruise O'Brien*, (McGill: Queen's University Press 1994), p. 323. Additionally, in relation to the potential for international adoptions, it was 'guaranteed' by the Department of External Affairs (now Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) that 'coloured' children born in Ireland would not be offered to prospective foster families in the United States. No. 33 NAI DFA/5/345/96/1, Extracts from a letter from Seán Ronan to Garth Healy (New York) (345/96) (Confidential) (Copy), Dublin 14 August 1951, reprinted in Michael Kennedy *et al* (eds.), *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy: Volume X (1951-57)*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy 2016). It reads: 'Moreover, there is no 'colour' problem here so that intending foster parents in the US know that Irish children are 'guaranteed' in that respect.'

Sr. [nun] that they were also adopted, and yet I felt quite sort of...out of place...if I had known that I would have felt a lot more on an even with them and I don't know why they didn't tell me.

PM: Were you in a position to be adopted?

Michelle: I don't know, I suppose there was times when there was a question about adoption, but I don't know, I was never adopted.

It is worth noting again the example above of what Bhabha (1994) describes as an act of epistemic violence, how the body of mixed African-Irish descent was approached as though it was a form of public property. This is a common element of most of the dataset as participants describe people just walking up to touch their hair or their skin, (Olivia: 'Jesus, Phil, someone or other was always touching your hair').

Greater attachment security with parents and caregivers has been associated with more positive social skills at age 8 years among children with a history of institutional care (Almas *et al.* 2012). Among very young children, the earliest building blocks of social functioning lie in the quality of the attachment relationships formed with caregivers. Like other aspects of social functioning, disturbances in the formation of attachment relationships are particularly common among children raised in institutions, as children in these circumstances have few opportunities to form lasting relationships with safe and supportive adults (Gleason *et al.* 2014; O'Connor & Rutter, 2000; Zeanah, 2000; Zeanah & Gleason, 2015; Zeanah *et al.* 2005). However, mixed young people in care who experience such transience similar to that outlined in the data are less likely to become successful care leavers as their capacity for resilience is diminished, their attachments broken and their movement leads to a sense of dislocation (Brodzinsky, 1990, 1993; Tizard, 1991). Research findings from Barn *et al.*, (2005) suggests that a multiracial locality may help mixed children feel secure in their individual and group ethnic identity and thus promote their resilience and belonging.

The participants were aware that the promise of establishing familial attachment through the fostering process was undermined by the fact that in many cases all that a foster family offered them was indentured service to 'often unvetted elderly couples as a way of augmenting the elderly couple's income in place of exploring adoption pathways,

decisions made by State officials in pursuit of a policy, whether formal or informal, on the basis of race' (AMRI, 2019: 10).

Eileen: [...] And there was another family I went to. Oh yeah in [town], sent me to another family [...] and eh, remember the old washboards. Yeah, she'd go off into town and she'd say I want that washing done... Yeah, the board went in the sink in the kitchen. I want that washing done before I get back. Yeah, I'd be on the washing board like that, in the sink, and she showed me how to use the mangle.

PM: And you were about 12?

Eileen: Yeah, about 12, that's all I ever knew, I never got nice families. There was other girls, they weren't coloured, now they got nice families - they went out to Howth and Foxrock and everywhere and they were wealthy families. I just got someone looking for a skivvy.

Jennifer: They had mixed race children from the [...]. All of them everyone was adopted/fostered, loose arrangements at the time. So it was easy to fit me in with this family plus this is where it comes in. An aging family right, you know this, you know, is where it didn't make any sense to me. When I was growing up it was a sort of ...I think I was passed over as, you know, she'll be of help to you as you get older, and she will be there to help and they were already sort of aging and they already had sort of disabilities.

Lack of trust

The impact on this breakdown in attachment is very evident from the data, Olivia: 'it left me a wreck, Phil, not having anyone', and though we will look at this in more detail in chapter 7 and life after the institution, I will illustrate two problematic areas for the women upon their discharge from the homes at 16, that of their relationship with their own children and the building of trust within intimate relationships.

Jennifer's observation above that any bit of attention standing in for the love that the child should have gotten from the mother or father relationship somewhat inevitably led

the teenage girls into hurried intimacy and becoming mothers of their own. Here she talks about her son who was also adopted.

Jennifer: Yes, he was adopted, he was adopted at [age]. His thing is a lack of identity even though he had a mixed-race sister [...] or whatever. But we haven't got the connection, it's really weak. And I've just met him and he's got loads of problems and I can't help him.

Eileen: Me first child, I had her in Navan Road, history repeating. (Laughter) I said to myself it's just as well I wasn't married to him... yeah. [...] I was probably [looking for] a father figure or just the love and affection you never experienced, if you know what I mean. I thought if I was with a fella he loved me, you know what I mean? Like whether he said it or not, not realising that it was probably just for sex to say he had sex with a black woman or something or a coloured girl you know. Now looking back, I do now, that's what I think; I didn't at the time.

Rosaleen, in reflecting on her own strained relationship with her mother, recognised that she had made extra efforts to be a good mother to her three children.

Rosaleen: I brought three kids up meself and as far as I'm concerned... it wasn't the home part but I brought three kids up meself and you don't subject your kids to that.

This was echoed by Nelly:

Nelly: I had my [child] when I was 16. I knew straight away no one was going to take her even though I was homeless and ended up in a hostel, but I was determined I was going to keep her.

PM: Did the nuns find you somewhere to live or what happened to you?

Nelly: You must be joking they couldn't wait to see the back of me. They were only afraid that they would be blamed, the holy nuns rearing tramps!! You must be joking! I went to stay with [name] cause she had left about two... eighteen months before me and she said I could stay with her.

However, for all that positivity, Rosaleen identified the common feature of all the children of mixed African-Irish descent and racial beings who grew up without any anchoring attachment, they all seemed to lack trust in others. Speaking about how she would never tell a man in her life about her origins and about growing up in the institution, she observed:

Rosaleen: I don't want to give them the ammunition. You just have to have a row and then they throw it back at me...there's enough they can throw at you. I do wonder were you deprived of so much love at a young age...I tell them I'm from [location]. I wouldn't even tell anyone I didn't grow up with my mother and I'll never tell anyone again. [...]

It's trust, I mean you were rejected straight away at birth and then you could be rejected again and I mean that's why I think it's letting the wall down I think that's why I love my kids so much because they won't reject you.

Summary

Institutional care settings typically do not meet the conditions of the average expectable environment. Depending on the child's age, the average expectable environment encompasses a range of species-specific elements, among which protective consistent caregiving, a supportive family, as well as socialisation and open opportunities for exploration and mastery of the environment play an essential role. The presence of the average expectable environment appears to be an important prerequisite for the normal development of the child (Cicchetti & Valentino, 2006). Due to its regimented nature, high child-to-caregiver ratios, multiple shifts and frequent changes of caregivers, institutional rearing almost inevitably deprives children of reciprocal interactions with stable caregivers. In this respect, institutional care implies structural neglect. A considerable number of studies have shown that children growing up in institutional care are at risk in various domains of functioning, including their physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive development.

This chapter examined the data as it pertained to attachment by looking at issues relating to mother-child relationships and the mother's positioning as the fallen woman and her own role as gatekeeper to information on the birth father. This need to 'navigate' the stories told, or keep guarded, by the mother further complicated the sense of the absent

father and his racial identity for the participants. This had the impact of rendering problematic a successful social racialisation which would assist the child/teenager in creating a workable racial identity within a monoracial society, thus hindering the development of a sense of belonging in Irish society.

In the next chapter, the data related to the role and impact of the institutions will be presented. A total institution is a place where one lives, works, sleeps and eats in the same location with the same people, under a general, rational planned system, and inmates are restricted from engaging with those outside. These features marked Ireland's industrial school system: large numbers of children were housed, fed and trained within the walls of these institutions, which themselves were run on a religio-military system of organisation (Touher, 2007: 15).

Chapter 6: Institution

Introduction

This chapter looks at the third of the four themes emerging from the data, that of the nature and impact of the institution on the participants. Goffman (1961) conceptualised the total institution (henceforth ‘TI’) as a place for work and living where a large number of individuals with a similar status live together for an extended period of time, isolated from wider society and forced to live a common, formal and guided life (Manning, 1992; Scott, 2010). The concept of the TI reveals how through routine, microlevel encounters organisational structures shape the behaviour of individuals and achieves the ‘authoritative imposition of consequential identities’ (Dennis & Martin, 2005: 191).

Total Institutions

Farrington (1992) argued that Goffman’s concept of brutal institutions was problematic and less relevant because some total institutions are not completely total, or as Wolfe *et al.* (2002: 12) puts it ‘not-so-total’ in the Goffmanian sense. Perring (1992: 132) puts forward the argument that there are broad ‘patterns of movement between [a total institution] and the wider community.’ However, if one is interested in historical institutional abuse, their argument is less compelling. All residential institutions for children are forms of total institution (Browne, 2017; Lemert & Branaman, 1996) in that residential care implies an impersonal structure and organised routine to the living arrangements for children (e.g., all children sleep, eat, wash, work, and take their recreation at the same time) and a professional relationship, rather than a parental relationship, exists between the adults and children (Browne, 2009; Manning, 1992). A boarding school, for example, could thus be considered a total institution (Clough, 1990), but is typically so only during term-time, and indeed children and young people may see their parents on certain occasions during term-time (parental visit or the child goes home for weekends/midterm breaks).

TIs frequently have a very high institutional control as well as numerous formal prescriptions on movement, dress, behaviour, physical restrictions, uniform and personal possessions, as well as mortification, degradation and deprivation practices (Clough, 1990; Kenny, 2011, 2013, 2016). Staff-inmate relations are distant, even hostile. Industrial homes as argued in an earlier chapter were total environments for the children in every

respect. Maggie: 'It was the only home I ever knew. [...] what else could you know if you're born into it?'

Industrial schools were as Smith (2007: 2) argues part of the 'nation's architecture of containment', a phrase clearly indebted to Foucault (1979/1995, 2000), which he defined as encompassing both the institutions through which church and state contrived to remove marginalised women and children from the public gaze and 'the legislation that inscribed these issues and the numerous official and public discourses that resisted admitting to the existence and function of their affiliated institutions.' Governmentality of these children was transferred to the Catholic Church. Mahood (1997: 91-9) pointed out that the institutions shared a common aim in recasting the improvident, degenerate and mostly working class culture, and to tame the undisciplined behaviour of its young people. Industrial school staff sought a complete regulation of the daily life of each inmate with the objective of remoulding the personality resulting in a 'strange mixture of caring and corruption' (Coldrey, 2000: 349).

Children, of course, were full-time residents as were the nuns. Childcare staff and support staff, such as kitchen workers, gardeners and maintenance staff all spent differing amounts of time on the grounds or in the home occupying different spaces for periods of time while on duty. The industrial school was clearly demarcated into the nuns' and children's spaces. The nuns decided where children were positioned within the institution. Depending on their age and gender they were placed in specific physical spaces. For example, if the home contained both boys and girls then two spaces were formed to contain each separately. This demarcation acted not only as a form of control over their occupants but also included other goals such as sexual regulation and the breaking down of family relations. Younger and older girls were separated and children with siblings of different sex did not have automatic access to their siblings within the same institution where these spaces were demarcated.

Nancy: The nuns would lock up for the night and then you wouldn't see them again until the morning.

Maggie: My brother was in the other home and you know, Philo, I never got to see him. Not much anyways.

The nuns and lay staff were in charge of almost all aspects of the children's daily lives.

Nancy: 'You couldn't scratch yourself without Sister [...] asking you 'what you were up to?'

How long they might stay there or whether they would be transferred to another institution was decided by the nuns. This frequently meant that friends and even siblings could vanish from the participant's life without any warning as Michelle pointed out, 'People left and we never knew what happened to them'. The pain or impact of separation from a friend appeared to be something that was not considered important in the lives of children in the institutions:

Chrissie: [...] she was my best friend... she left when she was about 10 or 11, nobody told me she left, and you are not told, one day you just wake up and they are gone and there is no room for that loss, that loss has never been acknowledged just people come and they go and the pain, and you just try and protect yourself. Learn to protect yourself.

The data suggests that the participants were subjected to a series of rituals or 'mortifications' (Goffman, 1961: 31) since most of what was contained within the institution was controlled by those in charge and was dominated by 'bells, early rising, domestic chores, interrupted schooling, heavy manual work and pervasive discipline' (Coldrey, 2000: 354).

Olivia: we grew up with someone always telling us to get up, go to bed, its dinner time or its supper time, even if you didn't want it, [...] you're supposed to be here, you're not supposed to be here. You could get into big trouble for being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

For example, what the children could retain as personal bits and pieces, as well as how the children dressed and the space they had access to within the institution. Interaction with those in charge was specific to each institution and access to those in charge was also based on specific need or was mediated through lay staff. Within this form of communal living those with the power controlled the timetables and set the rules for

how the day would be spent, and also how interaction would be carried out between all of the differing groups contained there together.

As has been pointed out by many commentators who have studied the industrial school complex, the totality of the environment was further symbolised by the obstacles which such an institution, which is usually physically distanced from the rest of the world, placed between itself and the outside world. Pembroke (2017: 6) outlines that TIs such as Industrial Schools were usually ‘physically impenetrable, using a variety of features, such as high walls, trees, shrubbery and long driveways to separate and shield from view. However, this is not to suggest that the industrial school was always a completely enclosed institution in the sense of being cut off from the outside world. Garrett (2010: 298) highlights this point in his review of Peter Tyrrell’s autobiographical account, entitled ‘Founded on Fear,’ of his time growing up in an industrial school:

Indeed, this is, perhaps, one of the most interesting aspects of the book in that Tyrrell illuminates the fact that the local community was, in a sense, in the school and not apart from it. Local men, for example, worked on the farm which was part of the ‘school’ and carried out property repairs. There was a tradesman employed in each of the workshops to teach the children a trade and also to make and sell items because the ‘workshops carry on a lively trade with local farmers and fishermen’ (Tyrrell, 2006: 30). Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, a number of the Christian Brothers also seemed to have ‘girlfriends’ living in the Letterfrack neighbourhood.

In his introductory remarks as editor of the book, Brendan Whelan (Tyrrell, 2006: xx–xxi) suggests that one of the most damning aspects of Tyrrell’s text is that it shows:

the way the lay teachers and the instructors, the tradesmen, labourers and caretakers are all woven into the society of the industrial school. It was of course a major part of the community and a sizeable portion of the local economy.

This connection to the extramural community is driven home by Garrett (2010: 298) who observes that ‘industrial schools should be regarded and analysed as employing, as well as incarcerating institutions, embedded within local economies.’ It is also characteristic of observations from the participants such as:

Maggie: Sure, people were coming in all the time. Workers, you know. To fix something, or deliveries. They knew we were there.

Yet, aside from the quantifiably small number of accounts during the first five decades of the Free State, the scale of the abuse and neglect within the industrial schools was not reported. Daly (2016: 179) suggests that there was a tacit acquiescence on the part of Irish society to such institutions ‘that stretched far beyond the Catholic Hierarchy.’ The Ryan Report pointed out that ‘Pressure groups were rare and usually ineffective, the general public was often uninformed and usually uninterested. All these pools of unknowing reinforced each other’ (CICA, 2009: 236). Keating (2015: 106) contends:

Powerful forces were at work to ensure that the conditions within the schools were misreported, minimised, ignored and in some cases, covered up and neither the Departments of Education nor the Department of Justice wanted anything that affected the availability of beds. Officials in the Department of Education were at pains to ensure that their perceived value for money option, of cheap child care, in large scale religious run institutions, continued.

Goffman’s typology may more appropriately be considered a continuum in that a particular institution may exhibit certain characteristics of a total institution, but not necessarily all of them (Burns, 1992), which then may predispose it to exhibiting degrees of totalising practice. Goffman concedes that his classification is ‘not neat, exhaustive, nor of immediate analytical use’ with a sometimes ‘tautological’ nature (1963: 5)

For example, a central characteristic of Goffman’s original conceptualisation of the TI is the latent agency of Goffman’s inmate. What makes the industrial school an uncommon example of a Goffmanian TI is that for many of the participants, they did not enter the institution but were confined there soon after birth or, in some cases, were born into it. For example, Vera says... ‘yeah, I was only in one home. Yeah. Yeah. I was only 3 weeks old. It was my home and those walls grew up around me. [...] It was the only thing I knew.’ And this is echoed by other participants Lily and Jennifer. Lily states ‘I was only 10 days old when I was sent to [name of institution]. Only 10 days old, yeah.’ While Jennifer concludes, ‘I always say I was born into the system.’

The act of growing up from infancy in the home led to a sense of acceptance that mirrors Goffman's colonisation of the inmate's 'self' since it is largely influenced by the particular structures and rules of the organization, which do 'not so much support the self as constitute it' (Goffman, 1961: 154). Kathleen: 'But because I had grown up in an institution you're told what is and what isn't going to be, and you have to accept it and you don't analyse it there and then.'

It is important to note that even amongst participants who knew nothing but growing up in the industrial school, the instinct of looking for a family connection (usually in the form of the birth mother) was manifest. However, these attempts to defend the self and establish non-institutional identities were met with resistance on the part of the institution:

Vera: You know I only remember asking once where's my mother? Where do I come from? Do I have a mother? And I got a big resounding 'no, you have no mother,' and I didn't ask after that!

These secondary forms of resistance (Goffman, 1961) on the part of the participants led them into forming in many cases a jaundiced view of the institution or the role of the nuns therein:

PM: Do you think it was odd to be reared by an institution?

Olivia: I think it was, yeah, but no, they didn't fucking rear you, they dragged you up. They didn't give much to you, they just did the bare amount, you know, feed you, clothe you, gave you a bit of education. [...] Growing up in an institution is odd cause you are depending on a person who doesn't have any connection to you to take care of you.

The industrial school was often physically intimidating and thus reflected the harsh treatment that some of the participants experienced.

PM: Can you tell me about your life in [institution]?

Nelly: It wasn't happy, it wasn't kind, the nuns hated me, I don't know why. One in particular, Sister [name] she never left me alone. All my life I wondered what I did on her, she was always picking on me. If you did something wrong she would chase you and catch you by the ear, but me, she always caught me by the hair and would call me wool head.

PM: Do you think you were treated differently by the nuns or those in charge?

Nelly: Only now I'm older that I think back and see that when they were talking to the other girls they would be giving them advice or looking for jobs for them. I don't think they thought I could get a job or be any good in any kind of job except maybe skivvying for someone.

PM: Why do you think that is?

Nelly: Well it's not like you saw a lot of black people in jobs in Ireland in those days. Plus, I was always in trouble or fighting or something ...

When asked about the structure of the institution Lily told me, 'Well, it was a very scary place, like a big old castle. Not a real castle, like a big old institution, it was.' For Olivia the scale of the home was intimidating in and of itself, '[...] especially the dormitory and going up the stairs, [...] even going to the toilet I used to leg it down to the toilet and back.'

Indeed, for one participant who, like so many in the industrial schools, was a regular bed wetter the ritual of washing and cleaning her sheets each morning was a mammoth task as she negotiated the dimensions of the institution and its grounds.

Eileen: Every morning she used to put me in the cold bath and she'd make me wash me sheet then, and put it on the wash line? I have to walk down the corridor then. There was a long corridor and down the stairs, especially in the winter at 7:30 in the morning, pitch black. I'd have to walk down to the wash line. It was a good walk, half a mile each way, the sheet dripping and trying to get it up on the line and everything.

Commentators have pointed out that punishment, degradation and deprivation were the lot of many children in the industrial schools. Arnold (2009: 71) suggests that punishment was 'the pernicious lubricant on which the wheels' of the industrial schools

relied. Uncontrolled physical abuse was inherent to the industrial school system such that it was accepted at all levels; it was part of the way the schools were run (CICA, 2009: 114-156). Pembroke (2017: 8) points out that ‘Another central aspect to the Industrial School regime was degradation, accounting for the harsh conditions they were forced to live in’. The most common forms of abuse reported are physical violence such as beatings as punishment, sexual violence perpetrated by staff or peers, neglect, undernutrition, and bullying (CICA, 2009). Survivors of the industrial school complex reported being continually in fear of the next attack (CICA, 2009: 153). In addition, children were frequently neglected and sexual abuse of children, including rape, by those charged with their care was a ‘chronic problem’ in a number of Schools (CICA, 2009: 190). The Ryan Report went on that when:

religious staff abused, the matter tended to be dealt with using internal disciplinary procedures and Canon Law. The Gardaí were not informed. On the rare occasions when the Department was informed, it colluded in the silence (CICA, 2009: Executive Summary, 23).

