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Moving racisms, shifting targets: An analysis of race in postcolonial Britain.

Abstract

In order to explore the contemporary manifestations and meanings of race and its operation within racist discourse and practice, this paper draws on a secondary analysis of two research studies. The first study involved young separated migrants seeking sanctuary in Britain and the second focused on the experiences of lone white mothers of mixed-parentage children. Here we analyse the everyday and structural racism experienced by each group in order to consider how seemingly different manifestations of race and racism are in fact linked together and in some ways dependent on each other within a postcolonial logic that reconstructs race and racism to serve shifting hegemonic interests. The discussion seeks to address the salience of race and racism in contemporary Britain and how this interrelates with other social inequalities, such as migration status and family composition.

Racism/postcolonialism/asylum/mixed-parentage/multiculturalism

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Introduction

Historically, notions of blood and soil have been important to understandings of Britishness, defining both the extent of the territories' geographical borders and crucially who the British 'are' in racial and genealogical terms. Articulations of Britishness and notions of racial purity underpinning it have moved from a more exclusionary racialised image to one that is, on the surface at least, more inclusive of ethnic diversity. This paper aims to examine the salience of race in contemporary Britain by comparing and contrasting the experiences of two different groups – lone white mothers of mixed-parentage children and young separated migrants (footnote 1). These groups tend to occupy different spaces within the sociology of race and ethnicity and are not usually analysed in relation to one another. The motivation for this paper is that by comparing and contrasting the experience of these different groups, a broader picture can be revealed about the way in which racism manifests itself at the current time.

This is a particularly appropriate political moment to provide an analysis of race and racism in postcolonial Britain. Back and Sinha (2010) note how the government-invited, labour-led pattern of African, African Caribbean and South Asian migration settlement is at an end. Vertovec (2007) argues that the level of diversity in Britain today exceeds anything that the country has ever seen before. He employs the term 'super-diversity' to refer to the level and complexity of contemporary migration and argues that this is particularly visible in London. His analysis highlights the

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importance of taking into account a range of factors when seeking to understand the experiences of migrants, including country of origin, migration channel, language and area of residence. While processes of migration have become more complex than before, Vertovec (2007) argues that social scientists' and policy-makers' understandings of migration and multiculturalism in this country have largely been based on the experience of people arriving from the former Commonwealth between the 1950s and 1970s.

It can be argued that contemporary Britain celebrates diversity, increasingly insisting that racism is on the margins of society, an aberrant extreme space populated by the BNP or English Defence League. However, at the same time legal channels for migrants to settle in the UK are becoming increasingly restrictive and public concern about immigration is regularly voiced. Notably, when the candidates for Prime Minister in the 2010 general election took part in a televised debate, immigration was the first topic to be raised by the audience (BBC, 16.04.10). Concerns about resources such as social housing (Dench, Gavron and Young, 2006), access to healthcare and the availability of paid employment have been highlighted. Of significance to this paper, they often invoke territorial or even racialised beliefs, assumptions and concerns. Such concerns are sometimes exploited by far right political parties such as the British National Party (BNP). However, it is of interest to note that the BNP did not do as well as predicted in the 2010 general election (Roberts, 2010), suggesting a complex and changing range of attitudes and voting

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behaviour. This paper draws on two studies in order to present an analysis of the nature of race and racism in contemporary Britain.

The first study focussed on young separated migrants. It arose from tensions between the proclaimed universalism of policy initiatives such as *Every Child Matters* and the inequalities that young separated asylum seekers face (Dunkerely et al., 2006; Kelly and Stevenson, 2006). Healthcare access as well as sexual health and risk of sexual exploitation were concerns underpinning this research (UNHCR, 2004). Equally of concern was the changing politics of racism nationally and in East London that was targeting migrants as 'not belonging' in contrast to the claims on belonging and resources made by both post-war migrants and their often British-born descendents as well as the White British community whose inward/outward flows have historically been less controversial to British racial politics (Keith, 2008). The data created in Study A was placed against this backdrop.

The second study explored the experiences of lone white mothers of mixed-parentage children, focusing particularly on mothers' support networks. The starting point for this study was the suggestion from previous research that families from this background may face particular difficulties (including the experience of racism) and may potentially have less than optimum support networks. For example, research and official figures indicate that mixed-parentage children are over-represented in the public care system (DfES, 2007), and a high number of children in care come from families headed by a lone white mother (Barn, 1999). The study sought to gain more

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understanding about mothers' experiences and the formal and informal support networks available to them.

