The School Experiences of Black Mixed-Race Young People and their Co-Constructions of a Positive Future: An Appreciative Inquiry

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Abstract

Narratives around Black mixed-race young people (BMR YP) subject them to pathological discourse. They are currently underachieving at secondary school relative to other racial groups and there is a paucity of literature which explores BMR YP's secondary school experiences.

This study was driven by exploratory and transformative purposes. It aimed to contribute exploratory data on the school experiences of BMR YP, to promote change through a collaborative and solution-focussed approach, and counter deficit narratives by focussing on BMR YP's strengths.

A two phased approach to data collection was adopted. Phase one used semi structured interviews to gather the racialised views and experiences of 10 BMR YP, aged between 13 and 17. Phase two brought the participants together to co-construct a positive vision of the future, using Appreciative Inquiry (Ai) as a framework for data collection.

Findings revealed that BMR YP's school experiences were mediated by their experience of their fluid and complex racial identity. This facilitated both hostilities and barriers to learning during school, and sources of resilience. BMR YP's co-constructions of a positive future included opportunities for learning, expression, and representation.

These findings challenge binary conceptions of race and contribute to our understanding of how BMR racial identity functions in the lives of YP from an inner London mainstream secondary school. Implications for practice include promoting the cultural responsivity of professionals and encouraging those working with BMR YP to adopt solution focussed and collaborative approaches that are rooted in Positive Psychology (PP).

Declaration

I declare that while registered as a research degree student at UEL, I have not been registered or enrolled for another award of this university or of any other academic or professional institution. I declare that no material in this thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award. This thesis is the result of my own work and investigation, except where otherwise stated. I declare that my research requires ethical approval from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and confirmation of approval is embedded within the thesis.

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List of Abbreviations

Ai	Appreciative Inquiry
BMR	Black Mixed-Race
BPS	The British Psychological Society
CMRS	Critical Mixed Race Studies
CRT	Critical Race Theory
CYP	Child or Young Person
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EHCP	Education, Health, and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
HCPC	Health and Care Professionals Council
LA	Local Authority
MMAT	Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool
MMSR	Mixed Methods Systematic Review
PP	Positive Psychology
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
RQ	Research Question
SALSA	Search AppraisaL Synthesis and Analysis
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SEND CoP	Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice
SFA	Solution-focussed Approach
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
YP	Young People

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter sets out the background and context of this research project. I begin with a personal reflection to help orientate the reader to the personal and professional experiences, values and beliefs that have coloured this project. Following this, I set out the theoretical framework to support the reader to understand the approach taken to investigate the topic. Next, I provide background and a rationale for the study by exploring the shared histories of multiracial individuals generally, and Black mixed-race (BMR) individuals specifically, in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). I end the chapter with a commentary on the project's relevance to Educational Psychology practice.

1.2 Personal Reflection

1.2.1 Personal Identity

Back in 1997, a Guardian G2 headline read: "…Beige Britain: A new race is growing up. It's not Black, it's not White and it's not yet officially recognised. Welcome to the mixed-race future' (Young, 1997)" (Song, 2010a, p. 338).

Born in 1994, I was part of this *new race* that the headline was referring to. Raised into a warm and loving home, in touch with both sides of my British and Caribbean

heritage, I have always valued what my racial identity has offered me. It has played a significant role in defining my experiences and shaping how I see the world.

"As it was, I learned to slip back and forth between my Black and White worlds, understanding that each possessed its own language and customs and structures of meaning…"

- Barack Obama, Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance (2004, p. 82)" (Waring, 2017, p. 145)

This quote from Obama resonates with my racialised experience. I perceive the opportunity to learn and ability to slip 'back and forth' as real opportunities and strengths of the multiracial experience, but I recognise my realities do not match others'.

1.2.2 Professional Identity

Teaching and learning on my doctorate course has always been underpinned by central values of social justice, autonomy, and beneficence, and these values have guided my decision making in this project.

As a practitioner Educational Psychologist (EP), I aspire to facilitate change and support clients to, at the very minimum, feel more hopeful and optimistic about the

future. This is predominantly through consultation as a framework for practice. Integral to the consultation model is "the interactionist, systemic, and constructionist psychology that gives it meaning…" (Kelly et al., 2017, p. 194). This psychology is central to my practice and has influenced my approach to the current research project.

Critical Educational Psychology is a further approach that guides my professional work. It is informed by those often marginalised from psychological discussion and raises concerns about "pathologically orientated ways of understanding students (Mill, 2007)" (Corcoran, 2022, p. 3). This project presents the voices of a marginalised community and has a positive and solution-oriented perspective, reflecting my attempts to honour Critical Educational Psychology and challenge the status quo.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

1.3.1 Positionality and Reflexivity

Positionality describes the position a researcher adopts toward a research task and its socio-political context, while reflexivity is the idea that researchers should acknowledge and disclose themselves in research, seeking to understand their influence on it (Holmes, 2020).

My developmental experiences and perception of my racial identity are inseparable from this project. They have led to my initial interest in multiraciality, my choice of BMR individuals as participants, and influenced my decision making with regards to the

research context and process; three areas which locate a researchers' position (Holmes, 2020).

I also consider myself holding an 'insider' position with reference to my racial identity, due to my lived experience as a Black mixed-race (BMR) person. I actively acknowledge the role that I have played in conducting this research and for this reason, sections of the thesis will be written in first person.

The current project is positioned as part of the 'new wave' of research into mixedness that aims to contribute celebratory accounts of mixedness by listening to mixed-race voices (Caballero et al., 2007). It does this by positioning the participants as experts in their experience and exploring the context surrounding their racial identity (Rockquemore et al., 2009). With this, I hope to encourage others to perceive mixedness with the intrigue, sensitivity, and through a positive lens.

1.3.2 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that has guided this study. It rests on the premise that society is racially unequal and power processes systematically disadvantage people of colour (Hylton, 2012). School, for example, is an institution that creates and maintains racial hierarchy, through its disproportionate distribution of power and resources to marginalised groups. CRT ensures that race remains central to investigations that aim to reduce inequality and racial hierarchies (Hylton, 2012). Below will provide a brief description of some of CRT's main tenants.

Racism is Ordinary. CRT's ideological foundation is that, although a social construction, race plays a fundamental role in shaping the everyday experiences of people of colour (Harris, 2016). Racism is ordinary. This means that it is difficult to eradicate because it is not often acknowledged (Delgado & Stefancic, 2010). Racism, and the system of White over colour, serves to benefit the dominant group. Due to racism advancing the interests of both White elites (materially) and the White working class (physically), large segments of society have no urge to fight against it ('interest convergence'; Delgado & Stefancic, 2010).

Social Construction Thesis. The social construction thesis holds that race is a product of social thought and relations, and corresponds to no biological or genetic reality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2010). CRT literature disrupts hegemonic conceptions of race to offer a more equitable understanding of the experiences of marginalised groups (Chang, 2013), which is one of the main purposes of the current study.

Voice of Colour. Due to the different backgrounds and histories of people of colour, the expectation is that they will be able to tell us something meaningful that dominant discourse is unlikely to know (Delgado & Stefancic, 2010). The racially marginalised have been historically excluded from knowledge production processes. As a result, centering marginalised voices as valid sources of knowledge is a priority for CRT (Hylton, 2012).

One way this is effective from a CRT standpoint is through counter-storytelling (Hylton, 2012). These are narratives told by those who have been historically marginalised and highlights their everyday lived experiences in "institutions and structures of dehumanisation", such as schools (Chang, 2013, p. 349).

Social Justice. With an awareness of social processes that structure the social world, "A CRT methodology can be identified by its focus on 'race' and racism… and a commitment to challenge racialised power relation[s]" (Hylton, 2012, p. 27). This often requires researchers to look 'to the bottom' for research answers and questions (p. 24).

CRT scholars recognise power and status stacked against certain groups and are not afraid to 'take sides' if it leads to transformative change. Some argue that rather than a theoretical framework, CRT is more a praxis, given that it requires an activist dimension (Delgado & Stefancic, 2010; Hylton, 2012).

1.3.3 Critical Mixed Race Studies

Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) is a distinct field of scholarship that places mixed-race experiences at the critical centre of focus (Daniel et al., 2014). A three stage evolution of CMRS has been referenced: The age of pathology, the age of celebration, and now the age of critique (Ifekwunigwe, 2014). Some of the main components of CMRS are outlined below.

Self Determination. CMRS must be guided by research principles that place those we work with at the centre (Jolivétte, 2014). This includes a respect and consideration for the diversity inherent in the multiracial community and research methods that involve deep listening (p.156).

Implicit in this component are the social justice values outlined above as part of CRT. CMRS is explicit about desires to dismantle dominant conceptions of race and prioritise mixed-race voices that have been marginalised.

Cross-Ethnic and Transnational Solidarity. This component argues the need for international collaboration of multiracial communities to promote social, legal, economic and political representation (Jolivétte, 2014). While the current study did not have scope for this level of inquiry, its focus on both mixed White/Black communities aims to strengthen the BMR identity by acknowledging that this is the social identity that these groups share.

Radical Love. Radical love means researchers asking themselves whether what they are contributing is giving back to the community, is strengthening relationships, is adding to the growth of the community (Jolivétte, 2014). This study does not pretend that race has no impact on our lives but uses it to bring people together to strengthen feelings of pride and belonging.

1.4 Study Background and Rationale

1.3.1 Why are we Talking about Race?

The implications of racial categories impact every aspect of our lives (Boyle, 2022). Meanings associated with racial categories are generated in popular culture, political settings, and 'statistical governmentality' (Aspinall, 2020). The role of power and authority impacts how racial and ethnic terminology come to be used (Boyle, 2022).

Race is the primary social identity of importance in this study because it reflects distinct realities (Golash-Boza, 2016) and defines people's experiences and opportunities (Shih et al., 2007). Without talking about race, there is a risk of normalising the realities of the dominant social group (Reid et al., 2018).

Defining the terminology that will be used frequently throughout this thesis is important to ensure a shared understanding. While I will use terminology related to race and ethnicity consistently, when referencing a study, I will use the terminology that the researcher has used. A list of definitions of racial terminology has been provided, see Appendix A.

Geographical Context. Both the UK and USA will be explored together in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 because of their shared history of the Black-white racial dichotomy that positioned multiracial individuals as outsiders (Joseph-Salisbury,

2018). This binary has shaped data collection for much of the 20th century, and persisted because of the one-drop rule, which categorised mixed White/Black individuals as Black (Aspinall, 2003).

Ancestors of Black people in both countries were subjected to slavery, have shared migratory histories and operate under a system of White supremacy (Caballero et al., 2007; Song & Aspinall, 2012; Waring, 2017). For these reasons, the early background research for this project spanned across both nations.

1.3.2 Why the Mixed Population?

The Rising Agenda of the Mixed Experience. The multiracial population is fast growing in nations across the world (Aspinall, 2018; Clarke, 2022; Reyna, 2022; Song, 2010a). While the reasons for this are multifaceted, the rise in interracial unions (Boyle, 2022; Shih & Sanchez, 2009) and the increasing number of people choosing to identify as mixed ethnicity (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016) have been noted in the literature.

In the USA, the population of multiracial individuals is expected to increase by more than 200% between 2016 and 2060 (Nishina & Witkow, 2020). In the UK, by 2070 those who identify as mixed ethnicity will be the second largest community after those who identify as White (Demie & Hau, 2018). For these reasons, it is important for

researchers to explore multiracial experiences to respond to society's fast-changing racial landscape.

Immature Literature Base. The multiracial population increase was officially recognised in census data in the UK and US in 2001 and 2000, respectively. For the first time in the US, multiracials were able to check off more than one racial category on the census (Shih & Sanchez, 2005), and in the UK, mixed people were able to choose a mixed category, consisting of four subdivisions: White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and Any other Mixed Background (Song, 2010a).

The study of the multiracial experience has grown exponentially since the availability of census data in 2000/2001 (Rockquemore et al., 2009). However, compared to mono-racial groups, relatively little research has documented multiracial experiences or uncovered the factors influencing academic achievement (Boyle, 2022). For multiracial CYP, their invisibility has been compounded by research typically focussed on multiracial adults (Reyna, 2022).

Unique Experiences. The recognition of multiracial identity challenges traditional assumptions about race because it does not fit into pre-existing categories (Shih et al., 2007; Shih & Sanchez, 2009). Multiracial recognition forced society to reconsider the mutual exclusivity of racial categories, "…a moment in which we

acknowledge that race is a social construct (as opposed to a biological reality)…" (Rockquemore et al., 2009, p. 14).

The multiracial experience is unique because this community has needed to navigate the racial landscape independently and formulate answers about themselves that monoracial groups have had answered for them by society (Shih et al., 2007). Multiracial youth also often find themselves in situations in which they are the numerical minority, essentially a minority within a minority (Nishina & Witkow, 2020). For these reasons, there is a need for multiracials to engage with one another and share stories and experiences (Song, 2010a).

As Daniel (2021) states, the necessity pre-2000 for multiracials to identify monoracially, "…disallowed, and indeed repressed, the articulation and recognition of multiracial identities…" (p. 108). Much of the research dominating the literature has been from those across the monoracial spectrum, "imbued with inherent monoracial biases" (p.108) and institutions are ill-equipped to recognise multiracials as anything but monoracial (Harris, 2016). The Black-white racial binary presents an obscured view of today's racial landscape, and there is a need to explore the experiences of racial groups that traverse the colour binary (Gonzalez-Sobrino & Goss, 2019).

Pathological Narratives. Historically, multiracial people have been pathologised as occupying a marginal location and depicted as fragmented and

tortured individuals (Haynes et al., 2006; Song, 2010a). This is in light of a history of racial mixing determined by sexual violence (Essi, 2017).

Approaches taken by researchers to understand the multiracial experience have reflected the racial politics of the time, with BMR individuals initially viewed as problematic (Essi, 2017; Shih & Sanchez, 2005). For example, the 'marginal man' multiracial identity model focussed on deficits and problems associated with a multiracial background, a problematic social position inevitably marked by tragedy (Rockquemore et al., 2009). Research included multiracial susceptibility to rejection, isolation and stigmatisation from both the dominant and minority groups in society, and susceptibility to psychological outcomes such as an inferiority complex, hypersensitivity or moodiness (Shih & Sanchez, 2005).

This cultural deficit perspective (Silverman, 2011) describes the inherent dysfunction of multiracial lives and has even permeated into children's books with mixed-race characters typically struggling emotionally or financially, with biological parents who are absent (Chaudhri & Teale, 2013).

In attempting to dismantle such deficit narratives that still seem to prevail in modern society (Song, 2010a), this study advances the notion that the multiracial community is "…a distinct group worthy of study with unique, nonpathological experiences and identity development processes" (Rockquemore et al., 2009, p. 18). It is positioned within the most recent way of theorising about multiracials, named the ecological

approach (Rockquemore et al., 2009), which focusses on the context surrounding multiracial identity development.

1.3.3 Why the Focus on BMR School Experiences?

The mixed White/Black racial group is the particular focus of this study, termed as BMR throughout this thesis. This terminology acknowledges the concomitance of Blackness, mixedness and Whiteness and is a common way for mixed-race young people (YP) in the UK with Black and White parentage to identify (Clarke, 2022; Sims & Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). It is composed of two of the four mixed-race categories, mixed White/Black Caribbean and mixed White/Black African. The 2021 census for England and Wales showed that both of these mixed groups have doubled in size over the past 20 years since the 2001 census (Office for National Statistics, 2021), and the mixed White/Black racial combination is the most common mixed group in the USA (Waring, 2017).

The rationale for viewing the two BMR groups together is due to the expected similarities in their experiences; both navigating multiraciality in the White and Black binary, both traversing structurally racist school systems, and both groups often racialised as Black because of the one-drop rule, making them susceptible to the negative outcomes that Black people experience in society (Long & Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). This is not to say that these two groups have the same experiences, but that we might be able to learn something meaningful from viewing the BMR group as a whole.

Unique Racial Location. Black and Whites are seen to navigate ideologically different worlds resulting from inequitable structural arrangements that create and exacerbate racial boundaries (Waring, 2017). Mixed White/Black individuals therefore occupy a unique racial and social location, embodying both ends of the racial hierarchy (Rockquemore et al., 2009; Waring, 2017). Popular discourses historically and contemporarily have pathologised Black mixed-race men as the embodiment of a 'clash of cultures' (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). It was as recently as 2006 that Trevor Phillips, former Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, warned of BMR children growing up 'marooned between communities' in Britain (Campion & Lewis, 2022).

While the voices of other mixed groups are equally important as BMR voices, it was not possible to include these identities within the scope of this project. There is also evidence which states "multiracial people are primarily targeted for discrimination due to their non-Whiteness rather than their multiraciality (Hernandez, 2018)" (Reyna, 2022), providing further rationale to focus on the BMR community for this project.

School Experiences. Education is a mechanism for social mobility, a means of cultural integration and reproduction, and lies at the heart of the pursuit for a successful multi-ethnic Britain (Boyle, 2022, p. 474). Exploring BMR YP's school experiences therefore provides an appropriate site to contribute to the flourishing of

this community and achieve the project's social justice ambitions. Next, I provide a summary of how BMR YP are comparing to peers at secondary school.

Achievement. In the UK, 'Progress 8' is a way of measuring pupil progress over secondary school, between the ages of 11 and 16. The higher a pupil's progress score, the more progress they have made in comparison to those who have started at a smiliar level. Data for the school year 2021-2022 showed that while mixed White/Asian students have an average progress score of .21, the mixed White/Black African and Caribbean groups had average scores of .1 and -.46, respectively. This demonstrates the significant underachievement of the mixed White/Black Caibbean community during secondary school, and the relative underachievement of the mixed Black/White African group. To add, there was over 10% difference between the achievement of the mixed White/Asian and BMR groups in percentage of pupls achieveing a grade 5 or above in their GCSEs (Department for Education, 2023).

Sanctions. BMR males also experience higher rates of suspensions and exclusions than 'all pupils' and the 'all ethnic minority' average (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017). In fact, the suspension rate for mixed White/Black Caribbean YP was above that of monoracial Black Caribbeans[1], while the suspension rate for mixed White/Black

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[1] Suspension rates for the 2021-2022 school year, by ethnicity, was 13.62 for mixed White and Black Caribbeans and 11.74 for Black Caribbeans (Department for Education, 2024). This means 1,362 and 1,174 suspensions, respectively, for every 10,000 pupils.

African's was above that of Black Africans [2] (Department for Education, 2024). Interestingly, the suspension rates for mixed White and Asian pupils was 5.07, signficiantly below BMR groups. This suggests that the concomitance of blackness and mixedness leads to higher rates of suspensions.

These disparaities fuel perspectives that White supremacy characterises schooling (Gillborn & Ladson-Billings, 2004) and the UK and USA school systems are structurally racist because they produce and maintain racial inequalities (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017). We could look further into the life outcomes of BMR individuals in the community to find further disparities in the labour market (Song, 2010b), in mental health provisions (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017), in arrests and experiences of domestic violence (Home Office, 2023), and in housing standards (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2020).

The purpose of outlining these statistics is to help the reader acknowledge the starting point for this project, and what initially fuelled the interest in BMR school experiences. The hope from this point was to explore in greater detail what was going on for this community at secondary school, through a systematic literature review (Chapter 2).

1.3.4 Background and Rationale Summary

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[2] Suspension rates for the 2021-2022 school year, by ethnicity, was 8.08 for mixed White and Black Africans and 4.96 for Black Africans (Department for Education, 2024). This means 808 and 496 suspensions, respectively, for every 10,000 pupils.

Race defines our experiences, and the multiracial population is growing, unique and understudied. BMR people are experiencing comparatively worse community and educational outcomes and are plagued with pathological and deficit narratives.

The importance of investigation into the BMR community has been noted in the literature. For example, it has been stated that education researchers do not often consider the presence of multiracial students in their samples, and the schooling and academic achievement of the BMR has not yet been sufficiently addressed (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Williams, 2013). As highlighted in Caballero et al., (2007), "…not only are there very few studies on mixed-race identities in the educational context, but research that does not pathologise mixed-race identities is still in its infancy in the UK" (Caballero et al., 2007, p. 359).

The underlying social justice aims of this project tie these reasons together to justify further exploration into BMR YP's school experiences, presented in the next chapter.

1.5 Relevance to Educational Psychology Practice

EPs are required to meet the standards of proficiency set out by the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC). Of particular relevance to this project is the duty of EPs to "recognise the impact of culture, equality, and diversity on practice and practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner" (HCPC, 2023, p. 9). Through this project, I seek to elicit qualitative data from those with lived experience of being BMR. The explorative and solution-oriented nature of this project will provide EPs with

information about how to support a fast growing, understudied, and invisible community. It will also support EPs' cultural competence by providing insights which will help them to work equitably and in anti-oppressive ways.

Additionally, EPs are involved in enhancing the achievement and wellbeing of children and young people (CYP; Beaver, 2011). We are observing a situation in the UK in which, as noted above, BMR YP are disadvantaged and underachieving on a range of school metrics. This project is relevant to EPs because it explores the experiences of BMR YP, with the hope of promoting their achievement and wellbeing. Importantly, BMR YP in this study were empowered to participate in discussions about their own support, which is a key principle in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (SEND CoP; DfE, 2014).

Finally, EPs are motivated to promote social justice. Fox (2015) maps the moral principles underpinning the helping professions onto Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. Social justice was conceptualised at the level of the macrosystem, with EPs striving to ensure that there is fair and equal access to resources. This relates to the current study because it finds out what a fair access to resources looks like from the participants' perspectives, by asking how their school experience can be improved.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

In this chapter I set out the systematic literature review which was undertaken to investigate: what is known about the secondary school experiences of BMR YP? The purpose was to identify gaps in the literature base and position these as research opportunities.

I first provides a brief description of the review method used, before describing the review process and findings, with reference to the 'Search AppraisaL Synthesis and Analysis' framework (SALSA; Booth et al., 2021)

2.2 The Review Process

A mixed methods systematic review (MMSR; Joanna Briggs Institute, 2021) was selected. The rationale for using this method of inquiry was to enable the combination of both quantitative and qualitative data, from primary studies, to critique the evidence base and answer the review question. MMSRs promote a breadth and depth of understanding (Joanna Briggs Institute, 2021) which demonstrate its suitability to meeting my review's explorative goals.

2.2.1 Search

Identification. This MMSR used a transparent search protocol, details of which are reported in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA, see Appendix B). EBSCO and SCOPUS were chosen as platforms for being large multidisciplinary databases that enabled flexible and automated search filters.

The search string[3] was input on both platforms on the 18th August 2023, with two accompanying automated search filters. The first filter limited the results to entries that were written in English, as this is my first language. The second filter limited search results to those produced in the past 23 years (i.e., 2000-2023). The rationale for selecting the year 2000 was to recognise the public's newfound ability to select more than one racial category in the UK and USA (Aspinall, 2003; Caballero et al., 2007; Joseph-Salisbury, 2017). This review is concerned with the experiences of solely BMR YP (i.e., those from White/Black Caribbean and White/Black African backgrounds), and it was assumed that research prior to 2000 would not include the level of specificity needed to answer the review question.

The search protocol yielded 72 papers on EBSCO and 87 papers on SCOPUS, after duplicates were removed. There were 12 papers which were found across both platforms.

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[3] AB ("Black mixed race" or "mixed race" or "biracial") AND experiences or views AND secondary school or high school or secondary education

Screening. Screening aimed to filter for papers that helped to answer the review question. It involved applying the eligibility criteria (see Appendix C) to identified papers. The eligibility criteria consisted of study features that must have been met for the papers to progress through screening.

In addition to the automated filters outlined above, included papers must have been primary research focussed on the secondary school experiences of BMR YP or provide insights into the experiences of BMR YP of secondary school age (11-16), as this was the review's population and context of focus. Therefore, papers that focussed on different educational stages (e.g., primary school or university), or other mixed heritage groups, were excluded. The paper's methodological approach was left open to quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods designs, recognising the value that each can provide in answering the review question. Included papers must have been peer-reviewed to increase the reliability of findings.

Screening happened in two phases. In the first phase, I applied the eligibility criteria to the titles and abstracts of retrieved papers and manually remove papers that did not fit within the scope of the review. This led to the removal of 40 papers from EBSCO and 66 papers from SCOPUS.

The second phase of screening was a full text review. I read the full text and, again, applied the eligibility criteria. This led to the removal of a further 25 papers from EBSCO and 19 papers from SCOPUS. The three most common reasons for removing

papers at the full text review stage were: not including BMR participants, not providing insights into BMR secondary school experiences, and the papers not being peer reviewed. A total of 8 items from the database search remained after screening.

Supplementary Searching. Two further methods were also used to identify relevant literature. This was due to MMSRs exhaustive ambitions and a recognition of the challenges of obtaining all relevant literature through solely a database search.

The first method was to check the reference lists of included papers, which resulted in one further paper (Tikly et al., 2004) meeting the eligibility criteria. Author searching was second method. Remi Joseph-Salisbury is the co/author to four of the papers included from the database search. Due to his prominence as a researcher in this field, he was contacted directly to ascertain whether there are any ongoing pieces of research or preliminary findings that may be useful for answering the review question. While he was not involved in any ongoing research, he signposted his catalogue of work and, from here, one further paper (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016) was assessed for eligibility and included in the review. This resulted in a total of 10 papers included in this MMSR.

2.2.2 Appraisal

Data Extraction. Data from the included papers were extracted into a table (see Appendix D) and reported: the paper title, author/s and date, the design, research question/s and aims, the participants and the methods, and the findings. This process

helped me to become familiarised with the data, ensure all eligibility criteria had been met, and lay out the key details to support critical appraisal of the studies' methodological quality.

Overview of Papers. In terms of location, five papers were from the UK (Austin et al., 2021; Joseph-Salisbury, 2017, 2016; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004), two papers from the USA (Rozek & Gaither, 2021; Williams, 2013), and three papers that included participants from both the UK and USA (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017).

Regarding methodological design, seven papers employed qualitative designs (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017, 2016, 2018; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Williams, 2013), two papers used mixed methods designs (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017, 2016, 2018; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013)(Austin et al., 2021; Tikly et al., 2004), and one paper used a quantitative design (Rozek & Gaither, 2021).

For data collection, all papers opted for interviews as the/a method of data collection, with the exception of the quantitative paper which used surveys (Rozek & Gaither, 2021). Other data collection methods included focus groups (Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004).

With reference to the participants, five papers only included male participants (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017, 2016, 2018; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017), four papers included both male and female participants (Lewis & Demie, 2019; Rozek & Gaither, 2021; Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013), and one paper included female participants only (Austin et al., 2021). All 10 papers included participants who were current or former BMR secondary school children, however three papers also collected data from the systems around BMR YP (i.e., school staff, local education authority staff and parents of BMR YP; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013).

2.2.3 Critical Appraisal

The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018) guided the evaluation of the literature's methodological quality (see Appendix E, Table of Studies' Scores Against Methodological Quality Criteria). I selected the appropriate category of study design for each paper, and then responded to the relevant questions on the MMAT with 'yes', 'can't tell', or 'no'. This allowed me to judge the methodological quality of each paper. The literature base was of sufficient methodological quality, as indicated by most responses being 'yes'. Of note were the two mixed methods studies (Austin et al., 2021; Tikly et al., 2004) which reported sound methodological procedures.

However, with reference to the qualitative papers, three failed to explicitly state the data analysis methods used (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Lewis & Demie, 2019). This meant that I could not ascertain the extent to which

the findings adequately derived from the data. This also impacted another criterion (whether there was coherence between the papers' data sources, collection, analysis, and interpretation) and, in addition to the three papers mentioned, a further paper also fell short on this criterion for not providing enough data to support generated themes (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). For the solitary quantitative paper (Rozek & Gaither, 2021), the risk of nonresponse bias was relatively high which may have impacted how representative the findings were.

The failure of three qualitative papers to explicitly state their positionality (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Lewis & Demie, 2019) is problematic for several reasons. Although not a criterion stated on the MMAT, positionality is important. Researchers have different views about what constitutes truth and knowledge (which will be explored more in chapter 3), and without stating the philosophical assumptions underpinning a study it can impact the transparency and validity of findings. Qualitative data analysis requires the researcher to interpret meaning (Ngulube, 2015) and different philosophical perspectives can lead to different interpretations of the same data. This includes the theories that have guided the study.

This problem is compounded due to the fact that there is a scarcity of literature in this area, so if there is an over-reliance on a small number of researcher findings (which do not state their philosophical positions) the sense we make of the implications may be ill-advised.

2.2.4 Thematic Synthesis

Thematic synthesis involves the systematic coding of data and the generation of descriptive themes (Booth et al., 2021). As both quantitative and qualitative were included in this review, resting on the assumption stated above that both types of data can address the review question, I was required to transform the quantitative data into qualitative format (i.e., extracting the numerical data and converting it into textual descriptions), as seen in Appendix D, the data extraction table. This is known as a convergent integrated approach involving direct assimilation (Joanna Briggs Institute, 2021).

A synthesis matrices framework was used to synthesise themes and included a description of the papers' finding/s accompanied by an illustration from the same text that informed the finding. This iterative process promoted an inductive and interpretivist approach. It enabled the generation of aggregative themes that synthesised the literature's response to the review question, presented below in table 1. The next sections will explore each theme.

Table 1

Overview of Themes

MMSR review question: what is known about the secondary school experiences of BMR YP?	
Theme	Subtheme
Theme 1: Racial Identification	Racial Flexibility
	Associations with Blackness
Theme 2: Invisibility	Policy
	Data Systems
	The Curriculum
Theme 3: Barriers to Achievement	Academic Underachievement
	Stereotypes
	Racism
Theme 4: BMR Support	How are BMR YP Supported?
	What May Help?

Theme 1: Racial Identification. The first theme centred on BMR YP's racial identifications. While the literature tentatively supported BMR YP's racial flexibility (i.e., being able to change their racial identifications in ways that were meaningful for them), there was stronger evidence to suggest that Blackness remains central in their school experiences, and they cannot identify freely without restrictions.

Racial Flexibility. BMR YP self-identified in a range of ways, based on the circumstances and context of their experience, and what was meaningful for them. Lewis and Demie (2019) adopted a mixed methods study design and consulted with BMR YP, their parents, and a range of educational professionals across two secondary schools in London. Parents perceived their BMR children to have racial

identities that were imprecise and variable and affected by situational factors. This view is summarised here,

> "His identity changes according to who he's with. When I take him to East London for the school football team- when he's with the Year 6 team there are a lot of Black African and Caribbean boys and he changes the way he speaks and behaves- whether he feels that he needs to fit in, into a different identity" (p. 2073).

While this father is reflecting on his child's year 6 experience (i.e., not secondary school age), it suggests that BMR YP enter secondary schooling with experience of identifying in ways that are suitable for the context and situation. This seemed to hold mainly negative connotations amongst parents, concerned that BMR YP might experience "…difficulty defining themselves and in different phases get drawn in different directions" (p. 2073). Despite the limited coherence between data collection, analysis and interpretation in Lewis and Demie (2019), this argument speaks to a deficit perspective, and positions BMR YP as being unwillingly pulled in different directions to fit in.