On occasions, some individuals did intervene to prevent abuse, for example, lay staff working within industrial schools (see, for example, Tyrrell, 2006) The participants spoke at great length about all aspects of these punishments, degradation and deprivation practices they endured. The data points to the fact that physical, racial and emotional neglect was commonplace:

Evie: And from a young age I do remember being in the home, I do, but I was adopted then. I do remember signing the adoption papers [...] I do remember the woman saying when we used to go up and see you; you were always left in wet nappies.

Olivia: One night I remember she gave me a clatter across the face and she locked me in the dormitory and turned off the lights...and the lights were outside the feekin’ thing so I couldn’t turn them on again. [...] and it was fucking scary up there, ah, Jesus I was petrified.’

Eileen: [...] Remember that member of staff I told you about, she'd often call you a... like, c'mere you Blackey. She was very cruel. An itinerant girl, was she about 6; like she wasn't coloured or anything. She knew she was an itinerant. The girl was very skinny, she didn't eat much but she puts her lying on the table in the kitchen, lying down and she spoon-fed her the food. Oh she was very cruel. We used to call for the girls going back to school and she was gagging and everything, but she spat it out anyway, and she walloped the legs off her. 'Don't do that again,' shovelling the dinner into her. She was very evil that woman. Yeah, nobody ever complained about her, I think they were too afraid.

A very strong indicator of neglect from the data is the number of the participants that required dental surgery in later life to repair childhood dereliction on the part of caregivers and who reported that dental visits were as rare as hens' teeth. In a previously unreported study of the impact of environment and nutrition (in the form of total calorie and protein intake) on growth in industrial school children (Archer, 1961: 154-156), the researcher remarked on the 'surprising' lack of milk, cheese, meat and fish consumption within the schools being studied. While observing that the children in the industrial schools were 'all well below the standard for English and Irish children from the beginning [i.e. when entering the schools]' she went on to opine that 'many of these children come from poor quality parents, physically and mentally' (*ibid.*: 159). However, her final research reached the conclusion that the inhibition of growth witnessed in the industrial school children was down to poor nutrition (the schools under investigation displayed great variance in children's calorie and protein intake) and also 'due to psychological trauma caused' by the school itself (Archer, 1961: 261). She also alludes to the fact that recording of immunisation of the children in the industrial schools 'was incomplete in so many cases that it has not been included in this study' (*ibid.*: 81) despite the researcher's initial desire to do so. This is a significant observation given the nature of the medical trials being conducted which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The following long passage is significant and worth reproducing at length as it reflects many of the experiences of other participants in this study and encapsulates the commonality of experiences amongst some of the mixed-race survivors of the homes:

Lily: I was always aware that I was different and don't draw attention to yourself cause you stand out anyhow. So I always put up and shut up. Like when we were there [in the institution] we were slapped. Like, 'sure, what are you laughing at?' And then if you cried you were slapped 'ah sure, what are you crying for?'

PM: What was [name of institution] like?

Lily: We would be considered poor, like there was no food. We were starved, let me tell you. I remember so often rummaging through the pigs' trough looking for warm potatoes as opposed to the cold potato we were given. Yeah, and when we went to the national school, the national school was just up from the school, they were all on the one grounds, you'd be watching the day girls until they let something fall out of their sandwich and then you'd pounce on it. I remember this girl, I used to follow [her] around waiting for her to finish her apple so I could eat the core. We knew what hunger was now.

PM: Really?

Lily: Oh yeah, oh very, very, very much so. Starvation! We knew starvation! We were starved, there's no doubt about it and we were made do a lot of... They had a farm and we worked in that place. They had a bakery as well. And the nuns... the nuns, the actual convent, so we used to do all their washing. Yeah, yeah, we were slaves really, when I look back on it now. See, back then, you did whatever you were told.

Much of the suffering that Lily experienced was as a witness to the treatment of her brother who was not a compliant child. His resistance to the regime caused him to be severely punished and this added to Lily's anguish.

Lily: I didn't like my brother, I hated him because he rebelled and I knew he'd get more beating and I didn't care if they beat me but I hated it when they beat him. I used to feel his pain, more so than anything else, and even to this day I would be in tune with his pain more than I would with my own. [...] you were made to desensitise your feelings. [...], We were told 'get in there, nobody else wants you.' That was reiterated several times, and a favourite song of ours, we used to sing all the time 'we're nobody's child', all the time.²¹

²¹ Nobody's Child, written by Cy Coben and Mel Foree. It was first recorded by Hank Snow in 1949 and was a UK hit for Lonnie Donegan in 1956 and for Karen Young in 1969 which suggests it was a well-

Goffman (1961: 154) observed that the self ‘is not a property of the person to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connexion with the person by himself and those around him.’ Laying claim to an identity is thus a negotiated process of social construction, maintenance, and change (Goffman, 1959, 1968). In keeping with Lily’s account, the following passage illustrates that through these practices of punishment, degradation and deprivation the opportunity for self-definition is curtailed by the institution and it becomes impossible to maintain a coherent self-image in the eyes of other people, and oneself:

Lily: [...] I have to be honest with you we were very conditioned about how to think. Our brains were totally determined and dictated to. Sleep. Eat. Even at night time you’d be afraid to go to the bathroom. Many a night I wet the bed. Many a sheet that was hanging out, you go through all of that. I remember one night I wanted to go to the bathroom and to this day I am afraid of the dark and to this day I will not stay in my home on my own, not for love or money... Cause I have this fear of being on my own. Cause I have been in institutions all my life and I say to the kids, I says ‘god forbid don’t put me back in an institution, not back where I started. Even if you put me in a corner and dope me with medication.

No quarter was sought and no quarter was given when it came to the matter of bed wetting and the response by those in charge of children who were persistent bedwetters. The fear of punishment for wetting the bed drove Lily to improvise one night and created a memory that has lingered throughout her life course regarding the fear of being caught.

Lily: [...] Actually one night I remember in particular. Yeah, I remember this incident in particular in [institution]. I was dying to go to the toilet one night and I was bursting, bursting and eventually... We had big dormitories and the dormitory where the bigger ones were had their own little cubicles. And there

known tune of the period of childhood for the participants regardless of their age. The researcher can attest to it being an extremely common song amongst the girls in the institution in which she was reared. The lyrics of the song have an orphan plaintively responding to the singer with these lines:

I’m nobody’s child, I’m nobody’s child, just like the flowers, I’m growing wild.
No mummy’s kisses, and no daddy’s smile, nobody wants me, I’m nobody’s child.

was a toilet down there and of course I was afraid in the dark. And in the bedrooms there was a fireplace and I saw in the fireplace was a vase. And I thought I'll wee in the vase. So there was fake flowers in the vase and I took them out and wee'd in the vase. And I thought I'll wash it and as I put it into the sink the whole bottom fell out. Just literally, like an ash tray so it was. And I thought, oh my God! I was so sick and I cried and cried and cried because of the consequences. And I don't know how resourceful my mind was cause it went into overdrive and I turned it upside down and I put the flowers in it.

When we had a reunion for the Redress Board I went back to [institution] and oh my God, that vase is still there with the fake flowers in it. And the part that broke off I brought it up to school with me cause the national school was just up from here to [points at distance] there and put it in the bin there. And every time the nuns came in to check us, I was in fear that they would pass that vase and see it and I'd have had to own up. But I have no grá for flowers or anything like that, funnily enough. I don't have any dealings with flowers.

Nuns in loco parentis and parentless parenting

As detailed in Chapter 1, children were placed in the care of the state which saw them subsequently being admitted to the care of religious orders who ran the institutions and thus taking on the role of carer in *loco parentis* given the young age at which many children were admitted to the institutions. The data suggests that the nuns ran a total institution whereby they fed, housed, lodged and educated the children. Those responsible for the care of young girls in institutions were from various religious orders of nuns. Their institutions were littered throughout the country and each institution was run according to the rules of their order and the type of care they offered. The low status of the children in the industrial schools, being viewed as the shameful reminders of the stigma of unmarried motherhood (Ferguson, 2007; Ferriter, 2009b), was reflected in the personnel employed to care for them, as those members of religious orders who worked, in what Coldrey has referred to as, the 'orphanage circuit,' were regarded as having low status within their orders (Coldrey, 2000: 11). The schools were staffed largely by individuals drawn from lay members of the order who had 'low status within their congregations' (Coldrey, 2000: 11), members of the community who had not received the same educational and training opportunities as 'teaching Brothers' and 'choir Sisters'

destined for the more profitable private schools and hospitals²². Furthermore, members of religious orders with a drink or mental health problem, or those with a propensity to cause difficulty in some other way, could be placed in an industrial school to keep them out of 'harm's way' (Arnold, 2009: 17; Coldrey, 2000; O'Sullivan, 1978; Keating, 2002; and conveyed in numerous autobiographical accounts, cf. Doyle, 1988; Fahy, 1999; Flynn, 1983; McKay, 1998; Touher, 2007, 2008; Tyrrell, 2006; Wall, 2014). Coldrey (2000) further proposes that the disdain exhibited to these low status lay members of the order by the higher status members may have resulted in them projecting their anger and frustration onto the children in their care.

The nuns, while answerable technically to the Department of Education who had jurisdiction over the institutions,²³ had in reality absolute power over the lives of the children and operated their institutions accordingly. Reports of inspections from the Department appear cursory and did not appear to challenge at the time the dominant position of the religious in their ethos or control of these institutions (CICA, 2009).

The nuns oversaw institutions which, in many cases, were excessively violent places. Studies into organisational violence have examined the features which lead to individuals working in institutions engaging in violent behaviour towards inmates, including towards children (Bauman, 1989; Stokes & Gabriel, 2010). This research suggests that simply being part of certain institutions can encourage 'indifference to human feeling, [and] suffering' (Gabriel, 2003: 169; cf. Wardhaugh & Wilding, 1993). Commentators such as Hearn (1994) and Linstead (1997) have reported that the gendered nature of institutions can facilitate a suppression of the feminine amongst staff that results in aggression and

²² This is further compounded by the fact that the unit dealing with schools within the Department of Education was the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Branch or RISB. This division was responsible for overseeing the certified school system and was also responsible for the administration of the detention centre in Marlborough House. This Branch predated independence and changed little following the establishment of the Free State.

The RISB occupied a lowly place in the Department's hierarchy. Supervising the RISB and the primary schools' unit, as well as other units, was a mere Assistant Secretary when it was common practice to have a Principal Officer overseeing units within the Department (CICA, 2009: 4.1 at 11). The Department of Education saw itself as the vanguard department in the crusade to instil 'true' Irish culture and nationality in Ireland [...] a mission that delinquency or the perceived moral degeneracy, manifest in the very existence of the industrial and reformatory schools had no part' (Keating, 2015: 98).

²³ 'On the foundation of the modern Irish State the responsibility for reformatory and industrial schools was placed with the Department of Local Government, a responsibility it kept up until 1924 when it transferred briefly to a reluctant Department of Justice. However, later in 1924 responsibility for the reformatory and industrial schools was transferred to the Department of Education, a responsibility and cost which the Department of Education did not want' (Keating, 2015: 98).

violence. Researchers such as Clegg (2006) and Clegg *et al.* (2012) have argued that the very characteristics of TIs lend themselves to aggression and even violence while Kavanagh (2013) has examined the violence that can result in these oppressive contexts including violence against children in institutions such as industrial schools.

Some of the religious orders were also involved in the care of sick children or disabled children in addition to overseeing the operation of the industrial school and it is worth noting Garrett's (2010: 298) earlier point that the industrial school complex was not merely 'incarcerating institutions,' but 'employing' institutions embedded within local economies.' Adoption was not formalised in Ireland until the Adoption Act (1952) (which became law on 1st of January 1953)²⁴ and capitation payments were made by the State to the religious orders on behalf of each child. Parents were also liable for the upkeep of their child to the religious orders. As children, this cohort of participants was placed in care from infancy and many lived in the homes until they reached 16 when the capitation fee was stopped. This meant that there was a steady stream of income from the State for these years, though the participants point out that many of their parents fell away and did not continue to support their children in any way. Reference has been made by some participants about letters being sent from the nuns to their mothers or other family members for payments that were in arrears:

Lily: But on saying that in hindsight, and I look back at the notes and the letters my mother would have sent. They [the nuns] were constantly after her for payment and in one of them [a letter] she had said if anyone wants to adopt me and my brother, let them off like. But when the [name of family] asked, cause I had cried after being fostered to them, and every time they'd ask, every time they brought me back and asked 'Can they adopt me?' The nuns said no, her mother wouldn't allow it. In hindsight now, I know they got paid for me. That's all it was about.

Kathleen: So the grandmother was talking to the people who were looking to get money from my mother. Because you know, they charged everybody. So my mother was never, you know, they were never able to find her.

²⁴ The 1952 Act made it illegal for children under seven to be adopted abroad, but this did not apply to 'illegitimate' children aged over one year – a key example of the attitude towards illegitimacy at the time.

An overarching criticism of Goffman's TI is that while his account provides a vivid and persuasive account of the role of power inequalities in defining institutional life it fails to examine the relationship between the institution and the broader social context (Perring, 1992). Structural factors, including the potential roles of gender, race, disability and age, are clearly relevant and may increase the vulnerability of the individual within the TI and their exposure to situations of institutional abuse. Factors such as gender and race therefore inform the dynamics of the TI.

The relationship between the participants and the nuns is complex. Despite having raised the children from infancy there appears to be very few accounts of the attachment of the nuns to their children and vice versa. The women in talking about the role played by the nuns in their lives and in their perception of themselves as being valued within the institution, the abuse they experienced, or the racialised discourse employed by the children, nuns and other staff, run the gamut from reports by two participants of being a nun's favourite to, as we have seen above, reports of actual physical abuse and explicit racial discrimination. This was illustrated in the reporting by one participant that another inmate, an older, white Irish woman who had looked after the younger children informed her that the milk was watered down for the black mixed-race babies; while we have seen in earlier chapters that racialised slurs used by nuns were reported by some participants. Many of the participants suggested they had received a less than adequate education which echoed the findings of the Ryan Report (CICA, 2009: 457), which revealed that 'where Industrial School children were educated in internal National Schools, the standard was consistently poorer than that in outside schools'. They were lucky to be 'dragged up' as Olivia put it and receive the basics: 'reading, writing, arithmetic and a bit of religion.' Further avenues to pursue their education were curtailed 'again an indication of the lack of autonomy they had over their routine and in developing their full potential' (Pembroke, 2017: 7). Thus Michelle was denied education after the age of eleven and was consigned to work in the kitchen despite her early educational promise.

This problematic and complex relationship between inmate of mixed African-Irish descent and nun is captured in the following passage:

Dolores: God you know, it's hard to believe, they [*the nuns*] never, you know. You feel sorry for them in a sense wouldn't you?

PM: Why?

Dolores: Ah, you know I feel sad for them, you know, I feel sad for the nuns you know. Sisters of Mercy, feel sad for them, you know. But they seem to have ruined a lot of people's lives.

PM: Yes.

Dolores: They seem to have ruined so many families. They really ruined them, telling people they have no brothers when they have a brother. Saying that their mothers died when they were alive. That's very harsh. That's why some of the Irish ones don't forgive them, cause they had a mother and they told them they had no mother. D'ya understand?

PM: Yes. When you say the 'Irish ones' do you see yourself differently to the other girls?

Dolores: Now I do, yeah ... now I do yeah.

Nevertheless, some children benefited from their relationship with particular nuns and it appears that it was a very individualistic response depending on the child or the nun involved as shown in Rosaleen's account below. Rosaleen reports that she was protected somewhat by being a favourite of one nun, in particular, while she was very young and therefore, she did not experience as much of the racist barracking that other children did while in the institution.

Rosaleen: Because of my nature I probably still would have been alright...well when I say alright I mean I would have got by. One of the nuns that was in charge of the little ones took a real shine to me so I think I would have had some protection there... not from verbal abuse but from physical abuse.

She had positive memories of the nuns and of one nun, in particular, who she stated had travelled to somewhere in Europe to study the Montessori method which she duly implemented on her return. As Rosaleen reports she was about eight or nine at this time and this would have been approximately 1960/61. She spoke of her placement with well-off families.

Rosaleen: I will be forever grateful to Sister [...]. If you talk to any of our group, our age group I mean, she was mad into education and she went over to Holland and studied Montessori way before it was ever popular. And she came back with all the equipment, and I mean we were big, about 8 or 9 maybe, and she obviously agreed with it ... And then, to me, it looked like she sat down and thought ok what's that person's strength? Cause we all went to different schools ... we all went... like if you were academic you went to a secondary school and if you weren't you went to the Tech. Like [name of girl] went to the [school of design] and [another girl] went to, like, some make up place. And I went to [name of secondary school]. If you had no prospects at the time you sort of went into the kitchen...there was only ever 3 people in the kitchen so it wasn't like a great place to end up, [...]. But Sister [...] obviously thought about it and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* was out [in the cinemas] and she called us 'her girls' just like the teacher in the film. She sent me off to the Gaeltacht and everything for a month as she must have recognised my weakness. Other girls I know, kids, went after me. I know it was more common after. I only went to the Inter and... I could have stayed to do the Leaving Cert but I couldn't wait to get out. Though I did go into nursing.

Rosaleen reports of an institution where the nuns in general were of a kindly nature and initially she did not remember any time being unduly picked on or racialised by the nuns. However, it became clear that the attitude of the nuns to racist abuse complicated this positive memory. She asserts that when racist abuse occurred in the institution it was not challenged or curtailed by the nuns as in other instances where it involved, for example, a disabled child. This lack of action in tackling racial slurs is very similar to the experiences of other participants such as Olivia who pointed out that 'Yeah, cause there was no one there to look after you or take your side, you were just let go and whatever happened, happened!' Furthermore, Rosaleen and Michelle, who grew up together in the industrial school observed how frequently they were exoticised within the institution:

Michelle: If there were visitors...like, me and Rosaleen had to be paraded in front of them like we were something different...I wouldn't say so much in a bad way, but when you look back at it when you are older you can understand how you felt strange at the time. And how they were using us...

Maggie made the observation about the centrality of religion within the education provided to the girls, but it is interesting to note that none of the participants ever registered an interest to pursue a religious vocation. Equally salient is the accompanying fact that none of them could ever recall a nun suggesting that they would make a suitable candidate for their religious order. In point of fact, several participants reflected that the nuns consistently and in a most convincing manner, it would seem, informed the girls that they were 'unsuitable' to becoming nuns. Whether this was a racialised response to the whiteness of the vocation of being an Irish nun or a response on the part of the nuns towards the children of fallen, and therefore, degenerate mothers, was impossible to ascertain from the data.

The complexity of the nun-child relationship is reflected in Michelle's account of what occurred when she and some other non-mixed race girls got into trouble in the industrial school.

Michelle: Well, just really I was always bright and did really well in the primary cert. But then I was transferred to [reformatory institution] and I was always told it was because of my behaviour. But then it was confirmed to me that it was not to do with my behaviour but that, you know, there was a group of us that got together and were a little bit troublesome. But I was the only one in that group that had no parents and so I was the one that was targeted to take the punishment. And I was transferred down to the [new institution] and that was the end of my education, more or less.

The racialised aspect of this event was revealed to Michelle when she consulted her files before her appearance at the Redress Board²⁵ and she encountered the following statement: 'it would be detrimental to send the black child out to school in [city where new institution was located]. This further impacted on her overall opportunities as she was unable to progress through school:

PM: So when you were in the reformatory and they didn't send you out to school, what did you do?

²⁵ This process will be discussed in the next chapter on life after the institution.

Michelle: Sow, knit, clean, polish.

PM: Do you believe it was a race thing?

Michelle: Oh definitely, yeah, yeah...

The sexualisation which accompanied the exoticisation of the mixed race child is evident in the following passage:

Michelle: The judge [at the Redress Board] asked me why I was sent there, as if I bloody well knew... And I said, I don't know, I said, but I read in my notes, even though I was only young at the time, that I had a weakness for men. He said there was more than that in your notes... Imagine reading in your notes that I had a weakness for men. I was 11 years of age. I don't even have a weakness for men now. *[she laughs]*

Eileen's account echoes the apparently unfair treatment meted out to the girls of mixed African-Irish descent who got into trouble within the industrial school.

Eileen: [...] I was going on 14. I was always running away, sneaking out at night and everything with another girl. She wasn't mixed race now, she was a white girl, but the nun found out on me and I was sent to [name of Magdalen Laundry] and she was sent to boarding school in [name of town]. And like I always said she was 2 years older than me so why did I get sent there and not her? Yeah, I always resented the [industrial] school for that, d'you know what I mean like? She was 2 years older. She should have taken more fault for that. Instead they packed her off to boarding school and me off under lock and key.

I mean I'd probably say to you, it was done because of me colour, cause I can't see any other reason why they will do this mean thing. Why wasn't she sent to another laundry instead?

