

a lot of loose ends¹

a research on the self-narration of biracial and mixed race people and music's role herein

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¹ Title derived from Loyle Carner's song "Loose Ends" on *Not Waving But Drowning* (2019).

**“Als het mij hier niet bevalt
Zwaai ik met mijn eigen vlag
Van een land dat niet bestaat”**

Sef in “Land Dat Niet Bestaat” on *Ik Zou
Voor Veel Kunnen Sterven Maar Niet
Voor Een Vlag* (2023)

**“Why did we ever believe home could
only be one place? When existing in
these bodies means holding many
worlds within us,”**

Daphne Palasi Andreades in *Brown Girls*
(2022)

preface

Before you lies my master's thesis, *a lot of loose ends: a research on the self-narration of biracial and mixed race people and the role of music herein*, written to graduate from the Engaging Public Issues-programme at Erasmus University Rotterdam. This is a deeply personal project I have worked very hard on. This personal aspect makes it scary for me to hand this in. From January through June 2023, this thesis was my baby, one I was fiercely defensive and protective about. I am also notoriously bad at letting go. Handing in this thesis *is* letting go — letting go of the project I've worked endlessly on, my academic career, my time as a student. However, whenever a door closes, another one opens. Or so they say.

There are a few people I would like to express my gratitude towards. Firstly, my supervisor, Willem Schinkel. Not just because he mentioned me in Sef's podcast, but also because he was a great supervisor. He was supportive, inspiring and motivating, whilst keeping us grounded and reminding us that this thesis is not the most important thing in the world. Secondly, everyone who's participated in this research for their time, effort and trust. Thirdly, my friends for their patience, motivation and love during this time. In particular, Lotte, Suzan and Lisa, for being fabulous proofreaders, and also, Sanne and Bob, who I met during this master's programme. This process would be harder if I did not have them to rely on. I am grateful for the way we motivated each other and allowed each other to ramble on about our frustrations, even when they were stupid. More importantly, I am happy for all of the fun. There were dogs with eyebrows, broken glasses, ruthless jokes, birds in fietstassen, and times where I thought we would get thrown out of the library's silence area. I love you both.

Lastly, I also want to thank my parents. It is cliché but I would not be here without them. This thesis would not exist if they were not my parents. I have always wondered whether my mother would be proud of me and if I was doing enough to keep her legacy alive, but I think she would be proud of this thesis. This is dedicated to her, the most important woman in my life, forever and always.

abstract

This thesis investigates the way in which biracial and mixed race people with proximity to whiteness in the Netherlands narrate themselves, and what role music plays in shaping these self-narrations. To do so, the music voice approach is used, which considers that individuals use music to apply meaning to themselves, larger social contexts and personal experiences by creating playlists (Van Bohemen, Den Hartog & Van Zoonen, 2018).

Through literature on mixedness, whiteness, music and self-narration, playlist analysis and qualitative interviews, it becomes clear in this thesis that biracial and mixed race people with proximity to whiteness often experience the feeling of being different, and struggle with their mixed identities. These feelings and struggle form a significant part of their self-narrations, but learning how to make sense of these feelings and struggles, and understanding their identities also are of importance in these narratives. It is within this sense-making that music influences their narratives, as it offers them a sense of connection to their family and/or heritage, understanding and/or belonging, which helps in forming their self-narrations.

keywords: Biracial; Mixed race; Music; Proximity to whiteness; Self-narration

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introduction

Growing up biracial without my mother strongly influences how I narrate myself. As the daughter of a white Dutch man and an Indonesian immigrant woman of colour, I have struggled with my identity since childhood. Despite growing up in an ethno-culturally diverse part of Rotterdam, none of the children I attended school with were of mixed race. My friends' parents were both Hindustani Surinamese, Turkish, Moroccan. No one doubted their racial identities, whilst I always felt like the odd one out. I was interrogated by both peers and adults: how was my hair so dark but my skin so pale, how were my eyes that shape but my nose 'so Asian', what was I really? The latter is a frequently asked question to biracial and mixed race people by those who are not (Paragg, 2017). Studies have suggested that this question often stems from the ambiguity of our appearances, our bodies operating within "rigid, racialized frameworks", and that this can create feelings of otherness and unbelonging (Bradshaw, 1992; Gilbert, 2005; Nakashima, 1992; Root, 1998; Song, 2003; Williams; 1996).

My appearance made little sense until people saw me with my mother. After her death shortly before my 13th birthday, I felt lonelier than ever. Like Japanese Breakfast's lead singer Michelle Zauner – who like me, is biracial and lost her mother – describes in her memoir *Crying In H Mart* (2021), my belonging always felt like something I needed to prove, and without my mother, there was no longer "someone whole to stand beside, to make sense of me". These feelings are not exclusive to me and Zauner. Even without taking the complexities of parental death into account, biraciality is something greatly struggled with. Literature has shown that biracial and mixed race people often feel confused about their racial identities, lonely, caught between categories or groups and forced to explain and justify their existence (Standen, 1996; Williams, 1996; Paragg, 2017). For the majority of my adolescence, my sense of unbelonging was so strong it made me avoid the undeniable influence of my biraciality and mother's death on my identity and self-narration. I was exhausted of having to prove my belonging, explaining my existence, others deciding I was not Dutch or Indonesian enough. As Zauner wrote in her memoir, my identity felt like "something that was always in the hands of other people to be given and never my own to take, to decide which side I was on, whom I was allowed to align with" (2021). I relate to journalist Kristin Wong's description of her experiences growing up biracial: "self-discovery seems pointless when people are just going to tell you who you're allowed to be" (2019). If not asked directly, I removed this part from my narrative altogether, or danced around the topic so hard the vagueness became an answer in itself.

However, whilst growing older, my biraciality and mother's death started becoming crucial elements in my autobiography instead of deleted chapters. Though the 'facts' and

events in one's life remain fixed, how we narrate them does not. After all, narrating the self evokes "shifting and enduring perspectives on experience" (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Music was a major influence in this progression. Like sociologist Tia DeNora argues in her book *Music in Everyday Life* (2000), music has the power to change our bodily composure, behaviour, time experience, and feelings about ourselves and others. It can be involved in the never-ending process of constructing the self, and the biographical, memory and emotional work this process entails. My music consumption plays a huge part in expressing, understanding and narrating myself. It has changed how I think and speak of my depression, romantic heartbreaks, and deteriorating friendships, but also my biraciality and mother's passing. When it comes to my biraciality, I have noticed I mostly gravitate towards the work of artists who are biracial or mixed race with a proximity to whiteness like me, and deal with unbelonging, (intergenerational) trauma and potentially, parental absence. British rapper Loyle Carner has especially been important here, but also Dutch rappers Sef and Willem, the aforementioned American alternative pop band Japanese Breakfast as well as British indie rock singer Nilüfer Yanya.

My deeply personal experiences led me to wonder how other biracial and mixed race people with proximity to whiteness narrate the self, and how exactly music plays a role here. I strive to place my own story in a greater context by exploring that of others, based on the following research question: **how do biracial and mixed race people with proximity to whiteness in the Netherlands narrate the self, and how does music play a part in this?**

theoretical framework

the biracial, mixed race and proximity to whiteness

Biracial people are often described as coming from two different socially designated racial groups (Root, 1996; Paragg, 2017). Meanwhile, mixed race or multiracial is a broader umbrella term including both biracial people and those coming from more than two different racial groups (Root, 1996). Bi- and multiraciality are struggled with by people who are multiracial as well as by those who are not. As mentioned in the introduction, studies have suggested that biracial people and those of mixed race can feel forced to explain and justify their existence, and experience feelings of confusion, exclusion, loneliness, and being caught between groups. Often, appearances play a role here. The ambiguity of these appearances can lead to these people not fitting in society's prominent "rigid, racialized frameworks", and as mentioned earlier, this can result in feelings of otherness and unbelonging (Bradshaw, 1992; Gilbert, 2005; Nakashima, 1992; Root, 1998; Song, 2003; Williams, 1996). Bi- and multiraciality are also struggled with in families. The complexity of biracial and mixed race families "disrupt the notion of instant familial affinity and understanding" (Bettez, 2010). Instead of finding belonging, there can be dissonance from one of their parents or entire families (Bettez, 2010).

