

**Acculturation of young Mauritian people
of Chagossian origin in the UK:
negotiating living in the host society**

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Abstract

This study explored the acculturation of adolescents of Mauritian-Chagossian origin, who had migrated to the south-east of England between 2002 and 2011. It focused on the tensions between participants' perceptions of 'home' and the host society. This was done by examining their feelings about their families' forced displacement from Chagos, their past life in Mauritius, and their school experiences in England, given that school environments are important sites of socialisation. The aim of the study was to contribute to an understanding of the experiences of this under-researched community's migration experiences.

Participants in this study, born in Mauritius and with at least one Chagossian parent and/or grandparent, were aged between 16 and 19 and were in full-time education. A qualitative approach was used in order to capture the perspectives of the young people, with data gathered from narrative accounts through individual interviews.

The findings indicate that for all of the participants, school settings were seen as sites of tension, with one of their biggest challenges being a perceived lack of proficiency in English. The data suggests different experiences, according to whether the participants arrived as part of the main migration of people of Chagossian origin, or before and after this influx. While all participants shared similar positive experiences, such as feelings of being cared for by school staff, perceptions of negative stereotyping, prejudice and feelings of being unwelcome were reported by those who arrived in school when the number of migrants from Mauritius increased significantly. Participants' stories highlighted tensions between sentiments about 'home' and host society, including an acute sense of loss felt by all of the participants, largely due to the breaking of family ties.

Dominant models of acculturation conceptualise migrants as moving from one culture to another. However, participants in this research arrived in England as 'Mauritians', 'Chagossians', 'Creole' or 'Catholic Creole' but were then attributed unfamiliar cultural positions in England such as 'Black' or 'migrants from Africa'.

Hence, this study supports other models of acculturation such as dialogical models which feature migrants as negotiating not just two but a variety cultural positions and identities.

While dominant models of acculturation claim that the ways individuals relate to the host society (assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation orientations) depend on context, orientations adopted by participants in this study fluctuated and often contradicted each other in the same contexts, depending on the individuals' different voices. This research suggests that acculturative orientations not only vary across different contexts, but also within the same context. Therefore, with the increasing numbers of migrant arrivals in Europe, including the UK, this study offers an alternative lens to better understand acculturation and the particular challenges of migrants, especially those who come from diverse cultural backgrounds in a polyethnic society such as Mauritius.

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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

Dated: January 2018

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CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

The aim of this study was to explore the acculturation experiences of a group of Mauritian-Chagossian secondary school students in the south-east of England. Mauritian-Chagossians¹ are people who were born in Mauritius of Chagossian parents and/or grandparents. The Chagossian population was forcibly displaced from their islands fifty years ago by the United Kingdom (UK) government to make way for a United States (US) military base. The islanders were sent to live in exile in Mauritius and to a lesser extent to the Seychelles. While the Chagossians have been claiming the right to return to their homeland since their displacement, they were granted full UK citizenship in 2002. This was when large groups of people from Mauritius of Chagossian origin started to arrive in the UK seeking better education for their children, which is understood to be one of their primary motivations (Jeffery, 2011). This study focused on the acculturation experiences of a group of young people of Chagossian origin who were in full time education in England.

In the context of international migration, acculturation refers to the changes that take place as a result of contact between culturally different groups of people. This process of adaptation involves two dimensions: the retention of ideals, values and beliefs of the country of origin; and the adoption of values and behaviours of the receiving country (Phinney et al., 2001). Therefore, one research question of this study was:

- a) How did the participants navigate between their heritage culture(s) in Mauritius and the host culture(s) in England?

¹ Mauritian-Chagossian: used in this thesis to refer to people born in Mauritius from Chagossian parents and/or grandparents.

School settings represent new cultures to immigrant children (Vedder and Horenczyk, 2006) as they are sites where new migrants make contact with members of the dominant society. Therefore, the other research question of this study was:

- b) What were the participants' perceptions of their school experiences in England?