Institutional Abuse

While it has been argued by Tomison (2001) that the victimisation of children is as old as recorded human history, Ferguson (2007: 137) in examining the industrial school complex reflected that 'in this closed institutional context abuse thrived because it was so

well hidden by those who knew they were doing wrong.’ Gil (1975) defined institutional abuse as including any type of institution for children and all types of abusive conditions and policies. He viewed it as being situated between the familial and societal levels of child abuse (Gil & Baxter, 1979), all of which ‘inflicted gaps in children’s circumstances that prevent actualisation of inherent potential’ (1975: 346). Gil (1982) identified three distinct forms of institutional abuse. The first is overt or direct abuse, consisting of any sexual, physical or emotional abuse of a child by a care worker, similar to familial abuse. Within the context of Keenan’s observation that the ‘prevalence of sexual abuse in Ireland is staggering’ (2012: 5), it is germane to note that the potential for exploitation in TIs like industrial schools was significantly elevated (van Doore *et al.* 2016; Keenan, 2012; Trocmé & Schumaker, 1999). The authors of studies into incarcerated youth reporting being sexually abused by a staff member support this (Abner *et al.* 2009; Beck *et al.* 2010; Celenza, 2007) as does research which suggests that children are at greater risk of being sexually abused in an institutional context than in a non-institutional context (Boxall *et al.* 2014; Carmody, 2006; Euser *et al.* 2013; Fisher *et al.* 2017; Frank *et al.* 2010; O’Riordan & Arensman, 2007; Parkinson & Cashmore, 2017; Stanley *et al.* 1999; Schumacher & Carlson, 1999; Trocmé & Schumaker, 1999). To further compound the increased risk of abuse some evidence suggests that child sexual abuse that occurs in institutions may be more likely to involve multiple perpetrators (Schumacher & Carlson, 1999; Pinheiro, 2006) who abuse multiple victims (Richards, 2011).

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The data signals that the abuse may have had a racialised aspect as in the accounts below

Eileen: [...] Me and another coloured child, he was a boy, when we were in the nursery this lay person, she lived in, we’d rule the nursery and she slept in the little cubicle off it. It was kind of bordered off but she used to take us into her bed at night and sexually abuse us.

Jennifer, who also identified a racialised element to her own abuse, reflected on the impact of this sexual abuse:

Jennifer: And so that’s basically how they fucked up my life, sexualised me too early. So that’s how I believe you get sexualised too early and you get sexualised early because you haven’t got the one-to-one. Cause, so any bit of attention

seems like that. Seems like any bit of attention stands in for the love that you should have got from your mother or from your father.

The impact on Eileen of this abuse as well as her recognition of the racialised aspect of the crime and the lack of fairness on the part of the nuns is captured in the following exchange:

Eileen: I used to wet the bed, maybe because of her, because she sexually abused me, but when you moved out of the nursery you went up to the dormitories. [...] It was a good walk, half a mile each way, the sheet dripping and trying to get it up on the line and everything.

PM: How old were you?

Eileen: Age seven, eight, nine. This went on continually. The nuns then, [when I was] about 11 or 12 sent me up to Vincent's to see what was wrong with me kidneys. Because I kept wetting the bed. [...] I often said to meself I wish I wasn't this colour, you know what I mean? Because nobody else there got the cold baths in the morning and washing the sheets.

PM: Do you think you were given a harder time?

Eileen: Em, yeah, definitely, definitely! Now, not with the girls, but with that staff person. And the nuns. Yeah.

The second two forms of institutional abuse identified by Gil (1982) are unique to institutional settings. System abuse was defined as:

...perpetrated not by any single person or programme, but by the immense and complicated child care system, stretched beyond its limits and incapable of guaranteeing safety to all children in care. (1982: 11)

However, Thomas (1990) has rejected this system-based definition of institutional abuse as per Gil's definition above, arguing that systems are inert structures awaiting human operationalisation. From this point of view, a system abuse definition seems to propose that abuse only happens due to a lack of resources; when in reality it is people, not systems, that cause the harmful consequences. The data shows that the participants were

conscious that it was the nuns who put the systems in place and worked to operationalise and maintain them.

Maggie: No, I blame the nuns. They ran everything. They ran us like a prison camp. Except we were born into it. At least, prisoners have to commit a crime first.

Programme abuse consists of an institution's regime or treatment programme which, although accepted by staff, to an external observer would be viewed as abusive as in the clinical trials carried out during the 1960s and 1970s in industrial schools, Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalen Laundries (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, 2019; Kiely, 2000). As the subjects of these trials were children, effective consent could not be given to their participation in the trials or could only have been given by their parents or guardians (Department of Health, 1997). The requirement for such consent to be obtained was clearly understood by researchers and articulated in a number of documents available to the research community at the time but such consent was not obtained (Dwyer, 2018). Equally, the available records seem to indicate that even the Medical Officers of some of the homes may not have been aware that residents of these homes were being given the vaccines prepared for the trial in use at the time (Department of Health, 1997). Moreover, subsequent research has indicated that more medical testing than these three disclosed trials had, in fact, taken place (Dwyer, 2018).²⁶

A pernicious form of institutional abuse was that of the lacklustre professional response on the part of nuns and staff which tended towards minimisation or complete denial. Bullying research (Wei *et al.* 2007; Woods & Wolke, 2004; Young, 2009) has indicated that professionals, by their attitudes and actions, may condone the violence. A conspiracy of silence can then build up between the victims, the abusers and those in a position to act (Lane & Miller, 1993). Morris *et al.* (1994) found that children who reported the problem to residential staff said they had generally been ignored. For example, physical fights often happened out of the sight of workers who were then reluctant to take action on the accounts of children alone. Browne and Falshaw (1996) stress that the victim of bullying may be viewed as a 'wimp' by both staff and other children. Older children take on the role of both victim and perpetrator of abuse.

²⁶ *Cf.*, for example, the leaked Commission 2020 report discussed in Chapter 1.

Nancy: Older girls would take your food or shove food on your plate. Are you eating that? Do you really want it? Or, eat that and shut up [...] You just did what you were told, most of the time.

Morris *et al.* (1994) found that a quarter of all boys, and 11% of girls calling ChildLine from a residential care setting did so because of bullying and violence. Research on young people who run away has also identified the widespread prevalence of bullying within residential establishments (Barter, 1996; Barter *et al.* 1996; MacLeod & Morris, 1996; Newmann, 1989; Rees, 1993; Stein *et al.* 1994). Workers may believe that a victim needs to learn to be tough. By contrast, the bully may be given status by the exertion of power and the bullying minimized as a ‘practical joke’ or ‘rough and tumble’ or merely as part of the ‘cut and thrust’ culture of life in the institution. Professionals have also been shown to minimize the problem viewing the behaviour as only a transitional phase (La Fontaine 1991), blaming the bullied child as provoking the other child, or stating the child was being over-sensitive (MacLeod & Morris 1996). La Fontaine (1991) further argues that to conceptualise serious violent assaults as ‘bullying’ may allow adults to ignore behaviour in children they would be perceived as criminal if the perpetrator were an adult. Nancy: ‘You had to be tough, Phil. I can tell you. And you spent your time planning for when you were one of the bigger girls.’

Bonding with other girls and children rearing children

The complex relationship between being incarcerated as a child of mixed African-Irish descent and the institution is conveyed in the fact that many of the women felt ‘safer’ in the industrial school than outside. The data suggests that since nothing reflected the children and teenagers in the wider extramural community it was sometimes safer and more comfortable to be in the institution where there may be up to 20 mixed race children.

Eileen: There was no difference between the girls, they was all just the girls together. As you’d go into 12 and 13, the boys were on the other side, there were three or four coloured or mixed race boys. But we didn’t see colour, we just treated each other the same.

PM: What about name-calling?

Eileen: Well that was only if an argument was happening or something. They'd call you nignog or Blackey, or something like that. Well, no. Remember that member of staff I told you about, she'd often call you a... like, c'mere you Blackey.

Those who were in institutions for most of their lives created bonds that went deep, and formed what could be the most significant sense of belonging and identification amongst the participants, regardless of colour. The participants referred to the other girls on many occasions as their sisters:

Vera: Yeah the surroundings were beautiful and I had my sisters so what more would you ask for? I [name of other girl of mixed African-Irish descent] and I had the girls so I suppose your peers become more important than anything else then, so you're a teenager and whatever.

The participants did add that as black mixed race children, they felt they shared a particular sense of being different within the institutions, even amongst the other girls. This was something that set them apart within what was already an isolating environment and this further bonded them to one another. This was more apparent for the participants that grew up with large numbers of mixed African-Irish descent children in the industrial school as it afforded them an opportunity to be part of a group that could identify with each other and which was seen by others as somehow set apart from the other children. That they formed such close bonds in many cases should not be surprising. The small girls were often 'reared' by the older girls, delegated to such roles by the nuns who would absent themselves, resulting in children rearing children

Vera: the older girls used to mind the younger girls so there were a couple of older mixed race girls there and one of them was absolutely beautiful and I would have always looked up to her, do you know. And then there was that girl there and she was I think about 4 years older than me, I think, but she acted like she was 5 years older than me. So she would have protected a lot of us from physical abuse from the nuns. She would have spoken up to, and even argued for us like 'don't be hitting her' or whatever, you know. I kinda had that protection as well in the school.

Maggie: You know the bigger girls who took care of us were like grownups to us. It's strange to grow up and find out that they were only 13 or 14 taking care of a pile of us little ones.

Of course, the abusive nature of the institution on the older girls could see them act out their aggression/frustration on the younger ones. This was particularly the case with the mixed children as combing their Afros was extremely challenging, which frequently led to frustration and bullying. Maggie: 'They'd reef the head off you. You'd be sore for days as they pushed the brush through your hair.'

Some girls formed networks which offered comfort in the face of the grinding, and often times abusive, tribulations of their existence. For those who established these bonds they formed the foundation of a network that some participants have maintained despite the movement of friends in and out of Ireland once they left the institutions. They remain committed to the relationships they formed at a formative age and relied on these for friendship, family and material support as young women.

Eileen: I was sent to Regina Coeli [hostel] and my friend who I used to run away with, she had a job up in the [name] and she was living on the North Circular. Like I always kept in contact with her and she said I don't know how you live there and all that, move in with me... and of course I did [...]

It also, as reported in chapter 3, facilitated the Snowball method of data gathering used in this research. However, as we will see in the next chapter, this bond was not universal and the data reveals that when some of these children left the industrial schools, they were equally adamant that they were leaving behind the children amongst whom they lived.

Olivia: No, I didn't have a lot of friends in the home. Well, I was the only black kid there and all the kids kept together. They stayed together. They didn't know how to relate to me. The only way they could relate was calling me names.

Summary

The data in this chapter suggest that the institution played a significant role in these women developing, or failing to develop, a strong sense of identity and belonging and its deleterious impact continued with these women once they left the confines of the industrial school. In the next chapter, I will examine the data as it relates to life after the institution.

Chapter 7: Life after the Institution

Introduction

This chapter looks at the last of the four themes emerging from the data, that of life after the institution. A limitation of some mixed race identity development models is their assumption that a fully integrated mixed race identity can be conceived of as an end state (Kerwin *et al.* 1993; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Kich, 1992; Fatimilehin, 1999; Gillem *et al.* 2001; Poston, 1990; Root, 1998, 1999, 2002). Rather, the construction of an identity of being mixed African-Irish descent for these women was, as I have argued in chapter 2, a dynamic, contextual and relational process which was constantly under negotiation (Boltagici, 2004; Canclini, 1995; Collins, 1990; hooks, 1995, 1997; Lorde, 2007; Marable & Agard-Jones, 2008). I argued that this process can be essentialised as gendered, racialised, nationalised, or classed (Boltagici, 2004; Hall & Du Gay, 1996; O'Connor, 2012). Furthermore, as Campion (2017) proposes, place produces different scales of belonging for mixed race subjects and functions as a major point of reference for racial identification(s) and belonging.

The Institution and Racial Identity

Family has one of the largest fundamental impacts on the individual and their identity, and may be considered as the primary institution responsible for contextualising racial identity (Caballero & Aspinall, 2018; Caballero *et al.* 2008; LaBarrie, 2007; Nadal *et al.* 2013; Song, 2019). Gillem *et al.* (2001) and Radina and Cooney, (2000) explored family factors that influence racial self-identification and ethnic belonging and concluded that strong, supportive relationships between caregivers and mixed race children tend to foster a healthy identity development process and thus protect the children and young adults from identification confusion, racial discrimination, or social stigma.

The effect of this racial neglect and abuse on their early identity formation can be seen in the observation by Maggie, who reflected that within the homes: 'you created places for yourself, a space but not necessarily a place of belonging.' This assertion mirrors Young (1990: 146) who argued that 'a space surrounds [the mixed race woman] ...that we are not free to move beyond; the space available to our movement is a constricted one.'

In lieu of family, research indicates that one's peers and community have a highly influential impact on racial identity (Rockquemore & Brunson, 2001, 2002; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). Multiple aspects of community have been found to be related to racial identity development, including community diversity and racial/ethnic socialisation (Caballero, 2019; Herman, 2004; Hitlin *et al.* 2006; Kenney, 2002; McClain, 2004).

Given the importance of family, peers and community to the development of the mixed race identity(s) and experience, it is not surprising that the immediate shock which affronted the participants' sense of identity and belonging occurred as they were forced to leave the institution at sixteen. As discussed in the previous chapter, once the children reached the age of 16, the capitation fee provided by the State for their upkeep usually expired. There was a small variance in the leaving age as some of the participants left at 16 while others stayed past this age marker. Conversely, others left before they reached 16, whether to be released into the community or moved to another institution such as a Magdalen Laundry, or for some, adoption. Nancy: 'I started running when the gates opened. Away from that hurt. And I've never stopped.'

This researcher, for example, can attest that she was off-handedly 'encouraged' by the head nun to leave some weeks before she reached the age of sixteen. Surprisingly, the data conveys an unusual (and previously undocumented in survivors' accounts) instance of the nuns continuing to pay for the child past the cut-off age of 16 and after she had gone to live with a local family:

PM: Do you think you were prepared by the nuns for life outside?

Chrissie: Absolutely not. I mean they didn't, they didn't care, I think, the nuns, as long as you had a job. It didn't matter what job, they washed their hands. As far as they were concerned, they had done their job. If you had a job, they had done their job.

PM: Did you have a job?

Chrissie: I did, well I mean they sent me into a house to take care of people, [...] I stayed for about year and a half.

Chrissie explained that when she decided to return to school, the family with whom she was living simply sent all incurred school and health expenses to the nuns back at the industrial school:

Chrissie: At 16 I decided to go back to school and [name] who took me in was happy about that and she supported that, and the nuns then had to pay her to keep me in her house if I was going back to school because I wouldn't have an income once I went to school. Before I was 18 they had to take responsibility for me. They had to be responsible for me if I stayed in school up till I was 18. Bills would come in [for school]. But we just kept sending bills to them, like school books and stuff we just sent the bills to [name of institution] and they kept paying and we didn't argue. Like once I went to the dentist at 16 and a half and the dentist said 'oh my god, you've never been to a dentist?' And I said 'no, sure I never needed to.' And he said, 'well you did!' And a lot of work was done, like fillings and stuff and we sent it off to them to [the nuns] and they paid. And that was it. We were happy out.

The Impact of Institutionalisation

As a means of scaffolding the participants' post-institutional data, it is worth noting the CICA (2009) findings which demonstrate in clear terms the detrimental effects on the relationships, education and health of those incarcerated in these institutions. The report found that survivors of the industrial schools displayed: psychological adjustment (evidenced by anxiety disorders, depression, alcohol and substance misuse) and personality functioning (evidenced by antisocial, borderline and other personality disorders). The report adds that people with antisocial personality disorder are typically involved in criminality and are prone to self harming (evidenced by self injury and parasuicide behaviour). They are susceptible to problems with marital and cohabiting relationships, sexuality and domestic violence and display an inability to parent adequately leading to victimisation of children or children being taken into care. They are victims of low educational attainment and work performance and, finally, they are at risk of frequent illness and health service usage and risky health behaviour (2009: 80-84).

The report indicated that compared to children brought up in families, those reared in institutions were poorly adjusted and this was manifested by: personality disorder; marked marital problems; multiple broken co-habitations; teenage pregnancy; and having one's children taken into care (for women) (CICA, 2009: 80-84).

This Irish research echoes international studies such as Browne (2017) and Morley and Street (2014) who observe that the most common adverse effects that children who grow up in residential care experience include: developmental delays; behavioural problems; attachment disorders; lack of life skills; institutionalisation; and difficulty forming and maintaining healthy relationships.

Finally, research by AMRI found that survivors of industrial schools, of mixed African-Irish descent experience relationship problems, family discord and breakdown (AMRI, 2019). Several had or were currently receiving treatment for psychiatric problems such as anxiety and depression. A number had engaged in self-mutilation and had attempted suicide (AMRI, 2019). Others were addicted to illegal drugs, or related how being abused carried a stigma, and a strong sense of personal shame and guilt, or a feeling of 'being dirty' (MRI, 2014). Several did not wish to be known as victims of the system because they feared loss of face among their family, friends and associates.

The rejection that many of the children felt during the time in the industrial school was foisted upon them anew as in cases where mothers and families were known, they often refused to welcome the child of mixed African-Irish descent into the fold as outlined in stark relief in the following passage:

PM: Can I ask you about when you left the home? I know you said your mother didn't want to take you in because she had created this other life for herself. What happened after you left? Where did you go?

Dolores: Well, when I did meet my mother. I did meet her. I came up... She was pregnant, I told you. She had a baby. And I came up to Dublin and I worked. I was working in the [name of company], working in the kitchen and everything was fine and I slept in the kitchen. And I got to meet my uncle. I met him maybe 5 or 6 or 7 times that summer. And every time he brought me up to British Homes Stores and we'd have a fish and chip dinner and he'd always leave me

with a fiver in my hand. [...] And then suddenly after me meeting my mother that was it. I never met my uncle again.

PM: Really? Why, did he stop meeting you or you stop meeting him?

Dolores: He stopped meeting me and stopped contacting me and I never had contact with him since.

PM: Do you know if he was told to stop?

Dolores: I don't know. I think later my sister told me he was really trying to get help for me. He was trying to get somebody to keep me but nobody would. None of my mother's people would...

PM: How did you feel about the family not wanting to take you?

Dolores: The aunts came down [to the industrial school] and when they saw that I was black, or coloured they... I always thought it was because of either my big lips or my big hands, that she didn't want me... I never put it down to my colour that she didn't want me. I always thought it was my lips. Or my ...it's to do with my hands, my hands are too big.

PM: They don't look that big.

Dolores: Oh, but they are! Aren't they?

The data findings are consonant with the fact that the rejection by the mother was cruelly felt by the participants. The amazement of Dolores, and her reiteration of how lucky I was, when I indicated that I had, in fact, gone to live with my mother after my sixteen years in the industrial school captures what she took to be an unusual action on my mother's part:

Dolores: The mothers were a bit... weren't they? Like I mean, what about your mother now? Did she all the time keep contact? [I nod in the affirmative] All your life? Aah, that's nice. Ooh, that's really nice. So you had that sense of... oh what d'ye you call it? Eh...security! Did she eventually take you in when you left?

PM: Yes.

Dolores: Oh wow! Ah well, well done. Now, that's good, you know. Well done. That's lovely. No mine wouldn't... But you know... I sort of didn't really miss her that much until I had my own children. Then I started to miss her a lot.

For some of the participants the abandonment which accompanied their deinstitutionalisation led to a deep sense of isolation which, in many cases, they still carry:

PM: And what type of support was there for you? Were you prepared for what it was going to be like when you left the home or what life was going to be like on your own?

Olivia: No, no sense whatsoever. As far as they were concerned they told me to leave and get a flat. They just fucked me out. There was all white people in the house I lived in and I didn't know how to pay bills or feed myself. No support.

PM: Did you have any friends when you left, or did you keep in touch with anybody from the institution when you left?

Olivia: No, I just left.

PM: That sounds very lonely.

Olivia: And I didn't know anybody else in my position, any other black child or person, so that was very isolating as well.

PM: Did you find it hard to cope when you left the industrial school?

Dolores: I found it very hard to make friends with people. [...].

In addition to isolation and the quotidian practicalities of everyday living outside the institution, the suddenness of being made to leave had irreparable impact on the ext participants as they were obliged to navigate the unwelcoming world as they saw it, without knowing why so much harm had been done to them in the first place:

Eileen: I found when I left the home everything was just left hanging... All that pain. Nowhere to put it. No one to talk to.

Veronica: Whatever they done to me there, my adopted mum told me I didn't speak for three years [...]

Having lived their lives under constant surveillance and deprived of privacy, it is not surprising that even when the child had some family to enter into contact with, the impact of suddenly being alone was still profoundly felt:

Lily: It was a shock. The door closed. That was it, Phil. See ya. Don't let the gate hit you on the way out. It was all left up to you after that. I was lucky, at least, that I had some family. Some friends.