However, it is worth noting this thesis centres the perspective of someone with one white parent, meaning there is a proximity to whiteness. When I speak about 'white' and 'whiteness' in this thesis, similarly to Gloria Wekker in *White Innocence* (2016), I do not use it as a biological category. Whiteness is instead better understood as a system wherein a white racial identity is "inextricably linked to power, status, privilege, and racial dominance" (Gallagher, 2007). I find naming this proximity important. Not just because I have such proximity, but also because whiteness is often treated as ordinary, normal, and the default (Wekker, 2016). Like Stuart Hall wrote: "naming whiteness displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself an effect of its dominance" (1992).

Whiteness is not something you just have. Historian Noel Ignatiev wrote in *How The Irish Became White* (1995) that Irish immigrants who came to the United States in the 19th century were not initially seen as white. They obtained that status by adopting the culture of oppression, specifically that of African Americans. In David Roediger's *Working Toward Whiteness* (2005), the subject of the Irish becoming white in America is also tackled. Roediger stated that race in itself is a messy concept, just as obtaining proximity or access to whiteness. He considered that messiness as a central characteristic of the racial order and wrote: "messiness contains its own uncertainties and dramas, and it is indispensable in

helping us encounter the harrowing and confusing aspects of how new immigrants learned of race in the United States. Such trauma was not that of being made non-white, but of being placed in between". Though this was written in the context of Irish immigrants in the United States, this could be applied in the context of biracial and mixed people. Literature has suggested there is a unique mechanism whereby they gain proximity to whiteness, which is through white ancestry like having a white parent (Bonilla-Silva, 2004). Similarly to the Irish having to adopt the culture of oppression, biracial and mixed people only obtained proximity to whiteness through this ancestry. This proximity to whiteness explains why some who are not 'fully' white are sometimes perceived as 'higher in status' than those without that proximity. The proximity to whiteness can grant traits like a "stereotypically white" name, or physical appearance (Garay, Perry & Remedios, 2022). These traits extend forms of white privilege (Bouchard, 2020). Here is also where that messiness comes into play. These forms of white privilege are not the same as actual white privilege. It is a proxy privilege, granted by white people in specific contexts. It does not necessarily exist outside these contexts and never translates to actual white privilege (Liu & Liu, forthcoming; Liu, 2017). Similarly to how white people decide who is offered these privileges, they also decide who is undeserving of those privileges. Despite their proximity to whiteness, biracial and multiracial people frequently experience discrimination, prejudice and dismissal from white people (Rockquemore, 1998). Navigating racial identity as a biracial or mixed race person with proximity to whiteness is complex in a white supremacist world. Often, these individuals are aware of this, and find ways to navigate their racial identities by resisting the white supremacist structures that reinforce discrimination, invalidation and harmful stereotypes (Jones & Rogers, 2022).

narrating the self

Personal narratives are often born from experience and shape those experiences. It transforms live events and experiences into a sequence of events whilst simultaneously evoking "shifting and enduring perspectives on experience" (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Narrating the self can aid individuals in constructing their identities (Kehily, 1995). It helps people to come to know themselves, understand personal experiences and navigate relationships (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Through narrating the self, people can obtain better awareness of being in the world, and gain a sense of their past, present and future (Edelman, 1989; Heidegger, 1962). It is key to understanding one's identity construction (Wasserbauer, 2016).

In shaping and telling these narratives, memory is an important active process constantly working through and reworking personal experiences (Kehily, 1995). Memory

helps to recall and look back at the past, whilst allowing the recreation of the past to discover and invent the self (Eakin, 1990). Narratives are always dependent on the context wherein they are told, as different contexts trigger different memories (Hollway, 1989). Parts of the narrative can be exaggerated, reframed, or eliminated completely, depending on the audience (Kehily, 1995). It can thus be seen as the showing of oneself for the purpose of testing whether the narrative seems right and can be understood by the one who receives it through a set of norms (Butler, 2005). As Judith Butler wrote in *Giving An Account of Oneself* (2005), when giving these narratives, people “act on the schemes of intelligibility that govern who will be a speaking being, subjecting them to rupture or revision, consolidating their norms, or contesting their hegemony”. The fact these tellings are heavily situated in time and place and dependent on an audience, make it so that audiences only ever engage with aspects of the narrator’s self. It thus creates multiple partial selves that are recognisable and validated in different contexts (Ochs & Capps, 1996; Kehily, 1995). This would mean that people do not have one autobiography, but multiple that their lives consist of wherein partial selves exist, past selves can be critiqued and identity is treated as “fluid and fragmented” (Kehily, 1995). Listening to these stories is also a way to be undone by someone else. It offers a chance to be bound to what is not ‘me’, touched, prompted to act, and let go of the “self-sufficient ‘I’ as a kind of possession” (Butler, 2005).

Narrating the self is also often done to record and validate the stories of underrepresented, marginalised groups, as demonstrated by feminist writers and researchers, for example (Kehily, 1995). These narratives can connect individuals and their experiences to larger social contexts, give meaning to these experiences and create a “vehicle through which the existence and experience of inequality can be described” (Qiu, Resman & Zheng, 2023; Graham, 1984). Centering the narratives of these groups challenge traditional bodies of knowledge, truth and reality, which is often constructed as if white men and white supremacy are the norm (Personal Narratives Group, 1989; Collins, 2000; Qiu, Resman & Zheng, 2023).

the power of music

As aforementioned sociologist Tia DeNora describes in *Music in Everyday Life* (2000), “at the level of daily life, music has power”. She states that music is connected to our composition of the body, our behaviour, our experience of time, our feelings about ourselves, others and situations. Similarly, anthropologist Ruth Finnegan found that music offers “a human resource through which people can enact their lives with inextricably entwined feeling, thought and imagination” (2003). Music functions as a mirror for people to see and understand themselves, but also as a storage facility for their values and self-perceptions

(DeNora, 2000). It can facilitate “the active assertion of self in increasingly unstable social circumstances of late (or post-) modernity” (Martin, 2005). DeNora finds music is often deeply entwined in the never-ending personal process of self-construction and the memory, emotional and biographical work of this process (2000). Music thus not only reflects their listeners, but also produces them through creating and constructing the self (Frith, 1996).

There are multiple ways in which music plays a role in narrating the self. For example, it helps individuals speak about where they are now in life, and the social ideal set for their futures (DeNora, 2000). It can guide in dealing with pain and trauma, or coming to terms with their sexuality (Garrido et al., 2015; Sutton & De Backer, 2009; DeNora, 2000). Music can offer a sense of understanding, inclusion and belonging by evoking memories, or through identification processes, and thus help individuals in speaking about these things (Schäfer & Eerola, 2020). Sociologist Peter J. Martin argues that music should matter in contemporary culture simply because of its effectiveness in giving individuals a sense of belonging and a secure identity in times of insecurity and rapid change, and its inextricable connection to the active construction of the self and a distinct identity (2005).