The mothers in the study were parenting their children in a context influenced by past migration and settlement of people from the former Commonwealth countries. The young people in Author A's research fit into Vertovec's (2007) notion of 'new immigration' and face a different set of experiences and legal constraints. Comparing the experiences of this group can shed light on whether racisms' disavowal and the adjoining celebration of diversity signal an increasingly tolerant UK, or a shift in terms of how racism operates. Despite the different starting points, some parallels can be drawn between the two original studies. Both sought to gain insight into the experiences of a potentially marginalised and stereotyped group. Both studies adopted a qualitative approach in order to gain insight into the research participants' experiences from their own perspective and the results were analysed using the same technique (see methodology section). The two pieces of research generated data concerning racism and the findings highlighted the way in which social inclusion and exclusion could be complex and multi-faceted. For the purposes of this paper, we sought to compare and contrast the experiences of the two groups studied by re-analysing our data to examine everyday and structural racism. Based on the data presented we argue that ethnic diversity has found a level of acceptance in Britain alongside racism. We argue that the seemingly different manifestations of race and racism reported by the two groups are in fact linked together and in some ways dependent on each other. That is, the apparent celebration of diversity within Britain

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is contingent on the racist targeting of migrants. Furthermore this celebration ignores the re-inscription of racism against those of mixed-parentage and their families. Before discussing the findings, we will briefly describe the methodology employed in this research.

Methodology

This paper draws on secondary analysis of two research studies (Author A, 2006 and Author B, 2007). Author A's data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and fieldnotes. In author A's study, fieldwork was conducted between July 2005 and January 2006. Interviews took place with 16 young separated migrants between 15 and 18 years of age, and one who was 23. Young people were recruited in the knowledge that an interpreter could be provided for them if they so wished. Six young people took up this option. Topics covered included how long they had been in the UK and what they thought of it, education, friends and peers, sex and relationships, education, encounters with statutory and voluntary services in the UK, housing, neighbourhood and accommodation; health systems, GP's and sexual health services, dating and meeting partners, employment, trafficking. Participants were invited to take part in the research at youth groups, counselling services, social areas of social services offices and colleges as well as education and employment link agencies. Fieldwork took place in the Hackney and Newham boroughs of London. Names were chosen by the participants themselves to reduce the likelihood of what they said being linked to who they are, as well as meaning they could

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recognise their comments in the research outputs. Interviews were between 60-90 minutes in length.

Author B's (2007) study explored the support networks of lone white mothers of mixed-parentage children. Interviews were conducted between March 2004 and January 2005 with 30 mothers who categorised themselves as lone parents. Interviewees were recruited from a wide range of sources including social services, the NSPCC, a regional multiple heritage service, support groups for black and inter-racial families, support groups for lone parents and snowballing. Research participants were drawn from a range of geographical locations including London, Manchester, Nottingham, Brighton, Bristol, Sheffield, Surrey, Hertfordshire and East Sussex. On a questionnaire completed prior to the interviews, mothers were asked about their ethnic background using the categories from the 2001 census. Ethnic identity and positioning was then explored in more depth in the interviews. The majority of mothers (n=25, 83%) described themselves as 'white British'. Within the 'white British' classification there was some ethnic diversity, including one Scottish and one Welsh mother. In addition, one mother described her ethnic background as White Irish. Furthermore, four mothers described their ethnic background as 'Any other white background' and wrote descriptions emphasising a mixed white parentage such as 'Irish Scottish Italian Spanish', 'Irish and English', and 'Spanish and East European Jewish'. The majority children (n=37) were described as Mixed White and Black Caribbean. A smaller number of children (n=11) were described as Mixed White and Black African, Mixed White and Asian (n=4) and Any Other Mixed

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Background (n=6). Interviews ranged from 50 minutes to 3.5 hours in length and generally lasted between 60-90 minutes. Topics covered in the interviews included mothers' support networks, the local area, children's school/ nursery, terminology and racial/ ethnic socialisation and experiences of racism. Names were changed by the researcher in order to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents.