The participants recalled how unprepared they were for the outside world as many of the older participants, in particular, had been essentially trained to do appropriate domestic-type work, and little else. An interesting insight into the nuns' attitude to their charges is reported by Raftery and O'Sullivan (1999: 312) who noted that the Department of Education's discovery in 1952 that 'many nuns actually believed that illegitimate children were barred from employment in the civil service' thereby revealing the 'extraordinary depth of prejudice against these children that existed in the minds of the religious.' The religious ethos of the industrial school also invariably led to a problematic dearth of sex education:

Maggie: About sex? Ha! Keep your knees together or you'll end up in a worse state. They never said it, or if they did not to me, but you knew what they meant. Don't be like your mother.

PM: Pregnancy was always the big thing for girls when they left? But so many seemed to get pregnant.

Dolores: Yes, but did you see *States of Fear*?²⁷

PM: Yes.

Dolores: And what they said when they left and what they thought about men. They didn't know what a thing [penis] was. Remember they said they got an awful fright. And I saw that and I thought that's similar to me. So we didn't get educated about it. Sure we didn't? About you know... So that was one big hard issue for me as well you know, cause I thought you could make a friend out of a man, but you can't make a friend out of a man. [reflecting on this for a few moments she added] But when you're coloured and you're out in the world and

²⁷ The documentary series produced by Mary Raftery and broadcast on Raidió Teilifís Éireann between April and May 1999 which detailed the abuse suffered by children between the 1930s and 1970s in the state childcare system of Ireland, primarily in the Reformatory and Industrial Schools. After public outcry on the heels of this broadcast, the Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern apologised on behalf of the State.

your friends aren't ringing you to come to this party, but they're ringing somebody else and you're thinking well why amn't I invited. Very confusing.

The lack of any coherent sex education had a particular significance for these women who had inculcated an intense fear of being returned to an institution after growing up in the industrial school. Hogan (2019: 159) points out that 'one of the cruel ironies of the shame-industrial complex was that girls who had learned nothing of sex in the institutions were more likely to end up pregnant out of wedlock, and thus be re-institutionalised.'

Jennifer: And I'll tell you this thing is intergenerational. Cause when I got to 16, I ended up back in St. Pats where I had my son, right. And he got adopted. Intergenerational, right!

Eileen: Me first child, I had her in Navan Road, history repeating.

As outlined in chapter 6, while some of the participants had a parent or family members outside the industrial school, the institutionalisation process of being incarcerated in a TI had, in many cases, and in some ineluctable sense disrupted this familial bond:

PM: Did you feel at a disadvantage having grown up in an institution?

Vera: Not really no. I kinda do now though in that I don't feel I have any support; family support you know. I don't really need family support but I think I feel very kind of. Eh, I suppose... eh, what would it be? [...] I suppose very used and abused, just you know. [...]

PM: Do you think the institution formed you into this person?

Lily: Oh, one hundred percent. Listen, I know for a fact... I doubt there's too many of us who came out of an institution that hasn't been moulded into... like the way that they... that they... that they can't come out and be the person that they were born to be.

This isolating disruption was further aggravated by the monoracial and racialised society the girls encountered when they left the industrial school:

Chrissie: It's not just that you don't have parents. Kids who were white in orphanages, they don't carry this, they don't leave the orphanage and feel they are not included... They may have a longing for their mothers or fathers but they take for granted their Irishness... But black people, black Irish, we can't take that for granted, we don't have that luxury...

Fostering and Skivvying

The data is consistent with the finding that when released into Irish society, the participants discovered a racialised and rejecting environment. This even had an impact on those who had been fostered or adopted. Children who had been placed in foster care while in the institutions were expected to live with these families when their placement in care was finished at 16, but seven of the women stated that the foster family was not a happy place for them and so they did not stay with them. This left them with no family or biological relations on whom they could look to for any sort of a soft landing. It is worth noting that almost no long-term relationships had developed among these children of mixed African-Irish descent placed into their families. In some cases, the biological children of the foster families were the main cause of the failure of the placement, while in others it was the father who ultimately challenged their right to remain in the foster family.

It is worth noting that the data accords with the fact that much of the fostering process was perceived by the children as being little more than 'skivvying' for these families and their natural children, with the understood promise that it also entailed being carers for the foster parents in their old age. This was not the universal view but it did predominate amongst the participants' responses. Attention should also be drawn to the infrequent aspect of full adoption for these children of mixed African-Irish descent (MRI, 2014). While two of the participants were adopted, the following passage is more indicative of the fate of such children when it came to adoption:

PM: Did you ever see any of the black children being put up for adoption?

Dolores: It didn't pass me at all, No, not in the home. No.

PM: So none of the 14 mixed race children that you would have known, you never heard of any of them being adopted?

Dolores: Oh no, definitely not. [...] It's more like when it comes, when it comes to family we just didn't have family. Like '*Nobody's child*' was sung in there, like. Did ye sing that? [laughing]

PM: Yes. [laughing together]

Dolores: Did you not cry when he's singing 'I'm nobody's child, people come when they see me, they don't take me...'? [laughs uproariously] Do you not remember that song? And '*Scarlet Ribbons*'?²⁸

Even for children who had been fostered or adopted from the industrial school the data resonates with this disruption of identity and the need to find a place in which to belong:

Vera: So here there was a huge identity crisis then. You know, that I was supposed to be a [name of foster family] even though my name is actually [birth mother's name]. Talk about doing things ass backwards. And yes I go home and I'm rejected by the [foster family], by [foster father] and yes I'm supposed to identify with them. So I started drinking, you know.

Chrissie: [...] even the foster family they treated me a little bit different than they did their own children, like me taking things out of the fridge compared to their own kids taking things was different, but they still treated me well. [...] so I learned to negotiate being in the [name of family] [...] I remember saying to the oldest foster sister, I don't think mum likes me and she said 'what are you talking about of course she does' and that was as far as I got with that.

These foster placements were not made through an agency or by formal arrangement but were decidedly informal affairs. Lily: '[...] one Sunday the priest at mass asked if anyone would take a child. And that was it...'

The informality of such foster placements inevitably placed some mixed race children at risk as in the case of Mary Josephine Stephenson,²⁹ an industrial school girl, killed by her

²⁸ *Scarlet Ribbons (For her hair)* was a worldwide hit for Jo Stafford in 1949 and Harry Belafonte in 1952. The song tells the story of a little girl who prays before she goes to bed for 'scarlet ribbons for her hair.'

28-year old foster father, Vincent Dunphy, in 1968 (Irish Times 1968a). Dunphy justified the deadly assault by claiming that Mary was ‘difficult’ and told lies (Maguire & Ó Cinnéide, 2005: 638). The accused admitted to Garda James Heenan that he would beat the child ‘once or twice a week and sometimes once or twice a day (Irish Times, 1968b). The judge, who in the court record had expressed his revulsion earlier at the death of the child (Irish Times, 1968c), nevertheless reflected the prevailing attitude towards corporal punishment by summing-up to the jury that they must:

approach this case on the basis that the accused is a man who sincerely believes that physical punishment was the proper way to deal with any offences this child committed (Irish Times, 1968c)

The jury took heed of his guidance and duly found Dunphy not guilty of murder but guilty of manslaughter. He was given a lenient sentence of 12 months in prison. As Maguire & Ó Cinnéide (2005: 638) opine: ‘[Dunphy’s] actions in beating a six-year-old child to death were weighed against her ‘offences’ and his sincere belief that he had the right as a parent to inflict such punishment.’

The prevalence of corporal punishment has already been addressed in Chapter 6. Corporal punishment was only banned in Ireland in 1982 after 30 years of sustained public pressure (Maguire & Ó Cinnéide, 2005: 650). It would take, for example, until 1997 and the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act to criminalise the use of corporal punishment by teachers, and formally end the traditional immunity that teachers enjoyed from prosecution under the Offences Against the Person Act. In 1974, the Irish Union of School Students in their campaign to end corporal punishment published a brochure entitled ‘Corporal Punishment: the brutal facts,’ in which they attempted to quantify the use of corporal punishment in the nation’s primary, secondary, and vocational schools. The survey revealed the variety of implements, including leather straps, t-squares, sticks, hurleys, and tree branches, that were used to administer corporal punishment, ‘all in violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of existing Department of Education regulations’ (Maguire & Ó Cinnéide 2005: 646). Maguire (2009: 175) points to the fact that ‘Irish society, at all levels ... tolerated a degree of violence towards children which was striking in terms of both its regularity and routineness.’ Within the context of

²⁹ Her name is alternatively provided in newspapers as Mary Stevenson and Marie Dunphy.

the Irish industrial school regime, when ‘religious staff abused [the children], the matter tended to be dealt with using internal disciplinary procedures and Canon Law (CICA, 2009, Executive Summary, 23). The Gardaí were not informed. On the rare occasions when the Department [of Education] was informed, it colluded in the silence (CICA, 2009, Executive Summary, 23). Yet, as O’Toole (2009: 9) is at pains to stress, ‘[t]he fact is that the State knew all about the pain and allowed it to continue.’

Regardless of the pervasive corporal punishment, the significance of Mary Stephenson’s sad life and awful death (Kennedy, 2014) is captured by the comments of the murder accused’s defence counsel who opined to the jury that the dead child was a ‘waif and a stray, and a coloured one at that’ (O’Sullivan, 2018; O’Toole, 2011). The part such a dismissal of Mary’s value played in the jury’s decision is open to speculation, and thus beyond the remit of this research.

Two of the fostered women in my research were eventually adopted by families but both reported that it was an unhappy time and the families were unable to recognise that they required extra support as they entered racialised, homogenously white communities. One participant reported that while on holiday with the foster family, she received a call from the institution to say that she was not to come back and that she was to stay with the family full time from that moment on. She recalled that this made her deeply unhappy as she felt abandoned being abruptly cut off from the support within the institution provided by the other girls of mixed African-Irish descent. Another observed that she was called a ‘black bitch’ if there was any issue between her and the adoptive family. A participant recalled that the children in the family into which she was adopted ‘hated’ her and that a social worker had to be called to sort out some of the issues arising within the family connected to her placement.

Forging an Identity Overseas

For many of the participants release from the industrial school also meant flight from Ireland, with Great Britain as the primary destination of refuge. The data suggests that sometimes a small cohort of girls would leave at the same time given that their birthdates fell within a close period of time to each other. Those for whom no job or live-in situation was found in Ireland invariably emigrated to the UK and perhaps further afield

if intimate relationships or other opportunities arose, as is the case for some of the participants in this study (two participants eventually heading to the US):

Michelle: It was before I went to England, because like I say after the years [in the home] I lost my confidence and had low self esteem. But when I went to England, I just built up my confidence. I became a stronger person. I think I just came to the conclusion that there are always going to be people who are racist and there are other people that are not and if you mix with the right people and good people of whatever nationality... [she broke off and laughed]

This flight from Ireland, however, did come with commensurate hardships and risks for the young and often unprepared women:

Vera: I found London very, very tough, so I did. Yeah I just wasn't used to roughing it to be quite honest with you. You know I would have been more homeless in London than anything you know, trying to find a proper place to stay, you know. Tough! And you know you're not qualified to do anything and I was just doing low-paid work, it was hard to get anything. I had a bedsit first, when I went out there first, and I had that for about 6 months and then that went by the wayside.

For some of the participants, there appears to have been a naiveté about the world brought about by institutionalisation, and the isolation imposed on them by growing up in a rural and out-of-the-way industrial school that did not prepare them for the prospect of moving out of Ireland:

PM: Did you ever think of going to England, of moving into one of the black communities over there?

Dolores: No. No. I didn't even think there was such a thing and I didn't think of going to England because of that song, you know it. 'Have you seen the old man

who walks the streets of London.³⁰ Well, that stopped me going to England. That and stories of women going to England and becoming a prostitute. [...]

PM: Ok! And that [song] put you off?

Dolores: Oh God, yeah. Yeah. Those stories did anyway. I wasn't invited either. Well, in one way I was ... through the Mercy nuns I could have gone over to do nursing. I could have gone to Whipps Cross Hospital³¹ to do nursing.

When asked to explain why they never left Ireland, some participants expressed similar views as the next passage on the country being their home:

Olivia: No, they didn't care; they just fucked you out and let you move on. It was tough, but I thought my own country should give me support. Why should I have to go somewhere else, but they didn't. I still wanted to stay in Ireland. [...] I had a job in a kitchen and I only stayed there a couple of years. Same thing there, a lot of white people in there. I was the only black person and I didn't have much in common with them.

PM: And did you never want to leave or go somewhere with a bigger population of black or more mixed people?

Nelly: No, I am a real homebird. I went to England about a year after [name] was born and I stayed for about a year but I didn't like it so I came back. It was really hard and every time I met someone I had to explain that I was Irish, and I remember someone laughing and I thought, what are you fucking laughing at; why is that even funny? Even the black people I met wouldn't believe me that I was Irish, like they expected to see a shamrock on me shoulders or something. It got really annoying so I came back. At least if I was going to be laughed at it might as well be here with me friends and not over there being treated like a

³⁰ Ralph McTell's 'Streets of London,' recorded in 1969 and has since been covered by over 200 artists. The actual opening lyrics are 'Have you seen the old man in the closed down market, Picking up the papers with his worn out shoes.'

³¹ Whipps Cross University Hospital is a large university hospital in the locality of Whipps Cross in Leytonstone, London and was known as a bastion of Irish Catholicism. So Catholic was it that the famous story did the rounds that when Winston Churchill was canvassing near Whipps Cross in his constituency of Woodford Green one Sunday, some Irish nurses were heckling him and demanding that he give the six counties of Northern Ireland back to the Republic of Ireland. Churchill glared at them and declared 'I will give you back the six counties when you give us back Whipps Cross' (Spinks 2014: 11).

freak. It was different here cause people didn't laugh if you said you were Irish, they just didn't believe you. 'Where are you from though' they would say.

Closest ties with former inmates

Left to create their own lives and identities, the women often used the networks of other industrial school girls they had grown up with to help them to find jobs and for support. Several participants talked about the bond they felt with the other women from the industrial school, a bond which usually continued over the life course. They reflected that their lives were intertwined by the mutual experiences of having no biological family as well as the understanding that came from being survivors of the institution. Having the same references and experiences, as would be the case in an average family, is what seems to tie some of the women together.

PM: Did the home give you a sense of self or identity?

Kathleen: No. No, it left me confused [...] I was very, very shy when I was in the home and I hung around with some of the cheeky ones and when we left school we moved into bedsits together and I went to London.

Many of the women in this research maintained a connection to their early friendships with fellow inmates through networks of friendship formed after leaving the institutions. There is a constant reference to 'my sister', or 'sisters' in the research ascribed to the other women that make up these networks but who are not biological siblings. The close ties have allowed the women to form family structures through these friendships and these structures have been stronger than those of the biological families that rejected them as infants. Despite the fact that many of the women were in contact with, or went on to eventually find biological family members and parents, it is obvious from their testimony that the relationships that they have with their institutional peers are the strongest and are relationships that have sustained them through their formative years and in their times of trouble and need. For some, through homelessness and early pregnancy, drug or alcohol misuse, the people who have lent a hand have been those who understood the need to reach out and pull along, if not up, their former inmates.

This was demonstrated to me personally where two women of mixed African-Irish descent died, one as recently as 2020, and where both funerals were organised and mostly funded by their institutional friends, both white and mixed. It is not difficult to understand this bond when seen through the prism of identification with others who have been abandoned, rejected and left to struggle alone, regardless of colour or origins.

We should note, however, that this bond was not universally held and some participants reported that in turning their backs on Ireland they also actively turned away from the people with whom they grew up in the industrial schools. Research into the stigma associated with surviving childhood abuse suggests that for many survivors silence is often their response, and in their efforts to limit their shame and humiliation they actively avoid people they knew and associate with that period of abuse in their lives (Tangney & Fischer, 1995; Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

For those that left Ireland, the multicultural and multiracial environment of the cities in the UK where the participants tended to end up afforded them an opportunity to explore their sense of identity. It further allowed them to search for the absent mother and father. In some cases, the freedom to discover themselves after years of incarceration also encompassed the freedom to explore their sexuality.

The following participant's story is an interesting study as it captures in one narrative arc the spectrum of experiences of the participants (as well as echoing the CICA and AMRI findings discussed earlier in this chapter). It illustrates the challenges faced by the young women upon leaving the institution and encapsulates the trajectory of the search for a mother, of trying to discover an identity outside of Ireland, of dealing with the impact of institutional abuse leading to substance abuse and attempted suicide, and the dislocation from the discovered, but ultimately problematic father. Kathleen was born in the UK and returned to Ireland aged 3 weeks old as her mother was unwell. Her mother placed her in care through the court in Dublin and she was sent to [industrial school] but the absent mother remained a constant in her mind:

Kathleen: I thought about her all the time. I remember going to Africa years later and drinking really heavily but every time I got drunk I would start grieving for my mother and I don't understand it but I went through a huge grieving

process. And my sexuality, I was questioning that and intimacy was something that I couldn't even deal with because I had been sexually assaulted. [...] And so I used alcohol to forget all that stuff and then I smoked some hash, smoked some weed. I got involved with heroin. I got involved with cocaine, but I always had a really healthy side to me too. I was really interested... like, I was vegetarian for a bit, didn't drink for periods.

After leaving the institution she went to London where she shared a flat with a young woman originally from [...] who was also raised in care in the UK. The other young woman [...] held regular parties where drugs were taken. During one of these parties she was introduced to an older African man who several days later came to [...] where she worked claiming that she was the child he had had with an Irish woman years earlier. Kathleen did not believe him as he was a 'two bit' drug dealer, but after intense questioning it became clear that he was, in fact, her father. Kathleen stated, 'He apologised for the life that I'd had.' Her father found himself in trouble [...] and gave her name as his next of kin. She was asked to take his belongings which she felt unable to do. She was not able to cope with the presence of her father in her life as she was also dabbling in drugs and was emotionally fragile trying to deal with issues of sexuality and identity in London. Her father tried to build a relationship and as she reports was more into the idea of a father/daughter relationship than she was.

Kathleen: [...] suddenly it was a thing of like oh now we're family. And I was asked to look after his stuff [...] and I was asked if I would put him up? And I said 'no, I don't really know this man' and 'it's not my problem.' So I kind of blocked him out of my life and he would call me every Sunday [...] and I'd be all hung over and I'd be 'what d'you want?' you know. It was kind of like that [...] I hung up on the phone on him and I didn't speak with him... and then he came and picked up his stuff and I never heard from him again. And I felt bad. And then I went searching for him again [...] I'd love to meet him now cause when I was in London I was in bits cause I was kind of... I was really fucked up in many ways but I still kept my shit together. I was doing a lot of drugs and drinking. I worked all that out.

But before having ‘worked all that out’ the impact of the emotional and sexual abuse she had endured in the industrial school led her to attempt suicide:

Kathleen: Like I said to you, when I was in London I was very self-destructive. I tried to take my own life one night, you know. I had the ...I don’t know, I was very fortunate, like, [...] and now I have...like now I am just kinda done with people to the point where it’s like no, I’m ok doing things by myself.

Life course approaches to health suggest that an individual’s early life experiences are precursors to later health, especially mental health outcomes (Fergusson *et al.* 2013; Gilbert *et al.* 2009; Kuh *et al.* 2003; Sandedlak *et al.* 2010; Turner *et al.* 2017) and many of the participants reflected on the legacy of neglect and stigma in the industrial school as well as the impact abuse had on their adult minds:

Lily: [...] I had such bad OCD because in [name] we were taught cleanliness is next to godliness so it didn’t matter if we had no food to eat as long as the place was clean and if food fell from the table you had to go down on your hands and knees and finish eating it, and when we were finished eating we had to go down with a dustpan and brush and clean up any crumbs we left [...]

Michelle: They impacted on me from [institution], I became withdrawn, I became self-conscious, I became untrusting, you know, well what they did, they shattered me, they completely broke me down. And it took years for me to build up again. To get confidence. They told me no man would ever want me, only for the one thing, I didn’t even know what that meant, or what the one thing was, imagine saying that to somebody? Nobody is ever going to want you.

Kathleen: [...] I was absolutely terrified of intimacy and I didn’t really know how to... I couldn’t communicate with people very well and when it came down to it I would suddenly feel very inadequate and whatever.