Music can also influence people’s moods. Literature has suggested that people use music to get in a certain mood, such as for parties, work, relaxation or sex (DeNora, 2000; Bull, 2000; Van Bohemen, Den Hertog & Van Zoonen, 2018). The power of music does not limit itself to the emotional and psychological as described as it can also reach the physical. It allows listeners to reconceptualise their bodies as a site of action: music can be so powerful it cancels out surroundings, drowns out what happens outside the body and prioritises said body instead (Bull, 2000). It can positively transform physical activities like cycling and sex (Bull, 2000; Van Bohemen, Den Hertog & Van Zoonen, 2018). As DeNora points out, music can be seen as “an accomplice of body configuration” offering motivation, energy and endurance (2000).

methods

This thesis's central method is the music voice approach developed by Van Bohemen, Den Hertog and Van Zoonen for a research on music's role in good sex for young people in the Netherlands (2018). Their approach partly is an adaptation of the so-called photo voice method. Here, members of communities are asked to photograph aspects of their daily social and political realities, and to discuss these photographs in interviews or focus groups to place them in context and give them meaning (Wang & Burris, 1997; Catalini & Minkler, 2010). The music voice approach centres individuals instead of communities, considers these individuals use music to give meaning to themselves and larger social contexts, and uses that music to help people in giving meaning to personal experiences by creating playlists (Van Bohemen, Den Hartog & Van Zoonen, 2018).

In this thesis, the music voice method is used to research how biracial and mixed race individuals with proximity to whiteness in the Netherlands narrate the self, and how music plays a role in this. I specifically want to focus on individuals with this proximity. My own experiences, but also the theoretical findings, create the expectation that the proximity to whiteness plays an important role in people's self-narration as this is a society in which whiteness is seen as the unproblematic norm. Based on both my own experiences and the literature, I assume the proximity to whiteness causes feelings of disconnect and confusion within biracial and mixed race people, which is why I chose to focus on these individuals as opposed to biracial and mixed people without that proximity.

There are no limitations regarding age or place of residence as such limitations did not come forward in the theoretical framework. However, to manage consistency, I attempted to reach mostly people in their twenties in the Rotterdam area so the interviews could be conducted mostly in person. I did so by approaching people through social media, but also by sharing an invitation to participate on my social media so people could respond themselves. This invitation was also shared by others so that a bigger audience was reached. Eventually, 9 people between the ages of 23 and 26 participated in the research. Most lived in the Rotterdam area at time of research, but there were also participants living in Nijmegen, Haarlem and Amsterdam. 7 of the participants identified as women using the pronouns she/her, 1 identified as a man with the pronouns he/him, and 1 identified as neither of those and was pronoun indifferent. To protect their privacy, their real names were not used in this thesis. Instead, fictional names were used. All participants signed an informed consent prior to participating, and were made aware they could withdraw from the research at any given time with no consequences.

The participants were asked to create playlists on Spotify with 5 to 10 songs they associate with their experiences being biracial or mixed race. All playlists are collected in

appendix 1. These playlists were then discussed in individual, open-ended interviews, done both online and offline. The aim of these interviews was to investigate how these individuals narrate the self, and what music's role is in this narration. In the study by Van Bohemen, Den Hartog and Van Zoonen (2018), the ambition was for their participants to reflect and think critically of their good sexual experiences through actively selecting songs and creating these playlists. In this thesis's context, it is envisioned that this method helps the participants to reflect and critically think about their experiences being biracial and mixed race with a proximity to whiteness, and music's role in those experiences.

results

realising the differences

early realisations

Feelings of confusion, loneliness, misunderstanding, and otherness were recurring themes in the self-narrations of 8 out of 9 participants. These findings thus match what was found in the literature (Standen, 1996; Williams, 1996; Paragg, 2017). From these narratives, it became obvious the realisation of these feelings generally first happened in childhood. Rosi, a 24-year-old master student with a white American father and an Indigenous Peruvian mother, realised she was different from her peers as a young girl because of her mixed identity. About her experiences of growing in Botswana, she said: “in Botswana, there was a very limited idea of what race was. [...] Everyone had a box, and I didn’t know which box I fit in.” Dua, a 25-year-old master student who is half Dutch and half Indonesian, also felt like the odd one out whilst growing up. In the diverse neighbourhood of The Hague she grew up in, she was seen as “de Nederlander” because of her white-passing appearance, but on her white father’s side of the family, she did not feel like that. She recalled: “all my cousins were blonde, blue-eyed and pale, whilst I tanned easily, had almost black hair and dark eyes. I felt like the weird little duck, and was treated as such. I was not one of them.” Dua’s white family members treating her as if she was not one of them, lines up with the theoretical findings: white people decide who gets to enjoy forms of white privilege, and in which contexts, and who does not (Liu & Liu, forthcoming, Liu, 2017; Rockquemore, 1998). She can express her frustrations about such memories through music like Tamino’s “You Don’t Own Me”. “This song captures my anger and frustration towards that side of my family because they attempted to decide about my body,” Dua described, “but they do not own it. It is my body, my identity, not theirs.” This treatment made her break off all contact with her family. As described in the theoretical framework, the complexity of the biracial and mixed race, can cause complex relationships within families and even detachments like these (Bettez, 2010).

Whilst Rosi and Dua grew up in more diverse environments, Gracie, Olivia, Taylor, Phoebe, Maisie, Milo and Maggie all grew up in predominantly white neighbourhoods where they quickly became aware of their mixed identities and began feeling different because of it. For Gracie, a 25-year-old methodological prison supervisor with a Black Surinamese mother and a Dutch father, and Olivia, a 25-year-old journalist/documentary maker who has an Indonesian-Dutch mother and a Lebanese-Irish father and grew up between the Netherlands and Canada, it was noticing their home situations differed from their classmates’ because of rules, eating habits and/or the language spoken at home.

Meanwhile, upon narrating themselves, it became clear that for Milo, Maggie, Phoebe, Taylor and Maisie, it was more appearance-based. Maggie, a 26-year-old freelancer with a Nicaraguan father and a Dutch mother, and Phoebe, a 23-year-old student with a Moluccan-Dutch father and a Dutch-German mother, began feeling different upon realising they did not necessarily look a lot like their white peers. “I was ‘the most ethnic-looking one’ in class,” Maggie recalled, “which was weird, because I did not necessarily feel that way.” Phoebe grew up in a predominantly white village in Limburg and of that, said: “we [her dad and herself] were the brownest people there. Now I think that is crazy, because there are people who are much darker-skinned than us.” Whilst Maggie and Phoebe came to this conclusion of being different in a more subconscious manner, the others were made aware by others. Milo, a 23-year-old student who is half Chilean through his mother and half Dutch through his father, remembered being bullied in his handball team as a child because “I was different”. He used to think it was because of his appearance as he has “a darker complexion than all those other boys”, and said this was the only time in his life where he thought he might be treated differently because of race. Reflecting on it now, he does not think it had much to do with him being biracial and more with being “extremely shy and very bad at handball”. Taylor and Maisie however look back on being made aware of their mixed identities differently, stating it were obviously racist sentiments. These led to strong feelings of unbelonging, confusion, and loneliness. Maisie, a 23-year-old student with a Black Surinamese father and a Dutch mother, remembered: “we always acted out scenes from Winx Club, pretending to be those characters, but I was never allowed to play Bloom², because according to my white classmates, I had ‘poop-coloured skin’. It made me cry a lot back then.” Though Taylor, a 25-year-old software developer and activist who is half Indonesian and half Dutch, understood it was racism she and their³ mother faced from white people when Taylor was younger, she did not understand the anger evoked by these experiences. It was not until they were older that they understood, and music helped in generating this understanding. Taylor cited Dutch rapper Fresku’s music to be pivotal here, especially the song “Donkere Gedachtes”. About this song, they said: “it showcases his anger about racism, but in a way that is understandable and relatable for me.” What Phoebe, Taylor, Maggie and Maisie narrated here, confirm what was stated earlier in the theoretical framework: having an appearance not fitting within the racialized frameworks can lead to feelings of otherness and unbelonging (Bradshaw, 1992; Gilbert, 2005; Nakashima, 1992; Root, 1998; Song, 2003; Williams; 1996). Similarly, Taylor’s and Maisie’s recollections of a very early exposure to blatant racism once again drives home the point that white people

² An Italian animated series about six girls who also happen to be fairies, in which Bloom is the white main character (Fandom.com, n.d.).