However, rather than being passive bystanders, Joseph-Salisbury (2019) argues that BMR YP are active agents in the construction of their racialised identities. This paper used semi-structured interviews to explore how BMR participants negotiated their racial and gendered identities in the context of both UK and USA schooling. It was found that BMR participants, aware of the White gaze (i.e., "…a way of seeing the

world that is shaped by structural White supremacy" p. 1756), used their sense of multiple consciousness to engage in a process of hybridity that both confirms and disconfirms Black stereotypes.

Under the White gaze, BMR YP in schools are perceived as Black, and therefore present a threat in the form of a 'Black monster'[4], "I think we're seen as more of a target in terms of fights… we are definitely seen as more of a threat" (p. 1760). This awareness enabled BMR YP to, "…play my Black card… when I wanted to act tough and fend off anybody" (p. 1765).

Simultaneously, BMR YP intentionally resist Black monster stereotypes through acts of self-censorship,

> "I feel like sometimes I accommodate for these people and their ignorance. Like if I see someone kind of suspicious of me, maybe my body language will change. I'll try and come across more gentle and maybe be softer in the way that I speak…" (p. 1767).

Here, BMR YP utilise hybrid performances of 'the Black monster' and 'the light skin softie' in secondary schools to negotiate their identities through multiple consciousness.

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[4] "…an 'indistinguishable, amorphous, Black seething mass, a token of danger, a threat, a criminal, a burden, a rapacious animal incapable of delayed gratification'" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019, p. 1757)

Nevertheless, the extent to which Joseph-Salisbury (2019) can contribute to the review question is limited by several points. Joseph-Salisbury (2019) suggests that these performances are specific to males "no one sees them [BMR girls] as a threat" (p. 1760) and a social resistance to exercising hybridity has also been noted, "… I can't be other things than just a Black man" (p. 1766). This means the understanding of BMR YP's school experiences through solely hybrid performances is weak. To add, despite outlining the theoretical framework, this researcher fails to demonstrate reflexivity[5]. This impacts how credible the findings are, as we do not know the philosophical assumptions and perspectives that have guided his interpretations. Furthermore, methodologically, this paper shows poor coherence between data collection, analysis, and interpretation, and only includes male participants.

BMR YP in other studies also implied this sense of racial flexibility and how it led to beneficial outcomes. Tikly et al., (2004) used a mixed methods approach to investigate the barriers to achievement faced by White/Black Caribbean learners. BMR YP commented on their ability to relate to both sides of their ethnic background (White European and Caribbean heritages) and positioned this positively, "'Cos you know we think that we're the best from the Black and from the White, so therefore we're mixed blessings" (p. 51).

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[5] "The process of reflecting critically on ourselves as practitioners, helping us to come to terms with ourselves and our multiple identities" (Rowley et al., 2023, p. 18)

This was also supported by some of the participants from Austin et al., (2021), who used a mixed methods approach to investigate ethnic identity and self-esteem in mixed-race adolescent girls. BMR YP is this paper believed their racial identity meant they had access to in-depth knowledge about heritage and culture, allowing them to access more social groups, relate to more people, and belong in more contexts than monoracial peers,

> "Sometimes people feel like if they are White, they have to identify with the White group, and if they are Black they have to identify with the Black group. I feel like when you're mixed-race you can just do whatever you want." (p. 84)

Despite Tikly et al., (2004) only including White/Black Caribbean participants, this argument is credible due to the sound methodological quality reported in both mixed methods papers (Austin et al., 2021; Tikly et al., 2004).

Rozek and Gaither (2021) collected survey responses associated with indicators of stereotype threat from BMR and monoracial White and Black students across two different school contexts, characterised by their relative numerical representation of negatively stereotyped children (i.e., Black / Latino) and racial achievement gaps. These quantitative findings found partial support for the multiple identity protection hypothesis[6]. This was because BMR students fell descriptively between monoracial

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[6] "Multiple identity protection hypothesis: If having multiple racial identities cognitively accessible and available, including one associated with positive academic stereotypes, is protective, then biracial Black/ White students should experience low threat across both school contexts" (Rozek & Gaither, 2021, p. 1316).

White and monoracial Black students on a broad sense of self (how expansive a student saw their own set of identities) in higher-stereotype salient schools (i.e. racially homogenous schools; Rozek & Gaither, 2021), suggesting that BMR identity is a protective factor to stereotype threat in their school experiences.

Although this finding was not statistically significant, and the survey may have been susceptible to challenges around validity, these findings help to confirm and contextualise some of those presented prior. That is, BMR YP's racial flexibility enables them to experience a broader sense of self, and this leads to positive outcomes (protection from stereotype threat), but also that the school context mediates the need to exercise hybridity.

Associations with Blackness. Despite this racial flexibility, there was strong support to suggest that BMR YP's racial identity was strongly associated with their Blackness, with them *choosing* to identify more with their Blackness as they progressed through their secondary schooling (Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Williams, 2013).

Williams (2013) used a qualitative research design to uncover perceptions on the factors influencing BMR YP's schooling experience and found that some parents recognised this code-switching behaviour to identify more with Blackness as a natural progression, whereas some teachers perceived this as attempts to fit in, "Mixed race

boys over identify with Black street culture… this identity is important. It's to fit in" (Lewis & Demie, 2019, p. 2079).

Williams (2013) also reflects on his identity and, although recognising a challenge in not being able to relate to the first-hand experience of BMR participants, positions his self-racialisation as neither Black nor White as mainly beneficial to his interpretation of the qualitative data. This increases the confidence we can have in these findings due to its transparency and contributes to the paper's sound methodological quality.

However, Joseph-Salisbury and Andrews (2017), who interviewed 28 BMR males from the UK and US, found that relationships with Black peers felt natural due to common interests and shared culture, "Birds of a feather flock together" (p. 754). BMR females also shared their experience of having more in common with, and feeling more accepted by, their Black peers which enabled them to freely talk about their experiences (Williams, 2013).

Here, BMR identification with Blackness seemed to create a safe space to reflect on shared experiences and barriers to achievement (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004). However, Joseph-Salisbury and Andrews (2017) did not report the data analysis methods used, resulting in uncertainty around whether these findings adequately derived from the data.

But not all BMR YP shared this view, with some reporting the challenges of not feeling 'Black-enough' or 'White-enough' to integrate with a peer group of their choice (Lewis & Demie, 2019; Williams, 2013). There is also evidence to suggest that BMR females are less likely to choose friendships based on race (Austin et al., 2021; Lewis & Demie, 2019).

Blackness is also strongly associated with BMR YP's school experiences because they are racialised by others as Black. This can be seen in reports from parents of BMR YP, "…in our society you are Black… you will always be viewed as African American" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018, p. 16) and from teachers, "Where I grew up, if your father was Black, you were Black. So you're Black. You're not other" (Williams, 2013, p. 193); reflecting the legacy of hypodescent policy, or the one-drop rule, in which an individual with any Black ancestry was classified as Black.

BMR YP in many studies seemed aware of these racialisations placed upon them. For example, BMR YP shared "most kind of White people just see you as Black" (Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017, p. 754), "I don't think White people notice the distinction between the two [Black and BMR]" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019, p. 1762), and "…their teachers assumed they were Black anyway" (Lewis & Demie, 2019, p. 2078). While this indicates a lack of power to be seen as anything other than Black, occasionally, BMR participants attempted to push back on these racialisations by emphasising their mixedness (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Tikly et al., 2004).

This theme suggests that BMR YP's strong associations with Blackness in schools is shaped by a Black-white racial dichotomy. This sees BMR YP both choose to identify with Blackness (in terms of peer groups) and simultaneously limits BMR YP's ability to identify with anything other than Blackness, as this is how they are racialised by others. Further, BMR identity does not ensure a seamless entry into Black peer groups for all individuals, and seems to be mediated by school diversity (Rozek & Gaither, 2021; Williams, 2013), family racial socialisation practices (Austin et al., 2021; Lewis & Demie, 2019) and gender (Austin et al., 2021; Lewis & Demie, 2019).

Theme 2: Invisibility. The next theme centred on the invisibility of the BMR population in secondary education. It suggested that BMR YP's invisibility in policy, data systems and the curriculum adversely impacted their secondary school experience.

Policy. BMR YP experience invisibility in school-related policy. This impacts the general awareness of this community's needs and how well their barriers to achievement can be targeted. The Head of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service from a participating Local Authority (LA) in Tikly et al., (2004) encapsulated this perspective, "the level of awareness of mixed-race children, their needs, their issues, problems… is very low" (p. 60). While this does not in itself constitute a barrier to achievement, as demonstrated by the high achievement levels of White/Asian pupils, it seemed to reinforce a "no problem here attitude" (p. 47). The findings from Williams

(2013) supported this view, agreeing that BMR YP are low on school agendas, "…it's just not on their [teachers'] radar" (p. 190). This related to teacher's lack of awareness of BMR experiences, a failure to incorporate knowledge of BMR people into their teaching, and their tendency to categorise BMR YP as monoracial Black (Williams, 2013).

Here, BMR YP's absence from school-related policy impacted the awareness of their needs. Both Tikly et al., (2004) and Williams (2013) reported sound methodological quality, and, together, used a range of data collection methods: census data, interviews and focus groups; signalling the strength of this argument.

Data Systems. Tikly et al., (2004) compared qualitative and quantitative data and found that while participating teachers thought BMR students (specifically those from White/Black Caribbean backgrounds) accounted for only a small percentage of pupils in the school, the numerical data indicated that this group was actually one of the largest (Tikly et al., 2004). This implies a disconnect between the information that data systems contain and how this is interpreted by teachers. Tikly et al.'s (2004) demonstration of interdisciplinary collaboration, with insights from both sociological and educational perspectives, also boosts the credibility of these findings.

Underdeveloped data monitoring systems also had implications for the identification of need in this community, with a secondary school headteacher from Lewis and

Demie (2019) stating, "it's not clear from the data that they are underachieving. The definition [of mixed race] is fuzzy." (p. 2073).

Although both papers focussed on White/Black Caribbean YP, this position speaks to both the identification and language ambiguity in BMR discourse. As seen with the identity theme, BMR YP's identities can be flexibile, changing based on the situation and context. Those around BMR YP also racialise them in ways that are both in-line with, and different from, how they would categorise themselves (K. Lewis & Demie, 2019). This leads to discomfort around what language to use in reference to BMR YP in schools (Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013), which exacerbates the difficulty identifying BMR YP in data systems.

The Curriculum. Joseph-Salisbury (2017) explored the perceptions of the school curriculum through semi-structured interviews with BMR male adults who reflected on their retrospective secondary school experience. Participants in this study implied a sense of curricular exclusion in which BMR identities and histories were not included within secondary schooling experiences. As one research participant proclaimed, "…it's [the curriculum] so White…" (p. 451). Participants in this study were particularly concerned about how an unrepresentative curriculum may perpetuate White supremacy, "If the curriculum is designed for White people then it's going to advantage White people" (p. 451), and lead BMR YP to be disenchanted with education, "That'd [a diverse curriculum] help the mixed kids be interested, if they are part of the curriculum…" (p. 452). However, it must be noted that this paper only

included 20 adult males, raising the question of whether female participants would have the same views.

The perception of an unrepresentative curriculum was supported by Lewis and Demie (2019). As one BMR YP described, "we don't learn about how mixed race people have developed… the only history I know is about White slave owners that rape Black people – we didn't talk about this in relation to mixed race people" (p. 2074). The unrepresentative nature of the secondary school curriculum was also identified by teachers, "I suppose there aren't many images of mixed race people in the curriculum; it's just not talked about in school" (p. 2074). Here we can see the strength of Lewis and Demie (2019) in its ability to triangulate findings from different stakeholders.

The impact of curriculum underrepresentation seems to have led BMR participants to lack role models in schools, "I guess when you're not exposed to writers of different races, you think, oh they just didn't write any text" (speaking about the USA context; Williams, 2013, p. 196), and opportunities to acknowledge mixedness (e.g., in reference to topics related to figures such as Mary Seacole) were missed in the UK system (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017; Tikly et al., 2004). Some BMR participants communicated the implications this may have, "…it sends the wrong message, it tells us that we aren't good enough… that we won't be good enough" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017, p. 453) and how it could provoke feelings of disdain, "…we don't hear about people that are like us… probably because people just don't bother about those things" (Tikly et al., 2004, p. 62).

This theme argues that BMR YP are largely invisible in secondary school. Absence in both school-related policy and data systems leads to an unawareness of BMR YPs needs. This contributes to an unrepresentative curriculum and teacher practices that do not recognise BMR experiences and histories.

Theme 3: Barriers to Achievement. The third theme illuminates the barriers to achievement that BMR YP experience in secondary schooling. While BMR YP and their monoracial Black peers experience shared barriers to achievement, there were also distinct barriers experienced by BMR YP.

Academic Underachievement. Tikly et al., (2004) found that the attainment of White/Black Caribbean boys and girls, and White/Black African boys, were below UK national averages at the end of Key Stage 3 and 4, and this attainment gap widened as these groups progressed through the key stages. This shows that BMR YP are academically underachieving at secondary school, apart from White/Black African girls, who are much closer to, or above, the national averages at each key stage.

As explored above, this underachievement is impacted by BMR YP's invisibility in the secondary school system. One of the reasons for this invisibility is being racialised by others as Black (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Williams, 2013), and this rendered BMR YP vulnerable to the same barriers to achievement as their monoracial Black peers. This

included: dissatisfaction with a Eurocentric curriculum that was unrepresentative of their identities and histories (as examined above), low teacher expectations related to stereotypical views (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016, 2018; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013), racial prejudice from peers (Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017) and socio-economic disadvantage (Tikly et al., 2004);

> "In a lot of ways, we [Black and BMR YP] face the same challenges you know? And we deal with them in the same ways in the same communities… but there are issues that affect mixed race males specifically, and for true solidarity, we need to recognise these" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016, p. 459).

In this way, BMR YP's 'Blackness' is perceived as a barrier to BMR underachievement. In the context of the argument above regarding BMR YP's racial flexibility, this suggests that BMR YP's hybrid performances do not impact on their academic underachievement.

Stereotypes. However, BMR YP also experience distinct barriers to achievement, such as specific types of stereotypical views. The literature found that teachers assume that BMR YP have identity issues (Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013). As a White teacher remarked, "I feel the [Mixed Black/White Caribbean] children here struggle with two identities, who they actually are" (Lewis & Demie, 2019, p. 2075) and these perceptions led to beliefs that this community needed pastoral support.

This was corroborated by a mother who claimed that she was involved in her White son's schooling because of academic reasons, but in her BMR daughters schooling for social reasons (Williams, 2013). LA personnel also commented, "We talk to schools about the achievement gap being unacceptable, but they focus instead on pastoral mentoring… This needs to be coupled with academic learning conversations" (Lewis & Demie, 2019, pp. 2076–2077). Here, we can see how stereotypical views around mixed racial parentage pathologise BMR YP in the education system, leading to views that mixed identity was explanation enough for underachievement or behavioural needs, inhibiting further investigation and intervention around academic support.

Joseph-Salisbury (2016) interviewed 20 BMR males, and a participant in this paper explained how such stereotypical impositions were misguided and unjust,

> "They acted like I was troubled, like it would be harder for me to learn and didn't treat me with the same respect as other kids.... As it happens I wasn't particularly confused and my parents were cool but I'm not pissing about with teachers who've already got me marked. There are other routes than education." (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016, p. 8)

Here we can see how the pathological stereotypes that are imposed on BMR YP in secondary schools are in conflict with the positive ways in which BMR YP themselves often experience their identities (Austin et al., 2021; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004), and may lead to disengagement with education. Despite this, it should be noted

that Joseph-Salisbury (2016) interviewed only male participants, impacting the extent to which we can accept this account as representative of the entire BMR population.

Stereotypes are not merely limited to BMR YP's identity issues, but are further compounded by accompanying perceptions of BMR YP's home structure consisting of a present White mother and an absent Black father (Tikly et al., 2004), "The image of the White single mother on a council estate with the mixed race child; this is the deficit model, the fall-back position for underachievement…" (Lewis & Demie, 2019, p. 2075).

This led teachers to assume lower aspirations and lesser involvement from BMR parents, "…my perception is that it tends to be White mothers and Black fathers [who] don't tend to get involved in the school" (Tikly et al., 2004, p. 53), and signalled negative attitudes towards interracial marriage (Williams, 2013). Stereotypes of BMR YP's fragmented homes impacted the low expectations from teachers and justified the assumption that BMR YP need pastoral support. This has implications of BMR YP's over-representation in school exclusions (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016; Tikly et al., 2004) and their marginalisation in streaming systems (K. Lewis & Demie, 2019).

Some BMR YP acknowledged how intersectionality compounds their disadvantage in the education system, "I think a lot for me was being working-class or being off the estate, I mean there was stuff about race as well but working class was significant" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016, p. 6). This was supported by quantitative data, which

showed that pupils eligible for free school meals (an indicator for deprivation) was much higher for BMR YP when compared to the national average (Tikly et al., 2004) and that the lower socio-economic status of BMR YP added to challenges in school (Williams, 2013).

For other participants, an awareness of stereotypical views was positioned as a form of resilience igniting BMR YP's motivation to succeed,

> "My Mum taught me growing up, like, here are the stereotypes; people are gonna think this about you but I know you're better than that and I know that you're gonna prove them wrong... I think it's good to understand the stereotypes around you so that you can know what people are gonna think about you before they even get to know you because it gives a chance for you to prove people wrong" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018, p. 21).

Here, family support seemed to provide a buffer against these negative perceptions, a point that is also noted elsewhere (Austin et al., 2021). Joseph-Salisbury (2018) reported sound methodological quality, implying that the highlighted accounts are trustworthy.

Racism. BMR YP also experience hostilities in the secondary school system in the form of racism from their peers. Name-calling was a common theme in the literature: "They call us Orio, coconut, mongrel, muffins, yellow. And grey, or elephant. They say confused.com about us like the advert" (Lewis & Demie, 2019, p. 2074) and,

"I've had names called at me though…. Like half-breed, stuff like that" (Tikly et al., 2004, p. 56).

Teachers tended to not take these racist incidents seriously and this meant that BMR YP often took justice into their own hands with aggressive responses, often leading to exclusions (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016; Lewis & Demie, 2019). These responses therefore had significant implications for BMR YP's school experience, leading them to inadvertently fulfil the confused, angry, and confrontational stereotypes attributed to them. It seems like these responses were particular to the male experience, and interact with peer group pressures that encourage BMR males to adopt extreme behaviour to prove their Blackness (Tikly et al., 2004). This touches again on previous points, that BMR males are 'Wrangling with the Black monster' in their school experiences (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019), and that language ambiguity created hesitancy and discomfort for teachers and prevented BMR YPs sense of protection (Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013).

Other participants drew attention to the more subtle ways that racism was exercised in the education system. Microaggressions are everyday comments communicating unconscious hostile racial messages (Austin et al., 2021). BMR female participants reported microaggressions from peers, "oh you think you're Black, you're forgetting that you're half White" (85), and from teachers who would assume cultural knowledge, "It was automatically called out, 'do you know what that is, [and] do you celebrate that?'… I live with my mum we don't do things like that… it makes me question should

I know that?" (p. 85). This indicates that BMR girls too are subject to having to prove their racialised identities in the education system.

Additionally, BMR YP felt picked-on or disliked, which indicated underlying racism or prejudice. This related to addressing BMR YP in a derogatory tone (Tikly et al., 2004), being treated differently (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016), policing hairstyles (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018), negative reactions (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018; Tikly et al., 2004), and not actively supporting academic aspirations (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016; Tikly et al., 2004).

Rozek and Gaither's (2021) quantitative approach found that BMR participants reported lower levels of belonging across both school contexts that were studied, and, along with Black monoracial peers, reported lower levels of trust in teachers in stereotype-salient schools only (i.e., racially homogenous schools; Rozek & Gaither, 2021). Taken together with the barriers to achievement identified above, these findings suggest that hostilities in the education system lead BMR YP to experience less school belonging and lower levels of trust in teachers.

However, it must be noted that whereas the hostilities noted above are often reported within the UK context, the findings from Rozek and Gaither (2021) are specific the US context, limiting the ability to infer these findings as a consequence. Further, Rozek and Gathier's (2021) findings were susceptible to nonresponse bias, impacting the representativeness of the reported findings.

Theme 4: BMR Support. The final theme synthesises what the literature base says about the support provided for BMR YP in the secondary schooling system. It reinforces the invisibility theme above by indicting a widespread absence of strategies and interventions aimed at meeting the needs of BMR YP. In the context of the distinct barriers that BMR YP experience, a lack of initiatives to provide support further exacerbates these barriers.

How are BMR YP Supported? There was a strong sense that BMR YP were not supported with specific interventions, "we don't have any initiatives particularly for mixed-race children" (Lewis & Demie, 2019, p. 2074), and were instead placed in the same interventions as their monoracial Black peers, such as mentoring schemes or forms of supplementary education (Tikly et al., 2004).

However, in the context of BMR YP's unique and distinct experiences, these interventions seemed unable to fully meet their needs. For example, one BMR participant spoke of how his inclusion in a project targeting Black Caribbean boys failed to unpack the complexity of his identity (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016). A LA representative summarised the dilemma for schools, "So on the one hand, we don't want to be part of the process of fractioning children [from different Black backgrounds]. However, at the same time we do realise that there are particular achievement patterns that are specific to pupils of Caribbean heritage [and of] dual heritage…" (Tikly et al., 2004, p. 16).

The absence of strategies to counter the specific barriers to achievement faced by BMR YP can be understood as a contributing factor to their underachievement in secondary schools. It should, however, be noted that both Tikly et al., (2004) and Lewis and Demie (2019) solely focus on the White/Black Caribbean population, limiting our understanding of how the entire BMR are supported in secondary schools.

What May Help? BMR YP in Lewis and Demie (2019) seemed keen to suggest school-based intervention, "We should have an assembly or something to talk about everybody cussing us" and, "We could have a meeting once a month – a mixed-race room, to say 'how's your month been'…" (p. 2075). These suggestions of a space for BMR YP were echoed by support staff, "I think there should be growth in support for mixed kids ... discussion groups ... a chance to chat to each other in a safe space." (p. 2075). While this communicates a clear message, it is limited in its weight, suggesting that there is an absence of data on what may help, from BMR YP's perspectives.

The research base more commonly used findings to infer intervention for the BMR population. For example, Tikly et al., (2004) used their mixed-methods findings to provide policy recommendations for education authorities. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and LAs were advised to, for example, work with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to ensure White/Black Caribbean YPs experiences and identities are recognised within the curriculum and educational

resources. Parents of BMR YP were generally supportive of teacher training initiatives (Williams, 2013).

Recommendations for LAs included the effective monitoring of White/Black Caribbean achievement with challenging targets in place, support for schools to develop strategies to meet White/Black Caribbean needs, and collating and disseminating effective practice for raising achievement (Tikly et al., 2004).

Tikly et al., (2004) also provided recommendations for schools, including effective systems of data monitoring and target setting, and specific strategies for raising the achievement of White/Black Caribbean pupils. Here, supplementary education was positioned as a way forward, combating BMR dissatisfaction with the curriculum, that which Joseph-Salisbury and Andrews (2017) also argued for. However, it should be noted that some participants communicated uncertainty about whether Black supplementary school attendance would appropriately support their needs (Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017). This implies a tension between researchers' recommendations and BMR YP's views.

Tikly et al (2004) also recommended schools provide effective role models for mixed heritage groups. Although this was supported by other papers, "I think one advantage of having more ethnic minority staff is that they'd understand racism and perhaps be more empathetic. I'd feel better approaching a minority teacher to discuss racism" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016, p. 12), there were concerns raised over the tokenism of such

decisions to *just* employ more ethnically diverse teachers, "this Black guy called Earl, he was supposed to be a mentor but he really didn't do much, didn't really have a proper role, he was just there..." (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016, p. 17).

This theme indicates that there is an absence of intervention and strategies to support BMR YPs needs in secondary school education. Further, the literature is limited in its ability to elicit intervention directly from BMR YP, and instead relies on inferences from researchers. A key concern also remains regarding interventions and recommendations being specific to White/Black Caribbean pupils, leaving many gaps in what is currently supporting, and what may well support, the entire BMR population. To add, Tikly et al., (2004), which informs the majority arguments presented in this theme, was published almost 20 years ago, reducing the credibility of these findings, and, judging by the findings from Lewis and Demie (2019), in 15 years little had been implemented.

2.3 Summary of Literature Review

Conclusion. I used a MMSR to thematically synthesise the findings from 10 studies to answer the review question: what is known about the secondary school experiences of BMR YP? Four themes were interpreted from the data.

BMR YPs racialised identities were central to their secondary school experiences. Their racialised identities allowed them to exercise hybridity and this was positioned mainly in positive ways. However, BMR YP also aligned with Blackness as a result of

both internal and external forces. While this association with Blackness enabled BMR YP to feel supported through shared cultures and experiences, it also rendered them vulnerable to barriers to achievement and fed into BMR invisibility in the secondary school system.

BMR YP experience barriers to their achievement which are both shared with, and distinct from, their monoracial Black peers. They often experience invisibility within secondary schooling which can be traced to their absence in school-related policy, data systems and within the curriculum and teacher practices.

BMR YP are not often supported with specific strategies and interventions to meet their needs and are more commonly placed in intervention alongside their monoracial Black peers. While the literature has attempted to provide recommendations to support BMR YP, it seems yet to have been established, and there is a distinct lack of views elicited directly from across the BMR community.

Evaluation. Strengths of the literature base relate to its methodological quality, with suitable research aims, interpretations that are frequently substantiated by the data, and the inclusion of data from BMR YP and other key stakeholders involved in their schooling experiences. The literature's ability to answer the review question with both qualitative and quantitative findings is also positioned as a strength of MMSRs.

Despite this, one of the main limitations of the literature base is the reporting of data analysis methods. For the qualitative papers in particular, this limits the coherence between data collection, analysis and interpretation. Most papers used interviews as the primary data collection method, limiting the creativity of the literature base to uncover views and perspectives in participatory ways, and leaving findings susceptible to personal bias. This is even more concerning given the considerable lack of explicit reflexivity in the qualitative and mixed methods papers, with researchers failing to report on how their experiences and worldviews may have impacted their interpretations of findings, and that 50% of the literature base involved research from a single researcher. This may have led to skewed understandings of BMR school experiences that hold disproportionate weight in this review.

I also wonder why there have not been many opportunities for participants across the BMR population to come together as a whole, and instead focusses on participants in isolation (i.e., through interviews or surveys), particular genders, or solely the White/Black Caribbean population. Due to the Black and White racial mix, there may be commonalities in the shared experiences to be gleaned from BMR YP as a community.

The literature base is also heavily deficit-focussed, and I wonder whether this is linked to some of the limitations described above, namely the data collection methods, perspectives of researchers and the participants. This impacts the literature's ability to elicit solutions from BMR YP themselves, and typically focusses on descriptions of

what BMR school experiences are, followed by the researcher's interpretations about what may help.

2.4 The Current Study

The gaps and limitations of the literature in the systematic review form opportunities for further research and the purposes of the current study. This project is rooted in exploratory and transformative purposes and has three primary aims.

It aims to explore BMR YP's school experiences from a critical perspective, as a counter to the bi-racial dichotomy which has typically prioritised monoracial voices. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to an immature literature base and provide a more equitable understanding of the school experiences of this marginalised group through counter-storytelling. Importantly, it takes a novel approach to achieve this, by grouping the BMR community.

This project aims to be transformative (i.e., create a lasting change) in two ways. Firstly, it aims to promote change through a person-centred, collaborative, and solution-orientated approach which positions BMR YP as experts in their experience. This is in response to a literature base that has tended to focus on static deficit-based descriptions of BMR YPs experiences and inferred recommendations from researchers. The hope is that this approach will illuminate clearer ways forward to support BMR YP at school and encourage researchers to focus on potential rather than problems.

Additionally, it aims to be transformative in terms of the impact on the community of BMR YP who participate. The hope is that the collaborative and positive ethos of this project gives back to this community by strengthening relationships and a sense of belonging, promoting feelings of pride, and adding to their growth. This is to counteract the deficit-based narratives that may impact the participants' wellbeing and school experiences.

The Research Questions

1. What are Black mixed-race young people's racialised experiences of their secondary school education?
2. How do Black mixed-race young people co-construct a positive vision for the future?

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

Methodology is a theoretically informed approach to data production; "it is the methodological question that leads the researcher to ask how the world should be studied" (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016, p. 52). In this chapter, I provide an outline and justification of the study's methodological approach.

It is split into three sections. In the first section, I explain research paradigms, which are the philosophical assumptions and theory guiding the study. In the second section, I explain the study's methods (the specific means for collecting and analysing data; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). In the final section, I describe the ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Paradigms

Research paradigms are a set of basic beliefs that guide action (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Other terms to describe paradigms are: philosophical worldviews (Creswell, 2009), belief systems (Davies & Fisher, 2018), frameworks of assumptions (Kawulich & Chilisa, 2012) and theoretical perspectives (Crotty, 1998), amongst others, but research paradigm will be the term used here.

Research paradigms are the lens through which we see the world (Creswell, 2009; Davies & Fisher, 2018) and frame how we view and arrive at truth (Guba, 1981; Kawulich & Chilisa, 2012). They comprise the philosophical assumptions, beliefs,

values and norms that each researcher holds (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Mertens, 2007). Mertens (2007) describes a paradigm as "a metaphysical construct associated with specific philosophical assumptions that describe one's worldview" (p. 215).

All researchers must be cognizant of the philosophical assumptions that guide their work (Mertens, 2007). Researchers have their own perceptions of what constitutes truth and knowledge (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Kawulich & Chilisa, 2012), and one's research paradigm influences every decision related to the research process (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Paradigms set the problem to be solved (Kuhn, 1997) and provide an overarching framework for research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As Braun & Clarke (2022) state, "such [big] theory is like the 'oxygen' for our research, surrounding and in our practice, even if we don't think about it at all" (p. 156).

The major research paradigms can be grouped into three main taxonomies: positivist, interpretivist and critical or transformative (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Each major paradigm will be briefly summarised below, with a justification of where this study is situated.

3.2.1 Overview of Major Research Paradigms

Positivism. According to Kivunja & Kuyini (2017), "the researcher's ultimate aim [in the positivist paradigm] is to establish a comprehensive universal theory, to account for human and social behaviour" (p.31). Positivists believe there is a reality

'out there' independently of human consciousness and pursue an objective search for facts (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

Interpretivism. Interpretivists, however, argue that there are multiple subjective realities that differ from person to person (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Accordingly, the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of those participating in it (Cohen et al., 2007; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Truth and reality are not discovered, they are created (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Individual constructs are elicited through interaction between the researcher and participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), with interpretivists aiming to bring hidden social forces into consciousness (Scotland, 2012). The goal of interpretivist research is therefore to understand the participants' interpretations of the social phenomenon, not a single verifiable reality (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

Critical Theory. Critical theorists agree that language plays a fundamental role in shaping our multiple and subjective realities, but argues that language contains power relations that can empower or weaken (Scotland, 2012). Mertens (2007) explains, "The role of the researcher in this [critical] context is reframed as one who recognizes inequalities and injustices in society and strives to challenge the status quo…" (Mertens, 2007, p. 212). Researchers who adopt the critical paradigm view research as a moral and political activity (Kawulich & Chilisa, 2012).