Originally, both studies analysed their data through framework analysis (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). This is an inductive approach to analyzing qualitative data that involves identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting and interpretation. For this paper, the authors conducted a secondary analysis of their datasets. This involved re-looking at the data grouped under existing codes and a process of recoding according to the new categories of 'everyday racism' and 'structural racism'. This helped to inform an understanding of the manifestation of racism at different levels. Re-coding the data using the same categories for both studies allowed for contrasts and comparisons to be made across the two data sets. The data was then considered together and the significance of the findings are explored in the discussion section. This paper now moves on to look at the findings related to everyday racism.

Everyday racism

We use the term 'everyday racism' here to refer to the banal, ordinary, often local nature of routine racism. As Essed (1991:3) notes, everyday racism involves

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'systematic, recurrent, familiar practices' and 'socialized attitudes and behaviour'. Of course, the dynamics of everyday racism are often connected with structural racism which will be considered later.

Young separated migrants

In this section, young separated migrants report a type of everyday racism, predicated on their status as migrants seeking asylum. The racism experienced came from multiethnic individuals, amongst whom skin colour alone was not sufficient to mark oneself as 'outsider'/ asylum seeker. This is because asylum seekers like the local population had varying skin colours. Accent and difficulties in English were points around which young separated migrants' 'otherness' became marked. They talked about unfriendliness, harassment and hostility in the local area, which was one cause of the loneliness they felt, as professionals working with them also noticed. While experiencing racism, there was also evidence though that young separated migrants tried, and were successful, in forming friendships with other separated young migrants, as well as individuals who were born here and their families.

Ygrette said that she likes the language and the opportunity of studying but: 'Just because we are refugees, they really disturb us for making a mistake [in English]'. She said that a result of the hostility, one point of which was the way she spoke English, was that it was, 'Difficult to make friends at college. They think we are nothing'. She explained that she had made friends at college with some of those seeking refuge: 'the friends I have are from Cameroon, Congo and Iraq'. Despite

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outside hostility, Nora (18 year old young woman, Ethiopian) continued to attempt to mix with British born people and make friends 'because I like to speak English'.

Emma (17 year old young woman, Kosovo) described wonder and excitement at being in the UK:

Like the girls with hair like this! [gesturing upwards, slight laughter] And I go, 'what they doing' and I be surprised for everything, everything! And everything I be, you know... something new.

However, she found it difficult to make friends: 'Everyone is cold, everyone is, is doing his own business, they don't care, yeah.' However, Emma said that there were places where she could make friends. She went to a 'Young Mum's' group that social services put her in contact with where she met other separated asylum seekers and migrants whom she made friends with. At the time of talking to her she was sitting with a young mother who was a friend of hers from Burundi and another from Vietnam. The accommodation that social services found for her had young women from China and different parts of Africa. She had made friends with her housemates as well. She reported friendships with other migrants but did not mention making friends from the local community.

Like Emma, Skolo (17 year old young man, Sierra Leone) found it difficult to make friends and in fact described that he had experienced harassment. He said this was due to his accent, which both marked him out as not from the estate and - as his multi-ethnic peers correctly guessed - an asylum seeker. He said:

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...you know because most of the kids, when I went to the lifts, they always urinating there, and some kind of funny things, spitting right around. I don't like spitting...No, I'm just coming to the country, the way that I speak, you understand? So they normally provoke you, so actually, you are definitely going to have a problem with them.

Although Skolo enjoyed college, he found it difficult to make friends partly because of local hostility: "Well, I'm not doing nothing so I find it difficult when I sit at home". David Joe (17 year old young man, Nigeria) found difficulties in making friends like Emma and Skolo but he was also unhappy at home. He ran away from his original foster carers and was not made to feel welcome at school or in his local neighbourhood with his 'foreign' accent being seen as a particular issue. He did however make friends with a Black British boy who was born in the UK and his family:

Some people that I know here, so, just like friend is family, like erm, my friends, because I used to stay over my friends house yeah, so me and my friend now its like a family, all his family knows me like, so, that they don't even know maybe we're friends, just think like maybe we're brother.

The ill effects of neighbourhood hostility in East London combined with continuing uncertainty over the outcomes of their immigration cases, and the continuing impact of traumatic events in the past were reported as detrimental to mental health. One health professional stated:

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We had a young girl who was just...she's getting, she's withdrawing more and more, she is regressing, she really is withdrawing. She's not looking after herself, etc., and I said 'look, look, ask your social worker, about exercise classes, swimming, English classes' – she's not even been sent off to an English class she said...everybody here has concerns about this girls' deteriorating mental health, she's not speaking, she's losing weight, she's withdrawn, she's not making eye contact, she's having nightmares, and when she does get to sleep, you know she looks terrible.