³ Taylor is pronoun indifferent and uses all pronouns, but mostly she/her and they/them pronouns.

decide who gets to enjoy white privilege and who instead is shunned, and treated differently (Liu & Liu, forthcoming, Liu, 2017; Rockquemore, 1998).

recurring realisations

Realisations as described above were not isolated within childhood. Instead, all participants except Milo had memories of realising they felt different because of their mixedness throughout adolescence and emerging adulthood. Here, appearances are once again of great importance, just like it had been for some during childhood. These 8 interviewees have all frequently dealt with strangers asking them questions such as “but what are you really?” or “but where are you really from?”, which is, as found in literature, commonly asked to biracial and mixed people (Paragg, 2017). For some, questions like these not only led to the recurring realisation of feeling different, but also annoyance. Olivia, Maggie and Taylor remembered random men in nightlife settings describing them as “tropical” or “exotic”, which they found dehumanising and objectifying. Taylor pointed out they are “not a piece of fruit”, whilst Maggie felt reduced to a harmful stereotype of Latina’s reduced to being merely sexual objects. Meanwhile, Phoebe often dealt with strangers seemingly refusing to accept her answer to their question being “Dutch”. “They would say: ‘but you’re not completely Dutch’,” she explained, “and I would always think: ‘okay, but what the fuck do you mean with that?’”

Maisie also recalled some moments where she experienced that recurring realisation because of her appearance. These mostly took place in high school “which was more diverse than elementary school, but still quite white”. She remembered being the target of her white history teacher’s racist jokes together with the only other Black girl in her class, and receiving a harsher punishment for a smaller misconduct. “I only filmed something shortly which got me expelled for a bit, but the white boys in my class bullying a teacher and making IS-jokes about him, only got a warning,” Maisie explained, “that made me wonder: is this because I am Black?” These appearance-based realisations once again show that proximity to whiteness does not guarantee an unproblematic access to whiteness and the accompanying privileges. That proximity to whiteness is, as Roediger suggested (2005), a messy thing. It does not protect from blatant racism, fetishization and stereotypes, and seems not to matter if you cannot pass as white appearance-wise.

Meanwhile, Gracie and Dua would both describe themselves as white-passing. In their narrations, both women described they were often seen as white by others. Questions about their ethno-cultural identity in relationship to their appearance sometimes made them feel more valid in their biracial identities. Their proximity to whiteness manifesting itself through physical appearance created some internal struggles, but others posing such

questions offered them some sort of confirmation that they actually looked different, and that their appearances lined up with their ethno-cultural backgrounds. However, for Dua, it only felt as a nice affirmation when it came from people of colour, mixed or not. If it were white people inquiring about her appearance, she always felt “like that little girl who was the odd one out in what was supposed to be family”. Throughout adolescence and emerging adulthood, Dua began experiencing this outside her family. It happened at school, internships and work, but it hurt most within her dating life. Dua reflected on two past relationships with white boys, where she was made aware of her appearance differing from their parents’ white ideal. “My first boyfriend’s mom repeatedly mentioned she’d always envisioned Thom coming home with a blonde girl,” she recounted, “whilst Kurt’s parents made me feel exactly like I did as a kid. Like a weird ugly duck that did not belong with the white swans, not good enough.” She found comfort and understanding within music. SZA’s “Supermodel” and Jensen McRae’s “White Boy” felt very relatable for her, though these were written from the perspective of Black women and Dua acknowledged their experiences are vastly different from hers. Songs about relationships with white men written by biracial women were even more relatable for Dua, specifically Mitski’s “Your Best American Girl” and FKA twigs’ “cellophane”. Listening to those make Dua feel like “there is a mirror being held in front of me”. She said: “hearing those songs for the first time felt like a gut punch. I finally felt seen.” What she described here, lines up with what DeNora wrote of the power of music: it can be a mirror for people to see and understand themselves (2000).

Most of these recurring realisations in these narratives were appearance-based. There were some other ways in which these realisations manifested that did not have much to do with appearances. Maggie for example noticed that she had a “very Nicaraguan rhythm” compared to her white peers: she starts her days later, has a more relaxed approach to life, and gets hungry later in the day. In school, the lunch breaks at designated times would make her feel different: “I found it difficult I had to eat so early in the day when I wasn’t even hungry yet.” The participants’ proximity to whiteness sometimes also caused a disconnect from their non-white sides, making them feel different from friends or family of that same background. Olivia, for example, began befriending girls in high school that were also Middle Eastern. On one hand, it allowed her to connect more with and grow more comfortable with her Lebanese side. On the other hand, those friendships also made her feel different. “They would sometimes remind me I wasn’t really like them,” Olivia said, “because I was ‘only’ a quarter Lebanese, not ‘full’ like them.” Growing up in the Netherlands and having Dutch as your first language whilst not being fluent in a certain other language, also caused some of the participants to feel different. Dua and Maggie both described feeling different because they are not fluent in Indonesian and Spanish respectively, whilst Gracie and Maisie were not taught Sranantongo as children because of the negative stereotypes

surrounding that language within their parents' generation. Both felt different from other Surinamese people because of this, with Maisie describing how she found it especially difficult around her Surinamese friends because "I would be the last to laugh if they made jokes [in Sranantongo] because it would take me much longer to actually understand the joke".

struggling

Most participants have struggled and often still struggle with being mixed and the described constant realisations of feeling different. These struggles played a large role in most narratives. Milo was the exception. He claimed to never have struggled with his mixedness. He figured that this lack of struggle stems from the fact he is "both strongly Chilean and strongly Dutch and very confident and comfortable with both". The common denominator within the struggles of the other participants, was the proximity to whiteness, further suggesting that its messiness creates complex internal dramas, traumas and struggles. These presented themselves in different manners for each individual.

disconnected from one side

Rosi, for example, was the only one who felt a very strong connection to her non-white side, and a disconnect from her white side. She assumed this disconnect was caused by multiple factors. Her father died when she was still a child, resulting in a lack of contact with her family on his side. Rosi also felt uncomfortable with her parents' meeting. Her father was in Peru because of the drug war, visiting her mother's hometown: "a Narco hub where everyone was making cocaine, flying it out to Colombia". This union makes Rosi feel like "the product of U.S. imperialism", and has caused her to leave out that she is also American whenever people she does not feel comfortable with ask about her ethnicity. "That's something I'd rather share when we know each other," Rosi explained, "I try to distance myself from it." From the way Rosi narrated this aspect of her identity, it became clear the American culture of imperialism and oppression caused her to struggle with the proximity to whiteness. It also illustrated how the complexity of biraciality and mixed race potentially cause disruptions within the familial context (Bettez, 2010). Furthermore, Rosi specifically pointing out that she only shares that she is also American, lines up with the notion that self-narrations are hugely dependent on the audience (Kehily, 1995; Butler, 2005; Ochs & Capps, 1996).