This study was situated within the critical paradigm. Firstly, it was a response to a social justice issue which sees BMR YP achieving worse life outcomes and under-achieving at school. This was the starting point for the research task that followed, with a purpose to explore their secondary school experiences, through the lens of their racialised identities. From a CRT perspective, RQ1 posed a challenge to racialised power relations by assuming that race has played some role in how they have made sense of school and vice versa.

Secondly, the voices of BMR individuals were largely absent from the literature base. By centering and prioritising BMR YP's voices, I assumed that BMR YP would have something meaningful and insightful to share about their experiences and what may work better for them in the future. The research was therefore concerned with hearing from a marginalised group whose voices have not typically been considered in knowledge claims (Scotland, 2012).

Thirdly, in the literature available, it was common for BMR challenges and difficulties to be described. Perhaps this is indicative of their racialised experiences tending to include challenges but may also reflect the deep-rooted historical pathologising of multiracials in society and through the literature. "Critical methodology is dialogic and dialectical (Guba & Lincoln, 1994); it requires the investigator to engage the subjects in dialogue with the aim of bringing about a change in their outlook on social systems that keep them deprived of intellectual and social needs" (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Accordingly, in the current study the methodological approach to RQ2 encouraged the participants to co-construct the BMR experience from a positive and optimistic frame.

A key characteristic of the critical paradigm is ensuring that the methodology used to investigate a phenomenon is decided alongside the participants (Romm 2015). While this project did not provide the opportunity for participants to decide methods, they were involved in creating ideas for change.

3.2.2 Axiology

Axiology concerns the philosophical approach to making decisions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) and considers the values that influence a researcher's work. It is significant in the critical paradigm because it drives the formation of one's ontology, epistemology and methods (Romm, 2015).

The moral principles that underpin the EP profession (autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and social justice; Beauchamp & Childress, 2019) have guided the ethical decision making in the current study and are embedded in a relational axiology. This is a type of axiology is guided by the principles of "accountable responsibility, respectful representation, reciprocal appropriation, and rights" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 117 found in Romm, 2015, p. 421), which can be identified throughout this project.

Rather than holding a positivist view that all research should be value-free (Kawulich & Chilisa, 2012), I viewed the task of social inquiry as value-bound and value-laden, recognising that this may interfere with neutrality (Kawulich & Chilisa, 2012).

3.2.3 Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of existence; the study of being and 'what is' (Crotty, 1998). Positivism holds the ontological position of realism and is grounded in the scientific method of investigation (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). This research is qualitative, and I do not believe that racialised experiences can be explained by quantitative data. However, statistics initially sparked interest in this topic and my position is that they can provide useful information.

Interpretivism holds the ontological position of relativism and conceptualises reality as being subjective, mediated by our senses, and resulting from human action and interaction (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Davies & Fisher, 2018; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016; Scotland, 2012). A relativist ontology underpins this research as it seeks to understand racialised experiences and perspectives, through the lens of the participants. This came from a sense of responsibility that I felt to provide a platform for BMR YP to tell their story, a relativist philosophy (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

This study also adopted a systemic and relational worldview, in which BMR YP are experiencing their own realities which are enmeshed "…in a web of relations and interconnectedness that extends to non-living things" (Romm, 2015, p. 21). With reference to CRT, race is recognised as a social construction, but one that significantly shapes our daily lives. It was from this ontological position that it seemed useful to adopt a focus group for RQ2.

3.2.4 Epistemology

Adhering to an ontological belief system guides epistemological assumptions (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Epistemology describes how we come to know truth or reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017); "how do we know what we know?" (Kawulich & Chilisa, 2012, p. 1). It is concerned with the production of knowledge.

Within this study, the meaning made by the participants did not exist in its own right, but was constructed, as we both engaged in interpretation (social constructionism; Robson & McCartan, 2016). While being careful not to conflate my own school experiences with those of the participants through reflexivity (explored more in the sections below), I believe I was well-placed to understand the participants' interpretations about being BMR in secondary school due to my own identity.

Language was viewed as a fundamental aspect for the process of knowledge production (Galbin, 2014, p. 89) and the participants' stories as legitimate forms of knowledge (Kawulich & Chilisa, 2012). Language can be used to create "vocabularies of hope… when members of organizations and communities are willing and able to work together cooperatively" (Shabazz & Cooks, 2014, p. 74). Participants were positioned as experts in their experience and were empowered to share their subjective realities.

Finally, a relational epistemology acknowledges that knowledge is socially constructed by people who have relationships and connections with each other, in recognition of their connectedness with 'the environment' (Romm, 2015). This is relevant to the current study because it captures the value of communal knowledge. This is a type of knowledge which benefits the participants, as opposed to traditional forms of knowledge production which tend to collect and store knowledge (Romm, 2015a).

3.2.5 Theoretical Framework that Guided Methods

Chapter 1 explains CRT and CMRS as theoretical perspectives which have shaped this study. However, below I describe additional approaches that have guided the methodology.

Positive Psychology. Positive Psychology (PP) was developed to counter Psychology's traditional grounding in the medical model of diagnosis and treatment. PP is based on the premise that, "… positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions promises to improve quality of life and prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). PP views the individual as owning the potential and intrinsic motivation for optimal growth (Joseph, 2008).

PP encourages psychologists to build on positive qualities, rather than just focussing on the things that are not working well (Joseph, 2008). This approach is summarised in the following quote: "'Psychology is not just the study of disease, weakness, and

damage; it is also the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is wrong; it is also building what is right…" (Bannink & Jackson, 2011, p. 2).

The current study adopted PP as an approach to understand the participants' thoughts, feelings and behaviours (Bannink & Jackson, 2011). The evidence for this is most explicit in discussions around strengths, virtues, and character traits during the focus group (the data collection method for RQ2). PP was particularly suitable to the current study due to its aim to create a counter to deficit-based narratives of BMR YP.

To add, the person centered approach (and the wider humanistic approach) was integral to this study and forms the theoretical roots of PP. The person centered approach is based on the growth metaphor, "human beings have an inherent tendency towards growth… but require the right social environment…" (Joseph, 2008, p. 283). This is relevant to the current study because the BMR YP were considered to be experts in their own experience and best placed to construct their own remedies for a more positive future. This is in addition to RQ2 oriented towards changing the participants' social context, rather than changing themselves.

Solution-Focussed Thinking. Here I have used 'solution-focussed thinking' to describe the current study's relationship to both a solution-focussed approach (SFA) and the Solution-Oriented model. Both approaches are concerned with identifying and amplifying strengths, resources, and solutions. This study's relationship to both SFA and the Solution-Oriented Model will be explored below.

A Solution-Focussed Approach. SFA operated as a framework for thinking about data collection. SFA is about eliciting positive emotions and broadening positive thinking (Glass, 2009), and these two concepts were integral to the discussions during the focus group for RQ2.

SFA is primarily concerned with what works for the client in this moment and this context (Bannink & Jackson, 2011). This principle was displayed in RQ2, which aimed to elicit co-constructions about a positive future to discover what may support the participants at their school.

Additionally, SFA believes that, "Interventions can initiate change without the therapist's first understanding, in any detail, what has been going on (De Shazer, 1985, p. 119)". (Bannink & Jackson, 2011). Perhaps this is where the current study differed from traditional SFA, as understanding the participants' individual context and experiences (through RQ1) was viewed as important part of the research process.

A SFA encourages the use of focussed and contained techniques for moving towards solutions (Rees, 2008). In the current study, Appreciative Inquiry (Ai) was used as a framework for containing focus group discussions. Ai is a strength-based approach (Macpherson, 2015; Reed, 2007) which postulates "Problems can be solved through valuing the best of what is and envisioning how the future might look" (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2018, p. 624). Ai contained the focus group discussions by eliciting

strengths and qualities the participants value and appreciate, and how we can build on this positivity and strength. While more will be explained about Ai later in this chapter, this is to say that Ai was the SFA used in this study. SFA and Ai align in their desire to build the capacity for positive thinking and solutions. Importantly, future-oriented thought has previously been shown to influence positive outcomes in academic settings (Pawlak & Moustafa, 2023).

The Solution-Oriented Model. Existing literature describes challenging school experiences for BMR YP (Joseph-Salisbury, 2017, 2016; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013). With this in mind, I thought it was important *not* to adopt a methodological approach that 'just' focuses on the positives, as it may negate any challenges the participants want to voice. This reflects the idea of keeping one foot in pain and one foot in possibility (Rees, 2008). For this reason, the current study aligned with the ethos of the Solution-Oriented model, by providing an opportunity for participants to express any potential challenges during the data collection for RQ1. This was, perhaps, an indication of my reluctance to let my own positive racialised school experiences hinder the opportunities for the participants to share their true subjective realities.

Rees (2008) states ten solution-oriented principles that shape practice (p.226-227). Several of these principles guided my approach to this research, as stated below:

- 'People have the necessary resources to make change possible'. BMR YP in the current study were assumed to possess the potential and initiatives for

change. RQ2 is evidence of this, by asking participants how *they* co-construct a positive vision of the future.

- 'Focussing on future possibilities and solutions enhances change'. This was the premise for choosing a framework for the focus group that elicited future-focussed discussions (i.e., Ai).

- 'Co-operation enhances change'. This study assumed that there was value in bringing BMR YP together, to co-operate and co-construct change ideas for change.

To summarise, a key difference between the Solution-Oriented model and a SFA is that the Solution-Oriented model embraces the problem narrative as an important part of the change process, whereas SFA initiates change by building entirely on positives (Rees, 2008). To add, the Solution-Oriented model aims to be scientific, whereas a SFA is merely concerned with what works in context (Bannink & Jackson, 2011).

3.3 Methods

The next sections focus on the study's methods, or the methodological procedure. I explain the sampling procedure, and the data collection and analysis methods. The methodological procedure is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Methodological Procedure
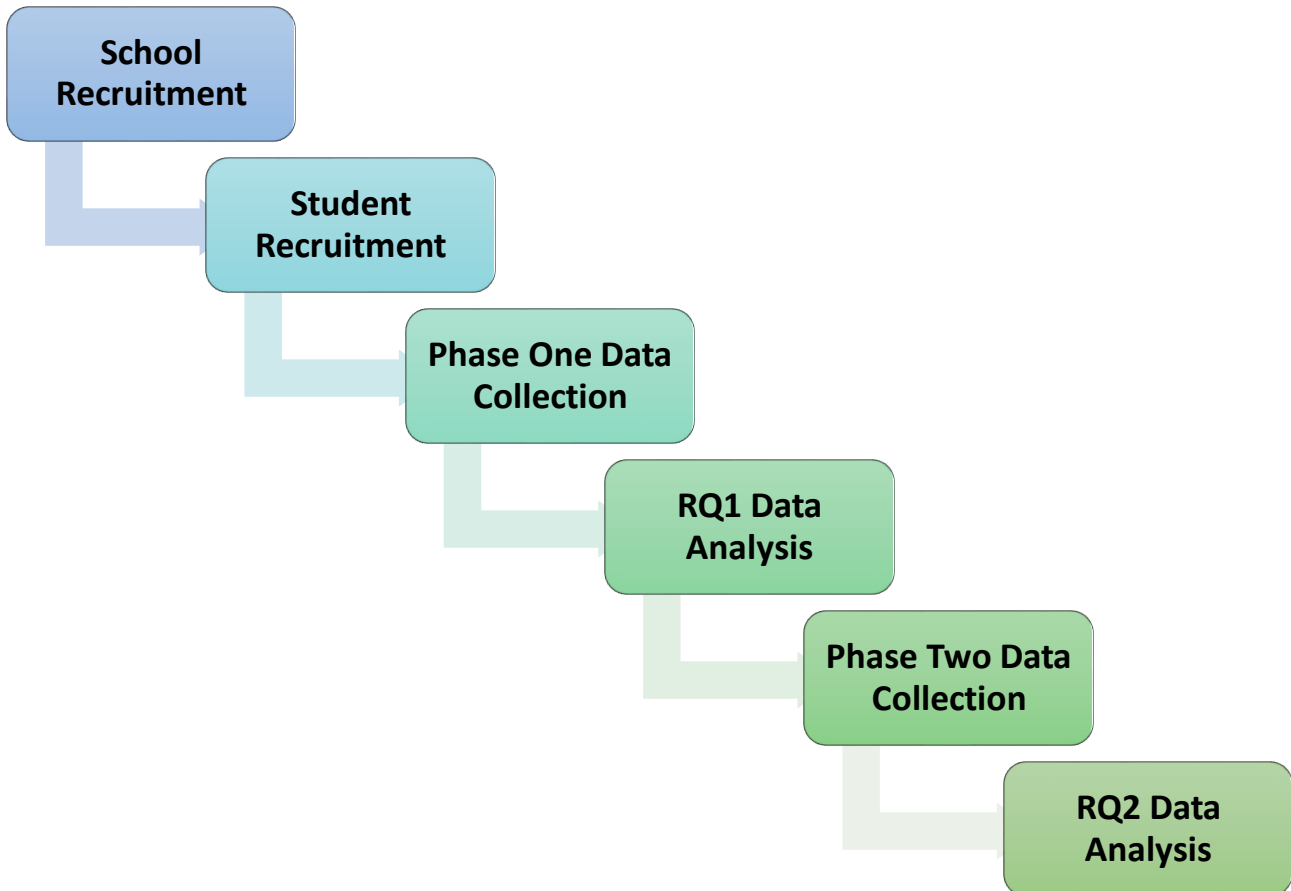
3.3.1 Recruitment

School Recruitment. A convenience sampling method was used to recruit a secondary school where the research could take place. The reason for recruiting a school, rather than selecting participants from across schools, was it was assumed that discussions around how to create a more positive vison for the future would be more accessible and productive if participants attended the same school setting. The hope was that participants would feel empowered to collaboratively move towards their co-constructed ways forward.

The school advert (see Appendix F) was initially sent to SENDCOs at mainstream secondary schools within the LA where I am currently on placement (via the schools' link EPs). It was believed that this approach would promote the school recruitment process due to locality (i.e., I would be able to access these schools for data collection) and the relationships that the school SENDCOs had already developed with my EPS service (i.e., to minimise the use of 'cold emails').

Two mainstream secondary schools expressed an interest in the research project and I met with each of the school's SENDCOs to clarify the research aims and purposes, requirements, and methods. Following these discussions, both SENCOs agreed to identify eligible students and distribute the parental invitation letter (Appendix G) to their respective parents / carers. From this point, one SENDCO agreed to their school participating in the research and this school became the research setting.

Research Setting. The SENDCo sought consent from the Head of School by emailing the research advert and information sheets. From here, it was decided that the research would go ahead at Fallowfield School (pseudonym).

I was familiar with Fallowfield School due to traded work completed at my placement Educational Psychology Service (EPS). It is a mixed secondary mainstream school located in an inner London borough that was assessed as 'Good' in their recent OFSTED inspection. Importantly, Inner London borough schools were found to have

the highest concentration of mixed-race pupils (11% of the pupil population or around 1 in 9 pupils; Demie & Hau, 2018).

Participant Recruitment. The SENDCo agreed to contact the parents / carers of eligible students through a purposive sampling method. Although the use of purposive sampling to recruit participants can be highly prone to researcher bias (Sharma, 2017), this method was chosen primarily for its efficiency and low-cost, allowing me to select, in an ad-hoc fashion, participants who met the eligibility criteria (Jager et al., 2017).

The SENDCo first identified eligible pupils by using the school's student information software to filter for students who met the participant eligibility criteria (see Table 2). The SENDCo scanned through the generated list of students to make introductory phone calls to parents / carers of potential participants to explain the research project. The aim was to recruit six to 10 participants, which has been quoted by Morgan (1997) as the optimum size for focus groups (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Table 2

Eligibility Criteria

Characteristic	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
Racial identity	Black mixed-race	YP who do not have both Black and White racial ancestry.	This project aims to explore the experiences of BMR YP and therefore only BMR YP will be considered as participants. This means young people who identify as either Black and White Caribbean or White and Black African. The proportion of the participants' Black and White racial mix was considered as unimportant at the recruitment stage. The reason for this was to promote inclusivity and reduce selection bias.
Age / year group	Age 13 to 18 years old / year groups 9-13	YP who are younger than 13 or older than 18 years old.	Research has found that race becomes more prominent during the adolescent years (Hud-Aleem & Countryman, 2008) and this is when students tend to acknowledge the impact of race and racism (Neville & Cross, 2017). Therefore, only students in year 9 and onwards will be considered for participation. It has also been considered that, by this age and having experienced the first two years of secondary school, participants are expected to be in a better position than the younger years to be able to envisage a positive future within their school system.
Additional needs	Considered on participant-by-participant basis.	YP with significant communication and interaction needs.	The methodological approach lends itself towards participants who can reflect and articulate their experiences and are able to share views and ideas within a wider group of other YP. This level of involvement could be conceptualised as rung six or seven Hart's Ladder of Children's participation (Hart, 1992). For these reasons, participants with moderate and severe learning difficulties will not be included within the present study. However, students with mild or specific learning difficulties, such as Dyslexia, will be considered, assuming they are able to verbally communicate their thoughts.

The SENDCO and I discussed with parents / carers the purpose of the research, why their child has been invited and what the research would involve. Parents / carers were invited to sign consent forms (Appendix H) to consent to their child's participation. Parents at this stage were advised to discuss the research project with their child, share the participant advert (Appendix I), and to contact me if they had any questions, or if they wanted to withdraw their child's potential participation.

At the start of phase one data collection, I again provided an opportunity for participants to listen to what the project will involve, ask questions and consent to their participation (Appendix J). Some participants shared that their parents had not discussed the project with them when they met with me for the first time, and in these few cases, the participants may have benefitted from more time to think about participation, separate from a situation where I was present. To try and mitigate the pressure of participants feeling like they must take part, I offered to come back another day if they needed time to think about participation, although none of the participants thought this was necessary.

Participant Characteristics. 10 participants consented to participation in the research. Table 3 below lists the participants' pseudonyms, their year group, gender and self-identified racial category.

Table 3

Participant Characteristics

Name	Year group	Gender	Racial category
Ash	11	Male	White and Black African and Caribbean
Lime	9	Male	White and Black Caribbean
Slate	10	Male	White and Black African
Saffron	10	Female	White and Black African
Olive	11	Female	White and Black Caribbean
Cooper	10	Male	White and Black Caribbean
Blue	13	Male	White and Black Caribbean
Violet	11	Female	White and Black African
Jett	12	Male	White and Black African
Rusty	10	Male	White and Black Caribbean

As seen in Table 3, all participants identified as either White and Black Caribbean, African, or both, meaning that they saw themselves as belonging to the BMR community.

However, despite this commonality, there was vast heterogeneity within the group, particularly in terms of their own racial mixes / their parent's racial identity, and the racial identities of those they lived with. For example, Olive is half white and black. She previously lived with her White mother but has spent all her secondary school years living with black extended family members. Ash currently lives with his mixed White and Black mother, and his father is monoracial black. Ash does not have much of a sense that there is 'Whiteness' in his family. Alternatively, Rusty has a monoracial

White mother and monoracial Black father. He has lived with only white family members for all his life and went to a 'mostly white' primary school. As evidenced by these examples, despite the participants' being part of the BMR community / group (due to their racial identity / category), they had different amounts of, and relationships with, the Whiteness and Blackness in their lives.

3.3.2 Data Collection

The data collection process took place in two phases, as shown in Figure 3. Phase one used semi structured interviews to answer RQ1, which was: what are Black mixed-race young people's racialised experiences of their secondary school education? Phase two used a focus group to answer RQ2, which was: how do Black mixed-race young people co-construct a positive vision for the future?

All ten participants were interviewed on a one-to-one basis in a private and quiet room at Fallowfield School between November and December 2023. The participants were then invited to attend the focus group, which took place on December 19th, 2023. Nine out of ten young people participated in the focus group, as one was unfortunately not attending school on the day.

The Phased Approach. The phased approach to data collection was adopted for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the semi structured interviews provided the necessary context for the focus group discussions, for both the participants and me. For the participants, it helped to familiarise them with the topic of inquiry in a 'safe'

environment ahead of focus group discussions. For me, it provided an opportunity for "in depth reconnaissance" (Adams, 2015, p. 494) ahead of focus group facilitation. This study relied on the participants' active participation. In this way, the phased approach fostered the participants participation by facilitating researcher-participant rapport building and fostering a sense of familiarity and safety when discussing their racialised experiences.

Important questions have been raised about the positive and progressive nature of Ai, "would they perceive my appreciative questions as belittling their difficulties and seeking to cast a rosy glow over them?" (Michael, 2005, p. 225). The phased approach therefore provided a space for both challenges and appreciative discussions, which is consistent with the Solution-Oriented model (described above). This helped me to see racialised secondary school experiences through the participants' eyes, mitigating the extent of my own personal bias. This was further monitored by member checking ahead of phase two data collection, allowing me to determine the accuracy of my interpretations.

Interviews. Human beings are conversational creatures who are accustomed to using conversation as a source of knowledge and way of knowing (Leavy, 2020). Interviews provided opportunities to hear the rich stories that participants have to tell, especially well-suited to phenomenon of interest that cannot be observed (Creswell, 2009). As Robson and McCartan (2016) states,

"The human use of language is fascinating both as a behaviour in its own right and for the virtually unique window that it opens on what lies behind our actions… asking people directly about what is going on is an obvious short cut when seeking answers" (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 286).

Semi Structured Interviews. The nature of semi structured interviews meant that I had a checklist of topic areas and potential questions (an interview schedule). It was understood that this would merely serve as a guide and that the order and wording of questions may change to give space to emerging topics. The idea was to collect similar information from each participant on the research area of focus, by providing guidance on what to talk about.

Kallio's (2016) systematic methodological review provided insights into topic areas where semi structured interviews are most valuable. They were topics that involved complex perceptions and opinions, topics in which participants may have a low level of awareness or with issues they are not used to talk about (Kallio et al., 2016). This evidenced the suitability of using semi structured interviews to explore racialised school experiences.

They were also chosen for their versatility and flexibility, allowing me to control the line of questioning (Creswell, 2009; Kallio et al., 2016; Robson & McCartan, 2016). This meant I could efficiently cover topics that are of interest to the research and allow space for participants to share experiences that were meaningful for them.

The use of semi structured interviews in previous research discussing BMR experiences (Adams, 2015; Joseph-Salisbury, 2017, 2016; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Sims & Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004), providing further justification that this method would be effective and fit for purpose.

Finally, I perceive myself to have strengths in attuned interactions and rapport building, which suited the interactive nature of semi structured interviews. I also identify as BMR, which was positioned as a strength, believed to have promoted the participants' ability to share sensitive experiences related to a shared racial identity, giving the impression that "this person will understand what I have to say" (Krueger & Casey, 2015, p. 522). Non-verbal cues provided further information to supplement verbal expressions, aiding my interpretation of responses.

The Development of the Interview Schedule. Rigorous development of an interview schedule contributes to the trustworthiness and objectivity of research and makes findings more plausible (Kallio et al., 2016). The interview schedule for this project consisted of three main themes (racial identity, family context and school experiences) and potential questions (see Appendix K). The purpose of the interview schedule was to support the interviewer to facilitate the storytelling of the participants, in relation to the research goals (Leavy, 2020).

The interview schedule was developed with reference to the literature base. In terms of its structure, Kallio et al., (2016) found that interview schedules / questions that produced the richest data were: participant orientated, not leading and clearly worded. In order to elicit participants' feelings, the schedule aimed to produce responses that were spontaneous and in-depth (Kallio et al., 2016). These findings were particularly useful when developing the interview schedule.

Sims and Joseph-Salisbury (2019), which considered the same topic of inquiry and used the same methods as this project, stated some useful topic headings to elicit a holistic view of BMR YP's experiences, namely, family background and youth environment, racial identity and development, negotiation of ambiguity and thoughts on future (Sims & Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). Some of these topics seemed particularly relevant for this project and were therefore used to frame the specificity of questioning. It was also important to include questions that elicited 'facts', behaviour and beliefs or attitudes (Robson & McCartan, 2016); all interrelated parts contributing to the participants' experience.

Procedure. The interviews took place face-to-face in a private room at Fallowfield School, across two separate dates. Each participant was invited to the room on an individual basis and was interviewed for 30-60 minutes. I was mindful that participants were meeting with a stranger and would then be invited to share personal racialised school experiences, so time was spent at the start of each interview ensuring the participant knew what participation would involve and getting to know one another.

I took field notes during the interviews (with the consent of the participants) to document behaviours or reflections that were relevant. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed using the Microsoft Teams video recording software. The produced transcripts were then checked for accuracy, de-identified and the original recordings were deleted. The data was then ready for analysis.

I used several interviewing techniques to improve the reporting and description of memories and experiences. These included: allowing time for participant recall information, providing concrete cues, asking for specific memories, and asking for specific details of detailed narratives (Leavy, 2020). These techniques promoted the participants' ability to share their stories. With reference to my interviewing style (Brinkmann, 2013), I adopted a more receptive approach (in which a large measure of control was offered to participants to answer the open-ended questions freely), although there were times a more assertive style of interviewing was used to control the responses and provoke self-reflexivity.

I analysed the data using reflexive thematic analysis. This data analysis method will be explained later in this chapter.

Focus Group. A focus group has been described as "…a planned discussion led by a facilitator who guides a group of participants through a set of carefully sequenced (focused) questions in a permissive and nonthreatening environment"

(Krueger & Casey, 2015, p. 506). The aim of the focus group was to bring a community of BMR YP together to listen to how they co-construct a positive vision of the future as a group. Agreement between the participants was not important, it was about the insights that were shared.

Appreciative Inquiry. Ai was chosen as a model to generate data during the focus group. It was originally designed as a tool for organisational change in the 1980s and is based on the premise that, like plants, organisations to move towards what gives them light (the helotropic principle; Michael, 2005). It focuses on the language, discourse and stories within the organisation, and embodies the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen an organisations' positive potential (Calabrese, 2006; S. Lewis et al., 2016). Ai aspires to achieve similar effects to an intervention and fit the study's transformative aims.

AI revolves around two concepts: appreciation and inquiry,

> "Appreciate means to value; to recognise the best in others and the world in which we live; to confirm strengths, successes, and opportunities; and to discover aspects that give life and health. Inquiry entails discovery and explorations, posing questions and being open to view new possibilities (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005)" (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2018, p. 624).

Rationale. Ai was used as a framework for the focus group design because it suited the philosophical assumptions and aims of this study. Additionally, the focus

group complemented the semi structured interviews. As mentioned above, phase one provided the necessary context and personal 'thinking space' to consider and share their racialised school experience. Phase two then provided an opportunity to co-construct ideas as a group, moving the participants beyond their individualised perceptions and experiences, to thinking about their community as a whole.

The application of Ai as a research method in educational settings has been effective in previous research. For example, Bergmark and Kostenius (2018) used Ai to facilitate student voice in a primary school in Sweden, exploring 'meaningful school situations and how these experiences could guide educational improvement' (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2018). AI has also been demonstrated as an effective approach to explore issues of race and diversity (Holloway & Carnes, 2011; Shabazz & Cooks, 2014).

The Development of the Focus Group Interview Schedule. I decided to create prompts and sentence starters that participants could refer to throughout the focus group discussions (see Appendix L). This helped them to feel comfortable and elicited responses that addressed the RQs, posited as key features of successful focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

Bushe (2012) commented on the moderators of Ai practice. Here, a distinction is made between pre-identity and post-identity systems[7], with the former best served by an inquiry into the ideal, and the latter best served by an inquiry into the ought. It was decided that the group, assumed to not have many previous experiences of coming together as a group, were leaning towards more of a pre-identity group (in terms of their racialised identities). However, in terms of their school identity (i.e., attending the same school setting) they were a post-identity group. I decided the group would be best served by an inquiry into both the ideal and the ought, which is reflected in the questioning.

Further, the focus group questioning was influenced by the concept of the shadow[8] (Fitzgerald et al., 2010), which often leads marginalised groups to censor feelings and cognition due to their position outside of the racial norm. An assumption that there were positives of the BMR YPs experience, therefore, gave participants the 'permission' to share these, often unvoiced, views.
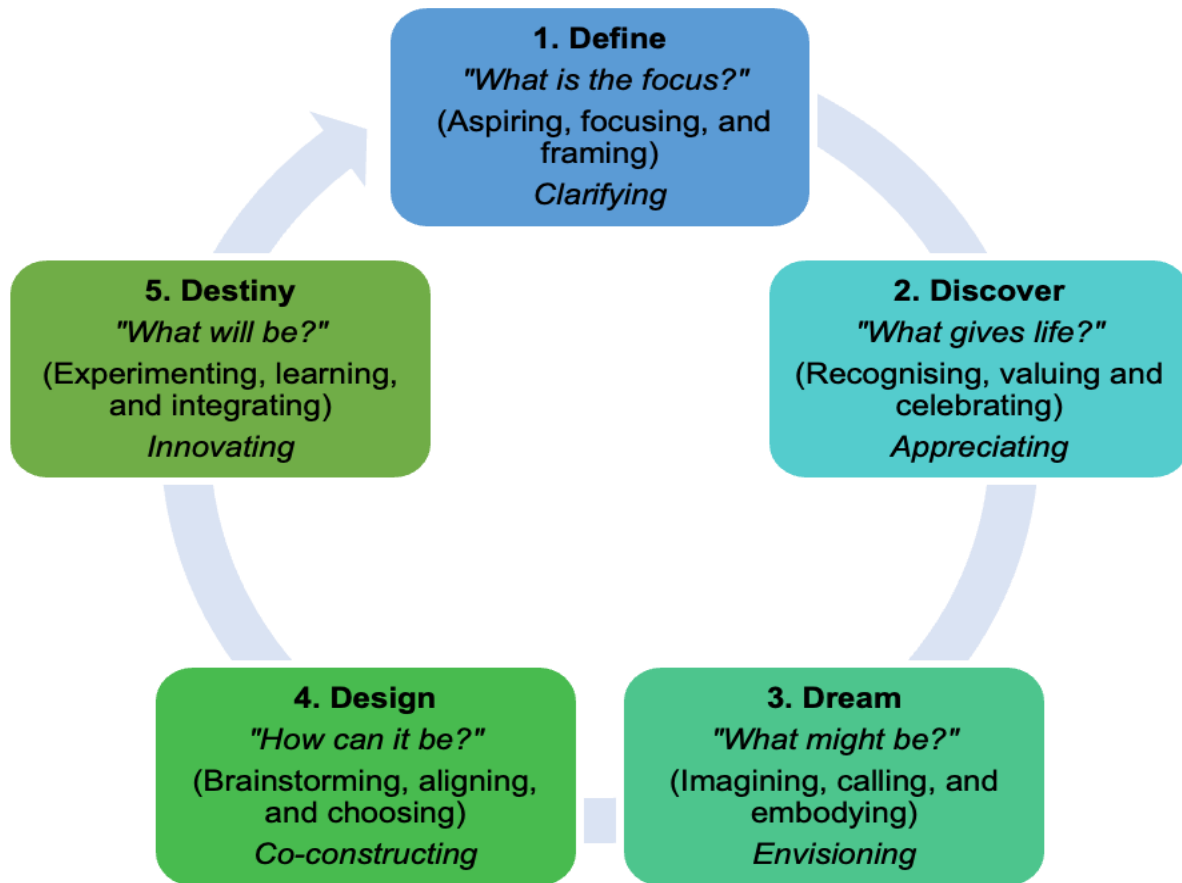
Procedure. The 5-D Ai Cycle (Figure 2), shows the five-phase format for the Ai focus group. A brief description of each stage is provided in Appendix M.