Adverse outcomes are not just experienced over the short and medium term following abuse, but instead can endure over a victim and survivor’s lifetime (One in Four, 2015). The outcomes or impacts of childhood neglect and abuse play out in the lives of victims

and survivors in complex and dynamic ways which provoke and compound physical and mental health outcomes (Hooper & Warwick, 2005; Kamiya *et al.* 2016). For example, Allnock *et al.* (2015) report that one in four victims and survivors of childhood abuse reported a long-standing illness or disability compared with one in five of the general population and Coles *et al.* (2014) in a longitudinal study found that women who had experienced childhood abuse were 1.3 times more likely to report poor general health than women who had experienced no abuse. For some of the participants, evidence that their abuse was a corrosive element in their lives is clearly evident in the data:

Lily: In hindsight I didn't know that, like, I never would have revisited... every now and again you get flashbacks. There's no doubt about it but it took me years. But I didn't know that I had been sexually abused and I didn't know why I would be frigid and why I would be very, very, what do you call it... not very au fait with matters about sex... Until I was coming back from [name of town] with a friend... and it was like a slap in the face and I jammed on the brakes and I said Jesus, [friend's name] I was, like, do you know what? ...I was abused... And this came out of nowhere. It was like this dropped out of nowhere on my car. [...] And there's this smell of the place [the institution], this smell haunts me to this day.

Racial Health

As it forms a core buttress to the argument of a racialised experience within the industrial school complex, it is important to note the association between race, gender, childhood and institutional abuse, and life course outcomes, especially those of physical and mental health outcomes. Much of the literature examining the association between racial discrimination and health has focused on mental health outcomes; however, racial discrimination has been shown to predict physical and behavioural health conditions as well. Williams and Mohammed (2009, 2013; cf. also Brondolo *et al.* 2011; Jackson *et al.* 2010; Lewis *et al.* 2015; and Williams *et al.* 2003) have argued forcefully that pervasive negative racial stereotypes within institutions can lead to internalised racism or self-stereotyping which is associated with lower psychological well-being and higher levels of alcohol consumption and depressive symptoms and state and trait anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Hwang & Goto, 2008) as well as overall mortality (Chae *et al.* 2018)

and heart disease mortality (Leitner *et al.* 2016). Finally, we should note that Chao *et al.* (2012), Sue *et al.* (2007), Keith *et al.* 2010 and Kessler *et al.* (1999) identified interpersonal, emotional, and existential distress as outcomes of experiencing both habitual and major event-related racial discrimination.

For some of the participants, episodes of chronic racial discrimination have been seared into their minds. In the following passage, Lily recounts how the helplessness she felt in failing to save her brother from racially-charged abuse had a significant negative impact on both siblings and on their relationship:

Lily: And I do remember it to this day, in [institution] where they did it to my brother. They used to lock him into the potato shed where all the mice were and him roaring. And the light switch was inside the door but the nun would be outside it, ‘don’t even think of putting on that light because I’m out here.’ And he’d be roaring, squealing and jumping. And she’d dare him to put it on.

[...] and then we’d be cleaning floors and one of the nuns didn’t like him at all, cause he was a very handsome little lad. She used to call him ‘black beauty.’ And as she was walking past him, she used to always tip over his dustpan of food knowing well it’d irritate him and then a fight would break out. And I used to hate him for that, in so far as, don’t say anything cause she’s going to beat you and beat you and she used to lift the habit and batter him. [...] I put all these restrictions on him, type of thing, do you know what I mean? Just like they restricted me, in so far as I wasn’t allowed laugh, I wasn’t allowed cry.

Stigma, Familial Bonds and Absent Parents

This damage to familial ties, up to and including complete severing of all links, was a common element of the dataset. The search for absent mothers and fathers as we will see in the next chapter played a significant role in the women’s negotiation of identity and their search for belonging in the society outside the walls of the industrial school. When parents were denied to them, they sought to establish links with other family members such as aunts and uncles. We should note, however, that the agnatic side was usually not available to the women as their father’s identity in many cases remained unknown.

In lieu of a family for themselves, the data is rich with examples of the women expressing their earnest attempts to create this sense of family through their children:

Veronica: 'I definitely bonded with my child and I definitely didn't want a white child and I wanted a child that looked like me.'

Some of the women, however, echoed Jennifer from earlier and expressed their continuing pain at being unable to 'parent' their children.

Jennifer: And now I've met [son who was adopted when Jennifer was 16]. All around the same time I met him and found my father and found my sister and found I came from a home in [country] and found my son. So it's the same thing. My son is damaged from his background. Yes, he was adopted, [...] His thing is a lack of identity even though he had a mixed-race sister. [...] But we haven't got the connection, it's really weak. And I've just met him and he's got loads of problems, and I can't help him.

Goffman (1963) was among the first to systematically investigate stigma and stigma by association. Boyd *et al.* (2003: 32) defined internalised stigma as 'devaluation, shame, secrecy, and withdrawal triggered by applying negative stereotypes to oneself.' Commentators such as Corrigan *et al.* (2006), Corrigan *et al.* (2011), Corrigan *et al.* (2012), Holzemer *et al.* (2009) and Luoma *et al.* (2007) highlight the identification of the individual with a stigmatised group which leads to their negative thoughts and feelings (e.g., shame, negative self-evaluative thoughts, fear) and their resulting behavioural impact (e.g., treatment avoidance, failure to seek employment, avoidance of intimate contact with others).

Lily: [...] but I was always ashamed of it always ashamed and I hated it when people asked. I always felt people felt sorry for me and I was fed up with it [...] And it's so demoralising, oh cause you're black, and you're this and you're that ... I find it so demoralising, feeling sorry for you, [...] and I have never got into the depths of the suffering that occurred there, cause, honestly, why do I want them [her children] to know that I suffered [...]

For the participants, the stigma of being ex-industrial school girls was compounded by the association in the Irish public mind of industrial schools with reformatories and thus with ‘criminality and disrepute in a traditional Ireland which was a deeply conservative, hierarchical place’ (Ferguson, 2007: 130). Once stigmatised, either directly or by association, people are devalued by others in their environment and treated with disdain and shunned. Thus, the victims of child sexual abuse may be reluctant to disclose the abuse out of fear of being stigmatised and experiencing the negative consequences:

Sadly, in Jennifer’s case this indentured service with her foster family led to sexual abuse.

Jennifer: And so it was easy for her [another adopted child] to abuse me without even thinking about it. So it was like an intergenerational thing [...] And so that’s basically how they fucked up my life, sexualised me too early. [...] Seems like any bit of attention stands in for the love that you should have got from your mother or from your father.

PM: Tell me about relationships?

Rosaleen: I’m not good at them! I tell them I’m from [city] I wouldn’t even tell anyone I didn’t grow up with my mother... and I’ll never tell anyone again

The stigma of being essentialised as ‘moral dirt’ as outlined by Ferguson (2007: 1) above is further intensified in the data by the recognition of the racialised aspects of being in the industrial school which left the children of mixed African-Irish descent open to more experiences of discrimination (AMRI, 2019; Sunday Independent, 2020) than many of the other white children with what Pinel (1999) defined as more concealable stigma. Carter and Forsyth (2010) argued that racial stigma is associated with higher levels of psychological distress and this distress has seeped into the lives of some of the participants:

PM: Do you think growing up in an institution had an impact on how you viewed yourself?

Rosaleen: Yes. I think. Yes, and it mightn't even be that but I couldn't have relationships with fellas like I couldn't make them last. I mean I have just finished with a fella and he said I was too easy-going. As a woman I never had any positive relationships with fellas. As a woman and a mother I'm really confident. I'd give meself a pat on the back. As a person I think I can hold my own with anybody in any situation. But in relationships I have never had real positive experiences.

Rosaleen displays strong signs of resilience (Shih *et al.* 2005; Shih *et al.* 2007) and resistance to stigma (Pescosolido & Martin, 2015; Poindexter & Shippy, 2010; Thoits, 2011) but research across a number of stigmatised statuses suggests that resilience has no discernible countervailing effect on internalised stigma (Corrigan *et al.* 2011). Moreover, research targeting the effect of stigma on social adaptation and recovery after childhood trauma (Neville *et al.* 2004; Factor *et al.* 2011; Link & Phelan, 2001, 2006; Link *et al.* 2001; Perlick *et al.* 2001; Wood *et al.* 2017) suggests that resilience has little or no impact on internalised stigma and that self-esteem and related social dispositions, as well as health disparities in population health overall, continue to be negatively correlated with childhood abuse and corresponding adult stigma. This attempt on Rosaleen's part to protect herself from the stigma of being a survivor of the industrial school is clearly evident in the next passage:

Rosaleen: I just broke up with somebody. We were together for a year and broke up and then got back together again for a few months. But it didn't work. I told him where I was from and he is the first guy in my whole life that I ever told ...and he was just really flattered and I was even going to bring him up to show him [the industrial school]. Anyway I'm not going back. At my age I need to get on and just enjoy life.

I don't want to give them the ammunition. You just have to have a row and then they throw it back at me. There's enough they can [...] It's trust, I mean you were rejected straight away at birth and then you could be rejected again. And, I mean, that's why I think it's letting the wall down.

Belonging and Irishness

Others suggested that identity construction began for them with the offloading of Irish surnames through marriage, which created in their minds an unwelcome dialogue on belonging and Irishness.

Vera: So yeah I suppose there was a huge identity crisis at the age of 17 to, whenever, you know. I remember wanting to lose my name, my Irish surname. I couldn't wait to get rid of that. That was very important to me. I suppose it was. I was nothing or nobody with that surname.

For others, the impact of growing up motherless led to subsequent attempts to reconstruct an identity through marriage and having children of their own. Veronica: 'I definitely bonded with my child and I definitely didn't want a white child and I wanted a child that looked like me.'

In stark contrast, Lily reveals the impact of racialisation on the young woman of mixed African-Irish descent:

Lily: ...but I think I'm racist, and I'll tell you why I would never have dated a black man, not a hope in hell, never, ever, and when I'd see them in [name of town] cos there was only 3 of us in [town]. when the doctors would come to the town I would feel sorry for them, but I knew in my heart I would never marry a black man. I used to feel pity for them in so far as I knew the abuse they were going through; I think that was my reasoning ...where I was coming from but I still wouldn't... I knew in my heart I would never marry a black man, I knew that

PM: Why do you think that was?

Lily: Because it did me no favours, being the colour I am, it did me no favours in so far as it made my life go in the direction it may not have gone if I was reared in a family to accept my colour...

However, at the same time, the participants note that the consequences of their marginal status were also often hidden under the surface of universality and colour-blind approaches.

Rosaleen: Sometimes when people say things about someone black around me I say, hey, I'm black, and they say we don't think of you as black and I say well I am so ...

Michelle: if somebody says something and if I say you're insulting me ...and they say you're not black.

PM: Does that insult you?

Michelle: No, I don't see that as an insult, I suppose what they're saying is you're one of our own, even if I don't have the appearance of it. I mean I can accept that but it still doesn't make sense to me that you can be one of their own but of a different colour but yet they can be racist to someone, but they don't think they are insulting you because you are a colleague or friend, or whatever.

In stark contrast to Michelle above, Olivia made the following observation: 'I'm Irish. But I'm black...so, I must be a foreigner. [...] What's the point in talking about it?'

Vera also alluded to the harmful impact on her sense of identity of being denied her Irishness due to phenotypic blackness:

Vera: I would have heard in conversations, 'where's she from?' or you know... so there was this constant... right up until my later years, you're... you know, so the Irish people let me know, you know, that that's not acceptable, you're not Irish, you know, so I kind of don't believe I'm Irish because I've been told so often

Irish mixed race role models such as the frequently-referenced Phil Lynott and Paul McGrath (Olivia: But Phil, name somebody else...you can't!) either came to national prominence too late for these women or were too few to penetrate the racialised isolation of the participants. Consequently, identity as a mixed race woman had to be 'put on hold' (Nancy) until they could 'escape' to the UK, or further afield.

They were also capable of identifying the racialised and gendered aspect of Direct Provision.

Nancy: What's that phrase you used earlier? 'The more it changes, the more it stays...'

PM: ...the same

Nancy: It never ends. What they're doing to them, sure that's how we were treated. Africans...

PM: And now Syrians. [researcher and participant talk over each other] And Afghans. And Iraqis.

Nancy: Yes. Syrians. Women and children treated like that, never ends.

Returning to identity and terminology, Vera asserted quite forcefully as to why she did not ascribe to the use of the phrase 'mixed race' in the following passage, which encapsulates the search for an identity on the part of many of the participants:

Vera: No, I prefer the term mixed heritage, yeah, yeah, and you know, I love it but some woman has come up and said look there can only be one race and that's the human race. Yeah, I like to identify that I don't think a person should ever be referred to by the colour of their skin I don't like black or white I think heritage that's the way I like to go about it, ok? so my children are not belonging to any races, so I'm not belonging to any race, you know I'm mixed heritage, my parents heritage is Irish and my father's heritage is African and to me that takes racism altogether out of the equation so let's have an intelligent conversation about this ok? That's the way I like to identify myself, I'm mixed heritage.

PM: What does that mean to you...?,

Vera: It just means I have a mixed heritage. I'm Irish and I'm African.

PM: But without any input from the African side culturally?

Vera: [...] Yes, so yeah you know I don't like the way people are referred to by the colour of their skin I just don't like that. [...] it's not me avoiding the issue. It's me saying come on, think of completely different ways of... around this. That's what I'm saying. You know, don't think of me as a black person first of all, I'm a human being and then and whatever you want me to do.

And I'm whatever I want to be, I'm Irish and I'm African. Not half-caste. Not coloured.

But I don't see it as two races. I see it as the one race. There's the African heritage and there's the Irish Heritage in me and I know a hell of a lot about the

Irish Heritage and I don't know anything about the African side of me, which is really sad because I always wanted to identify with that part of me. But I couldn't because I didn't have anything to go on. So, it kinda left me hanging. But now since I've got this identity kit [*a DNA Ancestry test kit*], I'm kinda like ok.

I feel balanced, that I can say 'no, I'm not in from the Spanish Armada.' I don't have to make a joke about it to fit in [to my Irish identity]. I'm West African which I quite like and I feel oh!, ok well that's part of me. So now I can lift both shoulders up and be proud and say that I'm half Irish, half African.

Dolores summed up this negation of her Irishness in the following exchange:

PM: Were you told you weren't Irish?

Dolores: They probably said it to me I am not Irish but I can't remember. And I'm a bit older than you are. I can think as a teenager, I think, you would be excluded from their group now. Ah you would, especially in [name of school] you know. Ah, you would be excluded from their group, [...] I don't know about the orphanage though. Let me think. Would you be excluded? Cause there was so many coloured you wouldn't even think you were different. It was when you left there it became so bad cause they never really explained to us about racism, you know.

Conscious that she was employing a defence mechanism, Veronica had reached the following conclusion about her Irishness and her identity:

Veronica: I was born in Dublin, Ireland ...which is, God...actually hard for me to say, because I, God, I hate the place so much, everybody, all of my friends and even my daughter whose 12, I told them I was born in London, because to be honest, I hate the place and the words won't even come out of my mouth.'

For Kathleen as she gets older, taking on visible symbols of Africanness such as African clothing presents an opportunity to discover an 'ethnicity' that she feels able to claim as she becomes more comfortable in identifying as both Irish and African; one being driven by the internalisation of a culture and the other by identification with an external phenotype that acknowledges her ties to Africa.

Kathleen: Well, there was that whole thing of like well my sense of humour is Irish. Well I had to identify with something and I couldn't... it wasn't until I went to...later in my life I started to feel the African... I really liked the idea of like just actually wearing African... like getting my ethnicity on the African side and actually embracing that. I found that very interesting and very attractive.

The Residential Institutions Redress Scheme

Commentators such as Smith and Freyd (2014) suggest that for victims of institutional child sexual abuse, the traumatic consequences are often exacerbated by the publicity that frequently surrounds the abuse and by the stigma experienced by the victim in adult life. It is axiomatic therefore that when faced with the prospect of having to tell their stories of neglect, discrimination and abuse to the Redress Board decades after they occurred, this would exacerbate the trauma and stigma felt by the participants. The Residential Institutions Redress Scheme (known by all the parties as the Redress Board, or more usually, simply the Redress) was set up under the Residential Institutions Redress Act 2002 to compensate persons who had suffered an injury as a result of being abused while a child and resident in an industrial school, reformatory or other institution subject to State regulation and inspection. It was administered by the Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB). The Redress Board was explained to the participants at the time as being a non-adversarial environment in which they could outline the injury they had received and that this would lead to limited financial compensation. Many of the participants report entering into the process without fully being aware of its remit. Others entered into it in the hope of initiating legal action against their abusers.

The strongest subtheme of the dataset in relation to the Redress Board is a combination of disappointment and anger stemming from the extremely adversarial nature of the process, as they reported being interrogated as if they were the guilty parties. The repetition of this point throughout the data reflects the deeply-held sense that the participants felt that they were the ones on trial, as it were, and that the charge they faced was one of lying. The subtext identified by many of the participants was one of the Board being there to 'defend' the nuns and the industrial schools from being impugned by the victims. This reflects the findings of the Residential Institutions Survivor's

Network (RISN) who point out that several survivors of the industrial schools relabelled the Redress Board, the Re-abuse Board (RISN 2020).

The hurt and damage done by this process was still keenly felt by the participants a decade later. The following passage exemplifies the Kafkaesque quality many of the participants identified as they endured the officious and petty bureaucracy of the Redress Board:

PM: And were you conscious of being abused at that time? Did you understand that something was wrong?

Eileen: No. I blocked it. I must have blocked it because when the case came up about, do you remember the case about [name of case]? It was often on the news about the lay staff sexually abusing. [I indicate I do remember]. That's the one. But I had to go for counselling for the Redress [Board]. I just couldn't bring myself to... it was a man I had, you see... and I just couldn't bring myself to...

PM: Could you have asked for a woman?

Eileen: I didn't know I could ask. I hated going for the counselling. I really hated it and I used to be sitting there for most of it and I'd just be like this [she mimics rocking back and forward] ... And then like I'd be trying to talk about what? I'd be like, what am I going to say? I just couldn't talk. And then with frustration I used to cry and he [the assigned counsellor] just left me sitting there crying. He'd be sat there quietly. [...]

And I had to go and the first time I went, I thought I'm not going back there again. It was too upsetting. Was very traumatic! every time, I'd be over at the bus stop and the tears would be crying down me face. So I told him I was sexually abused but I didn't go in to detail, like I just couldn't. I just couldn't handle it. I think it would have been easier if he had just asked me questions instead of just leaving me sitting there. And of course I was like this [mimics stuttering]. I couldn't start a sentence, couldn't get the words out. It was that bad... He just left me. He'd say 'whenever you're ready' and like it would be a long pause and I'd be ... and tears and all 'is there anything else you'd like to say?' Like, it wasn't helpful even at all. I sometimes think I aimed too low in what I said to the Redress [...] I do feel resentful for the fact that I never elaborated more with the counsellor

when I was doing the counselling. That I never ... I didn't elaborate more with the counsellor over the sex abuse.

Having demonstrably failed to help Eileen in any manner with the trauma and stigma which she still felt from being abused, she later discovered that the assigned Redress Board counsellor had failed to even learn her name during their sessions and appears to have 'mangled' Eileen's story with that of another participant which further problematised Eileen's appearance before the adversarial Redress Board committee:

Eileen: When I got my report it says eh, [Anne] found it very difficult to talk but she'll get over it, she'll recover, something like that. Yeah, something to that effect anyway. And it wasn't even like my name either. He put the name Anne down. I got me report off me solicitor and I was reading through it and I saw 'Anne will get over this and will recover' and I was thinking to meself who's Anne? And that report went to the Redress. And they sent to find me, like I was in the room outside and they probably saw that. And it was only afterwards that I read the report. So they're probably saying who's Anne? And who's Eileen?

Summary

The last four chapters have addressed the four key themes emerging from the data analysis, namely: mixed race experience; family and attachment; the institution; and life after the institution. Each of the themes should not be viewed as isolated from one another but as constituent parts of an interconnected experience of being both a survivor of the racialised experience of being a female of mixed African-Irish descent in Ireland during the 1950-70s and to date, in addition to being a survivor of the industrial school.

In the final chapter, I will tie these elements together and return to the central question of how does this generation of women of mixed African-Irish descent negotiate their identity(ies) within an institutionalised setting and throughout the course of their lives after they leave said institution? Furthermore, how does a person of mixed African-Irish descent, raised in an institution which is predominantly white, with no family or community and with dual ethnic identities, negotiate the world and, independently of all the normative social structures, forge an identity?

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

Summary of key findings

There are four key findings which emerge. First, many of the participants experienced the deleterious impact of being racialised in the institutions as children. Secondly, the denial of and/or failure to create a relationship with their white mothers and black fathers played a significant part in their (re)construction of individualised identities made up of the constituent elements of racialisation and institutionalisation. Thirdly, many expressed a deep desire to discover more about their Irish mothers and African fathers with a view to establishing a potential connection to this imagined presence. Finally, the combined effects of being parentless, institutionalised and Othered resulted in a subjective (re)construction of a racial self that is realistic and accommodating of the social reality of how they are perceived in a racial state.