Meanwhile, some participants struggled more with connecting to their non-white side because of their proximity to whiteness. Gracie spoke of her mother trying to assimilate into

Dutch culture when she immigrated to the Netherlands. She rejected certain aspects of Surinamese culture, like the language, and did not pass it onto Gracie. As a teen, she resented her parents – especially her mother – for these decisions. This, in combination with her white-passing appearance, created a disconnect that made Gracie feel like she had to prove herself and legitimise being Surinamese. As pointed out in the theoretical framework, the feeling of needing to explain and justify your existence as Gracie illustrated here, is something found often within biracial and mixed individuals (Standen, 1996; Williams, 1996; Paragg, 2017).

Maggie had a similar experience. Her parents made the conscious decision to raise her in Dutch as she would grow up in the Netherlands. Because of this, not much of her father's Nicaraguan culture was passed on to her. This made Maggie feel “more Dutch than anything else” and when surrounded by other biracial or mixed people, she felt less mixed as she felt that “they were actually somewhat in touch with their non-white side”. Now that she is older, she described trying to weave elements of Nicaraguan culture in her life more through cooking and learning the language, but admitted that this is something she struggles with. “It feels performative and inauthentic,” she elaborated, “I hope that feeling lessens as I'll try more.” Maggie found that music sometimes offered a sense of understanding regarding this feeling like boygenius' “Not Strong Enough”. Maggie especially related to the lyric ‘always an angel, never a god’ in this song as for her, it encapsulates that feeling of never feeling fully home within one culture.

stuck in the inbetween

Whilst Rosi, Maggie and Gracie mostly struggled connecting to a certain side, others instead experienced the feeling of not being enough of any side and like they fell somewhere in between. “I'm not Black enough for Black people, but not white enough for Dutch people,” Maisie described, “I try not to think about this too much because it makes me sad, but I think I'll always have that feeling.” Dua shared a similar sentiment as she feels “too white for Indonesians but too ethnic for Dutch people”. She admitted to often struggling with feeling unsure if she truly belonged somewhere, and like Maisie, thinks this is a struggle she will have for the rest of her life.

Olivia experienced similar struggles. For her, being mixed is “grieving all the time”: it is a lot of picking, choosing and grieving for what you did/could not choose, and what could have been. A song that captures this feeling for Olivia, is Zac Brown Band's “Bittersweet”. “It's country, which is big in Canada, and a bit cringe,” she said, “but it embodies that bittersweetness of being proud of your roots whilst also having that grief and struggle.” Despite having grown more confident in her mixed identity, Olivia mentioned that she still

often wrestles with which side she can claim as she feels “not valid enough because I’m ‘only’ a quarter of everything”. She admitted to still often feeling lost and unsure of who she is because of this. From the way Phoebe narrated herself, it became obvious that being a quarter Moluccan was something she often struggled with. For white Dutch people, she is frequently treated as “not really Dutch because of the way I look”, whilst she felt uncomfortable saying she is Moluccan to people who are half or fully Moluccan. As to why, Phoebe figured: “it feels like I’m claiming something that might not even be mine.” She said she struggles much with describing herself because of her appearance whilst “only being a quarter Moluccan” and admitted: “I sometimes just don’t know what I am.” These feelings as narrated by Phoebe, Maisie, Olivia and Dua further underline what was found in the theoretical framework of biracial and mixed individuals often experiencing unbelonging, and being caught between groups. Their proximity to whiteness created a disconnect from their non-white side, whilst simultaneously not guaranteeing acceptance in white environments. Being made to feel as “not white enough” despite that proximity to whiteness only further proves that white people hold the power to decide who is deserving of the same status and privileges.

leaving things out

From most interviews, it became clear that the described struggles are not necessarily fixed chapters in the narratives of the participants. Gracie was the only participant who thought that her self-narration did not differ per context or audience. The others did find that the way they narrated themselves varied depending on the context or audience. As mentioned previously, Rosi described that she left out her struggles with being part American around people she did not feel comfortable with. Similarly, Phoebe, Maisie, Maggie, Taylor, Olivia and Dua also described either leaving out their struggles around people they did not feel comfortable with, or downplaying them. This tracks with the theoretical findings: depending on the audience, an individual can change or eliminate parts of their narration (Kehily, 1995). Maisie, Olivia and Dua all specifically mentioned that they had a hard time speaking of their struggles with white people, even when they were close to them. “I just feel like my white friends do not really understand,” Olivia explained, “but I also think they’re just not that interested in what I go through or feel regarding this.”

making sense, understanding and connecting

However, the participants who said they struggled with their biracial and mixed identities, have also all begun making sense of their feelings and struggles, and growing more

comfortable within their mixedness. Just like the described struggles manifested themselves differently for each individual, this was also the case for their sense-making.

talking through things

Speaking to others has helped most participants to make sense of their struggles and feelings regarding their biracial and mixed identities. Both Phoebe and Gracie said that talking to family really helped them to grow more comfortable within themselves. For Phoebe, this meant having conversations with her Moluccan grandmother about their family history and the war, which helped Phoebe understand what her grandmother went through, and make sense of the traumas imposed on her father and herself. Similarly, speaking with her mother about the choices she made regarding rejecting elements of Surinamese culture to assimilate more into Dutch culture, helped Gracie understand where she came from and make sense of her own feelings. She stopped resenting her mother for these decisions. “Having those conversations with my mother made me realise that whilst she did not teach me the language, for example, she did pass a lot of other Surinamese things onto me,” she said, “and I appreciate those things much more now. Those values and norms—they’re all distilled into me.”

For others, conversations with friends of similar backgrounds helped them to make sense of their feelings and come to terms with their mixed identities. This was the case for Maisie, who said these conversations help her especially whenever “I’m feeling sad about all this”, Olivia, Gracie, Dua and Maggie. The latter three all stated that befriending others of mixed race backgrounds, and speaking about their feelings and sharing experiences, helped them feel more understood. Of having such conversations for the first time, Maggie recalled: “I found that very interesting because it made me feel less alone.” Meanwhile, Taylor found a lot of comfort in specifically connecting with young people in the Netherlands who are also (part) Indonesian. In recent years, they have become friends with others of that background. Talking about their experiences, watching documentaries together and visiting things such as a pasar malam⁴ together, has given Taylor “a feeling of connection and community”. The fact they all stated they left some struggles and feelings out of their narratives in certain contexts, but speak more openly about them in others, also lines up with the theoretical framework suggesting that self-narrations are audience-dependent (Kehily, 1995). It also suggests that the self consists out of multiple partial selves (Kehily, 1995; Ochs & Capps, 1996). These participants have a self wherein their struggles regarding their mixedness are left out of the narrative or downplayed, but simultaneously one wherein those struggles *are*

⁴ An Indonesian night market.

important and shared with the audience they feel comfortable around.

For some, speaking to a professional helped with understanding their feelings and struggles, growing more comfortable in their mixedness and speaking of that. Dua, Taylor and Olivia all cited therapy to have aided them in this process. All three have Indonesian roots, and explained how therapy helped them to work through the intergenerational trauma caused by the horrors imposed on their Indonesian family members because of war and colonialism. Olivia and Taylor both viewed themselves as part of a generation willing to talk through these traumas instead of suppressing them with access to resources as therapy and willing to use them. “I want to break this cycle of trauma,” Olivia affirmed, “I don’t want to deal from a place of shame and fear like previous generations. Therapy provides me the tools to actually break those chains.” Similarly, Taylor explained: “therapy made me accept my experiences are different *because* I am biracial, and that there’s no shame in that. I’m allowed to struggle because of this, and go to therapy for it.”

growing comfortable alternatively

Speaking to others is not the only way in which the participants made sense of their mixed identities and struggles. Not speaking a specific language formed a struggle for some of the participants, but some said they are making the conscious decision to learn a language to grow more comfortable within their identities. Maisie and Maggie both mentioned learning Sranantongo and Nicaraguan Spanish respectively with their fathers’ help. Of this, Maisie said: “in high school, I began feeling as if a part of me was missing because I didn’t know much Sranantongo. Learning the language really helps me in feeling more connected to my Surinamese side.”