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[7] A pre-identity system is one in which the majority of members do not identify with the system and a post-identity system is one in which a majority of members do identify with the system (Bushe, 2012).

[8] A shadow is, "that which is feared and suppressed, that which is considered inappropriate and shunned, that which is unbearable to hold consciously and denied" (Kolodziejski, 2004; p. 64, found in Fitzgerald et al., 2010).

Figure 2

The 5-D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry, adapted from Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran (2011, p. 2).

1. Define
"What is the focus?"
(Aspiring, focusing, and framing)
Clarifying

2. Discover
"What gives life?"
(Recognising, valuing and celebrating)
Appreciating

3. Dream
"What might be?"
(Imagining, calling, and embodying)
Envisioning

4. Design
"How can it be?"
(Brainstorming, aligning, and choosing)
Co-constructing

5. Destiny
"What will be?"
(Experimenting, learning, and integrating)
*Innovating*

3.3.3 Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was the chosen method for identifying and interpreting patterns across the dataset. It involved engaging in an iterative six-phase analytic process (see Figure 3; Braun & Clarke, 2022; Terry et al., 2017).

Procedure. The data from RQ1 and RQ2 were analysed consecutively as two separate datasets, following the six-phase reflexive thematic analysis method (Figure 3). Below I will discuss each of the six phases, with reference to the analysis for RQ1 and RQ2.

Figure 3

The Six-Phase Reflexive Thematic Analytic Process (Braun & Clarke, 2022).
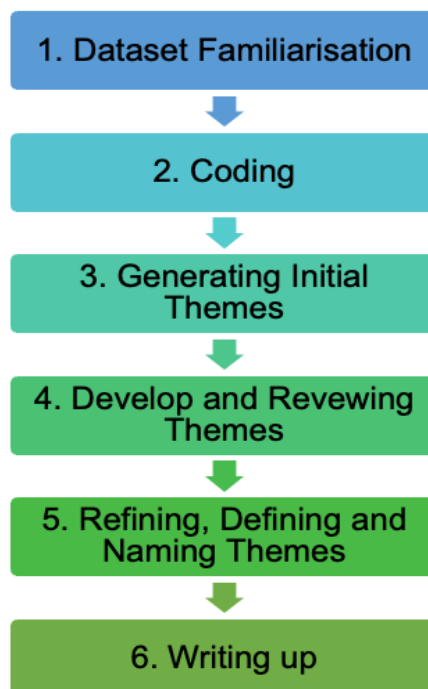
Phase One – Dataset Familiarisation. Familiarisation with the dataset is the entry point into analysis (Terry et al., 2017). It involves the researcher developing deep knowledge about the dataset through immersion and critical engagement. The aim was to achieve both closeness to (immersion), and distance from (critical engagement), the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

For RQ1 and RQ2, listening to audio-recordings and producing transcripts developed familiarisation. Rather than a passive act, these processes provided opportunities to actively engage with the data, by being observant and starting to ask questions (Terry et al., 2017).

With RQ1 in particular, I attempted to relate to the participants' stories by reflecting on the question: what is this YP trying to tell me about their school experience? This guiding question prompted me to look beyond the words in the transcript, to think about the feelings in the room and what the participants body language was like at the time. It also supported me to construct a picture of what life at school is like for the participants, considering the details of their background and home experiences. The transcripts were subsequently viewed as a whole, allowing me to tentatively begin to interpret patterns and noteworthy features across the whole dataset.

Phase Two – Coding. Coding is a process of exploring patterns across a data set. Where familiarisation was casual observational notes and tentative thoughts about interesting features and patterns, coding is the "systematic and thorough

creation of meaningful labels" (Terry et al., 2017, p. 26). A systematic approach to coding was important for two reasons: insight (typically becoming deeper through a repeated process of close engagement) and rigour (ensuring later theme development is based on a robust and analytic examination) (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Coding involved tagging segments of the text that meant something important for the RQ, "an analytically interesting idea, concept or meaning" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 53). The codes changed and evolved as the analytic process developed its richness. These codes, or more specifically code labels (i.e., "a succinct phrase attached to a segment of data, as a shorthand tag for a code"; Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 53), helped to identify patterns in the data.

I analysed meaning and developed codes primarily from an inductive orientation. Researchers holding an interpretivist ontological position tend to adopt an inductive approach because they perceive data to drive theory (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). This meant that the datasets were taken as the starting point for engaging with meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2022), aiming to 'give voice' to the participants' stories. However, it was also acknowledged that I brought with me personal experiences, views and a theoretical framework which shaped the meaning-making process. This means that, although aspiring towards an inductive orientation, interpretation likely involved deductive elements.

For this reason, it was important that I exercised reflexivity. I did this by considering whether the codes I identified resonated with my personal school experience, and reflecting on whether any of my own experiences of school may have clouded my judgement of identifying / not identifying any particular codes.

For RQ1, codes tended to capture meaning at the semantic level (descriptive, participant-driven) and became more latent (conceptual, researcher-driven) as coding progressed. Recognising the potential social and cultural constraints on participants articulating their racialised experiences, the coding developed to think more deeply about implicit messages.

I made initial codes during the task of transcribing, using Microsoft Word's comments section (see Appendix N). The transcripts were then printed, and this seemed to promote the latency of coding. I found that writing on the printed transcripts helped me to connect to each participant's story, aided by his fieldnotes. I attempted to tell the story behind the words, by using my lived experience to relate to their experiences. Switching from virtual to paper copies and changing the order which I worked through the transcripts ensured rigour and presented new insights.

For RQ2, analysis involved more semantic coding, primarily due to the nature of the research question (i.e., with RQ2 seeking YPs co-constructions with as little research input as possible). Whereas in RQ1 it felt important to advocate for the YP's implicit stories to be heard, I was aware that RQ2 was about how *they* perceive a positive

future; with researcher-driven interpretations potentially misrepresenting or limiting the participants' voices. It should be also noted that due to the facilitation responsibility during the focus group, there was less opportunity to make fieldnotes and reflect on the emotions in the room, in the moment. This is likely to have impacted the capacity to develop latent coding for RQ2.

Phase Three – Generating Initial Themes. Phase three involved grouping clusters of codes that shared a core idea. I had to be mindful of not simply grouping codes that mentioned that same thing, or related to the same topic, but thinking about the meaning of each code and whether meanings across codes are shared. It helped to formulate some initial themes, and then work through each transcript to plot codes and quotes under initial theme labels. This can be seen as a method to collect evidence for individual themes and subthemes, to assess their depth, richness, and relationships. An example of what this looked like is presented in Appendix O, which shows how I collated quotes as evidence for initial codes and theme labels.

I found it particularly useful to use a mind-mapping application to group and rearrange codes and themes for both RQ1 and RQ2 data analysis. It made the visual representation of themes clear and was an efficient way to construct the thematic maps. Particularly, the application's use of branches, which could be expanded and collapsed, helped me to conceptualise both the 'big picture' messages and the multiple layers within themes.

Phase Four – Developing and Reviewing Themes. Phase four ensured the themes made sense, were in accordance with the dataset, and answered the RQs. A question held in mind at this stage for both RQs was, "does each theme tell a convincing and compelling story about an important pattern of shared meaning related to the dataset?" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 35).

Phase 5 – Refining, Defining and Naming Themes. Phase five involved many changes to the thematic map. An example of a significant change includes the structure of the thematic map for RQ1. Initially, the thematic map for RQ1 contained three stand-alone themes. However, during this analysis phase, it was acknowledged that the themes related with one another, and therefore the thematic map was changed to reflect this relationship which better reflected the nature of the participants' responses and provided a more meaningful response to the RQ.

During this phase for RQ1 and RQ2, it helped to keep in mind that the analysis did not seek accuracy or objectivity. My subjectivity, underpinned by ontological and epistemological positions, was used as a tool to sculpt meaning from the participants' responses.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity is, "the process of reflecting critically on ourselves as practitioners, helping us to come to terms with ourselves and our multiple identities" (Rowley et al., 2023, p. 18), or critically reflecting on the assumptions and biases that have influenced research (Braun & Clarke, 2012). There were a couple of notable

ways that I exercised reflexivity during the data analysis process, which are described below.

When analysing the data, I tended to gravitate towards the hopeful and positive quotes. Initially, I attributed this to the purpose of the research, which was primarily concerned with sharing hopeful and positive messages, to counter the deficit narratives surrounding BMR YP, which often focus on their problems rather than potential.

However, upon reflection, these hopeful and positive messages also stood out because of my own personal lived experiences as a BMR individual. Using a reflexive diary, in which I recorded key thoughts, feelings and experiences, I considered *why* I displayed this pattern of deeply interpreting the positive messages but finding myself skimming over the more difficult and challenging stories.

I concluded that this may have been because these insights resonated with my own positive racialised school experiences, or perhaps these quotes were easier to emotionally manage, as opposed to the participants' difficult and challenging experiences. In this way, the use of a reflexive diary helped me to acknowledge my approach to analysis by highlighting my bias. This resulted in a more comprehensive reflection and interpretation of the data.

Secondly, holding an insider position as a BMR person, I was conscious not to impose meaning or tell *my* story during the data analysis process. With this in mind, I continually reflected on whether my interpretations had moved too far from the data. Where I thought this could potentially be the case, I highlighted specific interpretations and reflected on them over time as I became more familiar with the dataset. I reflected on whether the interpretations were due to something I had experienced / my biases, or whether they were in fact a message that the participants were communicating. The reflexive diary therefore also helped to separate my own experiences from those of the participants, which helped me to ensure the credibility of findings (the degree of isomorphism between the data and reality; Guba, 1981)**.**

3.4 Ethics

3.4.1 Ethical Considerations

Ethical Guidance. It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure the study adheres to accepted ethical standards (Bell & Waters, 2014). Ethics are "rules of conduct; typically to conformity to a code or set of principles (Israel, 2014)" (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 208). These ethical standards and codes are a reflection of the moral principles / values that underpin the profession (autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and social justice; Fox, 2015).

The British Psychological Society's (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct's standards: respect, competence, responsibility, and integrity (BPS, 2018), were prevalent throughout this study. I was also guided by other relevant codes for EPs (BPS, 2012; DfE, 2014; HCPC, 2016) and prior to data collection, received ethical approval from

the University of East London, School of Psychology Ethics Committee (see Appendix P).

Informed Consent. Central to ethical research is the voluntary nature of participation (Elsner et al., 2001, p. 38). Informed consent refers to the clients' right to choose to participate (BPS, 2012) and is concerned with researcher integrity and respect (BPS, 2018; Kelly et al., 2017).

To protect informed consent, it was viewed as an ongoing two way communication process (Elsner et al., 2001). In this study, I ensured informed consent at the level of the parent / carer and the YP. There was one parent that I did not speak to, but this participant was the eldest in the group and above the age in which parental consent is needed (BPS, 2012). Both parents / carers and participants were provided with an explanation of the study and what participation will involve. Information letters / adverts were also sent to home addresses. Ahead of both RQ1 and RQ2 data collection, the participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any point, without needing to provide an explanation (Shenton, 2004).

Privacy. "The giving of informed consent does not imply that you consent to your privacy being invaded" (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 220). Privacy refers to the controlling of access of others to themselves and their data (Elsner et al., 2001).

Both anonymity and confidentiality were key to protecting the participants' privacy. "Giving anonymity to participants is regarded as good practice by ethical research boards and committees and expected in legal frameworks" (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 219) and this was honoured by removing participants' identifying information and ensuring I was the only one who had access to original identifying information.

Confidentiality refers to agreement about what may be done with the participants' data, including the steps the researcher will take to ensure others are not privy to their identifiable details (Elsner et al., 2001). At the start of RQ1 and RQ2 data collection, the participants were reminded that their participation will remain anonymous and of the confidentiality agreements (i.e., all data will be stored in a UEL One drive folder which only I will have access to and that their data will be deleted up to two weeks after each data collection phase, before transcripts are de-identified).

Participants were told that there is a small chance that confidentiality may be broken, due to the potentially sensitive topic of discussions, if concerns arose regarding the nature of their responses. In which case, I retained the right to report any safeguarding issues to the schools safeguarding professionals.

Protection from Harm. Beneficence in research has been defined as, "maximizing good outcomes for science, humanity, and the individual research participants while avoiding or minimizing unnecessary risk, harm, or wrong." (Elsner

et al., 2001, p. 41). Several steps were taken to protect the participants from potential harm and promote positive outcomes.

This included a risk assessment, with potential hazards identified (see Appendix Q). Controls to minimise the potential harmful effects included the informed consent considerations outlined above, the option of a break during the data collection interviews, and ensuring I was sensitive to the focus group dynamics and set ground rules to promote respect. It was acknowledged that both RQ1 and RQ2 had the potential to be trigger trauma as a result of experiences of racism, and therefore I offered time for a little debrief for RQ1 and RQ2, which included questions such as: how did you find the conversation today? Is there anything you want to speak to me about privately? Are you feeling ok to return to lesson?

There were also softer methods adopted, such as time spent building rapport, inviting questions and clarification, and being attuned during our interactions. I had a duty of care to the participants and wanted to make their participation as positive for them as possible. During the focus group, I used printouts and post-it notes to prompt discussion and recall, as well as sentence starters to scaffold their involvement. These were other strategies to make the research feel 'safe' for the participants.

Following the interviews, participants and the parent / carers who provided consent, were offered debrief letters (see Appendix R). The purpose of this was to share gratitude for their participation, and provide information and signposting to support

service, should they have been affected by the research. It also included my email address for contact, should they need to discuss anything further.

3.4.2 Tactics to Promote Trustworthiness

Research situated within the interpretivist paradigm should consider four criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Below will provide a description of each criterion and the tactics used in this study to promote trustworthiness.

Credibility. The criterion of credibility is concerned with the degree of isomorphism between the data and reality (Guba, 1981). In other words, "How congruent are the findings with reality?" (Shenton, 2004, p. 64). Given my position in the current study, there is a risk of conflating my own personal secondary school experiences with those of the participants, presenting a risk to the credibility of findings. To counteract this risk, I adopted several tactics which will be briefly discussed below.

This study's methods, including the interview schedules for both the semi structured interviews and focus groups, were derived, or influenced by, those that have been successfully utilised in comparable projects; an approach to ensuring credibility (Shenton, 2004).

Member checking was a key part of this project. I member-checked during the interviews by repeating participants' phrases to clarify understanding and asking for elaboration after their answers to ensure I was not making assumptions. There was also member checking of data collected for RQ1 when I shared this thematic map, allowing me to check the accuracy of my interpretations. Additionally, the produced data for RQ2 (i.e., the audit, Appendix S) was also shared with participants to check it reflects their views. From the assumption that multiple realities exist, this technique allowed me to ensure the reality that I interpreted was congruent the participants' reality. The fieldnotes taken during the interviews were also reference points to aid interpretation.

I attempted to promote the honesty of participants' responses in multiple ways. I established a relationship of trust by spending time building rapport at the start of interviews, and explicitly stating my racial identity as a BMR person. Having this social identity in common foregrounded an insider understanding, stimulating trust between myself and the participants (Waring, 2017). I also emphasised that participation was optional and that they had the right to withdraw at any point, without reason.

A form of triangulation is using a wide range of informants (Shenton, 2004). This study hoped for six to 10 participants, in line with recommendations for focus groups (Robson & McCartan, 2016), and achieved its target. The rich realities from ten BMR YP contributed to the findings for RQ1 and nine for RQ2, promoting the credibility of this study's findings.

Dependability. The criterion of dependability is comparable with reliability in the positivist paradigm (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It relies on "the researcher's ability and skills to make sure that findings truly emerge from the data gathered and analysed from the research" (p. 34). A demonstration of the former theme, credibility, goes some distance in ensuring dependability (Shenton, 2004), but there are other tactics to mention. For example, using "overlapping methods" of data collection (p.71), keeping an audit trail of methodological decision-making, and reporting the study in detail; ways of improving the ability of future researchers to achieve similar findings under similar contexts.

Transferability. The criterion of transferability is showing that findings have applicability in other contexts (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While this study was not concerned with the generalisation of findings in the same way as in positivist research, I attempted to gather rich contextual data and descriptive information so that the findings could be compared with others and ultimately have impact.

Confirmability. The criterion of confirmability is comparable to the concern of objectivity in the positivist paradigm and relies on the researcher taking steps to ensure the findings are the result of the participants ideas and experiences (Shenton, 2004). To promote confirmability, I explicitly stated my racial identity at the start of interviews, the philosophical beliefs underpinning this research and has provided a reflective

critique of how the study went. These are ways to ensure confirmability (Shenton, 2004).

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the findings for each of the research questions:

- RQ1: What are BMR YP's racialised experiences of their secondary school education?

- RQ2: How do BMR YP co-construct a positive vision for the future?

As outlined in chapter two, the data for RQ1 was collected via semi structured interviews, and the data for RQ2 was gathered from a focus group. Datasets were analysed sequentially using reflexive thematic analysis.

Findings for RQ1 and RQ2 both included three overarching themes, as shown in Table 4. The purpose of this chapter is to present an argument in response to the research questions, using the participants' voices to tell stories of their racialised secondary school experiences and how they co-construct a positive vision for the future. Findings for each RQ will be reported consecutively.

For each RQ, the overarching themes are first summarised and then I delve into each theme, using the subthemes to add specificity and depth to my interpretations. The findings for each RQ end with a conclusion, summarising the arguments presented.

Table 4

Themes and Subthemes for RQ1 and RQ2

Research Question 1	Theme	Subtheme
What are Black mixed-race young people's racialised experiences of their secondary school education?	Theme 1: Racial Identity	Racial Fluidity
		Centrality of Blackness
	Theme 2: Hostilities / Barriers	Shared
		Distinct
	Theme 3: Sources of Resilience	Cultural Awareness and Expression
		Cultural Capital as a Facilitator of Peer Group Belonging
		The role of the Family

Research Question 2	Theme
How do Black mixed-race young people co-construct a positive vision for the future?	Theme 1: Opportunities for Learning
	Theme 2: Opportunities for Expression
	Theme 3: Opportunities for Representation

4.2 Findings for RQ1

4.2.1 Overview of Themes

Three over-arching themes were interpreted from the semi-structured interview data (see Figure 4), in response to the first RQ. Participants regularly shared insights into their perceptions of their racialised identities at school, the hostilities / barriers they experience, and the sources of resilience that help them to navigate their lives.

BMR YP's racial identity seemed to create the context for the other two themes, as demonstrated by the thematic map. This means that the participants' racial identities were the basis for the hostilities / barriers and sources of resilience that they experience during secondary school. Participants seemed to *need* sources of resilience to help them to overcome the hostilities and barriers they experience.

## 4.2.2 Theme 1: Racial Identity

Figure 4

Thematic Map for RQ1
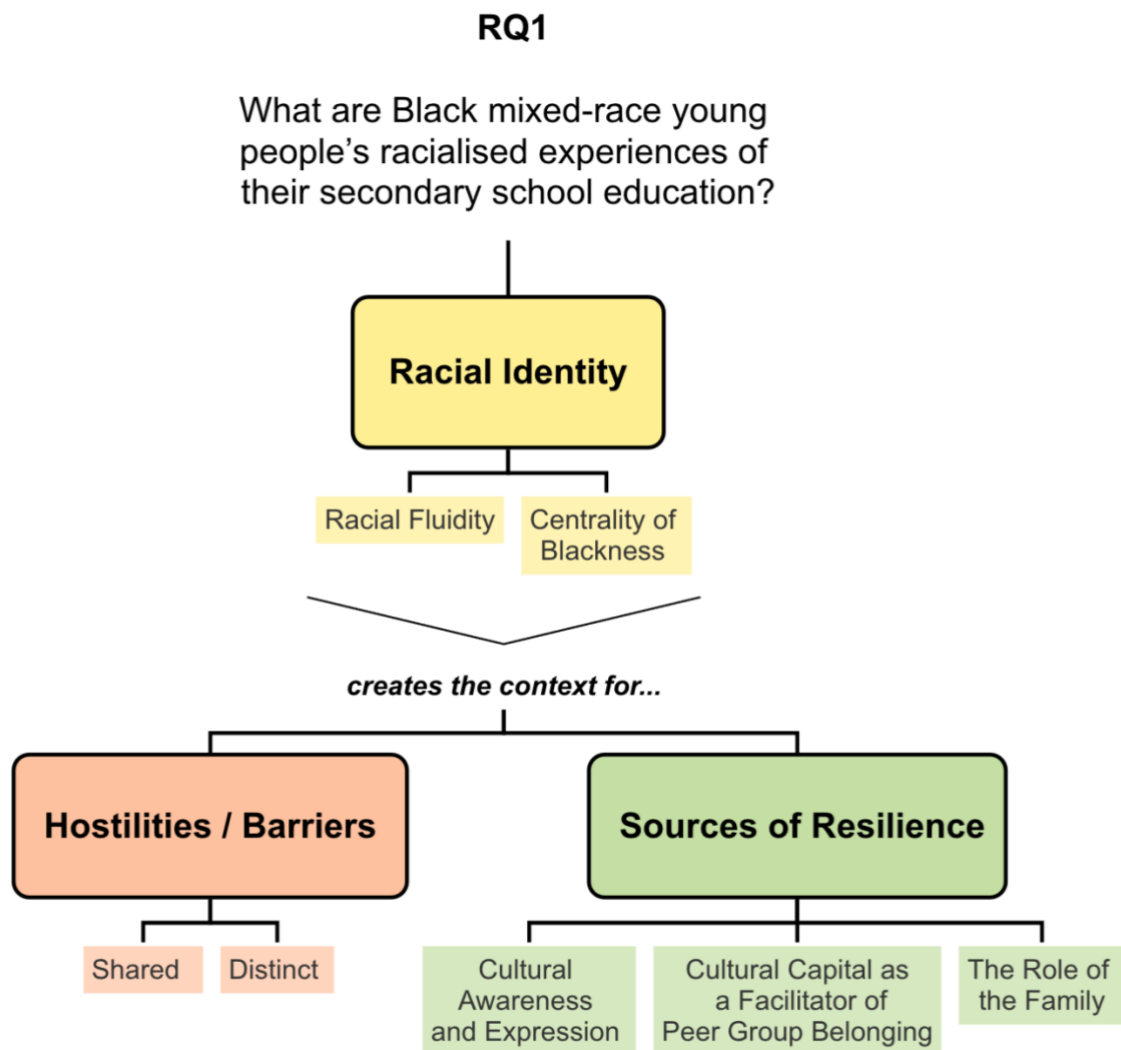
BMR YP's racial identity is unique and varied. The primary tenants of this theme relate to the participants' experiences of their racial identity as both fluid and centered on their Blackness. These themes will be explored below, under the subthemes: racial fluidity and centrality of Blackness, respectively (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Racial Identity Theme and Subthemes
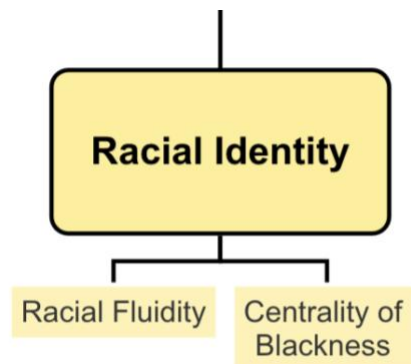
Racial Fluidity. BMR YP's racial identity was expressed as fluid, changing based on situation and context. They seemed acutely aware of how they are racialised by others. Consider this quote from Cooper, *"I feel like White people assume me as Black most of the time, and Black people assume me as White".* Simultaneously, Cooper thinks that being BMR is an important part of his identity because *"…people remember me like the mixed-race boy with curly hair, or something like that"*. Here, Cooper communicates the multiple racialisations placed on him, while also stating that his mixed identity is a key part of how he is remembered by others.

Ash illustrates the conflict that may result from occupying multiple racial positions,

> ***Ash****: I've always been taught, well my mum said since I was young, she would always refer to me as you're a young Black boy and you need to like, you still need to do all of this to be successful in life. So obviously, so yeah, I am Black*

but then when I say I am mixed-race people get it more so it's just easier to say I'm mixed-race.

Researcher: …Mixed race, people get it more? You feel like if you say you're Black…

Ash: Yeah people might question me… maybe at the very start [of secondary school] I would just refer to myself as Black, and then, obviously it's just the pressure whenever I say I am Black, so I just say I am mixed race.

Here, Ash suggests his racial identity is determined by his social context; at home he has been racially socialised as a "Black boy" but incidents of being 'questioned' about his Blackness throughout secondary school has led him to self-identify as mixed race, seemingly as the path of least resistance. This excerpt demonstrates Ash's recognition of the multiple ways he is racialised and implies that he uses racial self-identifications sensitively to navigate social threats.

Olive shared a similar perspective. She has spent most of her life living with her Black family members, after spending her early childhood with her mother who is White. She implies a binary relationship between race and preferential treatment, by commenting on her ability to 'opt-in' to the preferential treatment given to the White community,

Olive: I feel like people who are mixed-race or White have more lenience in life …she [a teacher in primary school] was more helpful to kids that weren't coloured at all. They were obviously the ones that were more progressive in class… and then you put kids like me in an awkward position because then

you're making them make a choice whether they want to be on the side that's being helped or the side that's not being helped.

Here, Olive communicates her ability to perform racial / cultural 'ways of being' to elicit favourable responses. Inherent in her views here is an awareness of how she is viewed through the lens of race and her perceived control over her racial positioning. It should be noted that, due to Olive's fair skin colour compared to the other participants, positioning herself with the White community may have been a more viable option for her.

Importantly, this 'choice' seemed to evoke feelings of guilt and shame in Olive; if she aligned with the White gaze to elicit preferential treatment, she was being somewhat exploitative. This leaves her in an "awkward" position; an indication of BMR YP's quandary when negotiating their racial identities. In managing these choices, a solution for Saffron seems to be embracing her mixed-race identity: *"I just prefer being called mixed-race because I don't like picking".*

This shows BMR YP experience their racial identity as fluid. They make sense of their identity as changeable and negotiable, subject to their audience and social context, and are, in some cases, able to use this to navigate threat.

Implicit in these responses is a contradictory sense of fortune and burden in negotiating their racial identities. Although there were occasions when BMR YP were able to utilise multiple racial positions to navigate and relate to their social world, there was often a need or responsibility to do so, which appeared to be associated with emotional discomfort.

Centrality of Blackness. Despite finding that BMR YP's racial identity appeared fluid, there was evidence to suggest that their racial identity was inseparable from Blackness. One of the reasons for this was because BMR YP are commonly racialised as Black by others.

Some of the participants traced the centrality of Blackness in their lives to family racial socialisation practices. In the comments above, Ash describes how his mother has raised him as a *"young Black boy",* and Violet feels she aligns more with Black culture because of her upbringing, *"…I still go and say yeah, I am half White, half Black, but I'm more on the Black side… it's the way I was raised. I feel part of the Black community 100%".*

In school, BMR YP thought they were perceived as Black, *"Like, when you have a new teacher, it's not like they see you and go, 'he's White'. They see you and see you're Black" (Lime).* This view was also held by Violet, *"I don't know how to say it. We're on the Black side. I don't think people [teachers and peers in school] see the White in us, just fully Black".*

BMR YP too chose to associate with Black peer groups, reinforcing their 'Blackness' at schools and facilitating Black racialisations.

> *Cooper: For example, in my football team, a lot of the players are White. So, when I am around them it feels like… they didn't do anything, but it feels kind of weird.*

BMR YP's racialisation as Black by others has made them susceptible to the stereotypes and discrimination attributed to Black communities. This is highlighted in the interview with Ash, *"a group of Black boys in my school could do something wrong… and what they do can influence what teachers think of me, because I am also part of the Black community".* This paints a somewhat fixed view of BMR YP's racial identities, as restricted to their Blackness. That is, although not monoracially Black, they are positioned, and position themselves, in ways that often relate to the Black community.

There was a sense that racism and discrimination do not discriminate between BMR and Black people, with shared experiences of disadvantage cementing a close affinity, as seen in this extract from Saffron's interview:

> *Saffron: I have mainly Black friends, or mixed friends, so I can kind of relate to them more… for me it's just more about our matching personalities and interests... [White peers] don't relate to certain stuff… like I said, being stopped and searched, they are seen as more innocent.*

Implicit in Saffron's response is her choice to align with Black peer groups to elicit support when navigating disadvantage. This point is also illustrated in the interview with Ash, *"…I feel like I can relate to him [a peer] when it comes to my struggles, because he's Black"*.

It seems that a social world in which BMR YP are typically racialised as Black leads them to share experiences with the Black community, creating a closer affinity between BMR and monoracial Black peers. These factors contribute to Blackness being central in their school experiences.

Conclusion. BMR YP's racial identification is fluid. It is constantly interpreted and negotiated across social contexts. Sometimes BMR YP are able to identify in ways that are meaningful for them, but there was an implicit sense of burden when exercising this choice. Despite this fluidity, BMR YP's Blackness remains central in their secondary school experiences. This was mainly due to being racialised as Black by others and because of shared experiences of racism / discrimination. BMR YP's alignment with Blackness seemed to be both an imposition and a choice.

This ultimately sets the scene for how race frames the school experiences for BMR YP. Binary conceptions of race seem to leave BMR YP in a state of constant flux in which they are positioned is different ways. They seem to hold the responsibility to

make sense of these social / racial rules, in a way that is sensitive and attuned to how they are perceived by others.

4.2.3 Theme 2: Hostilities / Barriers

A key message that participants expressed related to the hostilities and barriers they experience at school. These hostilities / barriers can be categorised as those that are shared with the Black community, and those that are distinct from the Black community (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Hostilities / Barriers Theme and Subthemes
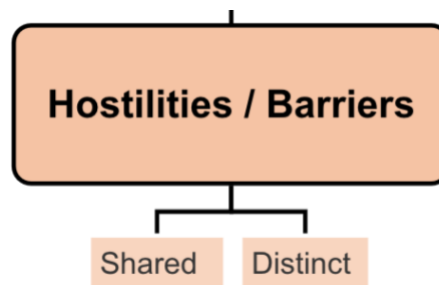
This theme builds on the former, as it is BMR YP's racial identity that provides the context for the hostilities they experience in secondary school. It seems that, due to the centrality of Blackness in BMR YP's experiences, they are inevitably susceptible to the hostilities aimed at the Black community, while simultaneously experiencing unique hostilities related to their mixed identities.