It must be stressed that the four findings outlined above cannot be analysed as independent phenomena since they interlock rather than interpolate. The themes identified mirror many of the themes that emerge in literature on institutional abuse such as physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse and neglect (Buckley, 2013; CICA, 2009; Ferguson, 2007; Ferriter, 2009b; Finnegan, 2001; Garrett, 2010, 2013, 2015; Milotte, 1997; Pembroke, 2013; Raftery & O’Sullivan, 1999). However, parallel to these other abuses, my data suggest an over-arching sense of identity displacement through a racist discourse which racialised the women as Other and as not belonging. It is crucial to contextualise results outlined in the last four chapters by acknowledging the growing recognition that mixed race children were treated in a less favourable manner even in comparison to the neglectful and abusive regimes in Irish industrial schools. At the time of writing, the report from The Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation (DCYA, 2015), though submitted to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth, Mr. Roderic O’Gorman, still has not been made public. As outlined in Chapter 1, it was set up in the wake of claims that the bodies of up to 800 babies and children may have been interred in an unmarked mass grave in the Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home, located in Tuam, County Galway, but its remit also covers investigation into the records of, and the practices at an additional thirteen Mother and Baby Homes (DCYA, 2015).

The Commission report, leaked in February 2020, detailed racist abuse, racial profiling, and Apartheid-like segregation in Mother and Baby homes towards mixed African-Irish children, as well as Traveller children, and children with physical and intellectual disabilities (Sheehan, 2020). It found that skin colour was often listed as a defect in files and that mixed African-Irish children were considered unsuitable for adoption, were 'eugenically rated' (O'Sullivan, 2020) based on a nun's assessment of 'the intelligence of the natural mother and how 'negroid' the features of the infant were' (O'Sullivan, 2020), and that 'when it came to the child's records, the religious orders did not record the ethnicity of a child's parents and that the default description - African - was mainly used' (O'Sullivan, 2020). The data chapters have provided ample support that many of the participants in this research experienced aspects of this systemic, and individual, racialised neglect and abuse.

In this chapter I draw these findings of racialised neglect and abuse in Irish industrial schools together, using the theoretical concept of Critical Mixed Race Studies to locate the construction of identity for these women. In keeping with Graham (2007), I viewed the participants in this research as competent witnesses to their own lives in order to accentuate their voices and bring insights into what it meant to be a child of mixed African-Irish descent in the industrial schools where adverse racism was etched into everyday experiences. As Aitken and Rosenhaft (2013: 3) observe, biographical and micro-historical approaches prove especially fruitful in the study of Europe's black diaspora as they elucidate 'global entanglements and trends by tracing the ways in which they are worked out at the personal and local level.' The participants are aware that experiences of being in the homes were mediated through the social categories of race, as well as those of gender and class, and bring to the fore diversity and differences among children rather than sameness and generality (Taylor, 2004). I highlight the parentless nature and corruption of care framework of institutional care and address the racial literacy of this group of women over their life course. Finally, I also consider how identification with the other 'institutional' children appears to be a stronger and more meaningful marker of identity among this cohort, than a contested, racialised Irish identity.

Assessment of findings

There are few positive portrayals of the industrial schools in either fictive or biographical accounts from former inmates. Nor are they to be found in the 2,600-page Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA, 2009). Guy (2011: 10) remarks that Irish society, the town, the community, the household and indeed the individual, in the main, appears to have tolerated this abuse through an abrogation of ‘moral responsibility’ and ‘self-protective silence’ because, as the writer, John Banville signals ‘everyone knew’ about the schools (Banville, 2009). This awareness that the culture of this architecture of containment (Smith, 2007) was based on a collusive relationship between the Catholic Church and State did not translate into action because of how this awareness was mediated and communicated (Pine *et al.* 2017: 199). Church, State and society sought to neutralise the existence of unmarried mothers and their children with a motif of Otherness (Ferguson, 2007: 134) since their perceived immorality had the potential to corrupt and even to ‘bring down the fledgling state’ (Crowley & Kitchin, 2008: 367). Moreover, when a whistleblower broke ranks, officials of the State according to Holohan (2011: 147) ‘often labelled those who broke the silence as cranks and troublemakers.’

In *Suffer the Little Children*, Mary Raftery and Eoin O’Sullivan observed:

There was one constant theme that continuously informed the way in which industrial school children were treated. That was the clear perception from the religious that they were in some way less valuable and less worthy than other children. Much of this view was shared by society in general, and gives a unique insight into the nuances of the very rigid class system which operated in Ireland during this century. The fact that children themselves were in no way responsible for their condition in life did not appear to mitigate the view that they were less deserving than children from better-off backgrounds and were consequently treated accordingly (1999: 312).

The sense of ‘coloured’ children being perceived as inferior, previously referred to in Chapter 5, is evident when Dr. Lysaght lamented their plight in 1966:

...their future especially in the case of girls presented a problem difficult of any satisfactory solution. Their prospects of marriage especially in this country are practically nil and their future happiness and welfare can only be assured in a

country with a fair multi-racial population, since they are not well received by either 'black or white'.... It was quite apparent the nuns give special attention to these unfortunate children who are frequently found hot tempered and difficult to control. The coloured boys do not present quite the same problem. It would seem they also got special attention and that they were popular with the other boys. (CICA, 2009: 4.93)

We should note that Raftery & O'Sullivan (1999: 313) trenchantly picked apart these desiccated comments on the part of the Department of Education inspector and stressed:

Not only were these remarks racist, they were also inaccurate. Many of these so-called 'coloured' children now testify that they received no such 'special attention' — they say that they received the same beatings and abuse as most of the other children within the system.

The data from my participants suggests that one should adopt a distinctly jaundiced view of the good Dr. Lysaght's suggestion that the 'special attention' lavished on the children of mixed African-Irish descent was wholesome. On the contrary, the impact of their racialisation is manifested by many of the participants throughout the research. It must be said that some participants initially offered that they had an unproblematic time growing up in the industrial schools. However, even for this group, when invited to further examine the underlying elements of certain traumatic incidents and events from their childhood, were able to label such as being reflective of racist practices. Overall, racism was perceived by the participants as being pervasive and pernicious and became a driving force in their desire to leave Ireland almost immediately on discharge from the institutions and to reconstruct new identities in other more multi-racial/ethnic communities.

When it came to issues of attachment and relationships, some identified the abandonment by their mothers as being due to an inability to accept the colour of the child as a viable option for mothering within a racialised state. The stark choices available to mothers at the time are evident in the following anecdote. Following a reading at Epic, the Dublin Emigration Museum, in 2020 to mark St Brigid's day, a woman approached me and confided in me that she had emigrated to the US in 1969. She had married a

black man and due to the negative things that were being said to her about the future fate of her children, she said she feared for them were she to remain in Ireland. The comments in question were being made by her own mother, who was a doctor. Disparaging attitudes were a commonplace in the UK (Bland, 2019; *cf.* Lewis (2009: 8) for her exposition on the term ‘nigger-lover’) and, given the close ties with Ireland, awareness of this racial contumely would have been virally transmissible between the two islands so that fear of being thus labelled may have been sufficient to scare an Irish woman from keeping a child of mixed African-Irish descent. Or, scare a family from supporting mother and child so as to avoid such stigma. Chrissie, for example, stated that her grandfather had refused to have a ‘coloured’ child in the house despite there being two other illegitimate children already there. Phenotype, and not quantity of children, was seemingly the deciding factor in this decision.

In his classic treatise on stigma, Goffman (1963) delineates between people who are discredited - whose stigma is clearly known or visible - and people who are discreditable - whose stigma is unknown and is concealable. Children of mixed African-Irish descent were discredited as both illegitimate and black and the mothers doubly discredited as unmarried and deviant having had black children. However, thanks to institutionalisation the children continued to bear the visible stigma while the mothers, families and communities concealed the stigmatising secret behind industrial school walls.

The institutional abuse some of the participants experienced arose from, and manifested through racialised discourse at both vertical (nuns and staff as well as adults both inside and outside the homes) and horizontal (fellow inmates) levels. The trauma of dislocation from family and community and social stigmatisation, left these children of mixed African-Irish descent acutely vulnerable to the power differential within what were, I would contend, institutions of violence (Scheper-Hughes & Lovell, 1987). The thrust of Scheper-Hughes and Lovell’s concept is that social relationships within an institution of violence - prisons, mental hospitals, schools, children’s homes and families - are based on the dynamics of power. In other words, ‘the common thread in all these situations is the violence exercised by those who hold the weapons against those who are hopelessly dominated’ (Scheper-Hughes & Lovell, 1987: 60). My research data reveal aspects of the complex power relations between children of mixed African-Irish descent and

institutions, as well as the broader social and political contexts, which went to influence the children's opportunities and life chances.

The loss of their children back into the same system of care, from which some of the women had emerged, was linked to their parentless incarceration within the industrial school complex and the devaluation they associated with racialised abuse within the institution. This loss was even more harrowing when, having reconnected with their children in later life, the women discovered that details of their existence and even of their racial mixedness had been withheld from the children. Others suggested that identity construction began for them with the offloading of Irish surnames through marriage, which created in their minds an unwelcome dialogue on belonging and Irishness. For others, the impact of growing up parentless led to subsequent attempts to reconstruct an identity through marriage and having children of their own.

Racialisation threads itself throughout the entire dataset and the women attest to the multiple and oftentimes contradictory ways in which the construct of 'race' is operationalised - or rather, takes on dynamic qualities so that the constructs of nation, ethnicity and culture are collapsed into this racialised discourse. Consequently, Irish becomes shorthand for white (and vice versa) while black is synonymous with anyone who does not match the notion of phenotypical Irish.

Race, as argued in Chapter 2, is socially constructed through relationships and interactions between outsiders and insiders. Race is a social and political construct that comes out of particular histories of domination and exploitation between people through a race-based analysis of social relations. (Sheremet, 2017) opens us up to the 'understanding of why we cannot view the world from one perspective alone' since 'race is not biology, but race becomes biology' (Lentin, 2019). Collins (1986) stresses the importance of gender as an intersectional element in constructing a black identity since she points out that black women exist in a traditionally white and male space. Perhaps it is because the mixed race and racialised Other experience is typically read with the emphasis on the male. There is an assumption that men are the emblems of a nation's identity and women are attachments to men but not entities unto themselves. Anne McClintock writes '[a]ll nations depend on powerful constructions of gender...No nation in the world gives women and men the same access to the rights and resources of the

nation-state' (1995: 353). There is a plethora of work that indicates how mixed race and gender intersect (Ali, 2005; Butler, 1989, 1993; Collins, 2000; Mahtani, 2002; 2014; Newman, 2019; Omi & Winant, 2014; Sims & Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). Phenotypical designation, working in combination with gendered and socioeconomic attributes, all contribute in reducing the individual's 'racial capital' (Daniel *et al.* 2014: 24). Within a racialised environment race is often confused with nationality and ethnicity and thus other concepts of power—such as ethnicity, culture, nationality and class—are collapsed in misunderstanding. As a result of this process, race is often discarded in favour of ethnicity or identity which, for the most part, precludes issues of power and oppression operating in the everyday experiences of people's lives to be appreciated. Scourfield *et al.* (2005), in their study of minority children living in virtually all-white communities, consider identities to be negotiated according to specific social contexts but this negotiation takes place within a clearly racialised context.

Irish Identity(ies)

The participants existed in an Ireland geared towards monoracial identification. Ireland's persistent poverty over generations and its understanding of itself as a country of outward migration and an outpost on the edge of Europe sustained this cultural hegemonic stance as a white-only nation. Without a countervailing history of significant, sustained inward migration (at least, until the Celtic Tiger of the 1990s), the belief that it maintained a singular genetic bloodline creates an essentialist view of Irishness and of who is, and is not entitled to claim it. Commentators have problematised this belief:

... Obviously I am not disputing that in Ireland many people perceive(d) the nation as being 'monocultural' – but this was/is only sustainable as a result of partition, the marginalisation of Travellers as members of the nation and the ignoring of groups of people of immigrant descent living in Ireland. (Hickman, 2007: 17)

This essentialism at the core of the construction of Irish identity brings to light the web of factors and complexities involved in creating a mixed race identity for the participants. Identities are never fixed but are complex, differentiated and are constantly repositioned. Identity, and the articulation thereof, eschews as Stuart Hall submits in an early paper (1987), 'all forms of fixity and essentialism; social, political and class formations do not

exist a priori' (in Gairola 2016: 13). The women I interviewed lived as insiders and outsiders as they navigated between different social environments or to use Anzaldúa's (1987) formulation, they existed on the border as a mixed race woman throughout their lives. 'Who, me confused? Ambivalent?,' Moraga and Anzaldúa (1981: 205) once asked, 'Not so. Only your labels split me.'

For the participants, the path towards developing an embodied mixed race consciousness was fraught with contradictions. The data suggests that the participants experienced a paradoxical oppression in that they were both marked out by racial stereotypes in the wider society and yet at the same time were rendered invisible (Young 1990). I can attest to the fact that racial stereotypes were prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s Ireland. To take just one illustrative example; one of the heroic pilots in the 1955 movie, *The Dam Busters*, had a dog, affectionately named 'Nigger.'³² It would only take the showing of this Michael Anderson movie (an event which occurred, at least, every Christmas, and sometimes more frequently) for all and sundry in the industrial school to remember that they had a special word to use when singling me out for 'special attention.'

Due to their liminal positioning, many participants witnessed numerous and varied acts of racism both within and outside the homes. The marginalisation of these women of mixed African-Irish descent is associated with the complex social mechanism of oppressions that black communities have experienced in Ireland (Michael, 2015). Although black communities have been a part of Irish society spanning several centuries (Akenson, 1997; Hart, 2002; Riach, 1980; Rodgers, 1997, 2007), they largely occupy a peripheral or hidden position in national identity discourse. However, at the same time, the participants note that the consequences of their marginal status were also often hidden under the surface of universality and colour-blind approaches.

Colourblindness can 'function as a naive disavowal of racism, as if racism were an ideology that could be simply rejected by choosing what one sees, as if our racialized habits of seeing could simply disappear by a volitional act' (Medina, 2013: 40). Equally, it

³² The black Labrador retriever actually existed (cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigger_\(dog\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigger_(dog))). This Wikipedia entry includes the insightful titbit: 'In the same interview, George Baker, who also acted in the film, in response to being asked whether any opinion had been expressed on the name at the time that the film was made, said: 'No, none at all. Political correctness wasn't even invented, and an awful lot of black dogs were called Nigger.' In a sign that such designations may not be a thing of the past, on 04 August 2020, Amazon was forced to remove a post selling shoes described as 'nigger brown' after Black MP, David Lammy discovered the listing while shopping online.

can augment the deep-seated anxiety the participants felt as they anticipated and managed other people's racism (Ngo, 2017).

As Graham and Robinson (2004: 662) discern, 'who gets listened to is related to questions of power and various aspects of the silencing process which conspire to normalise invisibility so that what is 'normal' becomes the way it is.' These aspects of silencing are particularly powerful in the Irish context because the frustration and enormity of race issues can sometimes lock individuals into silence (Gordon, 2001) as we saw when Olivia contended in, Chapter 7, that she was perceived as black, she must be a foreigner.

Being mixed race is a complex social phenomenon and as argued by Gilroy (1993) presents a challenge to national identity and social perceptions of community. As they negotiated their access to a validated identity, the participants were prevented from establishing a validated identity based on the white side of their racial mix. Rockquemore and Arend (2002) noted the ability to become part of honorary whiteness is heavily dependent upon phenotype. Without validation, a person cannot fully 'own' that identity (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2002). Furthermore, a lack of validation can take emotional and psychological tolls (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Townsend *et al.* 2009). It is a common belief that multiracial people have a greater choice in how they want to identify, but the right to identify as they wish is not always socially sanctioned (Harris & Sim, 2002; Root, 1992), though they feel mixed race (Song & Hashem, 2010). The social and psychological construction of identities is an ongoing process which defies any notion of essential or static determinants. Harris and Sim (2002) have postulated that mixed race exemplifies a fluidity and dynamics of identity. Equally, my research suggests that there was no singular experience of being mixed African-Irish descent for the women growing up in institutional care within the industrial schools. Their identity construction was interpolated with other intersectional identities, social conditions and environments. It is, therefore, problematic to attempt to essentialise this group.

However, commonalities can be delineated. Irish society's response to these women was to determine a singular identity to their mixed African-Irish descent. The participants felt that they were thus obliged to 'do' race. Muñoz describes racial performativity as a way to get at an aspect of race that is 'a doing.'

More precisely, I mean to describe a political doing, the effects that the recognition of racial belonging, coherence, and divergence... It is therefore expedient to consider what race does... to look at race as a performative enterprise, one that can best be accessed by its effects... A critical project attuned to the performativity of race is indeed better suited to decipher what work race does in the world. (2006: 678–79).

Racial performativity entailed for some of the participants the curtailment of their education, to be replaced with labour.

While up to 60,000 children were sent, mostly illegally, to America for adoption (Golden, 2018), the evidence presented in Chapter 5 suggests that while there was a black market for white babies there was no such market for black babies (Akenson, 1994: 323). We recall the civil servant in the Department of External Affairs who, in 1951, informed his Consul General in New York that '[m]oreover, there is no 'colour' problem here so that intending foster parents in the US know that Irish children are 'guaranteed' in that respect' (Kennedy *et al.* 2016 cited in AMRI report, 2019). Thus, deprived of this potential lucrative value, the remaining value of the mixed race child – the colour problem - came from the capitation fee, from whatever the mother was paying to the institution for the child's upkeep, and from being used as a labourer, both within and outside the institution. Some participants recalled that during the 1950s and 1960s, as they got older, they were put to work within the industrial school or were placed in a home or on a farm to work for a foster family. Several of the women were conscious that you were also being funnelled into the next layer of the institutionalisation regime, namely the Magdalen laundries. Eileen, for example, observed that she did not receive what she termed a 'proper education,' as the understanding was that she did not need it, and she was moved into a Magdalen laundry. Other participants report that jobs were found for them in the kitchens of convents. The end result was a system that sought to utilise a work force, already lucrative due to the capitation fee, and move it from one tier of labour to the next for further exploitation. There was an awareness amongst some of the women that this was a self-perpetuating industry whereby the mothers in the Mother and Baby homes had their children taken from them and placed in the industrial schools, and that these girls would subsequently end up in the Magdalen laundries where women worked for no payment.

The question of identity has taken on colossal weight particularly for these women who were cast into the role of the Other, marginalised, discriminated against and too often invisible, not only within everyday discourses of affirmative notions of Irishness, but also within the 'grand narrative' of Irish thought and of being or becoming Irish. They were taught to recognise that Irish was shorthand for white and black was synonymous with anyone who did not match the limited physical profile of a white person, which includes mixed race with white birth mothers. Therein, the sanctioned constructs of nation, ethnicity and culture were collapsed and become racialised as in Vera's observation in Chapter 4 that since she was seen only as black and was often told she was not Irish, therefore, she never believed or desired herself to be Irish.

Racism, according to Stuart Hall (1996: 445; *cf.* also Yuval-Davis (1997), 'operates by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories... [so that race] constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalise the difference between belongingness and otherness.' The history of Othering the non-white by Irish society is founded on an essentialist discourse of impassable racial demarcation. Such essentialism can enhance the 'reproduction of potentially antagonistic, dominant and subordinate others' (Ang, 2001: 14), and, hence, provide an ideal environment in which racism can operate.

The participants were acutely aware that what was happening in the institutions during the timeframe in question cannot be viewed as happening in a vacuum, on an island cut off from all of the understandings of racial hegemony and racism. While it is true that Ireland, an emerging post-colonial nation state, was grappling with its own identity crisis and was mimetically endorsing cultural hegemonic displays (one such entity, *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* had literal, and not merely symbolic, maidens dancing at crossroads); on the other hand, race was high on the global agenda and this would have permeated the consciousness of the Irish who through centuries of emigration and missionary work were entangled in many of these power struggles. In the US, there was the rise of black Power and Civil Rights movements, black Panthers, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement, race riots, and popular movies such as *Guess who's Coming to Dinner* and *The Imitation of Life* (I saw this movie while still resident in the institution) which dramatised the American attitudes to race mixing predicated on hypodescent. The

cultural and political power of the Irish-American community and their attitudes to other ethnic minority groups (Ignatiev, 1995) filtered back to the ‘old sod’ in visits such as that characterised by Brian Friel in his 1964 play (and 1974 film version) of *Philadelphia, Here I Come*. In the data, Vera captures this in Chapter 5 when she discusses the malign influence of the returned Irish-American relative on her foster parents.