When the Black Lives Matter-movement gained traction internationally around 2020, Taylor and Dua began educating themselves on anti-racism and became more conscious of what it means to be of colour in a white supremacist society. Both acknowledged that their experiences being part Indonesian are not equivalent to that of Black people, but that this movement opened doors for them to understand their experiences and struggles through music (for Taylor), reading and watching documentaries. Both found the documentary *Indisch Zwijgen* especially important and relatable, which was also mentioned by Phoebe. Watching others delve into their ancestors’ history formed a way for Dua, Taylor and Phoebe to educate themselves on that history. It allowed them to feel more connected, and understand their identities more. Delving into their non-white ancestors’ history and their heritage also helped Gracie and Rosi to make sense of their identities, grow more comfortable within their mixedness and speak about it more openly. “Nowadays I know exactly where my Peruvian family comes from, and I’m able to trace quite far back,” Rosi

explained, “it’s not like this huge question mark I’m not able to get. I can talk about it much more and feel much more comfortable.”

making sense and connecting through music

For all participants, music has played a role in growing more comfortable within their mixedness. Though none would specifically say music changed or hugely influenced the way they narrate themselves, music *did*, in one way or another, help them all to make sense of their feelings and struggles, connect with their families, or feel a little less alone. Whether in a large or small way, or direct or indirect, music helped them all grow more comfortable within their mixedness. This suggests that music indirectly impacts the way they narrate themselves now, as all participants were open and honest about their feelings regarding and struggles with their biracial or mixed identities during the interviews. As the literature indicated, by offering a sense of understanding, inclusion, or belonging, music has the power to help individuals speak about complex personal matters (Schäfer & Eerola, 2020).

connecting to heritage and family

For Rosi, music is a way to connect more to her Peruvian side and heritage. Whilst growing up, her mother did not play much Peruvian music, resulting in a loss of connection for Rosi’s mother. Not wanting to lose whatever connection she has, especially whilst living “so far from Peru”, Rosi consciously seeks out traditional Peruvian music from her family’s region. The majority of songs in the playlist she made are Peruvian. Listening to this music allows Rosi to affirm her identity and express herself, whilst simultaneously making her feel more connected and offering “a sense of home away from home”. Similarly, Gracie’s playlist consisted of a lot of Surinamese music from singers such as Max Nijman, which she sought out herself as her mother did not pass much of that cultural aspect onto her. This music makes Gracie feel more connected to her roots and the country’s history, and more confident within her identity. “Though I don’t understand the language,” she pointed out, “I do mostly understand what the songs are about. It teaches me about my ancestors’ history and my roots, and gives me a feeling I can’t really explain.” Meanwhile, Maisie described music as playing a major role in exploring her biracial identity, affirming it and expressing herself. Her playlist consisted of songs from contemporary Surinamese artists – both in Sranantongo as well as Dutch – and Dutch artists. “These songs make me feel connected to these two very different cultures,” she said, “they make me feel comfortable and confident in my identity.” What Rosi, Gracie and Maisie described here, is an example of what was found in

literature: music can facilitate the active assertion of self, and is deeply entwined in the process of self-construction (Martin, 2005; DeNora, 2000).

Though there were no Moluccan songs in Phoebe's playlist, all 10 songs did strongly remind her of her Moluccan family. All had fond memories attached to them, and Phoebe associated these songs with her father, grandmother, aunt and other family members on her Moluccan side. "It's all songs with a lot of rhythm and soul, which I think is typical for my family, songs that have a lot of feeling in them," Phoebe explained, "I listen to a lot of white music as well, but I don't associate that super cold punk with my family." For her, music is a way to feel more connected to her Moluccan family, and keep her memories intact. Milo's playlist was also built on his fond memories of his family. Unlike Phoebe's decision to specifically choose songs reminding her of one side of her family, Milo selected tracks he associated with both his Chilean mother as well as his Dutch father. Spanish songs like Elvis Crespo's "Suavemente" and Oscar D'León's "Lloraras" remind him of "the fun birthday parties" with his Chilean family, whilst Dutch songs like Paul Elstak's "Rainbow In The Sky" and Doe Maar's "Sinds 1 Dag Of 2" take him back to "car rides with my dad". Like Phoebe, music for Milo is a way to feel more connected to both of his families, "especially when I'm feeling down". The fact that music helps him to lift his mood when feeling "down", lines up with the theoretical framework suggesting that music can positively impact an individual's mood (DeNora, 2000; Bull, 2000; Van Bohemen, Den Hertog & Van Zoonen, 2018).

finding comfort and understanding

For some, as illustrated above, music helps to connect to their heritage and families, and grow more comfortable and confident within their mixed identities. For others, music offers a sense of comfort and understanding for their complex feelings and struggles. As the theoretical framework suggested, music can guide individuals in dealing with pain and trauma, and offer a sense of understanding, inclusion, and belonging (Garrido et al., 2015, Sutton & De Backer, 2009; Schäfer & Eerola, 2020). This became clear from Maggie's interview and playlist. It consisted of songs making her feel "understood, like I wasn't alone in feeling that unbelonging". She acknowledged that songs like boygenius' "Not Strong Enough" or MARINA's "True" are not necessarily written about her experiences being biracial, but pointed out that her personal interpretation of the lyrics make them feel very relatable to her feelings and struggles. One song in Maggie's playlist tackles those feelings more directly, which is the Kinderen Voor Kinderen-song "Baklava Of Rijstevla". It is from the perspective of a young girl with a Moroccan mother and Dutch father, who struggles with feeling like she has to choose between two cultures and not knowing where she belongs. "I felt so seen as a kid when I heard this," Maggie recalled, "I remember hearing it for the first

time and thinking: ‘wow, others also deal with this? How does she know exactly what I go through?’”. What Maggie described here, is an example of how music can create a sense of belonging and understanding through identification processes (Schäfer & Eerola, 2020).

Maggie was not the only one who felt understood because of music. For Dua and Taylor, music is also a source of understanding and belonging, once again found through identification processes. Both participants experienced this in the music of artists of colour as opposed to white artists, some of them also being mixed. As mentioned earlier, an important artist for Taylor was Fresku, who is also biracial with one white parent and one from Curaçao. They began listening to him when the Black Lives Matter-movement took off. “That movement and subsequently listening to Fresku, kickstarted my journey of figuring out what it means to be mixed,” Taylor described, “his lyrics are relatable to me, and help me understand my anger and confusion as a mixed person. I’ve gotten a better sense of what it means to be mixed because of Fresku’s songs, and understand my feelings.” Meanwhile, Dua predominantly felt understood by songs written by women of colour, especially those who are also mixed with a proximity to whiteness like Mitski and FKA twigs. “Navigating womanhood is already complicated,” she explained, “but the mixedness makes it more complex, I think. Whilst I can relate to white women musicians like Fiona Apple, listening to twigs or Mitski, feels therapeutic. It feels like that mirror I mentioned earlier—I feel seen.” Coincidentally, both Taylor and Dua had the same song from the biracial Dutch rapper Sef, “Land Dat Niet Bestaat”, in their individual playlists. Both described how this song made them feel less alone, because they strongly recognized themselves in the feelings of and struggles with unbelonging portrayed in “Land Dat Niet Bestaat”. Sef’s exploration of not knowing where he belongs due to his biracial identity and feeling like he falls somewhere in between, made both Dua and Taylor feel understood, but also question: what do borders and flags mean when you are mixed?