Shared Hostilities / Barriers. BMR YP are often racialised as Black and often choose to integrate more with Black peer groups. This led BMR YP to be vulnerable to stereotypes attached to Black communities, *"You see with Black and mixed people. Like if you were in a big group, they would assume you were in a fight or something. But that wouldn't really happen with White people because they're seen as more innocent"* (Saffron). Here, Saffron describes her proximity with Black peers as potentially signalling conflict to school staff.

This pathologizing of BMR and monoracial Black YP seems to relate to perceptions of inherent Black aggression. This viewpoint is demonstrated in extracts from interviews with Violet and Jett,

> ***Violet:*** *He [the teacher] told me to get out of class…He said, 'I know how you people can be very aggressive'. And she [Violet's friend] was like why, is it because we are Black? And he said, 'yeah sort of'. And I was shocked because he actually had the audacity to say that.*

> ***Jett:*** *If there's like an argument or a fight, a teacher will always perceive a Black student as more angry or hostile… but then if a White person was angry, they would kind of comfort them instead of condemning their actions.*

These extracts reflect BMR YP's awareness of how they are racialised as Black through the White gaze, making them susceptible to stereotypes that pathologise Blackness. Importantly, despite BMR YP's racial fluidity (explored in theme 1), there

is a sense that they are unable to escape Black stereotypes and feel powerless to influence how their behaviour is interpreted,

> *Violet: We get misunderstood a lot when we explain. We don't have the chance to explain to teachers or whoever is in charge… they just think we are up to something bad.*

Violet has been excluded multiple times, and has questioned how her treatment is linked to her race*,*

> *Violet: Sometimes I would imagine, what if I was a White kid in school? Would it be different? Because school has been terrible for me. Terrible experience. It's like, if I were White, I wouldn't have gone to this school, this school, that school.*

Olive has also noticed how BMR and Black YP are treated differently to their White peers at school,

> *Olive: You'll notice as well, if a White kid is having a bad day, they'll get questioned, 'are you okay?' Or this and that. If they don't want to explain it, or they do, they're going to get help. Coloured people, especially Black people, I've noticed, and mixed-race included… they just get ignored.*

Stereotypes and differential treatment perpetuate low expectations, as seen in comments from Blue, *"They [peers] label me a delinquent or something… they just think I get up to like no good. Like, I sell drugs and stuff"*, and Violet,

> **Violet:** *Some people put us down. They put us down and say oh they're not good at anything......It's academic comeback for me… to show teachers I'm actually worth something, that I can actually do something with my life, because these people mostly think that I'm not going nowhere, and it doesn't hurt me, I just got to show them.*

Violet expresses how low expectations in secondary school have led her to want to prove people wrong and break free of the low expectations that have impacted her self-worth. Violet positions these low expectations as a form of motivation, while Olive shows an awareness of the more deterministic and detrimental nature of the impact of low expectations on future success, *"…because if a teacher is constantly picking on someone, you can't do this, can't do that, you're going to make that kid feel like they can't achieve anything, which leads them to not being successful"*.

The pathologising of Blackness, differential treatment, and low expectations that BMR YP contend with in the education system is reinforced through community experiences. Many participants were keen to share their experiences of being subject to unjust stop and searches by the police force. Consider these extracts below,

> **Ash:** *I've been stopped by the police before and that was very scary and having to make sense of why… just because I am the colour I am and I am wearing a*

tracksuit, doesn't mean I'm part of the stereotypes, so yeah, it's very annoying, but that's the reality of it, I can't change what other people think.

Violet: *….so I went there, straight to my grandma's house and they [the police] followed me. They said, where are you going? They said, do I have to search you for anything bad? They probably thought I had stuff on me.*

Olive: *…because you're black, you are getting stopped. As simple as that. Doesn't matter what you're doing. You could be walking. Doesn't matter who you're with or what colour person you're with, you can still get stopped.*

Blue: *Even though in school I might be seen as, not like a criminal, but, yeah, outside of school, I don't really get stopped like that. It's only when I'm with some of my Black friends that we get stopped sometimes.*

Saffron: *…There was one time when my brother got stopped and searched. He wasn't carrying anything on him. But then two other White girls walked past him like nothing happened. So they didn't get stopped. It was just my brother. And then two other Black people got searched as well.*

These extracts evidence BMR YP's emotive experiences with the police. While not particularly relating to BMR YP's school experiences, they show how hostilities in the education system are compounded by experiences outside of the school building.

It is important to acknowledge how in these descriptions, BMR YP tend to refer to themselves as, or group themselves with, Black people when discussing the injustices they experience at school. This substantiates the centrality of Blackness for BMR YP in school (as discussed in the racial identity theme) and indicates that BMR YP recognise their Blackness as implicit in these hostilities and experience them alongside their monoracial Black peers.

Distinct Hostilities / Barriers. In addition to experiencing some hostilities and barriers alongside the Black community, BMR YP are also subject to distinct hostilities at school. For example, participants reported derogatory name-calling related to their mixed heritage,

> **Blue:** *People make like the occasional jokes like, oh, you're White or you're hybrid or something. They don't mean it in a rude way… Even if a staff member did hear it, I'm not going to complain. If the staff member hears it and they want to tell the other young person off, that's fine, but you're not going to really try and enforce that.*

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Interestingly, Blue seems to play down the intentions of the abuser / deliverer, and implied that he would not let an adult know if he was on the receiving end of such comments.

Jett also shared his experience of name-calling, *"Yeah, well a lot of the time you get called like things like hybrid, cross breed Black, impure, which is like, I think it's dehumanising because those are kind of things you call experiments and animals"*. Jett too does not often report these incidents to school staff because of expectations of teacher apathy,

> *Jett: …They [teachers] wouldn't see that as a sign that's rude or racist… Well, I personally haven't told them directly when it's happened. From what I know, is they don't react as much as they would if a White person was racist to a Black person. I think it's less focused on because there's not many mixed-race people in our school for starters, and they probably don't have it as the top of their priorities…. they kind of undermine it.*

Implicit in these quotes is the need for BMR YP to navigate racism in secondary schools independently. Schools seem to respond differently to racism aimed at BMR YP compared with their monoracial peers.

BMR YP also detailed generalisations and assumptions attributed to the BMR community. This related to BMR YP's home / family context, skin tone, and behaviour.

For example, Jett shared how his BMR identity, and associated stereotypes, leads to his criminalisation in the community,

> *Jett: …if I go into a shop, you already see security guys looking at you because first of all, you're not White. And second of all, you're mixed race, which is a stereotype that mixed-race kids come from broken homes and they are quite high in crime rate.*

Jett explains how the same stereotypes related to BMR YP being raised in fragmented and dysfunctional homes, also creates differential treatment at school, *"I think it's like assumptions and ignorance. They [teachers] would assume we come from a bad household with no home training, so they'll assume that this student is, like, dumb".*

Violet also thought her racial identity led her to be viewed and treated differently by school staff,

> *Violet: I'm a troublemaker. I'm up to mischief. I'm not a good person, I'm a bad influencer… So, I think they [school staff] treat me differently 100%. I've been saying that for years.*

Stereotypes about BMR YP elicited assumptions to be made about parental relationships,

Jett: …people would be like, oh well your dad only married your mum for a Visa, like a green card to get into the country… and it's wrong because they married because they love each other, which is like any other race.

There were also expectations placed upon BMR YP. For Cooper, he felt that there was an expectation that BMR males, "*Talk to loads of girls*", whereas for Olive, these stereotypes manifested into expectations about her skin tone,

Olive: One thing about being mixed-race right, it's like you're either too White or you're too Black. There's no in between… They [peers] ask, why are you so White if you're mixed? And I'm like, well, it's not really my choice, is it?"

As well as distinct forms of racism and stereotypical views, BMR YP also experience rejection from the Black community, as the following quote from Ash evidences:

Ash: In my citizenship class, we have been talking about how Black people have like struggled in our society or whatever, erm and in particular we were talking about young Black boys. And then when I spoke up about what I thought, a girl at the back of the class started laughing at me and was like 'you're not even Black'. So obviously, it kind of hurt because you're part of them, but at the same time, you can see why they would think you're not… I've been told I'm not Black on multiple occasions, and all I can do is just sit there, I mean it has got to the point where I'm done explaining.

In the context of the centrality of Blackness in BMR YP's lives and their shared experiences with monoracial Black peers (subthemes explored previously), rejection from the Black community seems to cause BMR YP pain and confusion, and result in alienation; the effects of which seem more extreme for BMR YP like Ash, who have been raised in 'Black families'.

The fact that BMR YP experience rejection from the Black community with which they are commonly grouped, for Jett, creates a unique challenge in terms of school belonging, *"… trying to fit into two groups. You want to be Black and White at the same time, which is hard to do"*. In addition, not possessing capital about Black culture presents a risk to BMR YP,

> *Jett: …Because you could tell someone you're mixed-race and you could know nothing about being from say, Nigeria… they would talk to you, but you would kind of be excluded in conversations that regard to cultural and things like when they talk about certain foods and you don't know what that is, you'll probably get mocked for it.*

Here, Jett implies that BMR YP are also rejected from the Black community in implicit and subtle ways. He signalled concern for BMR YP who, unlike him, have been raised in households with only one race,

> *Jett: …and especially for those who have grown up in a single parent household and they're mixed race, half their identity is gone because they don't*

have the other parent to teacher them about it. But for me I'm lucky because my parents are both together and they taught me about it [cultural practices].

The Black and White racial dichotomy not only provides a context for BMR YP to be both grouped with and excluded from Black social groups, but also facilitates a lack of BMR representation in secondary schools. This is illustrated by the following comments,

Jett: Schools don't really accommodate for mixed-race people. They'll accommodate for Black people, like Black History Month and all that things but they don't accommodate for mixed-race people because I think they kind of just categorise them with Black people.

Ash: I don't see many mixed-race people [in the curriculum] and, even when I do, they are not referring to them as mixed race.

This lack of representation causes BMR YP to lack role models and impacts their sense of hope, as seen in this extract from the interview with Lime,

Lime: No, it's White or Black at this point. I don't know. Of course, when you look at people, it's like what they've made and invented. So, like the light bulb, tyres, stuff like that. Albert Einstein and then, like, Shaq O'Neill, I think it is, and Muhammad Ali and, like, famous people. But it doesn't really show mixed-race people. It's always like Black or White.

Researcher: And do you think that matters?

Lime: It's just like… even if I do get somewhere in life, I'm just going to stay unrecognised because I'm mixed race… I think it could be like influential, though, like it could be like 'I think I am so good I'm going to be one of the first mixed-race people to be like extremely successful'.

Lime acknowledges the detrimental impact of a lack of representation on BMR YP's self-efficacy but also recognises that it could also be used as a motivator. Other participants had views on the impact of a lack of explicit BMR curricular representation, wondering if YP may become somewhat accustomed to limited representation.

Slate: …Well at first, they might think, why is it only this one, but not my race? And then after, I think if there's not many mixed-race images in textbooks, then they'll just probably get used to it as well.

Conclusion. This theme shows that BMR YP experience hostilities and barriers at school that are both shared with, and distinct from, the monoracial Black community. These troubles seem to be facilitated by the nature of their racialised identities, as both the same as, and different from, Black peers. They create the need for BMR YP to utilise sources of resilience to navigate their experiences during secondary school, a theme which will be explored next.

4.2.4 Theme 3: Sources of Resilience

We have learned so far that BMR YP experience their racialised identities as fluid and complex, and experience hostilities in secondary school that provide a barrier to their achievement and wellbeing. To cope with these experiences, BMR YP commonly highlighted protective factors that acted as sources of resilience.

BMY YP's sources of resilience can be grouped into three subthemes (as shown in Figure 7): cultural awareness and expression, cultural capital as a facilitator of peer group belonging, and the role of the family.

Figure 7

Sources of Resilience Theme and Subthemes
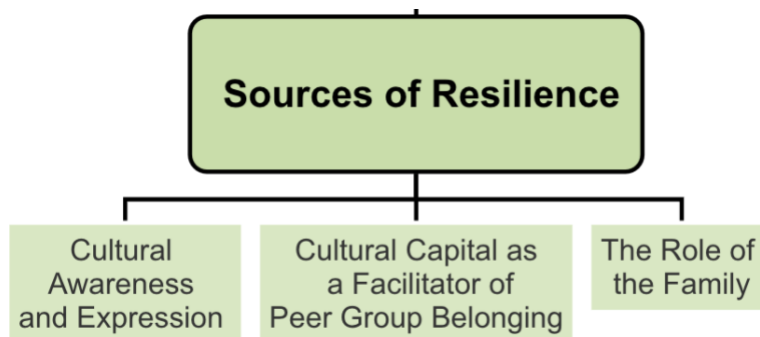
Cultural Awareness and Expression. BMR YP expressed pride in their BMR identity and appreciated interest in their individuality. For example,

> *Ash: I think there is a lot of culture within being mixed race.*

> *Jett: …I have multiple cultures that I am part of and can relate to.*

> *Lime: …Cultural identity, like the food I prefer to eat and how I was raised.*

Perhaps, due to the perceived restrictions placed upon BMR racial identities in schools, in which they are commonly racialised as solely Black, BMR YP appreciate people inquiring about their unique racial and cultural identities,

> *Violet: …we expressed our culture [at culture day[9]]. It was just a lovely time, everyone was happy… It showed that we matter.*

> *Ash: I love talking about my race, I love it. I love talking about my culture. I feel like where I am from is an interesting place. I am from five different countries.*

As explored in the previous themes, there was a sense throughout the interviews that BMR YP felt misunderstood; that their unique experience was not often recognised. Opportunities for cultural expression then seemed like a form of activism; an opportunity to take control of their racialised narratives.

BMR YP in this project seemed to centre culture as a fundamental way to understand themselves and others. The participants seemed sensitive to cultural differences that

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[9] Culture day was an event held at the participants' school. It involved students expressing their culture, by wearing cultural outfits, sharing typical foods, and opportunities for sharing information about their ethnic background / cultural practices.

shape who we are and were keen to suggest opportunities within the curriculum to learn about cultural differences. These related to subject areas such as history, music, food technology, and 'ancestry / culture sessions' during form time.

From the participants' responses, this would provide two purposes: an opportunity for BMR YP to learn about and celebrate their unique cultural and ethnic identity, and an opportunity for others at school to acknowledge their individuality and facilitate bonding. Rusty summarises the impact of opportunities for cultural expression,

> *Rusty: In school, culture day - that was a big thing. You got to see different sides of everyone… I don't think it made people see me in a different way. I feel like it just helps to get a deeper understanding of where people are from, their culture.*

Here, Rusty suggests the value of cultural expression is developing a deeper understanding of people's culture. BMR YP, sensitive to cultural differences, seem to see cultural expression as a way to move beyond simplistic attributions and expectations related to race, creating a *deeper understanding* between people.

Cultural Capital as a Facilitator of Peer Group Belonging. BMR YP's racial identity (and inherent mix of cultures) was perceived as instrumental in their ability to integrate across peer racial groups, as seen in the interview with Cooper,

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> *Cooper: … I feel like it can shape who you are friends with, kind of… Mixed race people can relate to either and it's probably why I've had different friends… I think that's actually helped me to bring together different types of people as well, because before, it wasn't like separate, but people just knew who they knew, and I feel like that helped me to bring different people together.*

Cooper positions his BMR identity as associated with an inherent ability to navigate the Black – White racial divide in schools; essentially a facilitator of peer group belonging. Jett builds on this argument by acknowledging the impact of cultural capital in his ability to integrate across peer racial groups,

> *Jett: I think the only benefit [of my race at school] will be like the social aspect that I can socialise with both groups… so it's like for example, accents. I speak like Pidgeon English, broken English, and I can also speak like a cockney geezer. Like, it's just something I've learned to do… I think the fact that you actually have White ancestors, Black ancestors… the fact you sort of have knowledge from their culture, that will let you socialise with them [other racial groups].*

Jett believes his home context, consisting of both White and Black cultural influences, has promoted his cultural capital, and enabled him to use his mixed-race identity as a relational tool. Interestingly, other participants used cross-racial peer group integration as opportunities to develop their cultural capital,

Rusty: Before I came to secondary school, I wasn't around a lot of Black people because I went to a school where it was probably more 'White'. And as I've gotten to secondary school, I've learned more about my culture and stuff.

Rusty also shared that he comes from a single parent household and lives with his mother who identifies as White. In the context of Rusty's home context, his ability to fluidly integrate across peer racial groups seems to be an opportunity to develop his self-concept.

Here, we can begin to see the importance of a diverse school population for BMR YP. It provides the context for them to use their cultural capital as a relational tool and provides opportunities to develop cultural capital. Saffron and Olive agree,

Saffron: [diverse school is important because] …we can share our different experiences and backgrounds and learn from each other.

Olive: From what I've experienced, I feel like mixed-race people need to be around more coloured people, only because if they're around White people more, they're only getting one side of the story.

These examples demonstrate how BMR YP's racial fluidity can facilitate peer group belonging, not least through the cultural capital gained through racially or culturally

mixed home contexts. Cross-racial peer integration also provides opportunities for BMR YP to learn cultural / racial practices that are meaningful for them.

The Role of the Family. Family appeared to be a resource for participants in this project. Conversations with family members helped BMR YP to make sense of their racialised experiences,

> ***Ash:*** *there's been times when I've got in trouble and my mum will tell me, obviously, that it's only going to happen because I'm a Black boy*

> *…I feel like when I've been victimised, and I've mentioned it to my mum…. she says that they are going to look at your skin, and going to think one thing straight away, you're not going to get a chance to explain yourself, and you're not going to know what they are thinking either which is the worst thing, she also says that all you can do is prove them wrong, and that's it.*

Ash speaks of how he uses conversations with his mother as a source of resilience, helping him to overcome and make sense of his experiences. In addition, conversations about race at home helped to prepare BMR YP for experiences they may encounter,

> ***Rusty:*** *Mum tells me how people are going to think like, how Black and White people and then mix race people are going to think, but nothing major…She just says there might be some people who stereotype you and stuff like that, but overall, it doesn't matter, you are who you are.*

As demonstrated, family members appear to provide BMR YP with a space to prepare for, and reflect on, their racialised experiences. This support seems even more important considering the themes identified previously, namely, the complexity of mixed-race racial identifications, the hostilities and barriers experienced within secondary schools and their reluctance to elicit support from school staff.

Despite acknowledging family as a source of support, Olive uncovers a potential barrier to accessing this support,

> *Olive: So when you're talking to family about it [race], it's helpful because they'll explain to you certain things. It's sad because you can't always... There's things that you want to question or ask, but you can't because people can take that in the wrong way and that can backfire on you a lot, not only just in education, but also in society. Because people look at you differently and they also treat you differently because it's like, well,' if you're so fond of this and that, then you can go and be with them'.*

For Olive, her family have supported her to understand her experiences. However, she cannot openly inquire all she wants, seemingly due to fear of exclusion. Olive's comments here highlight a unique reality for BMR YP, that family members are typically not fully able to relate to the mixed experience. Apprehension about whether

they will be understood seems to prevent BMR YP, like Olive, utilising the family as a resource.

4.2.5 Conclusion for RQ1

BMR YP's racial identity is an important part of their identities and shapes their school experiences. The way in which they racialise themselves, and are racialised by others, is simultaneously fluid and restricted in secondary school; their racial identifications change across situations and contexts, but their Blackness typically remains central. While this racial fluidity can be used as a relational tool to facilitate peer grouping belonging, the ability to 'pick sides' in a Black – White racial dichotomy can come with burden and emotional discomfort.

BMR YP experience hostilities and barriers that impact their secondary school experience. These include hostilities that are both shared with, and distinct from, their monoracial Black peers. Hostilities and barriers shared with the Black community relate to stereotypes, low expectations, and dissatisfaction with the curriculum. Participants seemed to recognise these hostilities and barriers as a result of their Blackness. However, distinct hostilities include unique forms of racism, rejection, and a lack of representation.

To protect against such hostilities and barriers to their wellbeing and achievement, BMR YP access sources of resilience. These sources of resilience acted as protective factors which helped participants navigate their racialised secondary school

experiences. Opportunities for cultural awareness and expression provided routes for BMR YP to learn about and celebrate their unique cultural and ethnic identity, and where others could acknowledge their individuality. Oftentimes, an inherent mix of cultures seemed to provide BMR YP with the cultural capital to flexibly integrate across peer racial groups, enabling them to utilise friendships as resources. For all participants, the family system appeared to provide a key role in shaping BMR YP's racialised identities and supporting them to be resilient.

In all, the participants' racialised identities seemed to be a fundamental way through which they made sense of their school experiences; they were inseparable from it. Making sense of their racialised identity and acknowledging both its fluidity and ties with Blackness, seems to be a tricky experience for BMR YP to navigate; it comes with complexity and unique challenges that other monoracial or mixed heritage groups may not need to contend with, such as moral dilemmas and rejection.

There was a sense that others (monoracial teachers, peers and sometimes family members) could not fully relate to their experiences and that their unique challenges are not recognised; *"I think there is struggle that isn't talked about"* (Ash). This lack of understanding or acknowledgement may exacerbate some of the difficulties outlined above, leaving BMR YP somewhat isolated in their experiences and feeling misunderstood.

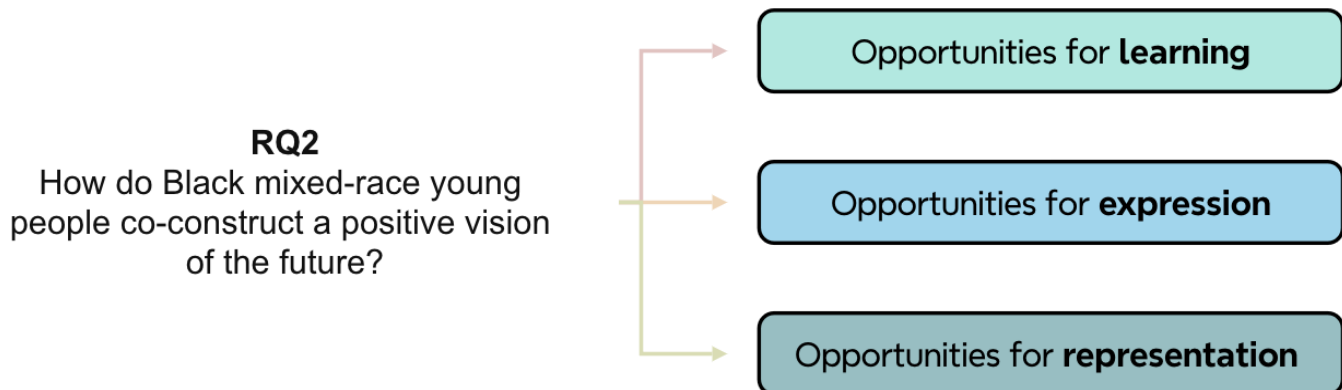## 4.3 Findings for RQ2

4.3.1 Overview of Themes

The second research aimed to encourage the participants to move beyond merely describing their past experiences, to actively co-constructing a more positive future. Participants were guided through the four phases of Ai, as explained in chapter 3. Below is a brief outlined of each phase:

- Phase one (discover) sought to uncover the best of what is. It elicited what BMR YP appreciate about their racial identity.

- Phase two (dream) built on the former by eliciting the commonalities in the participants' appreciations.

- Phase three (design) elicited short statements from the participants that described their ideal future, called 'provocative propositions'. They were written in the present tense to describe an idealised future as if it were already happening.

- Phase four (deliver) moved energy toward action planning, stimulating discussion around what they (or others) could do to realise their provocative propositions.

Three themes were interpreted from the focus group: opportunities for learning, expression, and representation (see Figure 8). In terms of visions of a positive future, each theme included the participants' values or things they appreciate, as well as change-focussed propositions.

Figure 8

Thematic Map for RQ2

RQ2
How do Black mixed-race young people co-construct a positive vision of the future?

Opportunities for **learning**

Opportunities for **expression**

Opportunities for **representation**

4.3.2 Opportunities for Learning

BMR YP appeared to be dissatisfied with the curriculum and feel a sense of inequity at school. Opportunities for learning, as part of their vision of the future, partly related to their value for cultural knowledge and diversity in the curriculum. Change-focussed suggestions included more diverse and creative learning opportunities. This was important not only because it seemed to relate to the participants' values, but also because of the positive implicit messages that these opportunities will transmit to YP at secondary schools and how it may promote acceptance.

As Blue states, *"we could change the curriculum… make it like less Eurocentric, like more diverse history".* While Blue's comments seem to relate to solely history lessons, participants suggested further opportunities in English, food technology and even

assemblies, *"…teach about different countries… learn about cultures. People might be more accepting [of BMR YP]" (Slate)*.

Opportunities to explore culture seemed to be a means to develop rich understandings of others, *"Just like culture workshops. It might not just be on mixed-race people, but all cultures should get, like, a time where someone comes in and explains stuff about it" (Rusty).* These comments suggest that curricular changes to include more learning on diverse culture was important to improving BMR YPs school experiences.

Rusty's use of 'culture' rather than 'race' was noteworthy, and perhaps is an indication of his perception that learning about one's culture, as opposed to race, is more likely to facilitate learning and understanding. In the context of BMR YP experiencing their race as fluid, culture seems to be perceived by the group as more stable and a truer reflection of who one is.

Ash thought about the implicit messages that come from teaching a diverse curriculum related to culture,

> *Ash: I was going to say even hidden curriculum, which is kind of common sense that's picked up from watching teachers or something like that… So I feel like teachers sharing respect to other teachers and more diverse education and stuff like that. I feel like it would affect [the] hidden curriculum by teaching other people that these people went through there, saw stuff and they're valuable.*

Implicit is Ash's response is a perception that the current curriculum does not radiate messages that diversity is valuable. Rusty and Ash's responses imply that although BMR YP want a more diverse range of learning opportunities for their own benefit, they recognise the positive impact that these changes will have on their peers and the entire school community.

In addition to cultural knowledge and diversity, fairness seemed to be a fundamental value underpinning this theme. In RQ1, participants shared the hostilities and barriers they experience in secondary school. Within this context, opportunities for learning also meant building BMR YP's resilience and preparing them for future challenging situations that they may encounter, in order for them to be granted a fair chance at success.

Violet has had a particularly difficult experience in the education system and she, perhaps, regrets her perceived lack of support from teachers. Violet suggests that a positive future for BMR YP includes a mentorship-type space where YP can receive support from those with lived experience, as seen in the comments below:

> ***Violet:*** *If I were to advise someone younger, I'll just say ignore [hostilities in school]. I wouldn't focus on the teachers, I'll focus on the younger people, on the children, and be like, look, you're going to have bad experiences. Teachers are not going to expect you to do too well.*

Other participants implied discontent towards their experiences with teachers by suggesting changes to staff recruitment practices. For example,

> **Ash:** *When it comes to hiring a teacher, they [school] should look more into their personal opinions on different types of situations that are going on in the world and kind of make an inference from what they think.*

Ash suggests positive change for BMR YP could include more thorough vetting procedures when hiring teachers. This signals his experience of unfair and disparate treatment from his teachers, and challenges schools to look more carefully at biases that teachers may hold.

To summarise, opportunities for learning is a key pillar in BMR YP's co-constructions of a positive future. This theme reflected the participants' values of cultural knowledge, diversity, and fairness. Three change focussed suggestions blossomed from these values: more diverse learning experiences on race, history, and culture; opportunities for BMR YP to develop their resilience through mentorship; and schools implementing more rigorous recruitment procedures that consider opinions / biases. These suggestions can be seen as a response to underlying discontent with their secondary school curriculum and their relationships with teachers.

4.3.3 Opportunities for Expression

BMR YP value their unique racial and cultural identities and what being BMR has offered them. This theme reflects the pride the participants have in their racial identity and what it has afforded them in school, but also that being a BMR YP in secondary school can be challenging. Solution focussed suggestions from the participants included empowering participants from both locations.

Violet appreciated what being BMR represented, *"…the fact that people are coming together, like from different parts of the world"*. She seems to embody a view of herself that signals progress in terms of racial integration. Ash and Olive valued the cultural capital gained from being BMR, *"having two cultures… like being introduced to different music, food, clothes, parties" (Ash) / "it's like you get [introduced to] a wide range of music, like when you go to your different families' houses" (Olive).*

Value for their racial and cultural individuality leads them to want to express it. This seems even more important due to experiences where they have felt categorised or rejected in secondary school.

Culture Day was an event held at the participants' secondary school that seemed to provide the appropriate shared platform for BMR YP to tell others about what makes them unique, *"Culture Day. Like being able to tell people about our different mixes and culture"* (Cooper)*.* The event involved dressing in traditional clothing, sharing familiar food, and telling others about your ethnic / cultural identity.

Expressions of individuality for BMR YP meant embracing their physical appearance, *"[I appreciate] …hair. Like you can do different hairstyles"* (Jett); *"I think it's become more apparent that I am mixed only since [a change in] my hair" (*Blue).

For Jett, expressions of individuality meant, in part, being recognised as BMR,

> **Jett:** *I think it'll be good if mixed-race people they're seen as like, mixed race, and not just extension of Black people… I think it would help for individualism instead of being seen as, oh he's Black… like help you to be proud of who you are.*
>
> *[we can achieve this by] …teaching students what's the difference between Black and mixed race, because normally you get kind of grouped with them.*

In RQ1, Jett spoke of how he is often racialised as a 'light-skinned' monoracial Black person. He thinks this is because he is darker than most BMR people, despite having monoracial White and Black parents. This contextualises his comments above. Due to his comparatively darker skin tone and frequent racialisations as Black, he desires a sense of separation from the black community. While this may be true for Jett, we have seen through other responses that some participants identify as Black. This reinforces the point, opportunities for expression in terms of a positive future for BMR YP includes being able to identify in ways that are meaningful, not homogenous. This also touches on the former theme, in terms of providing opportunities for others to learn about race and culture.

Opportunities for expression is not only about celebrating the strengths but reflecting on challenges. For Violet, there should be more spaces at school to relate to others, *"More opportunities to talk, in like mainly mixed-race groups so we can talk about stuff… yeah, we can talk about it. Bring it up and say, yeah, it wasn't fair" (Violet)*. These comments show that Violet values social support when navigating disadvantage. She suggests 'talking spaces' as opportunities to elicit social support through their school experiences.

Cooper agrees and comments on the importance of positioning BMR YP as experts in their experience, *"…. BMR YP given a chance to talk about their experience and knowledge on being a mixed-race person in school, especially in our society"*.

To end, being BMR comes with much to celebrate but also some challenges. The theme opportunities for expression provides a space for both ends of this spectrum. BMR YP want to celebrate their individuality and what makes them unique, as well as a space to be listened to by fellow BMR peers and others.

4.3.4 Opportunities for Representation

Opportunities for representation was the final theme interpreted from discussions around a positive future. In the context of experiences of quandary and rejection related to their racial identity, BMR YP appeared to appreciate the acceptance, motivation and belonging that representation offered.

Rusty advocated for the potential positive impact of role models, *"We as BMR people could have more people to look up to… it would help us have more motivation to be like them, and also better than them"*.