In Britain, the Windrush generation of immigrants from the West Indies had begun to make its presence felt in the 1950s, the rise of Powellism would follow in the 1960s, and the regular stereotyping of black people was frequent in British TV shows, which soon became family favourites in Irish homes, such as *Black and White Minstrel Show*, *Till Death Us Do Part*, and *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin* (Brennan 2019). In Africa, the fight for independence from colonial powers was in its full and bloody throes. The Biafran and Congolese Wars would insinuate themselves into the Irish mindset and enhance the Irish compendium of racial slurs with the unique inclusion of Baluba.³³ Bland (2019) highlights the attitudes to relationships between white British women and black American GIs during and following the Second World War and the resultant treatment of their offspring, which mirrors the attitudes and rejections of ‘coloured’ children in Ireland. Through it all, the role of the Catholic Church in Ireland as missionaries in Africa and the power and symbolism of the black baby box (see Chapter 4) helped perpetuate the myth of black helplessness in Irish consciousness. Black baby box charity thus became a ‘normalised means of engaging with blackness in the form of a remote neediness that was not so far removed from the concern expressed for the needy slaves by Irish abolitionists and their supporters’ (White, 2012: 34-5). As McVeigh (1996: 19) puts it:

Irish Catholicism manifested elements of anti-black racism in a specifically religious phenomenon. This is illustrated by the ubiquitous collections for ‘Black Babies’ which, until recently, were a feature of Irish Church missionary appeals. These necessarily conditioned Irish Catholic people to regard black people in a

³³ The Luba people or *Baluba* are an ethno-linguistic group indigenous to the south-central region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Niamba ambush took place on 8 November 1960, when an Irish Army platoon in Congo-Léopoldville was ambushed, the first time the Irish Army was embroiled in battle since the founding of the Irish state in 1922. The notoriety of the attack, and the allegations of mutilation and cannibalism that circulated in the Irish popular press in its aftermath, led to the word ‘baluba’ (sometimes spelled ‘balooba’) becoming a synonym for any ‘untrustworthy and barbaric’ individual in certain parts of Ireland. It was also a common racial slur for the mixed race participants in the late 1960s and 1970s.

particular way - passive, helpless, to be saved by the proselytizing ambitions of the Church.

There is no argument that a significant number – we may well argue, a critical mass – of children within the institutions, to a greater or lesser degree, suffered from the ill-treatment meted out by the religious orders in charge of them. But the added burden of a racialised and stigmatised representation of unfortunate half-castes in a world dominated by racial hierarchy was also at play in the institutions. Little was expected of the children in general and the ones of mixed African-Irish descent were, to all intents and purposes, deemed not fit for purpose. They were destined to be a tragic mulatto in an Ireland that was emerging from its own colonial past with its jingoistic fervour for all things Gaelic. Being phenotypically black, any claim to Irishness was rejected on their behalf (Gleeson, 2020).

White Irish were not only racialised as non-white but some commentators have argued (Clarke, 2000; Ignatiev, 1995; Lebow, 1976) that they were racialised as black. Curtis (1968: 72) quotes British anthropologist, John Beddoe, who in his 1885 text *The Races of Britain: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe*, was of the opinion that the prognathous and nigrescent Celt was to be placed close to the Negro on an anthropologist scale). Lebow (1973: 37-38) cites an anonymous 1882 pamphlet, *What Science Is Saying* about Ireland, which argued that the Irish were fitted to ‘the same political institutions as England’ no more than would be a hypothetical island inhabited by ‘negroes located off the coast of Britain.’ Lord Salisbury referred to the Irish as Hottentots in a celebrated speech of 1886.³⁴ The white Irish were thus placed in close proximity to non-white post-colonial peoples pre-dating by a century Roddy Doyle’s infamous quip that the ‘Irish are the niggers of Europe, lads’ (Doyle, 1992: 13). Commentators such as Coulter (1990), Dooley (1998), Eagleton (1990), Gibbons (2002), Lloyd (1991), McClintock (1995), Rolston (1999) and Wills (1991) have supported this contention, while others such as Howe (2000) and Peatling (2005) have problematised it to varying degrees. Nevertheless, it is true that post-colonialism impinged on the lives of the participants since they were children of both white and black post-colonial peoples, emigrants and immigrants, occupying the territory of the shared former colonial empire. Notwithstanding Kavoori’s (1998: 201) argument that postcolonialism is ‘less about the

³⁴ *The Times*, 17 May 1886.

world it seeks to describe and more about the world its users occupy,' a postcolonial theorist such as Sivanandan (1983) has even posited that the Irish were the fighting arm of a subaltern black struggle within British colonial history. McVeigh has used this subalternity and resulting experience of anti-Irish racism to suggest that:

Irish people's experience of many of the most terrible consequences of colonialism—genocide, slavery, starvation—have predisposed them to identify with other survivors of colonialism. Their own experience of anti-Irish racism means that there is an affinity with people who experience other racisms. It encourages people to engage with racism in terms of solidarity rather than guilt (1996: 40)

Whatever its 'affinity,' Irish society, as argued in Chapter 4, appeared to have had no need for the offspring of these postcolonial unions and offloaded them into a professional institutional care industry that catered for just such societal detritus within the national project (Gleeson, 2020). Alcoff (2013: 123) reminds us that the nation remains a critical venue for racial projects, not simply as an imaginary place in which racial configurations are organised but also as a 'material site of political institutions that manage resources and rights in accordance with complex structures of differentiated positionality.'

As argued in Chapter 2, because of the biological etymology of hybridity and its nineteenth-century manifestations in scientific racism and colonial legacies of purity (Gilroy, 2000), mixedness and mixing have been the preferred terms of address and of empirical investigation (see Edwards *et al.* 2010; Edwards *et al.* 2012; Song & Aspinall, 2012; Tizard & Phoenix, 2002). Critical Mixed Race Studies offer a more coherent, and comprehensive orientation by which to examine the participants' experiences. As a result of hypodescent, which was operational *de facto* if not *de jure* in Ireland, the participants were treated as though their racially-minoritised identities were their only racial identities, forcing them to adopt, if not fully accept, a monoracial black identity over a mixed race identity (Davis, 1991). They were subjected to a version of Merleau-Ponty's (1962) 'gaze' on a daily basis, the 'racialising gaze' (Ngo, 2017: 200). However, the data points to the fact that the negotiation of mixedness for these women raised in Irish institutions is not adequately encapsulated by the traditional theories set out in the CMRS field (*cf. inter alia.*

Aspinall, 2003; Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Olumide, 2002; Parker & Song, 2001; Root, 1992; Tizard & Phoenix, 1993; Twine, 2004) given that they rely heavily on the familial setting to ground the theories of identity formation for those who, like the participants in this instance, embody a physical blackness but an emotional/cultural Irishness. The absence of any maternal or paternal figures (or wider familial community) in a traditional familial sense is missing from the lives of the children. Several mixed race conceptualisations fail to satisfactorily address the role of institutionalisation and especially that of total and violent institutions (as *per* Scheper-Hughes and Lovell's (1987) formulation.

Another common element in the interview data is the recognition that the participants in this study do not form a diasporic group. They have not been transplanted with culture, language and traditions distinct to those of the people with which they live. They do not require integration or assimilation. They are not the children of a mixed African-Irish community from which they have been cut off. They are culturally and linguistically Irish, but phenotypically Other. This is evident in the constant discussion of, and reference to colour and the ubiquitous 'where are you really from?' that penetrated their psychological understanding of who they are and where they belong. They do not form a viable community, but are a disparate group of brown children banished to the recesses of the Irish countryside (CICA, 2009: 9.23). For some they have challenged the idea of what it means to be Irish by contesting the phenotypical designation of the Other and thereby attaching themselves to all things Irish. In some cases, this meant forming relationships with white men that would give birth to phenotypically white-looking Irish children, for others the need to find a place to fit in has meant leaving and not retaining any connection to the country and, by this means, discarding any necessity for an Irish identity. These new locations offer a respite from the constant demands of a repetitively contested and interrogated identity that challenges the dominant interiority of the person experiencing it. However, this removal comes at a loss to those who wish to document the experiences of children of black and African-Irish descent and allows the argument to prevail that they never existed.

The Impact of the Institution on Identity

Previous chapters have shown the role of the institutions in instilling a sense of belonging as a contested space by several participants who found it a cold and racially

abusive environment, while others claimed that their experience had been uneventful and had provided them with skills and a strong sense of Irishness, irrespective of colour. An interesting finding is that some found it to be a safe haven due only to the number of other children of mixed African-Irish ancestry who were detained there with them in a cluster. This reliance on numbers for emotional and physical security played a significant role in ameliorating the deficiency participants felt due to the identity crisis they experienced owing to the absence of phenotypically black examples (and exemplars) in their lives. They came to rely on the presence of other children of mixed African-Irish descent to support and protect them; and to sustain their own sense of identity and of belonging in order to survive a system that used racialised discourse and racial slurs as part of the currency of everyday life.

For those who grew up in an institution as the sole child of mixed African-Irish ancestry, the resulting life course has been harder and more isolating. The data suggests that those who were fostered or adopted found the racialised discourse and racial slurs of family and community difficult to bear and some attest to the fact that it disrupted their ability to think of themselves as Irish. Irish mixed race role models such as the frequently-referenced Phil Lynott and Paul McGrath either came to national prominence too late for these women, or were too few to penetrate the racialised isolation of the participants. Consequently, identity as a woman of mixed African-Irish descent had to be put on hold until they could escape to the UK, or further afield.

My research further foregrounds the individual nature of communal living where no two experiences are the same despite some of the women being reared in the same institution. Most participants viewed their own time in an institution as unrepresentative of the overall experiences of all children confined behind these walls. Furthermore, these participants did not view their treatment as part of a hierarchy of abuse, but as a separate and discrete component of the abuse regime that existed. It is important to note that the participants universally rejected any hierarchy of oppression, viewing such scaling as divisive and immobilising and redolent of zero-sum competition. Some participants did not want to privilege their racist abuse and reported on the sexual, physical and mental abuse of other racialised groups, such as Travellers and non-racialised Irish children in order to situate their own experience as part of an inventory of abuse that was meted out to all the children; viewing a racialised discourse as another mode of abuse that was used

to stigmatise and devalue them, in particular. The participants were, however, able to recognise a similar institutional abuse and neglect, as that suffered by them, being foisted on the families in Irish Direct Provision, the system of asylum seeker accommodation used in Ireland; the system has been criticised by human rights organisations as illegal, inhuman and degrading (Barry, 2014; IHREC, 2014; Loyal & Quilley, 2016; Thornton, 2014). They were also capable of identifying the racialised and gendered aspect of Direct Provision.

The racialisation of the children of mixed African-Irish descent within the industrial schools was framed within a culturally-white space. The numbers involved did not compel the religious orders or the State to institute segregation by colour in the homes, though racial stratification is evident (and several women who chose not to officially take part in the research claimed that this did indeed happen to them). It can be argued, however, that the placement of large clusters of black and brown children away from the main cities and towns and into isolated, rural, areas was a form of discrimination that contrived to place the children out of sight. This was confirmed in the Ryan Report that cites a 1970s report by the Child Care Advisor in the Department of Education, Mr Graham Granville. Granville stated in his annual report that:

It would appear upon examination of the files etc. that in the past many of the children admitted to Clifden were received into care to be removed 'out of sight out of mind. This policy in his opinion was applied especially to children of different racial backgrounds (CICA, 2009: 9.23-24).

To hell or to Connaught may have been the mantra of the courts given that six of the women in this study were born in Britain or in Dublin, but like me, found themselves placed, through the Dublin courts, into institutions in the West, the Northwest and the Midlands. Given the relatively small number of African-Irish inmates in total, to find such a high rate of the black and brown children assigned to these regions, and consequently as far away from the capital as possible, strengthens the Granville's speculation that this was indeed a deliberate policy operating at State level.

Socialised as Irish but racialised as black and Other, the treatment of the children of mixed African-Irish descent within the industrial school complex was based on the racial

abuse received at the hands of the religious orders, the staff in whose care they were placed, and the other white children. This is expressed through the individual narratives of the women who took part. The research suggests that children of African-Irish descent in institutional care were singled out for a particular form of abuse. Again, it must be stressed that some of the participants claim unproblematic memories of their times in the industrial school while going on to cite incidents of racial abuse that contradict their original assertions. Others, however, speak of being denied access to mother, father, and siblings; of having to work, cleaning and caring for other children (while being little more than small children themselves); of not going to school but instead being put to work either within the institution or being sent out to do adult work in laundries or as domestic workers; of being fostered to families on weekends and in school holidays where they suffered emotional, physical, racial and sexual abuse before being summarily returned to the industrial school; and through a corruption of care (Wardhaugh & Wilding, 1993), suffering cruel, humiliating and degrading treatment within the total institutional context.

Collective Identity

My research theorises that the women were racialised inside the institutions before they ever encountered the wider community where they continued to be racialised as Other and perceived as not belonging to the Irish national collective. For some, this led to them leaving Ireland almost on discharge from the institutions to forge an identity in the UK, Europe or the US. For others, their identity(ies) was framed, along with their phenotypical white fellow inmates, within a collective identity of being an industrial school girl. I, as a survivor, refer to myself as a 'St Anne's girl' to reflect my time in that particular institution. The participants used the name of their institution to refer likewise to themselves.

Inside the walls of the institution, children of mixed African-Irish descent, and all of the other children who were long term residents, were bonded by the experiences of abandonment and the constant brutality of the regime framed to ensure obedience and deference towards those in control. Fostering out to Irish families provided the children a reprieve from institutional abuse but brought with it concomitant forms of racialisation where the support of the mass of other girls was missing.

The results of my research demonstrate that the canon that exists of children's experiences in institutions does not disaggregate the range of lived experience within this industrial school complex. Memories are never fact. Science says our memories change each time they are recalled, and that no two people's memories are the same (Payne *et al.* 1996), even if recalling the same event (Mather *et al.* 1997). Memories are affected by emotion and perspective (Vredeveltdt 2017). So where one person sees the name-calling as racist, another sees it as just part of the currency of the institution in much the same way other children were targeted for being fat or wearing glasses. But the difference is that the children who were in the institutions and who were fat or wore glasses were not placed there because of these characteristics, whereas the data suggest that the children of mixed African-Irish descent were there because of their race. In foregrounding the experiences of the children of mixed African-Irish descent it is possible to conceive of how a racialisation process took place and the impact of this for the formation of an identity that was simultaneously disregarded and racialised.

Racial literacy

One of the more interesting findings from the research is the growth in racial literacy (Twine, 2014) on the part of the participants. In their reports of the socialisation process, several of the participants dismiss the impact of the day-to-day racialised language and yet, because it was so mundane and ingrained in the fabric of the institution, they were not aware of its pernicious prevalence until they were older and began to interrogate their own experience. Armed with this racial literacy, they developed an understanding of the impact on them of even the earliest forms of racism that they experienced. Michelle and Rosaleen, to take one example, started this research journey convinced that they had not experienced any racism and had been treated the same as the other girls during their time in the industrial school. Almost fifty years after leaving the institution, this research allowed them to unpack incidents during which what they took to be favourable singling out for special attention were, in point of fact, instances of being exoticised as the Other and subsequently put on display. As the participants revisited moments such as this from their childhood, several disclosed that they now find themselves able to articulate the foregrounding, on the part of the nuns and staff, of the racial difference between them and the other children. In dismissing and diminishing the racism they experienced, they tended to trivialise and marginalise their racial abuse and neglect. Taking part in this research enabled several participants to undertake a process of re-evaluation.

Michelle, as mentioned above, was able to reflect on the action of being brought forward by a nun to be looked at in one institution as being racialised in much the same manner that she was called a 'black pig' by another nun in a second institution. The impact on Michelle of such racialisation was that despite heading to the UK upon her release from the industrial school, she was not able to connect to the black communities over there as she admits to having been frightened of black people and not wanting to associate with them.

In stark contrast, Veronica and Jennifer's evaluation from an early age of the way they were treated and perceived in a racial Ireland is more marked, and they opposed what they perceived as their rejection of being Irish by leaving the country at the earliest opportunity. Jennifer, unable to bear the racialising gaze left just weeks before she was due to sit her Leaving Certificate. Faced with rejection, they counterattacked with a virulent rejection of Irishness and moved into a different racialised space based on their darker phenotype, even though they had no connection to the group or the communities they entered. The pathway they chose was through intimate relationships with black men that would afford them entry and allow them to establish themselves as 'black women.'

The identity formation of Michelle, on the one hand, and Veronica and Jennifer, on the other, contrasts with the abject failure felt by Kathleen to cross over into a perceived, and desired, black identity while in London as a young woman, despite forming black friendships. She felt she was unable to form intimate relationships within these groups because of an existential crisis of feeling that she lacked sufficient credibility to construct what she felt was an authentic black cultural identity, within the context of what she perceived to be an authentic black community. This underlines the fact that a mixed race identity was not available at this time (1980s), even in the UK, and any decisive move between racial groups raised the prospect of racial invalidation (Campion, 2019) and the need to pick sides (Khanna, 2010). Franco *et al.* (2016: 96) identify the unique prejudices mixed people can experience including 'accusations of racial inauthenticity, imposition of racial categories and forced choice dilemmas,' which have a negative impact on the identity development, mental health and self-esteem of mixed race people (Franco *et al.* 2016; Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Townsend *et al.* 2009). Mixed race individuals are 'pigeon-holed into their minority

race' (Song & Aspinall, 2012: 740; cf. also Campion, 2019). They may find themselves precariously positioned in relation to their black peers that creates, in turn, a boundary that places mixed race individuals outside of the imagined black space (Brunsma & Rockquomore, 2001; Joseph-Salisbury, 2018; Khanna, 2010; Song, 2010). This pressure to 'pick a side', the struggle to find acceptance of a racialised Irish identity, and the sense of alienation were issues for the participants who left Ireland, but also for those, like me, who remained.

Contributions of the Study

This research contributes theoretically and empirically by recording how women of mixed African-Irish ancestry negotiated their identity and understood the meaning of belonging while being raised in the Irish industrial school complex in the 1950-1980 period. I have documented the narratives of the legacy of abuse and sought to place them alongside the canon of literature on the impact of growing up in an Irish industrial institution, thereby, adding the voices and experiences of heretofore overlooked Irish women of mixed African-Irish descent within a regime that dominated the landscape of Irish social and religious life for almost a century.

The research has interrogated what part racialisation played in the development of a mixed race Irish identity and how the participants regarded themselves as belonging in an Ireland that would never afford them the right, as Irish maidens, to dance at the cross roads. It is clear that those who did not find any comfort or soft landing in this racialised landscape reconstructed their identities abroad once they were old enough to leave and lay down roots in new communities where they had no biological or cultural link. Abandoning any desire to identify themselves as Irish and finding that their dark phenotypical features were often enough to gain access and acceptance in their new community of choice (though not always as in Kathleen's case above), they sought to construct identities without the accompanying need to explain or seek validation of their right to belong. This latter point, as portentous as Coleridge's albatross, is a strong thematic element in the data and is best summed up in the subsuming interrogative statement, which denies the Other an Irish identity, 'where are you really from?'

This research is of interest as it used semi-structured, open-ended questions to elicit the personal recollections of older women of mixed African-Irish descent recounting their

experiences of life in an Irish industrial school, Magdalen laundry or reformatory covering the period 1950-1980. It allows for the capture of memories and incidents that informed the women's understanding of their own place and sense of belonging in Irish society where they were socialised as Irish but racialised as Other in what has been argued was a racialised society, and offered me, as the researcher, the opportunity to look at the position of this unique cohort of institutional survivors.

The results of this research demonstrate that the canon that exists of children's experiences in institutions does not document the disaggregated components of the lived racial experience within this industrial school complex. Children of mixed African-Irish descent were victims of racist policies and discourses within the regime but rarely appear in any of the literature showing how they were racially victimised within the institutions. This means their unique position was more or less excluded when documented evidence of experiences were recorded (such as CICA, 2009: 3.16). The racialisation process had not been recorded or publicly documented to date³⁵ nor was there any recognition of the part played by these institutions in the identity formation and sense of belonging for this group of women of mixed African-Irish descent and their lived experience throughout their life course. Gleeson (2020: 21) contends that the Irish Government's:

resistance to examining the racial elements of institutionalisation and its effects on mixed race Irish survivors also suggests the endurance of uninterrogated nationalist political ideologies.

Limitations of the study

Challenges and limitations

The small sample size prohibits the generalisability of responses to larger populations were such a population to exist given the particularity of this research environment.

