**Negotiating Mixed Identities: Generations of mixed African Caribbean and white Londoners**

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**Abstract**

Children of mixed African-Caribbean and white British parents are currently one of one of the largest ethnic groups in Britain today. Far from denying any part of their heritage, they have fought and struggled to carve out a place in British society where they can finally be acknowledged for who *they* feel they are. And although identity is not always a matter of *total* free choice, individuals do have a *certain amount of choice* about how they define themselves. Thus, the mixed-parentage individuals in my research have chosen to construct their own identification, which for them, have become adequate idioms for locating themselves within the society. Through their strategic manipulations, they have made a significant step in liberating themselves from the institutional structures of “racial” categorisation that prevailed up until the 2001 census, and forced them into a “half-denial [denial of their white heritahe]” through inclusion in the “Black-Other” category of the 1991 census. They have effectively located themselves between their African-Caribbean and white British heritages, thus validating their existence, and declaring their visibility in British society. Thus, “mixed-race” individuals have *chosen* to be recognized as *visible* and responsible agents whose hopes, desires, opinions, experiences and actions matter.

This paper is drawn from research on mixed African-Caribbean and white British extended families in London. It examines mixed-heritage individuals’ understanding of *their* social positions within their families and within the wider society, and their innovative agency in constructing and establishing their “mixed” positions in British society. Thus, it challenges the suggestion that mixed-race children experience problems arising from an ambiguous ethnicity (see for example Benson 1981).