This thesis is in Education but the research is multidisciplinary. Investigating lives of young people is a complex endeavour. Interviewing young people on personal aspects of their lives such as their migration experiences bring about sensitive issues such as identity, growing up, and well-being. A multidisciplinary approach was needed to understand the complexities of the acculturation experiences of the participants. Using educational lens, I looked at the field of multicultural education to understand how the government has attempted to address needs of students coming from a range of diverse backgrounds. Since education is considered as a means of achieving greater social equality, a sociological lens has enabled me to look at how individuals' experiences shape the way they interact with schooling. In addition, a psychological lens - specifically a cross-cultural approach - has been useful to understand the intricacies of acculturation for the young participants in this study. It has also been a valuable means to examine issues of identity negotiation at work in the course of acculturation of migrant youth. The participants' school experiences could not be kept separate from other disciplines such as sociology and psychology. Acculturation cannot be studied in isolation as it involves different facets, all interrelated.

In the following section, I present an overview of the situation of immigration in the UK. This first section will demonstrate how and why immigration is one of those topics which have always been in the public eye for both positive and negative reasons. This section will also show how the UK remains one of the most popular destinations for people from Mauritius.

The next section of this chapter will explain how I established contact with the Chagossian community in a town in the south-east England and what motivated me

to conduct this research. Finally, the last section of the chapter will outline the structure of the thesis.

1.1 MIGRATION TO BRITAIN

Migration to Britain is not a recent phenomenon. Throughout its history, Britain has experienced successive waves of migration with early invaders such as the Romans, the Angles, the Jutes, the Saxons, the Danes, the Norwegians and the Normans coming to England (Layton-Henry, 1992; Panayi, 2010). Before 1945, however, Britain attracted mainly migrants from Europe; after 1945, it also became a popular destination for people from outside Europe (Panayi, 2010). Then, following European Union (EU) enlargement in 2004, a very considerable number of East Europeans, mainly from Poland, settled in the United Kingdom (UK) (with an estimated 831,000 overseas-born immigrants from Poland living in the UK at the end of 2015). Based on the figures published by the Office for National Statistics (2015), the overseas-born population of the UK has sharply increased in the decade 2005-2015. Whereas the most common non-UK country of birth is currently Poland with disproportionately more residents born there than in any other Central and Eastern European country, it is important to stress that the number of migrants, for example from the Indian subcontinent, has also significantly risen during the same period (ibid). Against the current backdrop of an unprecedented number of refugees from various countries who are seeking refuge in Europe and despite various immigration policies aimed at restricting the number of new arrivals, the UK remains a highly attractive destination for people from various parts of the world. More than a decade ago, many people of Chagossian origin migrated from Mauritius to the UK. In 2011, there were 41,178 Mauritian-born people living in the UK compared to less than 30,000 a decade earlier (UK Census, 2013). This number includes people of Chagossian origin who started to arrive in the UK from 2002.

1.1.1 Migration as a cause for concern since the 19th century

The growing phenomenon of immigration has been accompanied by immigration control measures which date back as early as 1894 (Layton-Henry, 1992) although

the Aliens Act of 1905 marked the beginning of significant immigration control in Britain (Panayi, 2010). This Act refused entry to those who could not support themselves and their dependants, to those whose infirmities were likely to lead them to become a charge on the rates, and to some known criminals (Layton-Henry, 1992). Amendments were made to this Act up until 1920 when a new Aliens Order was passed and then renewed every year to control foreign immigration and foreign residents in Britain (ibid.). Restriction on the arrival of migrants continued with the British Nationality Act of 1948, the Commonwealth Immigration Bill of 1962, the 1971 Immigration Act, and the British Nationality Act of 1981 which defined British citizenship for the first time (Layton-Henry, 1992). New legislation followed after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the breakup of the Soviet Union which saw an increased humanitarian influx of migrants to the UK (Sommerville et al., 2009). New procedures were also put in place for asylum applications with the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act of 1993. Three years later, the Immigration and Asylum Act proposed new measures to reduce asylum claims.