This study was formulated to assess women's perspectives. Therefore, the study lacks the male's point of view. The research design does not afford an understanding of whether

³⁵ Other than the leak in the newspaper article which opened this chapter, and some supplementary newspaper articles and a quantifiably small number of references in the Ryan Report.

women's experiences were similarly perceived by males of mixed African-Irish descent who grew up in similar institutions. It is possible that what the women perceived to be racially salient experiences might not be the same experiences that men would identify as salient (Coard & Sellers, 2005). It is important to explore this possibility in future research. Also limiting is that this study was heavily reliant on the women's memories of past events, which could very well be subject to distortion or omission. I regret that this study did not happen ten years ago when the victims of industrial school abuse were fired up and challenging the narrative about their lived but as yet hidden experiences. I would, in hindsight, have requested to undertake, with the participants' permission, a record of the women's memories that could be filed as part of the Industrial Memories digital archive of Ireland's industrial past, located at University College Dublin. As it is the narratives in my research are anonymous and confidential which limits the possibility of this occurring.

I found that the principle method of data collection in this research, in-depth interviewing, has generated very rich data. However, the robustness of the evidence is another issue. Atkinson *et al.* (2003: 119) note that such 'problems are partly a result of misplaced assumptions concerning the relationships between 'what people do' and 'what people say they do'. Indeed, there is no guarantee that informants report a 'true' story. All that researchers can do is to report and analyse what participants say, and assume its veracity. Interviews cannot escape from this limitation. There is always a question about how generalisable qualitative research can be (Jones & Tannock, 2000). The validity of the data is robust and is representative of the specific space, time, relationships and circumstances present during the research period.

The processes underlying the construction and negotiation of identity for a generation of Irish women of mixed African-Irish descent, with white Irish mothers and African fathers, who grew up in the Irish institutional care system are complex. Because this study involved a community of which, I feel, I am part, I approached this research with radical subjectivity (Walker, 1985).

Reflexive Statement

In his *Treatise on Judicial Evidence*, the English philosopher, Jeremy Bentham,³⁶ famously declared that publicity ‘is the soul of justice’ (1825: 67). The research and writing of this dissertation has engendered a sea change in my attitude towards both my time within the industrial school as well as the entire State-Church institutionalisation nexus. As an academic, the research necessitated a rigorous struggle to ‘separate academic detachment from personal indignation’ as per Ferriter (2018):

To work on Irish social history over the last few decades has been to research during a time of extraordinary detailed revelations about a great range of suffering and the historian cannot stand completely outside of the environment in which they exist. But there is still an onus on us to remind of the need for context; as James Smith remarked in introducing his book *Ireland’s Magdalen Laundries*, one of his challenges ‘was how to separate academic detachment from personal indignation. Moral outrage and academic detachment do not sit easily on the same page.’

The struggles of the historian pale before those of the sociologist, and one who is also a survivor. I, like many of the participants, encountered white children, nuns and staff within the industrial school, as well as people outside the institution, who treated the child of mixed African-Irish descent as the racialised Other, who did not belong and whose claim to Irishness was, by default, suspect. It is hoped that this research will help publicise this treatment.

My own experience of growing up, first in an Irish care institution, and then in a white town, with my white mother and an absent black father, have informed my interest in how it is that notions of family and home are central to constructions of identities in specific emotional and cultural contexts. Fanon (in Hall 1992) draws a distinct difference between an authentic national or cultural identity and the lived experience of the racialised.

Though ethnically Irish and Nigerian, I was racialised as ‘African’ and essentialised as a black woman which corresponds to Song’s (2003) statement that very often people are

³⁶ Jeremy Bentham (1825). *Treatise on Judicial Evidence*, at p.67.

forcefully included in groups and attributed ethnic identities which are not the same as their own sense of identity. This emphasis on identity and the accompanying burden of racism in turn filtered through my development as a classed and gendered being, and would not have been the case had I been White Irish.

Mixed African-Irish stresses the two ethnic identities, even though mainstream Irish society sees mixed race only as black and other. In thinking through the meaning of '*identity*' I often expressed frustration at the inadequacy of terms available to me, and an inability to position myself satisfactorily. Giddens suggests that it is a feature of late-modern societies that identities are '*explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change*' (1993: 304). It is this connection of the personal to the political and social that permeated the data from the participants.

In carrying out the research I became aware that I was using the term mixed race and asking the women to discuss this concept regarding identity formation. For several this was a new concept to apply to themselves as they had been socialised as black, 'coloured' or 'half-caste.' This was demonstrated by a number of the women, especially Vera's forceful assertion in Chapter 7 as to why she did not ascribe to the use of the phrase 'mixed race.'

Directions for further research

To paraphrase Italo Calvino (1982: 7), the things that this research does not say are necessarily more numerous than those it does say due, in the main, to its scope but also to the reluctance of so many of the women to go on the record. I have taken great steps to ensure informational privacy, so as to prevent any possible deductive disclosure.

Nevertheless, I would hope to build upon this research and focus on Irish men of mixed African-Irish descent who also grew up in similar circumstances. Such an investigation would seek to identify possible convergences or divergences in relation to this current research. The central research question would again be what was the impact of institutional care in industrial schools on these men and how do they negotiate their Irish identity(ies)? An ancillary research question would take the form of what do their experiences and views tell us about the racialisation of identity for these male survivors within an institutional setting?

This research would address the lack of male voices within this research by examining their experiences of growing up in institutional care. Socialised as Irish but racialised as black appears to have presented numerous challenges for these young men, particularly as they were discharged into a white world, in many cases with no family to whom they could turn to. Together with this doctoral research, it would contribute to the existing literature on Irish institutional care as well as what it means to be Irish.

Future research would interrogate how the existing care system in Ireland continues to racialise children of black or mixed African ancestries under its care. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a process of profiling of these groups continues within the areas of social work, and children of colour continue to be overrepresented and endure racialisation in the care system despite their relatively small numbers in the general population.

Africans in Ireland

This research has shown that the participants' need to piece together their origins and to identify their fathers has not declined with age and several have used DNA tests to help them locate their non-Irish parent, or to at least give them some knowledge of where they may have originated from. As suggested by Kathleen the concept of the father as 'not a farmer from up the road' amplifies the suspense of who he might be, whether he is a 'Motown singer' or a 'two-bit drug dealer' is difficult to ascertain given that, in most cases, the only facts that can be assembled about him is mediated through the mother as gatekeeper.

Black people in Ireland have been recorded in small numbers from the earliest times. There are many myths and oblique references to the presence of Black people in ancient Ireland. Those myths may have a factual historical basis. By the eighteenth century, there was a significant presence, including slaves. W.A. Hart has estimated the Black population in Ireland over the latter half of the 18th century at between 2,000 and 3,000 (Hart, 2002). As might be expected, most accounts (from newspapers, memoirs and official records) refer to individuals living near coastal towns such as Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Waterford and many in the 18th century were servants of wealthy families (Hart, 2002). Recent African migration to Ireland began after Nigeria's independence from the United Kingdom in 1960; migration began to accelerate slightly during the late 1960s Nigerian Civil War, though it remained small. Early West African migration to

Ireland consisted primarily of business people, especially in the fishing. In the 1960s, the Irish government ran schemes supporting African students in learning skills that would help them build up their own newly independent states (Finnerty, 2020). Most enrolled in Trinity College, University College Dublin, and the Royal College of Surgeons, studying subjects like medicine, law, and government administration. By 1962, at least 1,100 students - or one tenth of Ireland's student population - were African, from countries like Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa, where there were strong links with Irish missionaries (Finnerty, 2020). Though these numbers were relatively small, African migrants had commonly had contact with Irish people and institutions in their home country, such as charitable activities run by Irish Catholic clergy or Irish non-governmental organisations, which contributed to their positive image of Irish people prior to migration (Fanning, 2018b).

These links to Ireland can be traced back to the early years of the 20th century as evidenced in Chief Dr Moses Majekodunmi's autobiography, *My Lord! What a morning: Autobiography of Moses Adekoyejo Majekodunmi*, in 1998. Majekodunmi became the first minister for health in the Nigerian first republic following his studies at Trinity College Dublin. His arrival in Ireland in 1936 is documented in his book, which outlines his journey to Ireland to study medicine and interestingly records that he was met off the boat in Dublin by other Nigerians who had already graduated and were living in Ireland at that time.

Finnerty (2020) points out:

[...] the students weren't always welcomed by the wider population. News articles reported attacks on African students and mentioned 'difficult landlords' - a reference to housing discrimination, according to Dr Bryan Fanning, author of *Migration and the Making of Ireland*. Though some of the students had relationships with Irish women, it was rare that these led to marriage in the culture of the time.

State instruments have not been helpful in piecing the missing parts of the puzzle together regarding the numbers of Africans that lived or studied in Ireland pre- and post-WWII. No census information is available and no official statistics were gathered during this time that articulates the kind of existence Africans had in Ireland during this period.

It is well known that many young African people came to Ireland to study in professional courses such as medicine, law or engineering in The Royal College of Surgeons, Trinity College Dublin, Queens University in Belfast and to a lesser extent in other universities around the country. It is only since 2006 and the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, that agitation for census data from human rights groups such as Travellers, as well as pressure from European bodies in monitoring discrimination that ethnicity has become part of the Irish census (Moriarty, 2020). The 2006 Irish census recorded 40,525 people of Black African ethnicity and 3,793 people of any other Black background resident in the Republic of Ireland out of a total population of 4,172,013, meaning that 1.06 per cent of the population self-identified as Black. The 2011 census recorded 58,697 people of Black African ethnicity and 6,381 people of any other Black background resident in the Republic of Ireland out of a total population of 4,525,281, meaning that 1.42 per cent of the population self-identified as Black. Nigerians were the largest group of new Irish citizens in 2013 (Fanning, 2018b).

For the participants eliciting information about their African fathers has often been a hostile and futile endeavour. One source of interrogation is the information found in the files the women received from the institutions which is dependent on whatever information could have been collected from the mother at the time of placement, which in most cases is limited or non-existent. The women born in Britain and whose mothers have died equally have no access to their father's identity. The suggestion of brief relationships with the mothers as outlined by Rosaleen whose mother claimed that her conception was the result of 'a one-night stand' further complicates the matter. As one participant opined, she is not sure that the name given by her father to her mother was his actual name as no such name has appeared in any of the research that has been carried out to support her pursuit of him. Others have discovered that their fathers were married men.

As a member of the Association of Mixed Race Irish (AMRI), I contributed to the first strand digital Mix-d Museum,³⁷ devoted to the African-Irish mixed race experience in Britain dating from the 1700s-20th century. I have formed links with Dr Chamion Caballero, the curator and creator of the mixed museum, and am looking for funding to create a similar digital museum in Ireland that centres the lived experience of African and

³⁷ <https://mixedmuseum.org.uk/>.

African-Irish people over several centuries. The work of the Mix-d Museum and my ongoing research into Nigerians studying in Ireland during the period 1900-1950 may prove useful to satisfying the needs of the participants to find these absent fathers.

I would suggest that this history of Africans coming to Ireland as students is an important site of future interrogation and would render a rich supply of data revealing the extent of interaction between Ireland and Africa through the legacy of Empire and religious colonialism that saw many Africans come to Ireland as a result of this interaction and receive degrees from these universities before returning to their own countries; in many cases going on to take up important positions in government and in other areas of public service. This tradition of travelling to the UK or Ireland to study in these professions is well-known but to date has not been interrogated or investigated within the academy in Ireland.

Concluding remarks

Children of mixed race/black phenotype were subjects of a racist discourse that was circulating in post-colonial, post-war Britain, Europe, the US, and Ireland. This discourse is apparent in the regime of child care in Ireland, but does not adequately address how children of mixed African-Irish descent were further marginalised and discriminated against, within and by, the institutions. Despite growing up in a variety of locations and circumstances, ultimately, the identity construction of the women in this research is defined by the imposition of a racialised identity based on their skin colour, as well as their background as incarcerated children from birth through which they mediated the alienation from, and disillusionment with parents, biological, foster and adoptive, wider family members, caregivers, given surnames, and their country; in fact, all of the constitutive elements that establish one's identity and sense of belonging; resulting in a marginalised, identity-less, confused, and at times, angry and suicidal negotiation of their life course. The subsequent refusal to address this through the Residential Redress Board Scheme was referenced by several participants who sought to have it added to the list of abuses that they suffered but were informed that this was not possible as it did not come under the Board's frame of reference. This research gave voice to this cohort of women and incorporated their stories as part of the ongoing conversation within the academic canon on the impact of institutional life on children in the 20th century.

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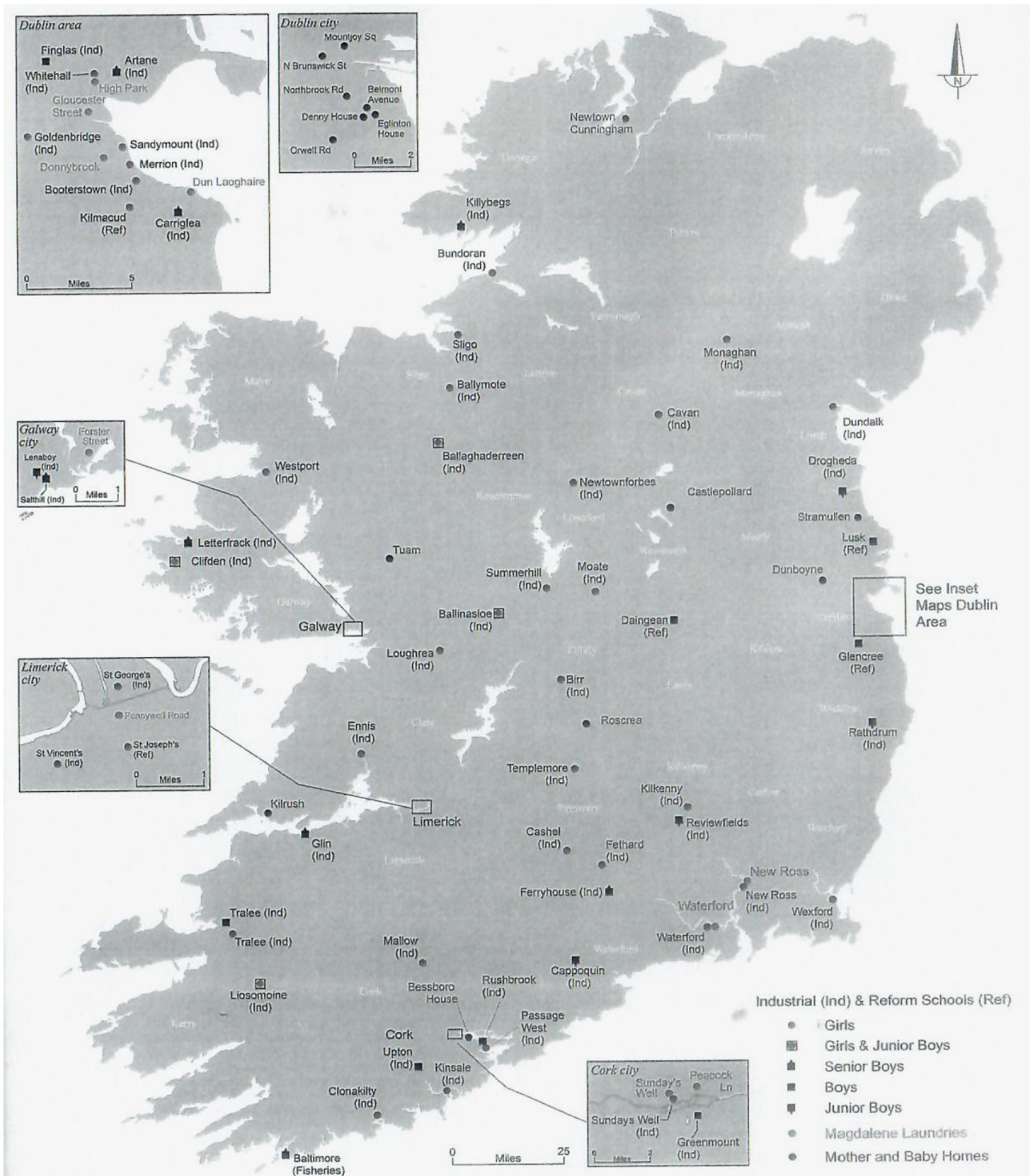
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Appendix I: Map of industrial schools and reformatories



Crowley *et al.* (2017: 803).

Appendix II: Sample Research Journal entry

Pre-interview

Today is my first day to do an interview. I am nervous about the type of questions I am going to ask and also about the answers. I have begun to realise that while I know (name) most of my life I have never discussed any of these matters except in a vague and general way in reference to the institution and just as part of a lot of other matters and abuses that happened to girls while there.

We are meeting in a coffee shop in (name) and I'm anxious that the recording will not be clear or retrievable after the interview if the coffee shop gets too busy. There has been a slow response to the call out for people to come forward and so I can't have any of the recordings contaminated by noise that interferes with the data and means I have to ask again.

(Name) is only in Dublin for a week and so the opportunities for redoing an interview are slim. She is probably the most easy-going of all the people I have asked but am still not sure how she will respond in the interview.

Post-interview

That was probably one of the most awkward feeling I have ever had. Knowing someone for so long and then asking them questions about aspects of their life that are painful and difficult to retell made me realise that part of the reason that I am so anxious about the interviews is that I am afraid of my own responses to the information. I have not discussed much of my own feelings or thoughts on this with people with whom I grew up. It is like we have existed in our own pain silos, aware but not acknowledging the depth of the pain that was inflicted on us as children, moving into adulthood ignoring the elephant in the room. I realised during the interview that I actually knew hardly anything about someone I have called a friend for most of my life. About her parentage or how she came to be in the institution, who her mother was or about siblings or anything like that. None of that ever seemed as important as the post institutional life that we all created and lived as adults. Childhood is a place that we visit for the fun stories or to comment on how someone was a bitch, or who was cruel or kind but it often contains very little detail. Today I was probing in a way that I have spent a life time

avoiding. If someone didn't tell me something, then I took it as a given that it was off limits.

We had to move out of the coffee shop as it got way too noisy and finished the interview in the car. In a way I felt more comfortable as we were both facing the same way and I felt there was less intensity. I realised during the interview that I was way more anxious and self-conscious than (name) was.

I was intrigued by her analysis and how without ever having spoken to each other about our varying situations we had very similar outlooks on the institutions and their impact on the children of mixed African-Irish descent.

Appendix III: Codes uses during the inductive thematic analysis

Theme 1 - Mixed Race Experience (Plum)

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| <i>Terminology</i> | - TER |
| <i>Racism</i> | - RAC |
| <i>Race as Identity</i> | - ID |

Theme 2 - Family and Attachment (Lime)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Parentless parenting</i> | - PP |
| • <i>Absent father</i> | - PP(f) |
| • <i>Mother</i> | - PP(m) |
| <i>Claiming</i> | -CL |
| - <i>Rejection</i> | -CL(rej) |
| <i>Foster families</i> | - FF |
| - <i>Rejection</i> | -FF(rej) |
| <i>Nuns/Staff</i> | - NS - NS(pos) or NS(neg) |

Theme 3 – Institution (Red)

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Total Institution and its negative effects</i> | - TI – TI(pos) or TI(neg) |
| <i>Power (empowered by the institution)</i> | - POW |

Theme 4 - Life after the Institution (Light Blue)

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Lack of relationship with birth Mother</i> | - LORM |
| <i>Partner and family</i> | - PAF |
| <i>Search for Father/Identity</i> | -SFF -SFI |

The process of coding can be seen at work in the following two sample extracts:

Did you understand the concept of racism?

‘No, no, but this is something like when I was a child ...not a little little child but not a big, big child but I remember thinking why was I born? but not in a positive way... but things must have happened ...I remember going to secondary school and being called blackey... [RAC]

What kind of education did you get?

I know you didn't sort of experience it but we did... I know we have different concepts of her... but I will be forever grateful to Sister L. If you talk to any of our group, our age group, I mean she was mad into education and she went over to Holland and studied Montessori way before it was ever popular and she came back with all the equipment... [NS(pos)] [POW]

It is important to note that certain chunks of the data could be coded in multiple ways and consequently a number of codes could be applied to chunks of data if the researcher felt that the ‘chunk’ of data related to a number of different codes. During this stage data continued to be recoded, moved from one code to another and the name and content of themes also continued to change and evolve.

For example, the following extract relates to the mixed race experience – RAC - but is equally coded to negative aspects of life in the institution - *TI(neg)*:

Like if you called them a cripple you would be in huge trouble but if you said you were called a nigger they would say get on with it and stop telling tales.

[RAC] [TI(neg)]

Appendix IV: Researcher's transfer sheet into second industrial school, c.1969

NAME IN FULL *Huller* DATE OF
 NAME AND ADDRESS OF PARENTS OR GUARDIAN *Miss [redacted], 54,*
Laoghair, Co. Dublin. DATE OF AD
 MAINTAINANT *Mother* ✓ *18/10*
 BROTHERS AND SISTERS UNDER DETENTION
 HOSPITAL OTHER MOVEMENTS GEN
 TO CAUSE FROM TO CAUSE
Trans

Note the word 'coloured' ascribed to me on my official documentation