Other participants shared their views about what increased representation or visibility as a BMR YP in secondary school may lead to. For Olive, it was about BMR YP being seen / treated as if they were the majority, *"imagine if mixed-race was the majority… we might not have been seen as different, and we wouldn't feel lonely" (Olive).* This seemed to relate to hopes of being free from the hostilities she experiences and, perhaps, a lack of belonging. Ash also shared that greater BMR visibility and understanding of their race, culture and experience would help them to, *"not feel ashamed by it"*.

In terms of solution-focussed propositions, this quote from Cooper contextualises the current problem,

> **Cooper:** *a lot of famous mixed-race people and stuff don't actually talk about being mixed race. And I feel like if they were to speak up then it would help younger people to feel more comfortable speaking about these things. And I feel like even for some people, they just call themselves Black. So then that's what people like, younger people, see them as.*

Cooper suggests that famous BMR people can facilitate YP 'speaking about these things'. His comments indicate some discomfort talking about his race and imply BMR people in the public eye can be role models to support YP to understand and articulate their experiences.

Further, Cooper comments on the potential positive impact of relationships with BMR teachers. During his one-to-one interview, he hypothesised about how his relationship with a particular BMR teacher related to her racial identity,

> **Cooper:** *I think there should maybe be more [BMR teachers] because I think my food tech teacher is mixed-race as well, and she was my food tech teacher in year eight also. And then that convinced me to... I don't know if it was her being mixed-race that drew me to like her in the first place, because a lot of people that I spoke to actually don't like her as a teacher that much, but I do, because I originally had done DT, but then when I found out that she was the future teacher, I just switched.*

This provides the necessary context to understand Cooper's comments in the focus group, *"…if we had more mixed-race teachers, we might feel more motivated to learn, and yeah, teachers will be able to relate to you more… then they could stand up in assemblies and teach school about it".* For Cooper, having a BMR teacher who could relate to his experiences provided a positive model that shaped his GCSE choices. Interestingly, he has begun to generalise BMR teachers as potential advocates or champions that could enlighten others to mixed-race experiences.

To conclude, opportunities for representation formed the final pillar of BMR YPs co-constructions of a positive future. In the context of their racial fluidity and the hostilities / barriers they experience at school, representation was appreciated as it facilitated their acceptance, motivation and belonging. As a result, BMR YP predominantly communicated the desire for more role models and champions, both at school and in the wider community.

4.3.5 Conclusion for RQ2

The focus group aimed to move participants beyond descriptions of their racialised school experiences, to co-constructing what a more positive future may look like. Discussions were centered around RQ2: how do BMR YP co-construct a more positive vision of the future? Ai was used as a framework to facilitate solution-focussed discussions, including when and how BMR YP do and feel best.

The first theme argued for learning opportunities. BMR YP value cultural knowledge, diversity, and fairness, and therefore seemed dissatisfied with the Eurocentric curriculum and their relationships with teachers. Solution focussed propositions included more diverse learning, opportunities for BMR YP to develop their resilience, and schools implementing more rigorous recruitment procedures that consider teacher opinions / biases.

The second theme argued for more opportunities for expression. This theme revolved around BMR YP's value for what being BMR represents and an appreciation of their unique identities. This led them to want opportunities to express their individuality. Equally, BRM YP valued being listened to and positioned as the experts in their experience. Recognising their racialised experiences can sometimes be a challenge and difficult to navigate, there were suggestions of spaces to reflect and receive social support from those with shared experiences and others.

The third theme argued for opportunities for representation. BMR YP value the acceptance, motivation and belonging that potentially comes with visibility of, and relationships with, BMR role models. To this end, BMR believed famous BMR people talking about their experience of their mixedness could empower YP, and connectedness with BMR teachers could promote their academic achievement and wellbeing.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a commentary on the study's findings. This thesis sought to answer the following two research questions:

- RQ1: What are the racialised school experiences of BMR YP?
- RQ2: How do BMR YP co-construct a positive future?

I collected qualitative data from semi structured interviews and a focus group with ten and nine BMR YP, respectively. Semi structured interviews addressed RQ1, and a focus group addressed RQ2. Each dataset was analysed separately, using the reflexive thematic analysis six-phase method. Three themes were interpreted for both RQ1 and RQ2.

This chapter begins with a reflection on meeting the study's aims. It then situates the current study's findings in the literature base and explores how they relate to findings that came previously. This is followed by a reflection of the study's strengths and limitations and then ends with a conclusion, which includes the implications of this study's findings, future research opportunities and how the findings intend to be disseminated.

5.2 Reflections on Meeting the Aims of the Study

The first aim of this research was to contribute exploratory data to an immature literature base. I have achieved these aims, by describing the experiences of BMR YP attending an inner London secondary school. I have provided insights into potential factors which could be contributing to the BMR communities' relative underachievement at school, by prioritising and valuing BMR voices.

The second aim was about promoting change. This was in response to a literature base that seemed to merely describe BMR experiences and contain researcher-led recommendations about how to improve their school experience. The focus group, using the Ai framework, supported BMR YP to co-construct a positive vision for the future, which revolved around three themes: opportunities for learning, expression, and representation. Based on social constructionist theory that language shapes our social reality (Wagner, 2008) and Ai beliefs that human groups too move towards what gives them light, the constructive discourse facilitated by the Ai framework created 'light' that participants could move towards. However, I wonder about the extent to which the methods produced actionable change within the participants' school system. This was perhaps a limitation of the design, in which school leaders were not included in solution-focussed discussions. For these reasons, this aim was only partially achieved.

The third aim was about a transformative impact on the community of participants. BMR YP were provided with a space to reflect on their strengths, values, and the things they appreciate about being BMR. These conversations promoted a sense of pride in their racial identity. This evidences a PP perspective, building on positive

qualities and experiences. Importantly, these conversations took place with their peers, strengthening relationships between these YP and helping them to acknowledge what they have in common with others (and therefore promote a sense of belonging). By centering their perspectives and positioning them as experts, participants recognised their voices as valid sources of knowledge. For these reasons, I think the project did have a transformative impact on this community, although this is difficult to measure.

5.3 Situating RQ1 Findings in the Literature Base

5.3.1 BMR Racial Identity

Racial Fluidity. In the current study, BMR YP's racial identity seemed fluid as they held multiple racial positions simultaneously. BMR YP's racial identity changing based on the context and situation is well supported by the literature (Austin et al., 2021; Gaither, 2015; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004). It seems that participants viewed racial categories as arbitrary and subjective and ultimately as a social construction (Shih et al., 2007). This rejects dominant understandings of race as mutually exclusive (Sims & Joseph-Salisbury, 2019) and supports CMRS as a theoretical perspective.

Joseph-Salisbury (2019) described how BMR males use multiple consciousness (i.e., an awareness of the multiple social identities that one holds) to engage in a process of hybridity, in which they are able to perform certain ways of being. Findings from the current study suggest this may also be true for females. For example, Olive described

her *choice* to 'opt in' to the preferential treatment that White students receive. It has been found that multiracial youth gain early practice with flexible racial identifications (Nishina & Witkow, 2020) and, considering Olive's home context (spending most of her life living with White family members), she may have been equipped with the cultural capital to perform in this way. This suggests that it may be the cultural capital gained from rich and diverse home experiences that are a mediator of one's ability to exercise hybridity.

Bourdieu's theory of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) posits that different types of capital (economic, social, cultural) possessed by individuals can determine their social positions and influence patterns of social behaviour (Xu & Jiang, 2020). The perspective of cultural capital I take here is of a relational nature that facilitates positive interactions (Davies & Rizk, 2018).For Olive, her cultural capital enabled her to elicit positive responses from her teacher, while for other participants, cultural capital seemed to centre on traits that helped them to relate to others. This promoted their acceptance in multi-racial friendships, referenced as a facilitator of school belonging (Flintoff et al., 2008).

The acquisition and accumulation of cultural capital is bound by socialisation experiences (Xu & Jiang, 2020). It seems for BMR YP, a diverse range of home experiences (including diverse ranges of food, music, types of celebration, ways of being etc) facilitates the use of cultural capital as a relational tool in the education system.

Blackness. Although fluid, BMR YPs racial identities centered on their Blackness. One reason for this was being racialised by others as Black. This supports previous research that finds BMR YP are commonly racialised by teachers as Black (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; K. Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013) and that BMR populations are more likely than other mixed groups to be "pigeon-holed into their minority race" (Song & Aspinall, 2012, p. 14). As mentioned in chapter 2, this reflects the legacy of hypodescent policy; the categorising of an individual as Black, if they had 'one drop' of Black blood.

Other studies have found BMR YP choosing to identify more with Black peer groups as they progressed through secondary school due to shared interests and similar experiences (Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; K. Lewis & Demie, 2019; Williams, 2013). This also seemed to be true for participants in the current study, who were all progressing towards the latter years of secondary school.

Racial Identity. Positioning theory can be used to make sense of how BMR YP come to hold multiple racial positions simultaneously. It assumes life unfolds as a narrative with multiple and inter-linked storylines, and the actions and words people use are positions of the actors (Harré et al., 2009). As Harré et al., (2009) continue, "… access of availability to certain practices, both conversational and practical, are determined not by individual levels of competence alone, but by having rights and duties in relation to items in the *local* corpus of sayings and doings" (p. 6).

Accordingly, BMR YP in this study were able to position themselves in ways that helped them to navigate their school experiences (e.g., Olive positioning herself to fit with the 'sayings and doings' with her White peers in class, and Ash repositioning himself as BMR rather than Black, to navigate social threat and circumvent racial rejection). Equally, BMR YP were positioned by others, as demonstrated by Cooper's comments, *"I feel like White people assume me as Black most of the time, and Black people assume me as White"*.

5.3.2 Hostilities and Barriers

Shared barriers. BMR YP's position as both sometimes Black and sometimes not-Black seems to impact the nature of barriers and hostilities BMR YP experience, which are both shared with and distinct from Black peers. It supports previous findings that when BMR YP are positioned by teachers as Black in secondary schools it leaves them vulnerable to hostilities that the Black community is subject to, namely low expectations related to stereotypical views (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016, 2018; Joseph-Salisbury, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; K. Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004; Williams, 2013).

This study found that BMR YP are aware of how their racial identity is pathologized at school. The participants commented on teacher assumptions of inherent Black aggression, feeling misunderstood, and being treated differently to White peers. They often associated these barriers to achievement with their Blackness.

We can use the psychological theories of stereotype threat and self-fulfilling prophecies to make sense of how stereotypes influence BMR YP's school experiences.

Stereotype threat describes a situational predicament in which people are, or feel themselves to be, at risk of confirming stereotypes about their social group (Spencer et al., 2016). A systematic review into stereotype threat found that anxiety, mind-wandering and negative thinking are some of the effects of stereotypes, which take away resources from one's working memory (Pennington et al., 2016).

In the context of BMR YP who engage in multiple consciousness with reference to their racial identity (i.e., acknowledging how they are perceived by both Black and White racial groups, which may include stereotypical views), I wonder if there is a greater risk of stereotype threat. For example, Blue mentioned stereotypes of him living in a caravan because of his Irish Gypsy heritage, and also being stopped and searched by police when he is with his Black friends in the community.

Despite previous research finding that BMR racial identity can be a protective factor against stereotype threat the US context (Rozek & Gaither, 2021), I wonder whether stereotype threat may underlie some of the secondary school disparities in the UK, outlined in chapter 1, with BMR YP comparatively underachieving in their GCSEs and making less progress throughout secondary school.

Participants in this study often communicated a sense that they were treated differently by school staff who held low expectations of them. For Violet, a teacher held a stereotype that she was 'a troublemaker' because of her race.

Research on self-fulling prophecies helps us to make sense of how these stereotypes (cognitions) may manifest into disparate secondary school experiences and outcomes. The term self-fulfilling prophecy was coined to describe "a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true' (Merton [1948] 1968: 477)" (Biggs, 2011, p. 295).

Biggs (2011) provides two criteria for differentiating self-fulfilling prophecies from other similar processes. These are stated below with reference to Violet's example:

- Criterion 1 requires it to be true that the teacher's initial stereotype of Violet being a troublemaker becomes true (i.e., Violet 'becomes' a troublemaker).
- Criterion 2 requires it to be true that the initial stereotype is believed to simply reflect the changed behaviour. This means that both Violet and the teacher assume that it is Violet's inherent mischief that has caused her to be a troublemaker, not the teacher's behaviour.

Violet referenced her secondary school experience as "terrible" due to several school exclusions. In the context of her belief that teachers held a 'troublemaker' stereotype of her, it seems that she began to fulfil this role, potentially evidenced by her exclusions.

We can see the manifestation of the second criterion further along in Violet's interview. She mentions being at a place of "…academic comeback… to show teachers I'm actually worth something, that I can actually do something with my life, because these people mostly think that I'm not going nowhere…". This quote hints at the impact that stereotypes, expectations, and differential treatment have had on Violet's self-esteem. She now feels the need to prove to teachers that she *is* worth something. Perhaps Violet is communicating here that teacher acknowledgement of her worth (i.e., through the verbal and nonverbal processes mentioned above) may help her to achieve her goals, in a 'positive' self-fulfilling prophecy cycle.

While this demonstrates how stereotypes and self-fulfilling prophecies manifest into disparate experiences and outcomes for BMR YP, elsewhere multiracial youth have been shown to be less-affected by race-based stereotypes than monoracial peers (Shih et al., 2007), although this study included participants from other multiracial groups in addition to BMR, limiting its relevance to this study.

Distinct Barriers. The distinct barriers to achievement are less well documented, *"I think there is struggle that isn't talked about [for BMR YP]"* (Ash). One

of the unique hostilities found in the current study was derogatory name-calling, perceived by the participants to be related to their mixed-race identities. The participants generally thought that this would go unchallenged by school staff if they raised it.

The term "monoracism" has been used to describe the exclusionary processes that oppress, on a systemic and personal level, those who do not fit into underlying assumptions of singular and discrete racial categories (Campion, 2019, p. 198). Although based on the US context, it seems that monoracism could also be used to describe some of the participants' experiences in the current study.

A hostility that seemed particularly challenging for participants in the current study was rejection from the Black community. Champion (2019) draws on the concept of horizontal hostility to describe how experiences of rejection from the Black community can cause those who are BMR to feel that their membership in the Black community was conditional, impacting on self-perceptions and self-identifications. In Ash's interview he speaks of another student saying "you're not even Black", and elsewhere describes how he was raised as a Black boy in a Black family, but now identifies as mixed-race as a result of being questioned on his Blackness. The findings here therefore echo previous findings that suggest BMR YP's experience of rejection from Black communities during secondary school can impact their self-perceptions and self-identifications.

Horizontal hostility also describes how divisions and prejudices can emerge within oppressed groups and signals the damage that internal conflicts might cause by distracting away from resistance against dominant forces (Campion, 2019, p. 196). This is evident in the quote from Ash above, who experienced being silenced based on the status of his Blackness when he was trying to contribute to a discussion about Black oppression.

While above, cultural capital seemed to be the means through which BMR YP were able to use their racial fluidity as a relational tool, a lack of it also seemed to be the basis through which BMR YP could be excluded / rejected from the Black community. This is because, being positioned as Black comes with certain assumptions and expectations of one's 'sayings and doings'. If BMR YP do not have the cultural capital to perform in ways which 'match' their position *"…you'll probably get mocked for it…"* (Jett). This ultimately promotes the social and emotional value of cultural capital for BMR YP in the secondary school context.

A further distinct challenge found in this study was the psychological conflict that participants experienced resulting from their ability to *choose* their racial identity. Olive spoke of being put in an "awkward position" and Saffron shared that she embraces her BRM identity because she "doesn't like picking [sides]". This echoes previous findings that multiracials feel social pressure to choose one of their racial / ethnic identities (Gaither, 2015; Nishina & Witkow, 2020).

5.3.3 Sources of Resilience

Cultural Awareness and Expression. This study found that BMR YP expressed pride in, and appreciated others' interest in, their racial and ethnic identities. BMR YP's pride in their racial identity has been noted in the literature (Austin et al., 2021; Lewis & Demie, 2019; Tikly et al., 2004) and combats deficit narratives that assume BMR YP struggle with identity issues.

Opportunities to develop awareness of others' culture was a key message from participants and is consistent with previous findings that multiracials show increased sensitivity and appreciation for the cultural backgrounds of others (Gaither, 2015). Encouraging people to be thoughtful about issues of race has been found effective in the fight against racism and prejudice (Shih et al., 2007), and it seems that opportunities for cultural awareness and expression were perceived by participants to help prevent some of the hostilities / barriers they experience in school (such as stereotypes related to their mixed identities).

Cultural Capital and Peer Group Belonging. Some participants in this study suggested that their cultural capital acted as a relational tool. This fits with Davies and Rizk's (2018) conceptualisation of cultural capital stated above, as a type of capital that facilitates positive interactions.

Nishina & Witkow (2020) state that multiracial youth may learn earlier on than their monoracial counterparts how to deal with a diverse range of individuals. This is

because of their background and home experiences, navigating interactions with family members from different racial backgrounds, and being introduced to diverse language, customs, viewpoints, and stories (p.21-27).

The flexible cognitive and behavioural strategies developed from these home experiences enable multiracial youth to function effectively in both majority and minority environments (Gaither, 2015).

This supports the view presented by participants in this study, that they feel an innate ability to relate to a more diverse range of people than their monoracial counterparts (i.e., they possess greater amounts of cultural capital). It suggests that they may have accumulated their cultural capital from their diverse home experiences.

The Role of the Family. Participants in this study recognised the importance of the family system on their racialised experiences. Discussions with family members included reflecting on their racialised experiences and discussing what they may encounter in the future.

Research has found that discussions about race with family members aided BMR racial fluidity (Gaither, 2015), and elsewhere we have seen that the ability of biracial students to identify with more than one racial identity simultaneously is protective from stereotypes, because it enables a broader sense of self (Rozek & Gaither, 2021).

These findings tie together to suggest that one of the reasons conversations about race with family members are protective for BMR YP is because they promote racial flexibility, which in turn equips them with a defence against stereotypes.

Parental anticipation of both internal and external tensions related to their child's mixed identity may lead to more varied and additional socialisation practices in multiracial youth, such as attempts to provide balance in cultural socialisation practices (Nishina & Witkow, 2020) through "ethnic raw materials" (language, food and objects) (Reyna, 2022, p. 3). Researchers have implied that parents of multiracial CYP believe that an overt and equal expression of diverse culture is important for their CYP's identity integration (Nishina & Witkow, 2020).

These findings provide some context to how BMR YP in the current study have been able to accumulate their perceived cultural capital. It suggests that perhaps their parents were more proactive in seeking diverse cultural experiences for their CYP, recognising the positive effect it may have. We have seen in the section above that BMR YP in this study perceived one of the positive effects to be cultural capital, because it facilitates peer group belonging.

The importance of conversations with family members and diverse home experiences in some ways justifies the concern expressed by participants like Jett for BMR YP who have been raised in single parent households, "…*half their identity is gone because they don't have the other parent to teach them about it"*. However, parents of

multiracial CYP are found to be generally proactive in their racial and cultural socialisation practices, suggesting CYP in single parent households may not be at a loss, as Jett suggests.

5.4 Situating RQ2 Findings in the Literature Base

5.4.1 Opportunities for Learning

The co-constructed theme 'opportunities for learning' in the current study was a key pillar in the participants' co-constructions of a positive future. It reflected their dissatisfaction with the curriculum and recognised the challenges they experience at school. The values underpinning this theme related to cultural knowledge, diverse learning experiences and fairness.

Participants were keen to suggest opportunities to learn about culture, rather than race, as seen with Rusty's suggestion for culture workshops. In the findings section, this was interpreted as a means to facilitate learning of and connectedness to others.

The literature has found that multiracials who view race as a social construction (which is more likely in BMR YP due to their reported racial fluidity) may believe race to be less informative about an individual's characteristics and traits (Shih et al., 2007). This could help to explain the participants' value for cultural learning opportunities as opposed to opportunities to learn about race.

Culture workshops were one of several change-focussed suggestions shared by BMR YP when co-constructing their vision of a positive future. Other suggestions included history, English and food technology lessons, as well as assemblies that teach students about different countries.

Linking these findings to what is known about diverse learning opportunities for YP, Neville and Cross (2017) found that formal and informal education provides opportunities for 'racial awakening' in ethnic groups. Racial awakening is characterised by "…an experience that triggered personal exploration of one's heritage and the histories of one's racialized ethnic group or other Black groups" (p. 105). Two potential positive personal outcomes of racial awakening are an increase in identifying what is possible for themselves as people of colour, and an increase in racial pride and acceptance (Neville & Cross, 2017). This supports the personal benefit that BMR YP may experience from learning opportunities that teach about diverse culture, hence supplementary education programmes being posited as potential ways forward for this community (Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017; Tikly et al., 2004).

However, perhaps a unique finding is the recognition from participants that diverse learning opportunities in school will have a positive impact on their peers, as seen with Slate's comments "…people might be more accepting [of BMR YP]". This is similar to the message communicated by Ash when he spoke about the hidden curriculum, and that teaching a diverse curriculum would emit positive messages that diverse cultures are valued. The findings from the current study therefore prompt us to consider the value of a diverse curriculum for all students, and not specifically BMR YP. This

therefore has implications for the appropriateness of programmes that segregate BMR YP from other communities, such as suggested supplementary education programmes.

Another change-focussed suggestion posited by BMR YP in the current study was considering teacher hiring processes. Ash indicated a need for more thorough vetting procedures when hiring teachers. Whereas other studies have suggested teacher training initiatives (Williams, 2013), findings from this study suggest that there needs to also be a consideration of intervention *before* teachers are hired.

A slightly different message from participants was the desire to have a space where BMR YP can develop the resilience to overcome challenging racialised experiences, by receiving mentorship-style support from those with lived experiences. This suggestion holds weight as 'preparation for bias' has been quoted as a successful strategy used by mothers of biracial children to prepare them for potential discrimination that they may face (Reyna, 2022). However, the current findings suggest that perhaps school also have a role to play in preparing BMR YP for bias, in addition to family members.

5.4.2 Opportunities for Expression

Opportunities for expression was the second co-constructed theme from the focus group discussions. This theme stemmed from the participants' value for their unique racial and cultural identities, and what being BMR has offered them. It recognised both

the pride that BMR YP had in their racialised identities, but also some of the challenges.

To start with the challenges, BMR constructed a positive future as including more opportunities to talk, "*… like mainly in mixed-race groups so we can talk about stuff… bring it up and say, yeah, it wasn't fair*" (Violet). BMR participants from Lewis and Demie (2019) also suggested 'a mixed-race room', which seems to echo Violet's suggestion. However, the current findings extend Lewis and Demie's by suggesting that this intervention may be useful for the entire BMR community, as their study only included White/Black Caribbean participants.

What seems less considered in the literature base is the desire of BMR YP to express their uniqueness and individuality. BMR YP in this study appreciated their ability to wear different hairstyles and noticed the effect that this had on how they were racially perceived. They also appreciated opportunities to tell others about their heritage, ethnic background, and cultural practices at home.

The current findings therefore encourage us to explore opportunities for expression with a positive lens, considering how schools can facilitate opportunities for BMR YP to share and celebrate their uniqueness and individuality, and not 'just' a space to reflect on challenges.

5.4.3 Opportunities for Representation

Opportunities for representation was the final co-constructed theme from focus group discussions. This theme reflected the participants value for a future in which BMR YP feel accepted, motivated and a sense of belonging. Changed-focussed suggestions revolved around increased representation.

Cooper suggested that an increase in BMR teachers at secondary schools would help BMR YP to relate to more teachers. This is supported by Joseph-Salisbury's (2016) interpretation from participants that more mixed-race teachers will promote empathy and understanding. Both of these findings suggest that an increase in BMR teachers may have a relational benefit.

However, Cooper goes on to suggest that BMR teachers could be advocates for the BMR community, by for example, teaching about multiraciality in assemblies. This raises an important point that has not yet been considered enough, which is the impact that BMR advocates or champions may have on other students' perception of the BMR community. I communicated in chapter 2 that BMR YP typically felt pride in their race, but it was the response from others that created a problem. This idea of BMR advocates therefore teaching other students about multiraciality, as a way of improving BMR school experiences, is a way forward that needs more thorough investigation.

What was, perhaps, more difficult to capture in the data, was the participants' appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity to share their views and experiences.

Although varying in the strength with which they identify with their BMR identity, participants seemed to appreciate being grouped in this way and the opportunity to discuss issues not often prioritised.

In fact, multiracial youth who identify as multiracial (BMR / mixed-race in this case) experience higher levels of psychological wellbeing, self-esteem and social engagement than multiracial youth who identify with just one race (Gaither, 2015). This suggests that grouping participants in this way for this research project may have accentuated the representation of the participants' mixedness, thereby promoting positive psychological effects.

It also seemed to be empowering for BMR YP to be positioned as the experts in their experience, and the study's methods created the possibility for re-framing existing situations and experiences; two key benefits of using Ai for student voice (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2018). Therefore, using Ai a as framework for discussion around BMR school experiences seems to be a unique and successful method of data collection in topics involving race.

5.4.4 Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a theory of human motivation and wellbeing. We can use SDT to conceptualise how the three themes for RQ2 (opportunities for learning, expression, and representation) relate to the participants' psychological needs.

SDT postulates that three basic psychological needs drive our growth and wellbeing, which are: competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci et al., 2017). The theory states that these psychological needs are essential for all people to achieve optimal growth and wellness. The extent to which individuals experience growth and wellness depends on the satisfaction versus frustration of these three basic psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2022). Importantly, it is the social context determines whether an individual can have these psychological needs met.

The psychological need for competence in the SDT is about feeling able and skilled to complete tasks well. This is reflected in the 'opportunities for learning' theme in the current study. BMR YP were dissatisfied with the curriculum and felt disconnected to the material, hence suggestions for more diverse learning opportunities as part of their vision of a positive future. Experiences of diverse learning opportunities may have previously satisfied the participants' psychological need for competence. Additionally, some participants highlighted the need to feel competent and be resilient when navigating barriers and hostilities, which led to Violet suggest mentor-type opportunities for younger students.

The psychological need for autonomy in the SDT refers to the need to make our own choices and decisions and be in control of our lives. This maps onto the 'opportunities for expression' theme in the current study. BMR YP desired to be listened to, to be provided with spaces to communicate, and to express themselves in ways that are

meaningful. In terms of SDT, these can be seen as routes for BMR YP to satisfy their psychological need for autonomy, by ensuring they have a voice and our in control of their racialised narratives.

Finally, the psychological need for relatedness in SDT refers to a sense of belonging and not feeling like an outsider. This psychological need was reflected in the 'opportunities for representation' theme. BMR YP hoped for more role models in school and in the community. In SDT terms, BMR representation was a means to promote their school belonging and avert feelings of isolation and loneliness. Cooper literally stated how representation may impact his motivation, as seen in the following quote: *"…if we had more mixed-race teachers, we might feel more motivated to learn".*

5.5 Discussion of Strengths and Limitations

5.5.1 Research Approach

It was clear, based on my philosophical perspective, that a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis was essential to unpicking the participants' rich and complex racialised narratives.

It was acknowledged from the start that my racial identity as a BMR male could impact the findings. On the one hand, this could be positioned as a limitation. The participants may have been less likely to speak about their racial identity negatively, they may have spared details and explanation due to an assumption that I 'get it', and there was a

risk that I would conflate my own experiences with those of the participants during analysis.

However, this research is situated within the critical paradigm. From this position, my BMR identity is a strength, which has likely helped the participants to feel safe and understood, being able to express their views with honesty with someone they can relate to. Through reflexivity, I also believe that my lived experience as a BMR person, once a YP in a London secondary school, has added depth and richness to interpretations and helped to facilitate the participants' storytelling.

5.5.2 Research Design

The study's phased approach to research design, in which the focus group followed the semi structured interviews was useful for a number of reasons. The aim was to provide an opportunity for BMR YP to share experiences / potential challenges as a pre-context to co-constructing visions of a positive future in a group.

This methodological design fit with the philosophy underpinning the solution orientated model; embracing the problem narrative as an important part of the change process (Rees, 2008). Concerns have been raised that a focus on positive stories and experiences will invalidate the negative experiences of participants and repress meaningful conversations (Bushe, 2012), and the phased design of this study overcame this criticism.

The phased approach ultimately helped to answer the research questions. The semi structured interviews provided data for the 'what' (i.e., RQ1), and the focus group provided data for the 'how' (i.e., RQ2). The phased approach also promoted trustworthiness by giving allow me time to analyse the data for RQ1 and member check my findings ahead of phase two data collection. On the other hand, separating the RQs and respective data collection methods in this way may have prevented useful data from RQ1 contributing to the themes in RQ2.

From an ethical perspective, the phased design promoted rapport building between me and the participants. This study relied on the participants' active participation and so the phased design likely promoted the participants' experience of comfort during the focus group. The semi structured interviews provided the necessary context and personal 'thinking space' to consider and share their racialised school experience, before sharing in a group.

5.5.3 Semi Structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews were used as tool to allow the participants to tell their story in response to RQ1. This was well-suited to the research area, providing structure but also allowing flexibility for the participants to talk about what was meaningful or them.

Semi structured interviews ultimately allowed the participants to provide data that could be interpreted to answer the research question. They provided a space for the participants to co-explore, alongside me, significant parts of their racialised secondary school experiences.

However, the use of interviews comes with inherent limitations. The first was the demand. I completed six interviews in one day, which highlights the time and labour demands of this tool. To add, due to the interactive nature of communication in semi structured interviews, I had to engage in double attention (i.e., both listening to informants responses to understand what they were communicating, and bearing in mind my research needs, in terms of ensuring the questions are answered in the fixed time; Opdenakker, 2006).

A further limitation related to the interview schedule. Participants found it somewhat difficult to reflect on the school experiences that have influenced their racial identity, in the moment. This often led to the participants repeating information and needing time to think deeply before responding. While the flexible nature of semi structured interviews enabled me to ask questions that seemed most relevant, participants may have befitted from greater structure when sharing their stories.

One way this could have been achieved is through the use of person-centred tools. For example, Jackson (2012) used a 'life event interview' which involved participants writing or drawing the meaningful events that have shaped their racial identity over

time (Jackson, 2012). These timelines served as a visual representation of participants' stories and a guide to organise the structure of the interview and invite interviewer probes. This approach may have benefitted the semi structured interview process, making it easier for myself and the participants to make sense of their racialised school experiences, chronologically, but may have inadvertently reduced the spontaneity of the participants' responses; something I desired.

A further limitation of the interview schedule was a lack of a pilot test. While this was perhaps a design issue, it particularly affected the semi structured interview schedule. Although I used academic and professional tutorial opportunities to review the coverage and relevance of the interview schedule (i.e. internal testing), it fell short of field testing (i.e., testing the preliminary interview schedule with potential study participants). This may have uncovered the need to change some of the language that was difficult for participants to understand, such as 'representation' and 'identity'.