Migration is often framed negatively in the UK. The first Romanians settling in Britain between 1505 and 1515 sometimes faced imprisonment and expulsion for simply being Romanians (Panayi, 2010) while the first slaves who arrived in England in 1555 faced considerable hostility. Likewise, Protestant refugees from France, Germany and the Low Countries² in the 16th century faced discrimination in part because they were accused of taking the jobs of native people (ibid.). As Panayi states, this hostility would be better described as xenophobia, or the fear of strangers. In much more recent times, Margaret Thatcher claimed that Conservatives should harden their attitude towards immigration because ‘people are rather afraid that this country might be swamped by people with a different culture’ (Layton-Henry, 1992, p. 94). Immigration is still a cause for concern for many. In 2015, an Ipsos Mori

² The ‘Low Countries’ generally refer to Belgium and Netherlands, although the term may also be used to include Luxembourg and certain areas of France and Germany.
<http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-low-countries.html>

public opinion poll asked people whether they thought there were too many immigrants in the UK and 53% agreed there were too many immigrants, while 32% disagree (Ipsos-Mori, 2015).

1.1.2 Positive influence of migration in the UK

Having said that, migration is not only associated with negative connotations. Migration also brings positive contributions to the country. According to the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), higher net migration would reduce pressure on government debt over a 50-year period, since incoming migrants are more likely to be of working age than the population in general (The Migration Observatory, 2015). Also, research suggests that immigrants in the UK are more likely to make a positive contribution to public finances. Indeed, migrant workers are important for certain key sectors of the country's economy. For example, the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) has made it clear that migration is necessary to construction (CIOB, 2015) and that stringent regulation of migration would be harmful to the construction activity in the UK. The CIOB is adamant that the industry of construction supports migration (ibid.). Likewise, the health sector is another area of the economy which relies on immigration. The Institute for Public Policy Research think tank warned in 2016 that the National Health Service (NHS) would 'collapse' without its European Union staff (IPPR, 2016). Out of the 1.22 million staff in 2015, around 19% were non-British. Similarly, international students make an important economic situation to the UK mainly through tuition fees and accommodation. According to Exporting Education UK, a cross-sector group of UK organisations involved in international education, around 500,000 people from 200 countries come to the UK to study each year (ExeDuk, 2016). The group estimates that overseas students make a direct contribution of around £11.8bn to the UK economy. Apart from the economic benefits, international students bring other benefits to the wider community. A 2015 survey by the Higher Education Policy Institute and Kaplan looked at prospective students' attitudes towards international students. 87% of the prospective students reported that studying alongside international students would give them a better world view, 85% reported it would be useful preparation for working in a global

environment while 76% said it would help them develop a global network (HEPI/Kaplan, 2015).

1.1.3 ‘Superdiversity’ of the 21st century

Immigration in the first years of the 21st century is larger and more diverse than at any point in history (Sommerville et al., 2009). Since 2004, there has been an extraordinary wave of migrants from Eastern European countries, mainly from Poland, following European Union (EU) enlargement (ibid.). The latest figures from the 2011 Census revealed that the number of immigrants in the UK has reached three million in 10 years and that for the first time, people identifying as White British were a minority in London (UK Census, 2013). In 2011, the total population of England and Wales was 56.1 million which represented a 7% increase, compared to figures available in 2001. This unprecedented migratory landscape in some parts of the UK has been conceptualised by Vertovec (2007) as evidence of ‘superdiversity’. In addition, the reasons for migrating to the UK have also changed. While people continue to migrate due to persecution, these ‘new migrants’ also leave their countries for economic reasons – finding better paid jobs to improve the standard of living – which has increased the number of new immigration trends (Vertovec, 2007).

Since 2002, the UK has become home to an increasing number of people from Mauritius. According to data gathered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (IOM, 2014) from the 2000 census, migrants from Mauritius mainly resided in three foreign countries: France, UK and Australia. In the year 2000, three out of four Mauritian-born people living abroad resided in these three countries (ibid.).

COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE*	NUMBER	%
TOTAL	962,742	100.0
Mauritius	866,857	90.0
France	29,674	3.1
United Kingdom	26,481	2.8
Australia	16,557	1.7
Canada	6,465	0.7
Italy	5,513	0.6
South Africa	3,491	0.4
Belgium	2,578	0.3
Switzerland	1,894	0.2
United States of America	1,462	0.2
Seychelles	372	0.0
India	320	0.0
Russian Federation	214	0.0
New Zealand	165	0.0
Ireland	123	0.0
Denmark	110	0.0
Sweden	105	0.0

Table 27: Mauritian-born population aged 15 years and older enumerated in the 2000 census, by various countries of residence (including Mauritius)

**Countries with more than 100 Mauritian-born*

Source: IOM, 2014

The table above clearly shows that, outside Mauritius, the UK remains a popular destination for Mauritian people. From 27, 078 Mauritian-born people living in the UK in 2001, the number rose to 41, 178 ten years later (UK Census, 2011). This represents an increase of about 14 000 new residents, that is, a percentage increase of

52%. Among those 14 000 people born in Mauritius who arrived in the UK from 2001 and 2011, are people of Chagossian origin who started to migrate in the UK from 2002 when they were granted British passports and full UK citizenship. People of Chagossian origin represent a forced displaced population. Most of these Chagossian people have settled in a town in the South-east of England.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

In this section I describe how I established contact with the Chagossian community in South-East England. Living in the same town enabled me to get to know many Chagossian families and the difficulties they faced adapting to a new place. This section also provides an overview of the background of their forced removal from their homeland.

1.2.1 My interest in the Chagossian community in South-East England

My interest in the Chagossian community in England dates back to 2007 when I made contact with members of this community in my role as a multilingual assistant in a local primary school in the town where most islanders had settled. I supported children who arrived from different countries and who had English as an Additional Language. These were mainly children from Mauritius. Arriving with very little or no competence in spoken or written English, the children needed language support in and outside the classroom to make sense of their new educational setting. This role gave me the opportunity to meet the children's families who also needed language support to communicate with the school. Additionally, the families needed support and guidance to familiarise themselves with the British education system in order to help their children. Being in contact with the Chagossian community via the school, I heard that some adults were attending local English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to learn English. I developed an interest in how this new group of migrants, adults and children, was finding their way in their new environment. The language barrier seemed to be the major obstacle for many in the local Chagossian community. Later I found that there had been no properly organised schools on the Chagos islands (Botte, 1980; Walker, 1986) and that so many native-born islanders received only limited formal education. For this reason, many Chagossian parents I

met through fieldwork had limited literacy in any language. Adult Chagossians found that settling in a new country was a frightening experience, primarily because of the difficulties they had with using the English language. They spoke about problems they encountered in finding housing and jobs, booking medical appointments, and communicating with teachers and other staff at their children's school. Apart from the language problem, the migration of Chagossian people to the UK also involved separation for families where one of the partners did not hold a British passport. Typically, in these situations, the British passport holder came to the UK to find employment and accommodation before starting the lengthy immigration procedures required before being reunited with kin left in Mauritius.

Another factor which ignited my interest in the new life of people of Chagossian origin in England was curiosity as a journalist. Prior to my migration to the UK in 2005, I worked for the Mauritian media and like many of my former colleagues, I followed major events, such as the Chagossians' court cases or the decision of the British government to grant the islanders UK passports in 2002. The predicaments of the Chagossians have been written about in the Mauritian press ever since the islanders first arrived in Mauritius in the late 1960s. Mauritian journalist Henri Marimootoo published a series of articles, 'The Diego Files'³, in 1997 (Marimootoo, 1997). For thirty years, documents about the displacement had remained confidential according to the 'secrecy' law in Britain (Collen and Kistnasamy, 2002). It was after the publication of these Government documents that the Chagossians started the Court cases. The Mauritian media has not been indifferent to the situation of the Chagossian people. As a journalist, I once invited a Chagossian activist onto a weekly radio programme I hosted called 'Femmes a la Une' [Women in the Spotlight]. Mrs Lisette Talate, born and raised on Diego Garcia, was removed from her homeland as a young woman, and had since devoted her time of exile in

³ Documents created by the Government departments in Britain were usually closed for thirty years and most are not released until the 1st January following the 30th anniversary of the last document (Collen and Kistnasamy, 2002).