Having highlighted some of the manifestations of everyday racism and notions of 'otherness' in the lives of young people seeking asylum, this paper now moves on to consider the experiences of the lone mothers.

Lone white mothers of mixed-parentage children

For the young separated migrants above, skin colour was not the first marker of 'difference', because of the multicultural areas of East London where the research was carried out. The mothers in Author B's study lived in a range of geographical locations in the UK, including diverse inner city locations and mainly white rural areas. It was found that for the mothers interviewed, their children's skin colour or hair texture and other visible markers could be employed within a racialised discourse to mark a socially ascribed difference between themselves and their children. Mothers' narratives indicated that racist attitudes could be revealed through looks, comments,

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and sometimes actual or threatened violence. One example of verbal racism was highlighted by Alana:

There was one incident walking towards Croydon High Street with the push-chair. Two guys had been walking along and sort of smiled, and then looked down, seeing my son who is obviously mixed race. And as they walked past they made some comment about him being a 'Nigger baby', things like that.

In this example, Alana appears to be initially approved of (as suggested by being smiled at), until her child's ethnicity is noticed. The employment of the racist term, 'Nigger baby' by these white men draws attention to the racialised differences between mother and child and conveys condemnation at her choice of sexual partner.

As well as facing social disapproval themselves (as reported in more detail in Author B, 2010), mothers were also in a position where they had to explain racism to their children. Miriam described the following incident that occurred when her daughter was three years old:

She said 'Mummy what's a Nigger?' I was absolutely horrified. I said 'Huh...where have you heard that from?' She was playing outside and children round here actually called her that. So I had to sit down and try [to explain] and obviously I wasn't expecting to have to sit her down at such a young age and explain to her how some people can behave.

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Mothers described taking care to minimize the potential for racism to occur by managing their children's environment, such as area of residence and school or nursery they attend (Author B, 2010). Additionally, they sought to provide their children with a strong self-concept as protection from racism. As another mother, Amanda said: 'Somebody else might have a negative image of them, you know, if I don't bring them up strongly enough to deal with it then it may knock them'. A further mother described how she performs role-plays with her son so that he is empowered to deal with racism if it should occur.

As well as name-calling, physical violence was reported by some of the mothers in the study. Jackie, a 37 year old lone mother of 5 living on a council estate on the outskirts of a multi-ethnic city, explained that she was waiting to be transferred to a different area due to the racism her family was experiencing. Her son Simon (who has an African-Caribbean father) had been experiencing worsening racism both at school and in the local area.

We're constantly calling the police out here...Got something the other day.

Some girl attacked him [Simon], called him a black bastard. It happens all the time, [he] comes in and someone's kicked him, he's got marks all over him. It's just an awful area, I feel sorry for him, I do.

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I've always talked him through it, I've said look Simon, you know, people will say these things because they're ignorant. It really doesn't matter. Because he was starting answering back, saying 'I'm not a Paki, I'm...' I said it doesn't matter what...It's just ignorance. I just ignore them now, I don't retaliate [*on the verge of tears*] I just leave them to it, I'm stronger than that. An important part of our faith is having patience. I just ignore it, get on with it, get on with life. It's them, it's not us.

The experiences of Jackie's family show how racism in the local area can severely affect the life of a family, and how it can be based as much on assumptions and visual signifiers as known facts. Jackie had converted to Islam and felt that some of the racism her family was facing was based on discrimination against Muslims. Jackie's experience is unusual in some respects because wearing the Niqab when out of the house she frequently experienced verbal harassment herself, from people she felt did not know she is white and English. In this complex situation her son Simon experienced racism as a result of perceived membership of a number of social categories (at various times he was abused for being black, Pakistani, mixed-parentage and Muslim). Interestingly, Jackie felt that Islam was a unifying force on her family, focusing on religion rather than race.

Some mothers, whilst suggesting overall positive feelings about their local support network, implied that forms of racism could also influence their social contacts.

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Jasmine described how she and her neighbour exchanged mutual practical support such as childcare and lending each other household items, but her racist comments about a man who lived across the road made Jasmine uneasy. She explained that 'she's not the type of person that I would sort of relay any fears or real concerns that I had about issues with the children, I wouldn't relay them to her'. Later on in the interview, when asked who had provided her with most support, Jasmine named the same neighbour. She explained that:

There have been times when money has been so tight that I haven't had any money for food for a couple of days. And she's been really good and she's helped me out with that and I've done the same for her as well.