Whilst Olivia also grasped a better understanding of her mixedness through music, and was able to “express herself in a healthier way”, music also helped to make sense of the past and obtain a better understanding of her (grand)parents’ experiences. The evoking of such memories is another way wherein music can offer a sense of understanding and belonging, as found in literature (Schäfer & Eerola, 2020). According to Olivia, making sense of previous generations’ experiences was “crucial in understanding my own mixedness, and becoming at home within it”. Olivia described not feeling very connected to Ireland, and not knowing much about the culture, since her Irish grandmother immigrated to Canada as a young woman “and never looked back”. However, the traditional Irish love song “Casadh an tSúgáin”, which she heard in the film *Brooklyn*, is important to Olivia as it made her realise and understand how much her grandmother gave up in the hopes of a better life in Canada. Guns N’ Roses’ “Paradise City” made her playlist for similar reasons, which she often

listened to during car rides with her dad. “As a little girl, I was already aware that my dad left a lot behind to come to the Netherlands, just like his mother did to go to Canada,” Olivia explained, “this song is about wanting to go home, and singing the lyric ‘oh, would you go home with me?’ with him, made me realise that he missed home, and that the home you make elsewhere does not feel quite the same as the home you left.” Music also helped Olivia to understand her mother more. Her mother spoke very little of her experiences and traumas being Indonesian-Dutch, which Olivia found difficult. She recalled her mother often listening to Doe Maar’s “Ruma Saja”, a song about “not feeling at home in neither the Netherlands nor Indonesia, and having to choose between the motherland and your roots”. As Olivia grew older, she began understanding why her mother often listened to this song, and how her mother felt. She said: “maybe that song’s lyrics are the words she simply cannot say herself, the feelings she cannot properly express.”

conclusion and discussion

Despite the different ethno-cultural backgrounds, upbringings and experiences of the 9 research participants, it became clear the majority of their self-narrations have similar overarching themes. With the clear exception of one participant, all other individuals spoke extensively on the recurring realisations of feeling different because of their mixedness, and their struggles with their mixed identity. In this part of their narratives, feelings of unbelonging, loneliness and confusion were thoroughly explored, which lines up with the theoretical findings about biracial and mixed race people often experiencing such feelings (Standen, 1996; Williams, 1996, Paragg, 2017). From the way they narrated themselves, it became obvious that the common denominator in those struggles was their proximity to whiteness, further showing how messy the concept of whiteness is as stated by Roediger (2005). This struggle manifested itself in a disconnect from a certain side for some, or the feeling of being stuck somewhere in between for others. Most participants stated that these themes only form a part of their self-narrations with audiences they feel comfortable with. As the literature suggested, self-narrations are very much dependent on the audience and context, and can thus vary (Ochs & Capps, 1996; Kehily, 1995).

The third and final overarching theme found in these self-narrations, was the process of coming to terms and making sense of their mixed race identities. This was done in diverse ways: speaking to others (family, friends, a therapist), learning a certain language, reading, documentaries, but also music. Whilst none of the participants specifically said music hugely influenced their self-narration, it did become clear that music helped them to make sense of their feelings, understand themselves and others, grow more connected to a certain side, and/or become more comfortable within their mixedness. The fact that music is able to do so, suggests that music indirectly does influence the participants' self-narration by subconsciously offering them the tools to speak more comfortably and logically of their experiences being biracial or mixed race. These findings underline the sentiment found in literature: music is connected to our feelings about ourselves, others and situations, can offer a sense of understanding and belonging, and facilitates the assertion of self in unstable social circumstances (DeNora, 2000; Schäfer & Eerola, 2020; Martin, 2005).

However, it is worth noting there are some limitations to this research. Out of the 9 participants, 7 identified as women, 1 as a man, and 1 did not identify with any gender. The only participant who did not experience recurring realisations of feeling different because of their mixedness or struggle with that, was the one who identified as a man, whilst all the others did experience such feelings and talked extensively about that. This could be a coincidence, but it does lead to wonder whether this difference could have something to do with gender. For future research, it might thus be interesting to improve gender diversity to

see whether it is a coincidence or not. Next to a lack of gender diversity, there was also very little diversity in the participants' ages. All participants were in their early or mid-twenties, and part of a generation that is very conscious of the social sphere and has access to resources like therapy, but also resources to teach them more about their mixedness and terms such as intergenerational trauma. In potential future research, focusing on participants who are older might be interesting, as they come from different generations that might be less conscious and less in touch with their feelings and struggles.

Lastly, my own position and identity is also of influence, and worth the mention. Obviously, I can not say this for sure, but I assume the fact I am also biracial with proximity to whiteness and of a similar age to all participants, did impact how much they were willing to share. I wonder if they would have trusted me with their very personal stories and experiences so much if I had not been a biracial woman in her twenties, and I do think the results would have been different if, for example, I had been white. It also became obvious that my relationship with music as illustrated in the introduction strongly differs from the participants' relationship with music. I assume this difference stems from the fact I personally have very little biracial or mixed people around me, and have no contact with the majority of my family. Meanwhile, all participants did have good familial relationships and/or mixed people around them. In that regard, it might make sense they do not narrate themselves through music in the way I do.

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appendix 1: playlists

1: Rosi's playlist

1. "Akanamali" - Sun-EI Musician & Samthing Soweto
2. "Hasta la Raíz" - Natalia Lafourcade
3. "Jola" - De Mthuda, Sino Msolo & Da Muziqal Chef
4. "Iluminar" - Poraguí
5. "Pachamama" - Beautiful Chorus
6. "Dead Sea" - The Lumineers
7. "Arbolito Divino" - Nick Barbachano

2: Phoebe's playlist

1. "Feels Like Rain" - John Hiatt
2. "Midnight In Harlem" - Tedeschi Trucks Band
3. "Somebody Please" - The Blazers & Donny Gerrard
4. "Blow Me Away" - Alain Clark
5. "Little L" - Jamiroquai
6. "If I Had Eyes" - Jack Johnson
7. "Sea Gets Hotter" - Durand Jones & The Indications
8. "Let's Stay Together" - Al Green
9. "The Sweetest Taboo" - Sade

3: Gracie's playlist

1. "Blaka Rosoe" - Lieve Hugo
2. "Like It Like That" - Pip Millett
3. "F.U.B.U." - Solange
4. "Chan Chan" - Buena Vista Social Club
5. "Zouk la sé sél médikaman nou ni" - Kassav'
6. "Eternal Flame" - The Bangles
7. "Adjossi" - Max Nijman
8. "Ine Miene Mutte" - Max Nijman
9. "(Sittin' On) the Dock of the Bay" - Otis Redding

4: Maggie's playlist

1. "Baklava Of Rijstevla" - Kinderen Voor Kinderen
2. "True" - MARINA
3. "Not Strong Enough" - boygenius
4. "Rosalia" - Juan Luis Guerra 4.40
5. "She's Always A Woman" - Billy Joel

5: Maisie's playlist

1. "Boeke" - Aptijt & Dj Sunil
2. "Ik Mis Je" - CHO & La Rouge
3. "BYEBYE" - Fmg & Equalz
4. "Blijven Slapen" - Snelle & Maan
5. "Snoepje" - Param4ryofin Mixey
6. "Nothing To Smile About" - Morgan Heritage
7. "Waterfalls" - TLC
8. "Karma" - Lisandro Cuxi
9. "soso" - Omah Lay
10. "PUNTO 40" - Rauw Alejandro & Baby Rasta