Mauritius to obtaining the right to return (Vine, 2009; Jeffery, 2011). In my interviews, Mrs Talate recalled fond memories of Diego Garcia and shared her hope that one day she would return to her birthplace. Mrs Talate passed away in Mauritius in 2013. A year later, another female Chagossian activist I interviewed, Charlesia Alexis, passed away in England where she had migrated to escape a life of poverty in Mauritius. As a former journalist and citizen of the Republic of Mauritius, I feel I have a duty of remembrance towards members of the Chagossian community. After having lived in exile in Mauritius and the Seychelles as a result of their forced displacement, many Chagossian families migrated to England in the hope of securing a better future for themselves and their children.

1.3 THE STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The remainder of this thesis consists of six chapters, structured as follows:

Chapter Two provides an overview of the Chagossian history, specifically the Chagossian people. The chapter will present the historical background of the Chagos, from the discovery of the Archipelago in the 16th century to the eviction of its inhabitants in the 20th century.

Chapter Three presents a review of the acculturation literature, and the way in which the concept of acculturation has evolved. It also includes a review of literature relating to the field of diaspora, including meanings attributed to concepts of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’. Furthermore, theories of identity are considered within this chapter, with a focus on ethnic identity which is pertinent to the group of participants in this study. Finally, literature on the role of schools in the UK in relation to the research area will be reviewed, with a focus on multicultural education.

Chapter Four outlines the methodological approach. This chapter will justify the choice of a qualitative study using a narrative approach to collect data through individual interviews. It will also describe how data was analysed. Ethical considerations will be addressed in this chapter including my positionality as an insider/outsider researcher.

Chapter Five will present the first part of the findings of the study related to the first research question. It will put forward the findings related to the participants' experiences and perceptions of moving between cultures.

Chapter Six will then present the findings related to the second research question. It will explore findings related to the young people's school experiences in England.

Chapter Seven will discuss the main findings of the study in relation to existing literature in acculturation research. The findings will also be discussed in relation to literature exploring the significance of school experiences for young migrants.

Finally, Chapter Eight will present the conclusions of the study and its implications before addressing the limitations of the current work and discussing potential new directions in this field of study.

CHAPTER TWO: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CHAGOSSIANS

To attempt to understand the current situation of the Chagossians, especially the situation of the young generation of this community, it is important to understand the historical background of this population. Understanding the context of the young generation of Chagossians migrating to the UK entails understanding what their families experienced themselves before, during, and after their exile.

This chapter will describe how life on the Chagos Archipelago was established in the 18th century. It will then explain the reasons for the forced displacement of the Chagossian islanders between 1968 and 1973. Next I will look at life in exile for Chagossians in Mauritius after their eviction, and also ethnic classification in Mauritius, where people of Indian origin constitute the majority of the population. Finally, this chapter will describe the long-running fight for justice of the Chagossian islanders since 1973.

2.1 THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO

The Chagos Archipelago is a group of more than 50 islands situated halfway between Africa and Indonesia and lies almost 2000 kilometres north-east of Mauritius (Walker, 1986). The Archipelago was first discovered by the Portuguese in the 1500s, who used the islands as a stopover on voyages to India and was later claimed by the French in the second half of the 1700s (de l'Estrac, 2011; Evers and Kooy, 2011) who was already administering Mauritius after the departure of the Dutch in 1710. Towards the end of the 18th century, around twenty African slaves from Mauritius were brought to the largest island of the Archipelago, Diego Garcia. They were the first permanent inhabitants of the Chagos (Evers and Kooy, 2011) and helped to develop the copra industry on the islands under French rule. After the abolition of slavery, large numbers of Indian labourers were brought to Mauritius and a relatively small number of them were sent to the Chagos.