This example points to the complexity of mothers' support networks, where they may be uncomfortable about people's racist attitudes and simultaneously reliant on them for support.

The perceived social significance of visible difference could also result in mothers feeling that their maternal competence was being called into question. Mothers reported experiencing this from some members of the black community, not known to them personally, who commented on aspects of their parenting. Illustrating this, Lori explained that:

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Older black ladies will always comment on your child. Like ‘those shoes’, ‘she should be in a skirt’, ‘her hair’. People have a big issue with mixed race children’s hair. Now I can comb it, I can manage my daughter’s hair and I have been taught to do it and I know how to do it. But I’m very conscious that if I go out and my daughter’s hair’s not done that judgment is going to be on me. If something happens in the street an older black lady will always comment: ‘Don’t talk to her like that’ or da da da, like I’m not capable of looking after her because I’m white.

Mothers also reported being perceived as being sexually available. For example, Toni said:

There’s kind of an assumption, I don’t know if it’s everywhere or just here, among black men and women that white women are easy. And that if you’ve slept with one black man you’ll sleep with any black man.

Some mothers described being approached by men on the street in a way that they made them feel uncomfortable (Author B, 2010).

As the above examples have illustrated, mothers expressed feelings of otherness from both white and black people. As well as being experienced from strangers, the way in which racism was sometimes found to sever relationships in the white extended family has been explored elsewhere (Author B, 2010). The above examples

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have shown that while also dealing with racism directed at their children, stereotypes that were felt to be directed at mothers themselves included being promiscuous and less competent mothers than black mothers (Twine, 2000). Within these circumstances, friendships with mothers in the same situation as them (other lone white mothers of mixed-parentage children) were particularly valued for non-judgmental support, empathy and shared experiences (Author B, forthcoming).

Structural Racism

In this section we shift the focus from everyday racism to what happens when one comes into contact with education and healthcare providers, immigration authorities and social and welfare services. This is insightful because the kinds of racism and social exclusion reported in the previous section exist within a broader context of how institutions impact upon people. By describing this it is possible to see how the suspicions, harassment and predicaments highlighted in the previous section are at times reinforced by institutions. While structural racism can be connected to institutional racism, where racism can unwittingly result from an organisation's ethos or practices and can operate in a systematic way (MacPherson, 1999), our focus is broader than a legalistic definition. Additionally, we use the term structural racism to incorporate not just unwitting practices but practices that intentionally exclude those from certain ethnic, national and religious groups, such as the asylum and immigration system itself.

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Young Separated Migrants

In this section we see how young separated migrants experience inequalities due to their migration status when in contact with immigration, education and social care services. In wider society, familiar racist tropes circulate about asylum seekers, refugees, illegal migrants and so on connecting them to welfare scrounging, crime and threatening 'our jobs' and also in present times; terrorism (Schuster and Solomos, 2004; ICAR, 2004; Greenslade, 2005; Marfleet, 2006). These tropes reinforce and are reinforced by the manner of provision of immigration, education, health and social care services.

Immigration legislation and the fear of removal were prominent themes in the research and were an important feature of the structural racism young separated migrants encounter. Li (17 year old young woman, Vietnam) is worried about what will happen with her case:

Still waiting, because they just accept me to stay here for 3 year and then when I 18 years then they... you know, I don't know, I have to wait...I feel worried... because I don't know...Sometimes I want to study more but I don't know, what I know, what my future is, so... I very worried about that.

The worry that young separated migrants felt about their cases meant that some felt less like taking part in activities they enjoyed, and increased feelings of social isolation that already existed in part because of neighbourhood racism. Zorro says 'I used to go youth club and play football. I really loves doing those things but I don't do them now cos I'm waiting for my answer from Home Office'. This fear of removal was

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coupled with some young separated migrants reporting they did not understand the complicated and bureaucratic nature of claiming asylum. Laura (16 year old young women, Congo) says: 'No, like I was just given it, like 2002, yeah, we received it – before that, we didn't have any... like leave to remain (cont) I don't gets as to how it works'.