5.5.4 Focus Group

A focus group was used as a method to respond to RQ2. Participant-participant relationships are known to be a potential barrier to productive and open conversations during focus groups due to confidentiality issues (Robson & McCartan, 2016), and this may have played a role in the current study. The unfamiliarity of discussing their racial identity in a group, although strength-based, seemed to be daunting, and despite steps taken to minimise the discomfort (e.g., the phased design, opportunities for rapport-building, rowed seating during focus group), participants still seemed to find it difficult

to talk together as a group without continual researcher input. This impacted the extent to which findings for RQ2 were co-constructed.

A potential method to deal with participant-participant relationships would have been to facilitate rapport building sessions between the participants, prior to the focus group. Bergmark and Kostenius (2018) have reflected on the challenges of BMR contributing during the discovery phase due to inexperience with engaging in appreciative thought and, despite formulating sentence starters and allowing paired discussions before sharing, participants still seemed to find it difficult.

It seems important to reflect on the use of Ai with reference to its guiding principles. According to Bushe (2012), Ai "…should begin with appreciation, should be collaborative, should be provocative, and should be applicable" (p. 2). In the current study, all principles were reflected during the focus group, only limited by the extent of collaboration between the participants.

Finally, the focus group design was limited in its ability to fulfil the transformative purposes of this study. A further focus group session to agree actions and enact change may have promoted the transformative impact of this study on the school system. To add, perhaps an evaluative session to think together about the personal impact of the research would have made it clear whether the research benefitted the participants.

5.5.5 Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was accessible, providing a framework for making sense of the datasets, and resulting in rich and layered interpretations. It fit with the my philosophical position, assuming knowledge can be created through language, and provided useful guidance to promote reflexivity (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

However, it was heavily dependent on my own judgement. Braun and Clarke (2022) list a 15-point checklist for good reflexive thematic analysis (p. 269). It will be used here to frame a reflection on the use of RTA in this study.

Transcripts. The transcripts were produced using Microsoft Teams software and checked for accuracy while relistening to audio recordings. This ensured accuracy. Ideally, transcripts would have been checked by a second researcher but there was not scope of this in the current study.

Coding and Theme Development. Coding in the current study was an iterative process that tried to ensure rigour by collating relevant extracts for themes, frequent comparison of codes with theme labels, and exercising reflexivity. However, there were certain stories and phrases that impacted me more than others, and I found it more difficult to distance myself from this data. While a reflexive diary was used to note thoughts and feelings to reflect on why certain perspectives may have been more impactful, it still may have led to certain voices being prioritised during coding and theme development.

Analysis and Interpretation. In terms of analysis and interpretation, I believe my personal experiences have contributed to the reporting of rich insights, as opposed to merely quoting what the participants said, and hopefully presents a convincing story about the experiences of BMR YP that addresses the RQs. However, similar to above, the analysis was perhaps limited by the nature of the research methods (i.e., requiring language) and the effects that this had on participants' ability to share their experiences.

Written report. The data analysis section in chapter 3 clearly states the particulars of the RTA approach, a criteria of good reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I also positioned myself as 'active' in the research, which fit the study's theoretical assumptions.

5.5.6 Participants and Recruitment

Strengths of the recruitment procedure were that it yielded 10 participants, the optimal number for focus groups (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The participants represented the years nine to 13 and, although more heavily skewed to males, three females participated. Through triangulation, this promoted the credibility of findings.

On the other hand, there was an ethical risk to grouping BMR YP according to their race, which may not be meaningful for them. As mentioned in the 'participants section

of chapter 2, the sample had different BMR racial mixes and varying relationships with their White and Black identities and influences. This heterogeneity provided a potential barrier to the extent to which the participants felt identified with, and part of, the wider BMR community. This could have impacted their sense of autonomy and infringe upon beneficence. However, participants in this study largely seemed proud of their racial identity and discussions based on this aspect of their identity was rewarding and meaningful.

5.5.7 Considering Quality

In chapter two I presented the tactics used to promote trustworthiness in this study, based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. In order to evaluate the quality of this study as a whole, below I will refer to Yardley's (2016) core principles for evaluating the quality of qualitative research, which are: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance.

Sensitivity to Context. A study could show sensitivity to context by "showing awareness of the participants' perspectives and setting, the sociocultural and linguistic context of the research, and how these may influence both what participants say and how this is interpreted by the researcher" (Yardley, 2017, p. 259). The context of this study was considered at various levels.

Firstly, the contextual information presented in chapter 1 and the literature review presented in chapter 2 enabled the identification of BMR school experiences as a topic of study, and their co-constructions of a positive future as a gap in the literature. It also informed the approaches and methods used in the current study.

Secondly, the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of this research have been considered and clearly stated. This means that the assumptions influencing the design and findings are explicit and open to critique from oneself (through reflexivity) and from other researchers. During the research, this looked like me keeping a reflective diary and carefully considering the meaning the participants were trying to communicate, in relation to the RQs.

Finally, I recognised the school context, and the potential needs and challenges that participants may experience during data collection. Ethical considerations, guided by my moral principles and values, ensured steps were taken to promote participation and beneficence. This included scaffolding participation during the focus groups, spending time to build rapport with the participants, and ensuring they were reminded of their right to withdraw / take breaks at any point.

Commitment and Rigour. In-depth engagement with the topic (i.e., through thorough data collection and in-depth analysis) can demonstrate commitment and rigour (Yardley, 2017). This study has demonstrated in-depth engagement in many ways. Some of the primary examples are the descriptive reporting of this study's

context, purpose, methodological design, and findings; the extensive reading on the research topic and selected data collection and analysis methods; and the commitment demonstrated to collect data from 10 YP through two different methods and analyse the data independently and reflexively.

Coherence and Transparency. The reader should be able to clearly see how interpretation derived from data (Yardley, 2017). I have attempted to communicate the participants' realities as accurately as possible. Quotes and detailed explanations of my interpretations help the reader to navigate the findings section in chapter 4 and make it clear how interpretations came about. There was also transparency demonstrated through recruitment when explaining the purposes, aims, and requirements of the study to both the participating school, parents / carers, and students.

Impact and Importance. Impact and importance refers to the researcher's aim to generate knowledge that is useful; whether in terms of practical utility, generating hypotheses or changing perceptions (Yardley, 2017).

The school experiences of BMR YP is a topical issue and this study is a response to a national context. The study attempted to contribute positive narratives of BMR YP and ways forward to support them, from a critical perspective.

The production of the school experiences audit tool (Appendix S) was an attempt by to substitute for the lack of actionable steps taken away from the focus group by the participants. While this demonstrates the practical utility of the study's findings, they could have been even more impactful if there was a further session with participants to agree actions / next steps, or if school leaders were involved in the focus group.

The personal social and emotional benefits for the participants, while difficult to measure, should not be understated. They felt empowered by having their voice and experience prioritised, from a strength-based perspective. In the context of critical research, this is not often the case.

On the other hand, participants may have felt a sense of pressure when consenting, especially if the study had not been previously mentioned to them by their parents / carers. There was also likely an emotional demand in the moment, to articulate themselves in a way that was true and 'correct'. However, the research attempted to reduce the emotional burden through attuned interactions, being sensitive to the pace of the interviews, and reassuring the participants throughout by expressing my gratitude for their participation and telling them how valuable their views are.

5.6 Conclusion

This final section considers the implications of the research. I provide a reflection on what we have learned about BMR YPs school experiences, how the findings contribute

to the literature base, and consider future research directions. I conclude with plans for dissemination and a final word.

5.6.1 Implications

The findings for this project have contributed to our understanding of how race functions in the lives of teenage BMR students at secondary school, an understudied research area. It has identified sources of resilience in the lives of BMR YP which can be enriched and built upon by school staff. It has also highlighted potential barriers and hostilities that schools can work to prevent. Importantly, this study adopted a novel perspective by focussing on the BMR population as a whole.

From a strength-based perspective, BMR YP co-constructed a positive vision of the future. The themes can be integrated into support plans to promote the school experiences of this demographic. This study aimed to present an alternative to deficit narratives around BMR YP and has shown that they have much to appreciate about their unique identities. It suggests that prioritising BMR voices and experiences will help to counteract the pathologising of BMR racial identity.

5.6.2 Implications for Practice

Cultural Responsiveness. Cultural responsiveness involves understanding and appropriately responding to the full range of dimensions of diversity that an individual brings to interactions (Hopf et al., 2021). Referring to the HCPC standards

of proficiency, EPs have a duty to EPs to "recognise the impact of culture, equality, and diversity on practice and practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner" (HCPC, 2023, p. 9).

The findings for RQ1 promote culturally responsive practice by contributing rich and detailed information about BMR YP's school experiences. The findings help EPs, and other education professionals, to gain an insight into BMR YP's racialised experiences at school, by describing the range of dimensions of diversity relevant to BMR YP. The hope is that this will promote curiosity and intrigue about BMR YPs school experiences, recognising the heterogeneity of the population.

This increased awareness of BMR YP's experiences will help professionals to identify assets and strengths. For example, EPs could use their consultations with parents and school staff to explore whether there have been opportunities for cultural awareness and expression at school, whether there have been opportunities to have conversations about race with family, or whether there have been opportunities to integrate with a diverse range of peers. These are all ideas that relate to the 'sources of resilience' theme discussed in the findings for RQ1.

Equally, the 'hostilities and barriers' theme and subthemes may be used to unpick barriers to academic achievement and wellbeing at school. The distinct barriers outlined in the findings for RQ1 (e.g., specific types of racism, experiences of rejection and a lack of representation) are particularly important, considering these are

narratives that often go unheard. EPs could use their consultation skills to identify and sensitively reframe assumptions and stereotypes related to deficit narratives that are known to plague high expectations for this community.

Pride and Celebration. The findings have shown that BMR YP are appreciative of their racial identities and uniqueness. This is an important message to hold in mind for EPs when working with BMR communities. They are not plagued with inherent deficit and tragedy; the majority of participants in this study valued their mixed backgrounds and cultures and were proud of their racial identity. It is a reminder that using a PP approach can be an effective and more ethical alternative to traditional methods of research.

The 'opportunities for expression' theme for RQ2 is a demonstration of BMR YP's pride in their racial identities. EPs should use the message of this theme to support school staff to identify or create opportunities within the curriculum where all students can share information about their race and culture and what makes them unique, if they want to. Opportunities such as these will facilitate relationship building and help BMR YP to take control of their racialised narratives.

The use of a strength-based and solution oriented model suits the nature of EP work. This study's data collection approach for RQ2 (i.e., a focus group with Ai used as a framework for inquiry) may support EPs to use similar approaches when discussing race with secondary school pupils.

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Additionally, EPs may reflect on the value of bringing the BMR community together as a whole when discussing racialised experiences. BMR YP are not often provided with opportunities to come together as a community, and the response from participants in this study indicated the value of doing so. We have learnt that bringing the BMR community together as a whole, in one session, can produce meaningful and productive findings, suggesting that this should be a method used more often to gather BMR or multiracial voices. This will help EPs to ensure they are empowering CYP to participate in decisions about their own support, a key principle in the SEND CoP (DfE, 2014)

Opportunities for Change. EPs are involved in enhancing CYPs' achievement and wellbeing (Beaver, 2011). Their role is not 'just' about tackling problems but also building on positive qualities (Joseph, 2008). The findings for RQ2 provide EPs and education professionals with ideas about what BMR YP value about school and their racial identity, as well as change-focussed propositions that could contribute to a more positive future for them.

An audit tool has been developed from the RQ2 findings (Appendix S). It can be used to by education staff to think about potential initiatives for support for BMR groups. For example, school staff many wish to reflect on whether opportunities for learning, expression and representation have been provided for racial and ethnic groups. This will support organisational level support and intervention when thinking about how

school can engage groups or communities. Alternatively, the audit tool could be used on a one-to-one basis with a BMR YP to structure a conversation about how school could be improved to ensure pupil voice is fed into any intervention plan.

5.6.3 Future research

Based on the findings from this study, future research opportunities may include an Ai with teachers, parents, and other key stakeholders in the school. This may include a greater capacity for action-planning and enacting change. In addition, it is important that others have the opportunity to hear the strengths, pride and unique perspectives that this community have to share.

This research was conducted in a diverse inner London secondary school. I wonder how this multicultural and racially diverse context may have impacted the findings. It would be interesting to see if BMR YP in less diverse schools had similar school experiences or whether they would co-construct a positive future in the same way.

Thirdly, there should be greater investigation into BMR YP's experience of stereotypes and stereotype threat, given this study's findings that suggest BMR YP may be at risk of confirming stereotypes from both their Black and White racial / ethnic identities.

Finally, it would be interesting to investigate the impact of diverse learning on culture and history, on other racial groups' perceptions of BMR YP. There was a sense in the

current study that diverse learning opportunities for all CYP would help them to be more sensitive towards, and understand to a greater extent, the BMR experience.

5.6.4 Dissemination of Findings

The study's findings will be disseminated by sending a copy of the finalised report to participants, parents / carers and school staff who have requested to see a copy. I will organise a meeting with the SENDCo of the participating school to plan how some of the findings for RQ2 can be enacted. Secondly, I hope to present the study's findings to the EPS where I am currently on placement and consider, alongside the EPS team, how the findings could be used to inform policy or intervention packages for BMR individuals. Finally, I aim to publish these findings in a relevant journal, following viva.

5.6.5 Conclusion

Race defines our experiences and impacts every aspects of our lives (Aspinall, 2020; Boyle, 2022; Shih et al., 2007). This study aimed to investigate an understudied research area, the racialised school experiences of BMR YP. This was a response to an international context which has tended to pathologise BMR YP, and a national context that highlights BMR YP's relative underachievement at secondary school.

Accordingly, this thesis was rooted in exploratory and transformative purposes; to find out what's going on for this community, facilitate change within the school system, and change deficit-based narratives that surround BMR YP.

It used semi structured interviews and a focus group to explore the two research questions:

1. What are Black mixed-race young people's racialised experiences of their secondary school education?
2. How do Black mixed-race young people co-construct a positive vision for the future?

RQ1 found that BMR YPs school experiences were mediated by their experience of their racial identity. This facilitated their experience of both sources of resilience in school, as well as hostilities and barriers to learning. RQ2 found that BMR YPs co-constructions of a positive future included opportunities for learning, expression, and representation.

This study has demonstrated the value of adopting a strength-based, solution-oriented, and collaborative approach to investigating racialised experiences. Most importantly, the study provided an opportunity for a marginalised community to share their voices and unique experiences. With this project, I hope to have demonstrated the value of researching BMR YP experiences through the lens of positivity and potential, learning that we can generalise to other groups and communities.

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Appendices

Appendix A, *Definitions of Racial Terminology*

Terminology	Definition
Black-white Racial Dichotomy	A Black-white binary paradigm of race silences monoracial groups of colour that fall outside of the binary, e.g., multiracial groups (Harris, 2016). Delgado (1998) explained that a Black-white racial dichotomy in law 'assumes you are either Black or White' (p. 369).
Black Mixed Race	A common way for those with Black and White parentage to identify (Clarke, 2022; Sims & Joseph-Salisbury, 2019).
Culture	Culture is a set of values, behavioural conventions, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions shared by a group of people, that influence their behaviour and interpretations of the behaviour (Spencer-Oatey, 2008).
Ethnicity	"The quality or fact of belonging to a group of people with common historical heritage, originating in the same place, and sharing cultural expressions such as manner of dress art, music, food, literature, and other concrete manifestations" (Helms 1993; found in Williams, 2013, p. 182)
Hypodescent policy / the one-drop rule	The policy or rule by which one drop of Black blood renders an individual Black (P. J. Aspinall, 2003)
Interpersonal Racism	"Interpersonal racism is racism that occurs in interactions between individuals or groups of people, often in everyday settings" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2022).
Microaggressions	"Microaggressions are the casual expressions that perpetuate racist stereotypes and ideas" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2022).
Mixed-race	Mixed race is the most widely used term in the UK to describe those belonging to two or more races (P. Aspinall & Song, 2013; Clarke, 2022). More recently, mixed-race has seemed to become to shorthand for someone who has one Black parent and one White (Sharples, 2018). While concerns have been raised over the use of mixed-race due to negative connotations, it is the way in which all participants in this study self-identified.
Monoracial	Those individuals who racially identify as a single race (Daniel, 2021).
Multiracial	A word used to describe those individuals belonging to two or more racial groups (Williams, 2013).
Race	Race is a concept that is derived from a genetic designation based on phenotypic characteristics (Helms 1993; found in Williams, 2013, p. 182). In this paper, race is acknowledged as a legal category, a form of

	representation, and a fluid social construct that varies according to place and time, serving as tools of power and oppression (Reyna, 2022).
Racialised	The process through which meaning is attached to something that is perceived to be "unracial" or devoid of racial meaning (Gonzalez-Sobrino & Goss, 2019, p. 505).
Racism	"Racism is the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2022).
Person of Colour	A term used to described people who are not White (Moses, 2016).
Systemic Racism	"Systemic racism is a way of thinking about racism as a system, rather than just as an individual's bias or prejudice… Systemic racism creates the architecture around which other forms of racism are enabled, supported and justified…. [it is the] rules, practices and habits which systematically discriminate against or in some way disadvantage" (Whittaker, 2019, para. 10).

Appendix B, *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)*

Identification

| **Platform**: EBSCO
All databases

Search String: AB ("black mixed race" or "mixed race" or "biracial") AND experiences or views AND secondary school or high school or secondary education

Search filters: (2000 – 2023, English language)
Date of search: 18.08.23 | **Platform**: SCOPUS
All databases

Search String: AB ("black mixed race" or "mixed race" or "biracial") AND experiences or views AND secondary school or high school or secondary education

Search filters: (2000 – 2023, English language)
Date of search: 18.08.23 |

Papers Yielded (n = 72 after duplicates removed)

Duplicates n = 12

Papers Yielded (n = 87 after duplicates removed)

Eligibility criteria applied at the following screening stages

Screening

1. Title and abstract

41 papers removed after applying eligibility criteria to paper titles and abstracts. Remaining items n = 31.

66 papers removed after applying eligibility criteria to paper titles and abstracts. Remaining items n = 21.

2. Full text

25 papers were removed after applying eligibility criteria during full text review. Remaining items n = 6.

19 papers were removed after applying eligibility criteria during in depth review. Remaining items n = 2.

Papers included

From database search

| EBSCO | n = 6 |
| SCOPUS | n = 2 |

Supplementary Searches

| Reference lists | n = 1 |
| Author search | n = 1 |

Papers included in systematic review n = 10

The reasons for removing papers at the full text review stage were:
- not explicitly focussing on BMR YP (16 papers),
- not providing insights into secondary schooling experiences (14 papers),
- papers not peer reviewed (6 papers),
- not able to access the full text (4 papers).
- Not primary data (2 papers)
- Repeated use of data / data collected pre-2000 (2 papers).

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Appendix C, Eligibility Criteria

Study Feature	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
Study Focus	Paper is focussed on the secondary school experiences of BMR YP	Does not provide insights into the secondary school experiences of BMR YP.	This review is interested in uncovering the secondary school experiences of BMR YP.
Participants	Paper includes participants who identify as Black mixed-race	Pupils who are mixed-race but not from a White / Black mix, and pupils who are not mixed race.	This review is interested in how YP's racial identity has impacted / is impacting their secondary school experience.
Educational stage	Participants are secondary school age, or the paper provides information on secondary school experiences.	A focus on other stages of education, e.g., university / primary school.	This review is interested in uncovering the secondary school experiences of BMR YP.
Methodology	Paper can be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Only primary data will be included in findings.	Research methods which include secondary data.	This review seeks to understand what is known, and therefore the paper methodology is left open so relevant findings are gathered, whether expressed quantitatively or qualitatively.
Peer Review status	Papers that have been peer reviewed.	Papers that have not been peer-reviewed (e.g., dissertations).	Peer reviewed papers are thought to be able to provide the most reliable and trustworthy findings and data.
Language (automated filter)	Papers must be written in English.	Papers that are written in language other than English.	English is my first language.
Publication date (automated filter)	Paper published between 2000-2023.	Papers published prior to 2000.	This review is interested in recent research that could give up to date insights into the mixed-race secondary school experience. It was in 2000 that those from UK

			and USA were able to identify with more than on racial category (Aspinall, 2003; Caballero et al., 2007; Joseph-Salisbury, 2017) and so it was assumed that research over 20 years old will be less relevant.

Appendix D, *Data Extraction Table*

EBSCO			
Title, author/s date	**Study design / RQs / aims**	**PPs, data collection and data analysis methods**	**Findings**
Black Mixed Race Male Experiences of the UK Secondary School Curriculum, UK. Joseph-Salisbury, 2017	Qualitative design. Aim: To explore perceptions of the school curriculum in the UK with specifically Black mixed-race male students.	PPs: 20 Black mixed-race males between 18 and 27, speaking in their position as former secondary school pupils. Data collection: Semi-structured interviews in 2013. Data analysis: Analysis informed by Critical Race Theory framework and coded using NVIVO software in terms of	Findings: • BMR males experience curricular exclusion. • BMR males require supplementary education to find "the other half of the story" and find ways forward to support the inclusion of this group. • An emphasis on BMR males' Blackness must not engender the erasure of the particularities of mixedness and an overemphasis on mixedness must not ignore the constitutive presence of Blackness in their lives.

		experiences, criticisms, and potential interventions.	
Locating Black Mixed-Race Males in the Black Supplementary School Movement, UK.

Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017 | Qualitative design.

Aims:

To argue that a revival of the Black supplementary school movement could play an important role in the education of Black mixed-race males. | PPs:

28 Black mixed-race males (14 from UK and 15 from USA) between 16 and 21 years old in 2014/2015.

Data collection:

Semi structured Interviews. | Findings:

• BMR males experience dissatisfaction with mainstream schooling.
• Blackness is central in BMR males school experiences due to conceptions of self, shared barriers in schooling, and shared cultures and interests which lead to BMR males being in peer groups with monoracial Black YP.
• The introduction of a Black supplementary school movement has some advantages ("teaching kids to love themselves", enabling YP to learn about diverse history / hear different perspectives, and providing a sense of belonging).
• The introduction of a Black supplementary school movement has some challenges (the division it may create, doubts about the perceived efficacy and potential attendance issues). |
| The School Experiences of Mixed-Race White and Black Caribbean Children in England, UK. | Qualitative design.

RQ's:

1) what are the experiences of mixed | PPs / data collection:

Over two secondary schools - 9 parents of mixed-race children (4 White British, 1 Black Trinidadian); 9 senior managers, 4 teachers, 4 TA's, 3 LA education officers; 14 | Findings (related to):

• Lack of attention to the identities of mixed-race pupils and their the 'invisibility' at school
• Lack of awareness of the needs and issues faced by Mixed White and Black Caribbean children
• Teacher perceptions and expectations shape mixed White/ Black Caribbean children's experiences at school |

Lewis & Demie, 2018	White and Black Caribbean pupils 2) To what extent are schools meeting their needs? 3) What are the implications for policy and further research?	mixed-race children from years 9, 10 and 11 (gender unclear). Exploratory discussions with parents to establish a list of common experiences; 20 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with professionals; 4 focus groups with children	• Mixed White/ Black Caribbean children's friendship groups.
A **Mixed**-Methods Exploration of Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem among **Mixed-Race** Adolescent Girls, UK. Austin et al., 2021	Mixed methods design. Aims: To explore if and how the school experiences and self-esteem of mixed-race girls differed from monoracial peers, and potential mechanisms accounting for differences in self-esteem.	PPs and data collection:= • Phase 1: 109 girls (M = 13.9 years), quantitative questionnaires. PPs were White (34%), Black (29%), mixed-race (20%), Asian (10%), other (5%) and Arab (2%). • Phase 2: 12 BMR girls (M = 14.3 years), semi structured interviews. Data analysis • Phase 1: inferential statistics. • Phase 2: thematic analysis.	Findings *related to mixed-race* (Phase 1): • The mixed-race group had lower self-esteem than the BME group. • The mixed-race and White group had lower ethnic identity affirmation than the BME group. • There were no differences between the mixed-race and White group, or mixed-race and BME group, for ethnic identity exploration. • The mixed-race group had significantly lower perceptions of friendship support than the BME group. • The mixed-race group had significantly more diverse friendships than the White group and BMR group. • There were no differences in levels of perceived discrimination across ethnic groups. Findings (Phase 2), four themes: • Unique identities

			• Cultural and friendship; accessibility and challenges • Microaggressions • Back to my roots / the role of the family
Not Quite White or Black: Biracial Students' Perceptions of Threat and Belonging Across School Contexts, USA. Rozek and Gaither, 2021	Quantitative. Aim: to assess students' perception of threat and belonging in school.	PPs included 1,399 middle school students (49% female / 7.8% BMR). Recruited across 11 schools (58% sixth grade or Year 7, and 42% seventh grade or Year 8) Data collection: Survey, 1-5 Likert scale on three scales: school trust, social belonging, and broad sense of self. Data analysis: descriptive statistics.	Findings: • Both monoracial Black and biracial Black/White students reported low levels of trust in teachers and adults in stereotype salient schools only. • BMR students had significantly lower levels of belonging than monoracial White students in stereotype salient schools, and lower levels of belonging than monoracial Black (and same levels as White) in lower stereotype salient schools. *not significant • In higher-stereotype-salient schools is that monoracial White students report the broadest sense of self, biracial Black/ White students report the next broadest sense of self, and monoracial Black students report the least broad sense of self.
When Gray Matters More than Black or White: The Schooling	Qualitative design.	PPs: 10 mixed White/Black biracial students aged 16-22 (3 male and 7	Findings (five themes related to): • region and school diversity – the region of the country and the racial, cultural and ethnic diversity

Experiences of Black-White Biracial Students, USA. Williams, 2013	Aim: to uncover the participants' perceptions of schooling experiences to offer a description of the schooling experiences of Black–White biracial students RQs: 1: What are the factors Black–White biracial students perceive as having an influence on their K-12 schooling? 2: What are the factors parents of Black–White biracial students perceive as having an influence	female) & 14 parents of biracial children. Data collection: Interviews. Data analysis: Phenomenological analysis	of the schools may influence BMR schooling experiences. • Peers – BMR peer groups changed over time. There were some restrictions and enablers in terms of BMR peer group experience. • Teachers - lack of awareness of the youth's experiences, their failure to incorporate knowledge of biracial people into their teaching of related curriculum, and their tendency to categorize biracial students as monoracial, specifically Black, thus affecting their perceptions of the biracial youth and their accompanying expectations. • Curriculum – the curriculum is not representative of BMR experiences and histories. • Socioeconomic status - biracial students who are of lower SES may have to contend with added challenges in school compared to biracial students in higher SES communities.

Title, author/s date	Study design / RQs / aims	PPs, data collection and data analysis methods	Findings
	on their children's schooling?		

Title, author/s date	Study design / RQs / aims	PPs, data collection and data analysis methods	Findings
Wrangling with the Black Monster: Young Black Mixed-Race Men and Masculinities, UK & USA. Joseph-Salisbury, 2019	Qualitative design. Aim: to explore how Black mixed-race men negotiate their raced and gendered identities, particularly in the context of schooling.	PPs: 28 BMR men, aged between 16 and 21 (half lived and schooled in the US, half lived and schooled in the UK). Data collection: semi structured interviews. Data analysis: Nvivo software and adopted a Critical Race Grounded Theory methodology.	Findings: • Through the White gaze, there is no space for BMR YP to be anything other than Black. • Through multiple consciousness, Black mixed-race men are able to identify the discourses and gendered racial processes that threaten to engulf them. • It is through hybridity that Black mixed-race men grapple with their construction as both the Black monster, and the light skin softie.

| Black Mixed-Race Men, Perceptions of the Family, and the Cultivation of 'Post-Racial' Resilience, UK & USA.

Joseph-Salisbury, 2018 | Qualitative design.

Particular focus on secondary schools - explores the way in which BMR men in the UK and US construct their identities. | PPs:

28 Black mixed-race males (14 from UK and 15 from USA) between 16 and 21 years old in 2014/2015.

Data collection:

Semi structured Interviews. | Findings:

• Parents are a source of post-racial resilience in BMR YP schooling experiences.
• Families position on the importance of schooling influenced BMR YPs experience and motivation at school.
• They prepare their children for potential "racial mismatch" by use double consciousness / the White gaze to share how the men will be identified by society.
• They challenged and confronted experiences of racism at school. |

Supplementary Searches

Title, author/s date	Study design / RQs / aims	PPs, data collection and data analysis methods	Findings
Understanding the Educational needs of mixed heritage pupils, UK. Tikly et al., 2004.	Mixed methods design. Aim: to investigate the educational needs of mixed	PPs • 14 schools (eight secondary, six primary) across six LEAs in England • 170 people in total, including 84 mixed-race pupils (68 of whom were White/Black Caribbean), 44 teachers, 35 parents of	Findings: • The attainment of White/Black Caribbean pupils is below average in secondary schools, and the attainment of White/Black African pupils is slightly below average. • The key barriers to achievement for White/Black Caribbean pupils are similar to those face by Black Caribbean pupils (socio-economic disadvantage, their

(Found in Joseph-Salisbury, 2017)	heritage pupils through a specific focus on the barriers to achievement faced by White/Black Caribbean learners. In particular: • The relative achievement of White/Black Caribbean and other mixed heritage pupils • The barriers to achievement for White/Black Caribbean pupils • How schools have overcome these barriers through successful practice which promotes achievement.	mixed-race pupils and the remainder were consultants from the six LEAs included in the research. Data collection: • Quant data from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and the National Pupil Database, provided rationale for the qualitative element. • One to one semi structured interviews and focus group interviews. Data analysis: using Nvivo qualitative software.	experience of institutionalised forms of racism, and school exclusion). • White/Black Caribbean pupils face specific barriers to achievement (low expectations based on stereotypical views such as fragmented home backgrounds and 'confused' identities, and racism from peers). • Mixed race pupils are invisible in the curriculum, and in the policies of schools and local educational authorities. • White/Black Caribbean pupils who achieve highly often benefit from inclusion in policies targeted at Black Caribbean learners, with whom they share similar barriers to achievement and with whom they often identify. • Specific barriers to achievement face by White/Black Caribbean learners are rarely explicitly addressed.

Black Mixed-race British Males and the Role of School Teachers: New Theory and Evidence, UK. Joseph-Salisbury, 2016 *(Found from author search)*	Qualitative design. Aim: to respond to the scarcity of literature focussing on BMR educational experiences. More specifically, to highlight problems in the teaching work force and consider potential interventions.	PPs: 20 BMR males, aged between 18 and 27 Data collection: semi-structured interviews	Findings: • Low teacher expectations, self-fulfilling prophecies and teachers handling of racists incidents act as barriers to BMR YPs achievement and positive school experiences. • Providing more Black role models, and more culturally responsive teaching could provide ways forward.