6: Olivia's playlist

1. "Yalla Habibi" - Karl Wolf, Rime Salmi & Kaz Money
2. "Kifak Inta" - Fairuz
3. "Put Your Head On My Shoulder" - Paul Anka
4. "Ruma Saja" - Doe Maar
5. "Het Land Van" - Lange Frans & Baas B
6. "Casadh an Tsúgain / Frankie's song" - Iarla Ó Lionáird
7. "Bittersweet" - Zac Brown Band
8. "Paradise City" - Guns N' Roses

7: Taylor's playlist

1. "Donkere Gedachtes" - Fresku
2. "Illusion Of Seclusion" - Photay
3. "Mayonaise" - Vieze Meisje
4. "Leaving on a Jet Plane" - John Denver

5. "When The Sun Shines Through" - Placid Angles
6. "Mixed Feelings" - NENDA
7. "Vrijheid" - Fresku
8. "Pa" - Fresku & Doe Maar
9. "De Grote Zon" - Spinvis
10. "Hujan" - Amber Nefkens
11. "Land Dat Niet Bestaat" - Sef

8: Milo's playlist

1. "Suavemente" - Elvis Crespo
2. "Tu Sonrisa" - Elvis Crespo
3. "Lloraras" - Oscar D'León
4. "Traffic" - Tiësto
5. "Sail" - Armin van Buuren
6. "Rainbow In The Sky" - Paul Elstak
7. "Sinds 1 Dag Of 2" - Doe Maar
8. "Where Is The Love?" - Black Eyed Peas
9. "So Much I" - Red Hot Chili Peppers
10. "The Real Slim Shady" - Eminem

9: Dua's playlist

1. "Land Dat Niet Bestaat" - Sef
2. "Your Best American Girl" - Mitski
3. "You Don't Own Me" - Tamino
4. "Supermodel" - SZA
5. "cellophane" - FKA twigs
6. "Geef Mij Maar Nasi Goreng" - Wieteke van Dort
7. "Djanger" - Nusantara Beat
8. "White Boy" - Jensen McRae
9. "mirrored heart" - FKA twigs
10. "Thursday Girl" - Mitski



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: a lot of loose ends: a research on the self-narration of biracial and mixed race people and music's role herein

Name, email of student: Stephanie van Tol / 464471st@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Willem Schinkel / schinkel@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: January 2023 – June 2023

Is the research study conducted within DPAS **YES -**
NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. **YES -**
NO

If 'NO': skip to part V.

- NO** If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? **YES -**
Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. **YES -**
NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). **YES -**
NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES -
NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES -
NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - **NO**
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES -
NO
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES -
NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES -
NO
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? YES -
NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES -
NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES -
NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES -
NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

As the research centres biracial people or mixed race people with a proximity to whiteness, it is necessary for me as researcher to know what their ethno-cultural background is.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

The participants were informed of the research aim before they participated and were given the room to discontinue their participation whenever they wanted. I also made sure that the participants knew they did not have to speak of matters that felt too personal or painful for them, and in the worst case, these things could be left out of the study. The participants were all informed of the research afterwards, and if they wanted, could read it.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

Speaking of some personal matters regarding their mixedness might be painful for some of the participants and make them emotional afterwards.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

In interviews done both physically and online through Zoom.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

8 to 12 people

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

Approximately 700.000 but it is hard to say for sure as mixedness is not necessarily registered.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

All recordings and transcript are stored in a password-protected folder in iCloud.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

Myself

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Weekly

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

Removing the actual names of the participants and instead, using pseudonyms and numbers (the first participant would be 1: PSEUDONYM, the second 2: PSEUDONYM...).

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Stephanie van Tol
Schinkel

Name (EUR) supervisor: Willem

Date: 17 april 2023

Date: 18 april 2023

APPENDIX I: Informed Consent Form (if applicable)

Information and consent form

Thesis on biracial / mixed race experiences & music

Introduction

I am Stephanie van Tol and I am writing my master thesis within the Engaging Public Issues-programme at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I am conducting research on the experiences of biracial and mixed race people related to music.

I will explain the study below. If you have any questions, please ask me. While reading, you can mark parts of the text that are unclear to you.

If you want to participate in the study, you can indicate this at the end of this form.

What is the research about?

The research is about the way in which biracial and mixed race people narrate themselves and their own experiences, and what role music plays in this narration.

Why are we asking you to participate?

We ask you to participate because your experiences as a biracial / mixed race person help us to learn more about the ways in which these individuals navigate identity and what role music plays here.

What can you expect?

If you participate in this study, you participate by creating a playlist that you associate with your experiences and an interview that lasts approximately 30 minutes. If you do not want to answer a question during the interview, you are not required to do so. I will make an audio recording of the conversation.

You decide whether to participate

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can stop at any time and would not need to provide any explanation.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

During the interview, personal questions will be asked about potentially upsetting events you may have experienced. These may trigger unpleasant memories and emotions. You may therefore wish to invite a close friend or family member to attend the interview, or to pause the interview.

What data will I ask you to provide?

I will store your data so that I can be in contact with you. For the study, I will also need other data from you.

During the interview, the following personal data will be collected from you: name, age, gender, audio recording, occupation, cultural / ethnic background and sentiments about / feelings about / opinions about your experiences as a biracial / mixed race person.

Who can see your data?

- I store all your data securely.
- Recordings are transcribed. Your name is replaced with a made-up name. Your name will be stored separately from the answers and transcription.
- I may use your specific answers in the thesis. If your answer can be traced to you or we would like to mention your name, we will ask your permission first.

How long will your personal data be stored?

Your data will be retained for a minimum of 10 years. We retain the data so that other researchers have the opportunity to verify that the research was conducted correctly.

Using your data for new research

(Part of) the data I collect may be useful in pseudonymised form, for example for educational purposes and future research, including in very different research areas. Therefore, in the consent form I ask you to give us permission to use your (personal) data [excluding name, recordings] (not directly traceable to you) for follow-up or other scientific research.

What happens with the results of the study?

You may indicate if you would like to receive the thesis.

Do you have questions about the study?

If you have any questions about the study or your privacy rights, such as accessing, changing, deleting, or updating your data, please contact me.

Name: Stephanie van Tol
Phone number: +31 6 11307922
Email: stephanieeeeet@gmail.com

Do you have a complaint or concerns about your privacy? Please email the Data Protection Officer (fg@eur.nl) or visit www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl. (T: 088 - 1805250)

Do you regret your participation?

You may regret your participation. Even after participating, you can still stop. Please indicate this by contacting me. I will delete your data. Sometimes we need to keep your data so that, for example, the integrity of the study can be checked.

Declaration of Consent

I have read the information letter. I understand what the study is about and what data will be collected from me. I was able to ask questions as well. My questions were adequately answered. I know that I am allowed to stop at any time.

By signing this form, I

1. consent to participate in this research.
2. consent to the use of my personal data;
3. confirm that I am at least 18 years of
4. understand that participating in this research is completely voluntary and that I can stop at any time;
and
5. understand that my data will be anonymised for publication, educational purposes and further research.

Check the boxes below if you consent to this.

Required for research participation,

Data [about specify].

I consent to the researcher's collection, use and retention of the aforementioned data

Audio recording

I consent to [the interview] being audio recorded.

Name of participant:

Participant's signature:

Date:

You will receive a copy of the complete information and consent form.