The Everyday Racism section illustrated hostility directed at young separated migrants. This is repeated here within the institutional context of immigration, where societal suspicion about the 'bogus' nature of asylum applications is repeated in individual interactions with young separated migrants. Referring to an immigration official Zorro (17 year old young man, Congo) said:

There was a lady that um, the way they treated us was very stressful and there was a lady who, who spoke to me, she was talking to me, looking at me 'you're like a little liar, you're no, you know'. They didn't believe me.

They were just looking at me like a liar.

Lamps similarly adds: 'They don't believe what you say' (17 year old young man, Congo).

Young separated migrants gave various examples of wanting to pursue careers, education and university places. For example Li, a 17 year old young woman from Vietnam says: 'I just dream that, to go to university.' However, social services professionals and young people described a reluctance among some FE and Sixth Form Colleges to enroll separated teenagers. On enrolling at college Lamps said:

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The people who you meet when you go to register are very funny, especially those who, who are racist. When I went to register, when I just said 'asylum seeker', the reaction just changed, you know, the way they did things.

One social services professional noted how if a young person did not have a definite leave to remain, they would not receive state support even when a subsequent visa may be applied for as their indefinite leave to remain was drawing to a close: 'It doesn't qualify them to go off and get a loan or get any help from local authority' and adds 'sometimes I feel really bad when they've completed it [A Levels], they're saying, 'I wanna go to university' [and they cannot].

Young separated migrants reported problems accessing healthcare. The backdrop to this is a context where national controversy over so called 'health tourists' and welfare scrounging by illegal migrants and bogus asylum seekers is accompanied by legislative restrictions on rights to free healthcare for persons with insecure immigration status under The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Amendments) Regulations 2004. Hargreaves, Holmes and Friedland (2005) argue that this legislation reflects how aspects of healthcare provision have become a tool of immigration control. Suspicion about the eligibility to healthcare for young separated migrants impeded their access. Despite having the correct documentation

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from social services young separated migrants reported various cases where GP surgeries refused to register them. Sometimes, receptionists at GP surgeries would tell young people their surgeries were full, even though social and healthcare workers had identified them as having place for more registrations. Beth, a 17 year old young mother from Congo, reported that there were two surgeries that had vacancies but that there was one that would accept her and one that had repeatedly turned young separated migrants away: 'She [the nurse] gave me two addresses, but she say, 'Go this one, go this one, they not give you, you go this one they give you'.

Zorro (17 year old young man, Congo) says that when he went to hospital the hospital staff treat him nicely until they look at his documents and discover he is an asylum seeker when 'they fix their eyes at you as if you are some... some... Martian...somebody who came from space or something.' He says, 'I could have turned back and said 'I am this person you know?'. He continues, 'they look at you like you're not the same as them.'

On top of the difficulties accessing education, living without parents, discrimination in the provision of certain services and so on, young separated migrants reported difficulties in managing financially. These were compounded by them largely not being allowed to work. Zorro (17 year old young man, Congo) told us: 'The money is quite small. £63.50 every two weeks is quite small.' Aicha (17 year old young woman, Guinean) says: 'just eat, feed myself, I don't buy clothes with it'. Aicha explains a bureaucratic mix up over her getting benefits:

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I came to Home Office and then from here, they said I should go to Income Support. I'm supposed to be paid at Post Office. Yesterday I went there and they told me the documents were missing. I started crying. I could not understand what the woman was saying because she was just saying 'sorry'.

Young separated migrants were positioned differently in relation to formal structures to the lone white mothers and their children in author B's study because the latter group are British citizens. Author B describes the situation affecting lone mothers in the next section.

Lone white mothers of mixed-parentage children

Two key areas of formal structure where lone mothers had concerns about racism were education and social services. Turning first to education, mothers were concerned about how schools and nurseries deal with racism and whether the school pupils and staff were ethnically diverse. Mothers were also concerned whether schools had multicultural resources (such as books and toys) that showed positive images of black and mixed-parentage people in order to help their children to feel confident about their ethnic background. Furthermore, they were concerned that if their children were to experience racism in the school environment, that it would be dealt with appropriately by teachers. For example, Julie, a 45 year old mother described how she had been looking into finding a nursery for her daughter, which

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had involved visiting nurseries and speaking to staff. She described the response from one nursery as 'quite shocking really':

I mean one deputy manageress talked about 'half-caste' children. I thought I'm not sending my daughter here. You know it's things like 'half-caste' language that went out a long time ago and, especially professional workers, they should really know. In fact she did correct herself but, you know, that's too late really.