Appendix E, *Table of Studies' Scores Against Methodological Quality Criteria*

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria				
Qualitative	*Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?*	*Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?*	*Are the findings adequately derived from the data?*	*Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?*	*Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis, and interpretation?*
Black Mixed Race Male Experiences of the UK Secondary School Curriculum, UK. Joseph-Salisbury, 2017	Yes, although research questions not clearly stated.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Locating Black Mixed-Race Males in the Black Supplementary School Movement, UK. Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017	Yes, although research questions not clearly stated.	Yes	Can't tell – mentions themes but does not state analysis method	Yes	Can't tell

The School Experiences of Mixed-Race White and Black Caribbean Children in England, UK. Lewis & Demie, 2019	Yes	Yes	Can't tell – mentions themes but does not state analysis method	Yes	Can't tell
When Gray Matters More than Black or White: The Schooling Experiences of Black-White Biracial Students, USA. Williams, 2013	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wrangling with the Black Monster: Young Black Mixed-Race Men and Masculinities, UK & USA. Joseph-Salisbury, 2019	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell – does not include many quotes from participants	Can't tell
Black Mixed-Race Men, Perceptions of the Family, and the Cultivation of 'Post-Racial' Resilience, UK & USA. Joseph-Salisbury, 2018	Yes, although research questions not clearly stated.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Black Mixed-race British Males and the Role of School Teachers: New Theory and Evidence, UK. Joseph-Salisbury, 2016	Yes, although research questions not clearly stated.	Yes	Can't tell – does not state analysis method	Yes	Can't tell
Quantitative Descriptive	*Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?*	*Is the sample representative of the target population?*	*Are the measurements appropriate?*	*Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?*	*Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?*
Not Quite White or Black: Biracial Students' Perceptions of Threat and Belonging Across School Contexts, USA. Rozek and Gaither, 2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, 57% response rate.	Yes
Mixed Methods	*Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?*	*Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?*	*Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?*	*Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?*	*Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?*

A Mixed-Methods Exploration of Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem among Mixed-Race Adolescent Girls, UK. Austin et al., 2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Understanding the Educational needs of mixed heritage pupils, UK. Tikly et al., 2004.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Research title:

The School Experiences of Black Mixed-Race Young People and their Co-Constructions of a positive future: An Appreciative Inquiry

School Requirements:

1) Six to 10 BMR YP
2) A commitment of 3 hours per student
3) Minimal support from a key staff member to identify participants and distribute consent forms

Participant Inclusion Criteria:

Eligible participants are those that:

- Identify as Black mixed race
- Are between 13 to 18 years old
- Can commit to the study requirements (see participant information sheet)

This research aims to:

1) Explore the racialised school experiences of BMR YP
2) Empower BMR YP by illuminating their voices
3) Have a transformative impact on a school system

Contact Details:

If your school would like to take part, please contact me at the address below:

Arran Nurse

Trainee Educational Psychologist

u2190386@uel.ac.uk

Parent Invitation Letter

The School Experiences of Black Mixed-Race Young People and their Co-Constructions of a Positive Future: An Appreciative Inquiry

Contact person: Arran Nurse

Email: u2190386@uel.ac.uk

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to give consent for their participation, please carefully read through the following information which outlines what your child's participation would involve. Feel free to talk with others about the study (e.g., friends, family, etc.) before making your decision. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above email.

Who am I?

My name is Arran Nurse. I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist, training at the University of East London (UEL) and am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. As part of my studies, I am conducting the research project that your child is being invited to participate in.

What is the research?

I am interested in speaking to Mixed Black-White young people about their experiences in school and helping them to create a positive vision for the future. At the moment, there is not much known about the unique school experiences of this racial group, and this research aims to empower those who take part to make a positive change.

Why has my child been asked to participate?

They have been invited to participate as a mixed-race young person who:

- Has one parent who identifies as Black and one parent who identifies as White

- Identifies as Black mixed-race
- Is between 13 and 18 years old

What will your child's help involve?

- One to one Interview lasting up to one hour. This will be like having an informal chat. Questions will involve your child's experiences of race, their friendship groups, and their school experiences.
- Focus group interview expected to last a maximum of two hours over two sessions. This will involve other participants in the study and will involve questions that help your child to think about a positive vision for the future in their school.

Interviews will take place in school during school hours. Your child's help will contribute to answering the following research questions:

1. What are Black mixed-race young people's racialised experiences of their secondary school education?
2. How do Black mixed-race young people co-construct a positive vision for the future?

It is entirely up to you whether your child takes part or not, participation is voluntary and I will also seek their consent in a separate letter. Your child's input would be very valuable in helping to develop our knowledge and understanding of Black mixed-race young people's school experiences.

Your child taking part will be safe and confidential

Your child's privacy and safety will be respected at all times. Thinking and talking about your child's experiences related to race may be difficult. Your child does not need to answer all the questions, and they can stop or take a break at any point.

What will happen to the information that your child provides?

All identifying information will be saved in my University of East London encrypted Microsoft One Drive account which only I have access to. The interview recordings will be transcribed directly onto this same account, at which point the original audio-recordings will be securely deleted.

Any information your child provides about themselves, their family or anyone at their school will kept anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used to replace any identifying names that your child may use during the interviews. This means that no one will know the information that your child has provided for this research.

My research findings will be fully anonymised and will be shared with my university tutors, colleagues on placement and examiners who will evaluate the quality of my research. They could also be used in academic publications and journal articles. You are welcome to have a summary of the findings of the research once complete. Please let me know if you would like this summary.

Can you or your child change your mind?

Yes, you can both change your mind at any time and withdraw without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. If you, or your child, would like to withdraw from the semi-structured interviews or the focus groups, you can do so by letting the researcher know. If you withdraw, your child's data will not be used as part of the research.

You can also request to withdraw your child's data from being used even after you have taken part in the study, provided that this request is made one week after the semi-structured interviews, or one week after the focus group interviews.

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

The nature of the study could evoke emotive feelings related to race and racialised experiences in school and may cause psychological distress for this reason. Participants retain the right to not answering any questions that are too emotive and are allowed to take breaks or stop at any point during the interviews. Participants are directed to the below services for emotional or psychological support they need as a result of this study.

- *The Mix* is a support service for young people up to 25 years old. They offer support via a confidential helpline or online chat service. Tel 0808 808 4994
- *Mind* is a support service offering advice and support to empower people experiencing mental health difficulties. They offer information and signposting services. Tel 0300 123 3393

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Arran Nurse, Email: U2190386@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact my research supervisor Dr Pandora Giles, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ, Email: P.Giles@uel.ac.uk

Or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Trishna Patel, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ Email: t.patel@uel.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

Parental consent to participate in a research study

Title:

The School Experiences of Black Mixed-Race Young People and their Co-Constructions of a Positive Future: An Appreciative Inquiry

I have read the information sheet relating to the above study. The nature and the purpose have been explained to me. I have had the opportunity to consider my child's participation, discuss the details and ask any questions. I understand what my child's participation in the study will involve.

I understand that my child's participation in this study, and the information that comes from it, will remain strictly confidential. This means that only the researcher will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

By signing this consent form, I understand that I am freely and fully consenting for my child to participate in this research.

Having given this consent, I understand that I have the right to withdraw my child from the study at any time without any consequences or need to give an explanation. I also understand that if I, or my child, withdraw, I can also withdraw their data up to one week after both sets of interviews, before analysis begins.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………

Parent / Carer Signature

………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………

Researcher's Signature

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………

Date

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………

The School Experiences of Black Mixed-Race Young People and their Co-Constructions of a positive future: An Appreciative Inquiry

This project aims to: 1) hear about your experiences 2) empower you 3) impact your school experience

What will your help involve?

- A **1:1 interview** with me (a Trainee Educational Psychologist) where we have an informal chat about your school experiences (up to 1 hour)
- A **focus group** with other BMR YP where we have a talk about what a 'positive future' may look like in your school (up to 2 hours over 2 sessions)

Your help will contribute to answering the following research questions:
1. What are Black mixed-race young people's racialised experiences of their secondary school education?
2. How do Black mixed-race young people co-construct a positive vision for the future?

You have been asked to participate because:

- You identify as Black Mixed-Race
- You are between 13 and 18 years old

What will happen with the information you provide?

Your privacy and safety will always be respected. All information that you provide will be kept anonymous – this means that no one will know the information you have provided for this project. My research findings will be shared with my university tutors and examiners. They could also be used in academic publications and journal articles. The nature of the study could evoke emotive feelings related to race and racialised experiences in school and may cause psychological distress for this reason. You do not have to answer all questions and can take breaks whenever you need.

Contact Details:

Read this information sheet carefully and contact me on the details below if you have any questions. If you decide to take part, **you can change your mind at any time.**

Arran Nurse, Trainee Educational Psychologist,
u2190386@uel.ac.uk

Support Services

- **The Mix** is a support service for young people up to 25 years old. They offer support via a confidential helpline or online chat service. Tel 0808 808 4994
- **Mind** is a support service offering advice and support to empower people experiencing mental health difficulties. They offer information and signposting services. Tel 0300 123 3393

Appendix J, *Participant Consent Form*

Consent to participate in a research study

Title:

The School Experiences of Black Mixed-Race Young People and their Co-Constructions of a Positive Future: An Appreciative Inquiry

I have read the information sheet relating to the above study. The nature and the purpose have been explained to me. I have had the opportunity to consider my participation, discuss the details and ask any questions. I understand what my participation in the study will involve.

I understand that my participation in this study, and the information that comes from it, will remain strictly confidential. This means that only the researcher will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

By signing this consent form, I understand that I am freely and fully consenting to participate in this research.

Having given this consent, I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences or need to give an explanation. I also understand that if I withdraw, I can withdraw my data up to one week after both sets of interviews, before analysis begins.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……………………………………………………………………………………………………… ………………………………………………………

Participant's Signature

………

…………………………………………………………

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………

…………………………………………………………

Researcher's Signature

………

…………………………………………………………

Date

………

…………………………………………………………

Appendix K, *Semi Structure Interview Schedule*

Themes	Script / Questions / Prompts
Semi-structured Interview Schedule	
Introduction	*Thank you for agreeing to take part in my research project. My name is Arran, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist. As you know, I'm interested in the racialised secondary school experiences of Black BMR young people.*
	The interview today will last up to 60 minutes and there will be 12 main questions that we will be covering.
	The information shared today will be confidential, which means that it won't be shared with your teachers, parents, or anyone else in or outside the school; but if you share something that might lead me to believe you or someone else could be in harm, then I will need to pass on this information for safeguarding purposes.
	I will be recording the interview with the laptop here via Microsoft Teams software. This is so I can listen back to the interview and transcribe (write out); are you ok with me audio recording?
	After the interview, I will ensure the data collected today will be anonymised, all identifiable information removed, and the video recording will then be deleted.
	After all the data has been collected, I may use quotes from our interviews in my final report. However, pseudonyms will be used so no one will be able to link the quotes or data back to you.

	If there are any questions you don't feel comfortable answering or would like to come back to at a later stage, please just let me know. Similarly, if you would like to take a break or stop the interview at any stage, you just need to let me know. *You don't have to be an expert on anything we discuss today, there are no right or wrong answers, but the thoughts, opinions, and experiences you share today will be valuable contributions.* ***Do you have any questions before we begin?***
Rapport	What year are you in? / How do you find school? / Have you always attended this school? What do you like doing outside of school? / Do you have any ideas about what you'd like to do when you leave school? Or, what subjects are you planning to choose for your GCSE's? How are you feeling about the exams?
Racial Identity	• Tell me what you think about your race • Has your racial identity / how you choose to identify changed throughout school? (Prompt: why?)
Family Context	• Tell me about the race of your family • Is the Black and White influence in your life equal?
School	*Experiences* • What's it like being BMR in school? • Has anything in school made you feel proud about being BMR? • Has anything in school made you feel NOT proud to be BMR? *Friendships* • Tell me about the race of your friendship groups (prompt: have they changed throughout school at all?) • Tell me about other BMR people in your school

	Systems • How has school helped you to understand your race? (Prompt: is there any specific support for BMR? Do you think it's needed?) • What conversations about race do you have in school? (Prompt: who with?) Has this helped / hindered? • Tell me about BMR representation at school (Prompt: do you ever learn about the history of BMR?)
Debrief	*We have reached the end of the interview now. Is there anything else that you think is really important that you would like to share with me?* *How did you find the interview experience?* *Do you have any final questions?* *Next Steps: the next time we meet will be for the focus groups sessions planned on (dates). Thanks again for taking part, it has been really interesting speaking with you.*

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">Appreciative Inquiry Focus Group Schedule</td></tr>
<tr><td>Structure</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Content</td></tr>
<tr><td>Introduction</td><td colspan="2">Hello again everyone. As you now know, I am Arran. These focus group sessions are the second part of your involvement with the research project.

There are four areas we need to cover, and the aim is to get us all thinking about how we can create a positive vision for the future.

But first, I wanted to share the main themes which came from our individual interviews.

Do you have any questions before we begin?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sessions</td><td align="center">Goal</td><td align="center">Key Activities</td></tr>
<tr><td>Feedback themes</td><td>Do the themes reflect the participants voice about racialised school experiences?</td><td>Share themes from phase 1 data analysis</td></tr>
<tr><td>Discovery</td><td>Grounded observation to identify the best of what is</td><td>Participants will reflect and discuss the best of BMR YP's racialised school experiences.

• What do you value most about being BMR? Why?
• Describe a time when you were proud to be BMR in school
• What are the benefits of being BMR?
• When have you felt most valued as a BMR YP?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dream</td><td>Vision and logic to identify ideals of what might be</td><td>Participants are asked to imagine their community at its best and attempt to uncover common themes and aspirations of the group.

• What is similar about these positive experiences that we have discussed?
• What do all these opinions relate to?
• Which opinions that we have just discussed resonate with you most?</td></tr>
</table>

		• What have we learned about when BMR feel best / do best? Which factors made those experiences possible? *Apply *what if* to common themes. Write themes for participants to see e.g., White board*
Design	*Collaborative dialogue and choice to achieve consent about what should be*	Participants will construct provocative propositions which include the best of what is with speculation about what might be. • Considering these great moments about being BMR discussed last time, how could we make more of these high moments? • What might this look like? • Imagine if BMR were… BMR could… • What if we as a group could… • How could we collectively make a change in school to make x happen?
Delivery / Destiny	*Collective experimentation to discover what can be*	Participant plans and ideas to bring their provocative propositions to fruition are elicited from the group. Prompts: • In the design phase some of the great ideas you had were… How might we bring these about? • What could we do? • What could others do? • How could we let key people know? • How could we make change? / what needs to happen?

Appendix M, *Description of 5-D Appreciative Inquiry Cycle*

Appreciative Inquiry Phase	Description
Define	The Define phase clarifies the central question that will be discussed. For this project, it was about how BMR YP co-construct a positive vision of the future.
Discover	The Discover phase focussed on the best of what is. Participants were prompted to reflect on the best aspects of their racialised identity and favourite school experiences. They were provided with post-it notes to write their ideas, before sharing and discussing with the group and adding to a mind map which all participants could see. This method created space for the participants to formulate ideas and for me to clarify understanding and language before recording on the write board.
Dream	The Dream phase used the participants' vision and logic to identify ideals of what might be. With the mind map expressing 'the best of what is' for the participants, they were asked to uncover common themes and aspirations that underpinned their ideas. One of the prompt questions provided at this stage included, "what have we learned about when BMR YP feel / do best?".
Design	The Design phase elicited provocative propositions. Provocative propositions are statements about what the participants hope for or want to achieve. They bridge the former two phases (i.e., the best of what is) with speculation about what might or should be.
Destiny	The Destiny phase was collective experimentation to discover 'what can be'. It built on the previous phase by eliciting discussion about what could be done to bring their provocative propositions to fruition.

Appendix N, *Example of Initial Coding*

Researcher

Do you think race has played an important part in your school experience? So when you reflect on your whole school experience, do you think race has been a big factor in how it's gone for you?

Jett

I think it does play a huge factor in your interactional side. When your interactions with teachers, when there's confrontations, I think it plays a big part because, for example, if there's like an argument or a fight… a teacher will always perceive a black student as more angry or hostile and they'll tend to say, calm down, don't be angry, be the bigger person. But then, for example, if a white person was angry, they would kind of comfort them instead of condemning their actions, which is. I think that happens to me, but teachers, I don't think they perceive mixed race students as really white. I think they perceive them more as just blacks. So it's, like, I haven't been in any sort of fights because I wasn't brought up to fight people. But, yeah, it's a bit hard. If you're getting angry, it's always a teacher that would like kind of condemn your actions.

Researcher

So are you saying you think teachers treat you differently because of your race?

Jett

I think so, yeah.

Researcher

Okay. And has anything in school made you feel proud of being mixed race?

Jett

Schools don't really accommodate for mixed race people. They'll accommodate for black people, like black History Month and all that things but they don't accommodate for mixed race people because I think they kind of just categorise them with black

New

Race impacts interactions

Reply

AN   Arran NURSE

Inherent black aggression

Reply

AN   Arran NURSE

Racialised by teachers as black

Reply

AN   Arran NURSE

Difficult to cope with differential treatment

Reply

AN   Arran NURSE

Invisibilty in Black-white binary

Reply

Appendix O, *Example of Developing Initial Themes*

```
                              ┌──────────┐
                              │  Family  │
                              └──────────┘
                    ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
                    ▼                              ▼
```

Family help YP prepare for future racialised experiences

"...You're a young black boy and you need to like do all this to be successful" (Ash, p.2)

"my dad just says you have to be careful what you do, because some people are going to take it the wrong way or hate on it" (Saffron p.11)

"because they can educate you on it... it's helpful because they will explain certain things" (Olive p. 9) - a space which is free from judgement, unlike in society.

"my mum tells me how people are going to think" (Rusty p.4) says people are going to stereotype you...

Family help make sense of past experiences

"..there's been times when I got in trouble and my mum would tell me..."" (Ash p.5)

"she says people are going to look at your skin and think one thing straight away, you're not going to get the cnace to explain" (Ash p.14)

Initial thoughts about meaning:
- conversation is an important to help BMR YP explore their race
- it is important that this happens in safe / judgement-free places

School of Psychology Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION LETTER

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

Reviewer: Please complete sections in blue | Student: Please complete/read sections in orange

Details	
Reviewer:	Fevronia Christodoulidi
Supervisor:	Pandora Giles
Student:	Arran Nurse
Course:	Professional Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology
Title of proposed study:	The School Experiences of Black Mixed-Race Young People and their Co-Constructions of a Positive Future: An Appreciative Inquiry

Checklist (Optional)	YES	NO	N/A
Concerns regarding study aims (e.g., ethically/morally questionable, unsuitable topic area for level of study, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
Detailed account of participants, including inclusion and exclusion criteria	☐	☐	☐
Concerns regarding participants/target sample	☐	☐	☐

Detailed account of recruitment strategy	☐	☐	☐
Concerns regarding recruitment strategy	☐	☐	☐
All relevant study materials attached (e.g., freely available questionnaires, interview schedules, tests, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
Study materials (e.g., questionnaires, tests, etc.) are appropriate for target sample	☐	☐	☐
Clear and detailed outline of data collection	☐	☐	☐
Data collection appropriate for target sample	☐	☐	☐
If deception being used, rationale provided, and appropriate steps followed to communicate study aims at a later point	☐	☐	☐
If data collection is not anonymous, appropriate steps taken at later stages to ensure participant anonymity (e.g., data analysis, dissemination, etc.) – anonymisation, pseudonymisation	☐	☐	☐
Concerns regarding data storage (e.g., location, type of data, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
Concerns regarding data sharing (e.g., who will have access and how)	☐	☐	☐
Concerns regarding data retention (e.g., unspecified length of time, unclear why data will be retained/who will have access/where stored)	☐	☐	☐
If required, General Risk Assessment form attached	☐	☐	☐
Any physical/psychological risks/burdens to participants have been sufficiently considered and appropriate attempts will be made to minimise	☐	☐	☐
Any physical/psychological risks to the researcher have been sufficiently considered and appropriate attempts will be made to minimise	☐	☐	☐
If required, Country-Specific Risk Assessment form attached	☐	☐	☐
If required, a DBS or equivalent certificate number/information provided	☐	☐	☐
If required, permissions from recruiting organisations attached (e.g., school, charity organisation, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
All relevant information included in the participant information sheet (PIS)	☐	☐	☐
Information in the PIS is study specific	☐	☐	☐
Language used in the PIS is appropriate for the target audience	☐	☐	☐

All issues specific to the study are covered in the consent form	☐	☐	☐
Language used in the consent form is appropriate for the target audience	☐	☐	☐
All necessary information included in the participant debrief sheet	☐	☐	☐
Language used in the debrief sheet is appropriate for the target audience	☐	☐	☐
Study advertisement included	☐	☐	☐
Content of study advertisement is appropriate (e.g., researcher's personal contact details are not shared, appropriate language/visual material used, etc.)	☐	☐	☐

Decision options	
APPROVED	Ethics approval for the above-named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice), to the date it is submitted for assessment.
APPROVED - BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED <u>BEFORE</u> THE RESEARCH COMMENCES	In this circumstance, the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made <u>before</u> the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box at the end of this form once all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to the supervisor. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records. Minor amendments guidance: typically involve clarifying/amending information presented to participants (e.g., in the PIS, instructions), further detailing of how data will be securely handled/stored, and/or ensuring consistency in information presented across materials.
NOT APPROVED - MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED	In this circumstance, a revised ethics application <u>must </u>be submitted and approved <u>before</u> any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application. Major amendments guidance: typically insufficient information has been provided, insufficient consideration given to several key aspects, there are serious concerns regarding any aspect of the project, and/or serious concerns in the candidate's ability to ethically, safely and sensitively execute the study.

Decision on the above-named proposed research study	
Please indicate the decision:	**APPROVED - MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES**

Minor amendments
Please clearly detail the amendments the student is required to make
There is an indication in the Ethics Form that "*There is a chance that interviews may need to be virtual due to participant availability or if participants are recruited from different schools".* My decision offered here is on the basis that data collection will take place 'in the room' only and not virtually. I believe that there are ethical concerns about virtual group interviews that require further guidance from the UEL ICO officer. This is because of how MS Teams stores recordings when multiple participants are involved etc. If the student encounters difficulties with recruiting all participants in the same school for the data to be collected in person, and the alternative of virtual recordings proves to be the only option, I would advise that guidance is sought from our technicians and a relevant briefing shall be included in the docs appearing in the Appendices with regards to GDPR etc (as an example, how can you ensure that a participant attending virtually is not recording using a personal device?) what about cameras on? Etc) This proposed consideration is personal view and you may decide to seek the opinion of a second reviewer, if necessary.

Major amendments
Please clearly detail the amendments the student is required to make

Assessment of risk to researcher		
Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?	YES ☒	NO ☐
	If no, please request resubmission with an <u>adequate risk assessment.</u>	

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard, please rate the degree of risk:

HIGH	Please do not approve a high-risk application. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not be approved on this basis. If unsure, please refer to the Chair of Ethics.	☐
MEDIUM	Approve but include appropriate recommendations in the below box.	☐
LOW	Approve and if necessary, include any recommendations in the below box.	☒
Reviewer recommendations in relation to risk (if any):	I am satisfied that the researcher has acknowledged potential risks to self and has identified a suitable support network	

Reviewer's signature	
Reviewer: (Typed name to act as signature)	Dr Fevronia Christodoulidi
Date:	15/02/2023

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Ethics Committee

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE

For the researcher and participants involved in the above-named study to be covered by UEL's Insurance, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

For a copy of UEL's Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard.

Confirmation of minor amendments	
(Student to complete)	
I acknowledge the reviewer's advice and, should the necessity arise for the data collection to take place virtually, I will consult with my supervisor so that guidance can be sought from the data protection officer.	
Student name: (Typed name to act as signature)	Arran Nurse
Student number:	U2190386
Date:	20/02/2023
Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed if minor amendments to your ethics application are required	

Appendix Q, *Risk Assessment*

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" style="text-align:center">UEL Risk Assessment Form</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name of Assessor:</td><td>Arran Nurse</td><td>Date of Assessment:</td><td>19.11.2022</td></tr>
<tr><td>Activity title:</td><td>The School Experiences of Black Mixed-Race Young People and their Co-Constructions of a positive future: An Appreciative Inquiry</td><td>Location of activity:</td><td>Royal Borough of Greenwich secondary school</td></tr>
<tr><td>Signed off by Manager:

(Print Name)</td><td>Dr PANDORA GILES</td><td>Date and time:

(if applicable)</td><td>TBD</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Please describe the activity/event in as much detail as possible (include nature of activity, estimated number of participants, etc.).

If the activity to be assessed is part of a fieldtrip or event please add an overview of this below:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">The research will involve two phases to data collection: a semi-structured interview and a focus group interview. There will be approximately six to 10 participants. Interviews will take place at the participating school.

Interviews will ask a range of questions related to participants racialised secondary school experiences. Semi structured interviews will last up to 60 minutes and focus groups will last a total of approximately two hours (across two sessions). All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Teams recording software.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Overview of FIELD TRIP or EVENT:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Interviews will be conducted on site at the participating school in the first instance.</td></tr>
</table>

Guide to risk ratings:

Likelihood of Risk	Hazard Severity	Risk Rating (a x b = c)
1 = Low (Unlikely)	1 = Slight (Minor / less than 3 days off work)	1-2 = Minor (No further action required)
2 = Moderate (Quite likely)	2= Serious (Over 3 days off work)	3-4 = Medium (May require further control measures)
3 = High (Very likely or certain)	3 = Major (Over 7 days off work, specified injury or death)	6/9 = High (Further control measures essential)

Hazards attached to the activity							
Hazards identified	Who is at risk?	Existing Controls	Likelihood	Severity	Residual Risk Rating (Likelihood x Severity)	Additional control measures required (if any)	Final risk rating
Participant fatigued by the interviews	Interviewer / interviewee	Right of participant to ask for a break or terminate their participation in the interview at any point	1	1	1		1

Participant feeling uncomfortable or distressed about interview discussion.	Interviewer / interviewee	Interviewee has given informed consent and read the participant information sheet. Participant signposted to support services on the participant invitation letter and on the debrief form.	1	1	1		1
Participants feeling uncomfortable because of the dynamics in focus group sessions.	Interviewer / participants	Interviewee has given informed consent and read the participant information sheet. Participant signposted to support services on the participant invitation letter and on the debrief form. Researcher will be aware and conscious of group dynamics, use a reflective diary and have the opportunity to discuss observations with the director of studies (Pandora Giles) and the researcher's placement supervisor. Ground rules will also be set to try and ensure the focus groups are a safe space to discuss the sensitive topics that may arise.	1	1	1		1

a. **Parental**

Parental Debrief Letter

Thank you for consenting to your child's participation in my research study on the school experiences of Black mixed-race young people and how they may think about a positive vision for the future. This letter offers information that may be relevant now that your child has taken part.

What will happen to the information your child has provided?

The following steps will be taken to ensure what your child has told me in interviews is kept secure and confidential.

- All personal information such as names and contact details will be kept on a secure password-protected one drive account, that only I will have access to. The information will be destroyed at the earliest opportunity after the research has been completed.
- Following the interviews, I will type the recordings into a transcript. These transcripts will be stored on a secure one drive account, separate from the personal information. All identifiable information will be changed so that your child cannot be identified. Only myself and my supervisor will have access to these transcripts.
- The audio-recordings of the interviews will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed. The transcripts will be kept for up to three years, to allow time to write up the research findings in a publication.
- The information gathered will be used to write my doctoral thesis. Examiners, tutors and colleagues will see anonymised quotes of some of the things your child has said in the interviews, but no one will know they came from your child.
- You may request to withdraw your child's data up to one week after the one-to-one interview (before analysis begins), and up to one week after the focus groups interviews (before phase two analysis begins).

What if your child has been adversely affected by taking part?

It is hoped that your child will not find taking part in this research and speaking on these topics distressing. All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise potential harm.

However, it is possible that your child has found the interviews (or its after-effects) distressing, challenging or uncomfortable in some way as a result of talking about their experiences and hopes. If your child has been affected in any of those ways, they can access the services below:

- *The Mix* is a support service for young people up to 25 years old. They offer support via a confidential helpline or online chat service. Tel 0808 808 4994
- *Mind* is a support service offering advice and support to empower people experiencing mental health difficulties. They offer information and signposting services. Tel 0300 123 3393

Who can I contact if I have any questions/concerns?

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Arran Nurse, Email: U2190386@uel.ac.uk

Or

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact my research supervisor Dr Pandora Giles, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ, Email: P.Giles@uel.ac.uk

Or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Trishna Patel, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ Email: t.patel@uel.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

Participant Debrief Letter

Thank you for participating in my research study on the school experiences of Black mixed-race young people and how they may think about a positive vision for the future. This letter offers information that may be relevant now that you have taken part.

What will happen to the information you have provided?

The following steps will be taken to ensure what you told me in interviews is kept secure and confidential.

- All personal information such as names and contact details will be kept on a secure password-protected one drive account, that only I will have access to. The information will be destroyed at the earliest opportunity after the research has been completed.
- Following the interviews, I will type the recordings into a transcript. These transcripts will be stored on a secure one drive account, separate from the personal information. All identifiable information will be changed so that you cannot be identified. Only myself and my supervisor will have access to these transcripts.
- The audio-recordings of the interviews will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed. The transcripts will be kept for up to three years, to allow time to write up the research findings in a publication.
- The information gathered will be used to write my doctoral thesis. Examiners, tutors and colleagues will see anonymised quotes of some of the things you have said in the interviews, but no one will know they came from you.
- You may request to withdraw your data up to one week after the one-to-one interview (before analysis begins), and up to one week after the focus groups interviews (before phase two analysis begins).

What if you have been adversely affected by taking part?

It is hoped that you will not find taking part in this research and speaking on these topics distressing. All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise potential harm.

However, it is possible that you have found the interviews (or its after-effects) distressing, challenging or uncomfortable in some way as a result of talking about your experiences and hopes. If you have been affected in any of those ways, you can access the services below:

- *The Mix* is a support service for young people up to 25 years old. They offer support via a confidential helpline or online chat service. Tel 0808 808 4994
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Or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Trishna Patel, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ Email: t.patel@uel.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

How do Black mixed-race young people co-construct a positive vision of the future?

Opportunities for **learning**	- Are there opportunities for Black mixed-race young people to learn about diverse history and culture? - Are there opportunities for Black mixed-race young people to develop their resilience? - Is there a policy for how staff should respond to racism? - Have staff been offered anti-racist practice CPD? - Have opportunities been provided for staff to attend implicit bias / cultural awareness training?
Opportunities for **expression**	- Have opportunities been provided to resolve conflicts and hear the Black mixed-race young person's side of the story? - Are there opportunities for Black mixed-race young people to share their narratives and express their culture? - Can this young person identify in a way that is meaningful for them? - Have Black mixed-race been provided with opportunities to demonstrate their cultural knowledge? - Are there opportunities for Black mixed-race young people to learn about culture? - Are there opportunities for Black mixed-race young people to express themselves in safe spaces?
Opportunities for **representation**	- Are there examples of positive Black mixed-race role models in the curriculum and have their mixed identities been recognised? - Are Black mixed-race young people visible in data systems to enable tracking and monitoring? - Are there opportunities for Black mixed-race young people to connect with Black mixed-race or multiracial teachers?