Mothers also commented on practices employed by some schools which they felt were positive, such encouraging children to talk about racism in the classroom. As well as concerns about their children potentially experiencing racism, some mothers' narratives suggested fear of judgment and scrutiny from formal agencies towards them, based on their position as white mothers of mixed-parentage children. When Heather, a 32 year old mother, decided to educate her son at home after he had been attacked at school in a racially motivated incident, social services visited the family. She said:

When social services came round here, I really felt as if I was being really scrutinised, really examined, that wasn't a pleasant experience. But they had nothing on me...they just assume that you can't do it, which is why all these mixed race children are in the care system.

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As in this example, racism can bring mothers into contact with formal agencies. Heather felt that there is a perception that white mothers of mixed-parentage children are less competent parents, which meant that social services would scrutinize her parenting excessively, in her view resulting in an increased risk of her son being taken into care. Such concerns could also prevent mothers from accessing formal support where it may have been needed. Toni, a 20 year old mother of two children said:

If there is a relationship breakdown or if the woman feels she can't cope, where is she going to go? Is she going to go to her health visitor and say 'I can't cope' when she already feels like she's going to be judged. And [they'll] assume she can't cope because she's got a mixed race child. She's not, so it's going to get to the point then where she really can't cope and that child goes into care.

Some mothers in the study therefore suggested that the stigma and scrutiny that women in their position faced could contribute towards the over-representation of mixed-parentage children in the care system (DfES, 2007). In terms of structural racism then, it is possible to identify both mothers' fear that their children would be disadvantaged by racism in the educational system and concerns over whether the school would deal with racism appropriately. In addition, mothers were concerned

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that where they were in contact with social services, their parenting would face increased scrutiny.

Discussion

The shift from the end of labour-led migration from the former colonies to the present stage of 'super-diversity' in many parts of Britain (Vertovec, 2007) has implications for the experience of racism. It cannot be assumed that old patterns of racialised exclusion necessarily remain salient at the current time. In fact, some successful minority ethnic citizens have publicly declared that race is no longer a 'significant disadvantage' (Mirza, 2010). Such proclamations can be linked to theoretical and empirical debates about whether a 'post-race' framework is possible for analyzing social life (Nyak, 2006). The findings presented in this paper suggest that rather than having moved beyond race, we have witnessed the emergence of new and more complex axes of inclusion and exclusion. The analysis of the experiences of both groups suggests that ethnic diversity has found a level of acceptance in Britain alongside racism.

In Britain we see both greater attention to universal/ liberal (rather than racial) equality in the domestic sphere (as exemplified by the creation of the Equality and Human Rights Commission under the Equality Act 2006) combined with attention to strengthening immigration boundaries and the policing of entitlement to welfare and health care from within. In policymaking circles, within parliamentary parties and even

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in the public political pronouncements of the BNP, colour and biological markers of racial difference are disavowed, whilst sections of the media and corporate multiculturalism celebrate 'beige Britain'. Fortier (2008) reports that racially ambiguous faces are presented in the media as faces of contemporary Britishness; the face of the millennium. The growing number of interracial families and the celebration of interracial heritage has been suggested to imply that Britain is largely racially tolerant and, by extension, 'post race' (Ali, 2003). On the other hand, the portrayal of racial mixing, while initially seeming positive, can actually be showing the 'naturalness' of race (Fortier, 2008). Furthermore, the experiences reported by members of interracial families in this paper and in previous research (Alibhai-Brown, 2001; Tizard and Phoenix, 2002) illustrate that racism remains an issue. The celebration of 'beige Britain' or of Britain's supposedly growing post-race society helps legitimize the idea that because there is no overt focus on colour, there is no racism. Politicians from the BNP, to the Conservatives, to the Lib Dems, to UKIP and Labour (footnote 2) argue that immigration rather than colour is the issue so that racism is disavowed while fermenting antagonisms between different racialised groups at more local level. This plays on familiar themes of danger and resource deprivation to split communities and maintain rule.

It is notable that the research involving lone mothers generated more data about everyday racism, while the research on separated young migrants generated more data on structural racism. While physical markers of difference, as well as the

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stereotypes they are used to symbolize, seemed of importance in relation to the experiences of the lone mothers, the importance of such differences is not immediately apparent in relation to the young migrants. Here, the formal reason for exclusion is immigration status even if underlying antagonisms related to 'colour' may exist for some. Resident in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, the everyday racism they encountered appeared to be primarily related to their position as asylum seekers or undocumented migrants, rather than the fact that they were ethnic minorities *per se*. It is likely that media portrayals of asylum seekers and the frequent conflation with words like 'bogus' could have contributed to hostility at a local level (Greenslade 2005). Gilroy (2004) argues that under colonialism and postcolonialism racism has been used politically by nation-states for their own needs and further, that even if disavowed, the social construction of race and political targeting of who it 'others' and on what terms reflects ruling priorities. Under postwar racism the entitlements and belonging of the immigrants from the former colonies were, and in some senses continue to be, questioned in contrast to the White British. However, in this contemporary and postcolonial moment, racism can also draw upon the resentments that some minority ethnic residents have towards asylum seekers and other potential immigrants. For example, Ray, Hudson and Phillips (2008) found that Black Caribbean and white British residents were to some extent united in a discourse of entitlement and resentment that targeted asylum seekers and refugees. It seems that at the present time asylum seekers can be targeted because no overt reference to colour is needed when agitating against immigration in general. Limits on immigration

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and the resources that categories of migrants are allowed to access do not operate formally on the basis of skin colour, or even ethnic group, but on the basis of immigration status. This is even if they disproportionately affect non-white migrants (Back and Sinha, 2010).

Racism socially constructs racialised groups as both different and inferior to 'us' and of lesser worth (Gilroy 2004; Bauman 2004). Their 'otherness' is politicised to suggest that racialised groups are not really like 'us' (however the 'us' is constituted) and therefore they should have fewer claims to 'community' resources (Keith 2007). It has been suggested that too much diversity can undermine the solidarity on which the welfare state was founded (Goodhart, 2004). As was the case with postwar racism, stereotypes of the groups examined here relate them to welfare scrounging, over-consuming social resources such as housing and displaying a proneness to criminality, promiscuity or disruptive behaviour. In addition, newer stereotypes concerning terrorism are applied particularly to asylum seekers. These assumptions are used to de-legitimise the claims of those 'othered' to social resources whilst legitimizing what are posited as necessary forms of social control. The young people's experiences are shaped by a legally enforced system of exclusion which seeks to limit the number of people entering the country and therefore making a claim on resources. Whereas the lone mothers were concerned that they would face additional scrutiny in relation to formal services, the young people reported concern that they would be sidelined or

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denied assistance that they needed, for example in accessing healthcare or continuing their education.

An acceptance of diversity, and absence of overt discrimination by colour, is used to establish Britain's credentials as tolerant and not racist. Yet the apparent celebration of diversity within Britain is contingent on the racist targeting of migrants. Furthermore it ignores the re-inscription of racism against those of mixed-parentage and their families. The ways in which racism is able to adapt by at one point disavowing reference to colour or even a particular ethnic group, whilst at another raising antagonisms based on race with physical reference markers such as skin colour, is of note. In fact it is indicative of the way racism moves and shifts targets in postcolonial Britain today. Studying the two different groups here have allowed to us to consider how seemingly different manifestations of race and racism are in fact linked together and in certain ways dependent on each other within a postcolonial logic that reconstructs race and racism to serve hegemonic interests. At a time of economic crisis, and continued concerns about the availability and financing of resources such as social housing, education and health care, the ways in which racism has the potential to disunite communities and turn them in on each other are important to note and to counter.

Notes

¹ The term 'separated' rather than 'unaccompanied' is used when describing those seeking refuge, aged under 18, and not cared for by parents or their usual carer. This

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follows the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR, 2004:2) suggestion. Like the term 'unaccompanied' preferred by the UK government, this covers asylum seekers under 18 and cared for by social services because no parents or 'usual carers' are available to care for them. However, the term 'separated' also includes those separated from usual carers or parents who are either seen by social services as part of extended families and not requiring their support as 'unaccompanied', or whose care arrangements are unknown to state authorities. Author A's sample focuses on young separated migrants, including both those classified as 'unaccompanied' and those who are not. The only young separated migrants who at the time of fieldwork were not living under social services care as 'unaccompanied' were Lisa (23 year old woman from Burundi), Tony (18 year old man from Somalia) and David Joe (17 year old man from Nigeria). The rest of the sample had leave to remain in the country until 18.

² This is despite isolated politicians in these parties being more critical of racism being directed at migrants, such as Jon Cruddas.

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