2.1.1 Chagossians' history of slavery

Most slaves on the Chagos islands originally came from Madagascar and Mozambique in the 18th century (Gifford, 2004) to work on the copra (the flesh of the coconut) processing plants. The coconut industry was the Chagos islands' main economic sector until it was closed down in the early 1970s to make way for a US military base. The Chagos Archipelago and the Agalega Islands – another coconut-producing dependency of Mauritius situated around 1,500 km west of the Chagos Archipelago – were known as the 'oil islands' (Madeley, 1985). Apart from the coconut industry, economic activities on the Chagos islands included fishing, guano mining, coaling, maize production, dog breeding, honey production, and export of timber, wooden toys, turtle and tortoise shells, cordage, brushes and brooms (ibid.). The oil extracted from the copra was of high quality (Walker, 1986) and was exported to Mauritius and to Europe. In 1808, the number of slaves increased and the entire population of the islands were involved in the exploitation of natural resources for the export market (ibid.).

With the fall of Napoleon, France formally ceded Mauritius and its dependencies – including the Chagos Archipelago – as well as the Seychelles to Great Britain under the Treaty of Paris in 1814 (Vine, 2009; Gifford, 2004). After the abolition of slavery in 1835, indentured labourers from India were brought to Mauritius. Between 1836 and 1924, more than 430 000 Indian labourers arrived in Mauritius (Madeley, 1985; Walker, 1986) to replace the freed slaves who had left the local plantations. Indian labourers were then brought to Chagos from Mauritius (de l'Estrac, 2011) and with the numbers of Indian labourers to work in the plantations, Mauritius became the main sugar producer of the British Empire. Significant numbers of workers from China also arrived in Mauritius (Walker, 1986). The Chagos population was estimated to consist of 60 per cent African and Malagasy origin and 40 per cent Indian origin, mainly Tamil origin (Walker, 1986). This may explain why most people of Chagossian origin today have a Black African phenotype while there is a minority of people of Chagossian origin who have an Indian phenotype. In 1826, the population on the islands comprised of 448 people, increased to 760 in 1880

(Madeley, 1985), and was estimated to have reached about 2 000 before the final eviction in 1973 (ibid).

2.2 THE DISPLACEMENT OF THE CHAGOSSIAN ISLANDERS

In the late 1950s, the US Navy was actively looking for locations in the Indian Ocean and surrounding areas to set up military bases (Walker, 1986). This was in order to maintain its global dominance, especially in the context of the Cold War (Vine, 2009) as they felt that their freedom of navigation would be threatened by the emergence of the Soviet Union and China (de l'Estrac, 2011). Diego Garcia, about 2000 kilometres away from Mauritius, was identified as a geographically ideal location. The atoll was considered a perfect location as it was isolated, sparsely populated, and situated at almost equal distance from the East African seaboard, the Indonesian Archipelago, Australia and Middle East (ibid.).

2.2.1 The detachment of Chagos from Mauritius

The US Navy started negotiations with the British government in 1960 and suggested that it separate Chagos from the colony of Mauritius (Vine, 2009). Dr Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, then leader of the Labour Party in Mauritius, was first informed of the Anglo-American project in June 1964 by the Governor of British Mauritius (Evers and Kooy, 2011). A Constitutional Conference held in London in 1965 would decide on the ultimate constitutional status of Mauritius, and included the decision to detach the Chagos Archipelago from the colony (ibid.). The Mauritian delegation to London, led by Ramgoolam, consisted of 26 representatives selected from the four major political parties and two independent representatives (Walker, 1986). Members of the Mauritian government coalition were already divided on the desirability of independence from the UK. The Mauritius Labour Party was in favour of independence while the Mauritian Social Democratic Party [Parti Mauricien Social Democrate, PMSD] opposed independence and expressed a preference for a status of association of Mauritius with the United Kingdom (de l'Estrac, 2011). The UK government initially offered a compensation package of £1 million to Mauritius for the detachment of Diego Garcia (ibid.). However, Ramgoolam stated that his

government was not at all keen about the excision of the islands of Chagos and wanted the UK to agree to a 99-year lease for the Archipelago. In a meeting with Ramgoolam, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson explained that the UK wanted to play its role properly ‘in the defence of the Commonwealth but also to bear her share of peace-keeping under the auspices of the United Nations’ (de l’Estrac, 2011). Wilson declared that the UK government did not require Ramgoolam’s approval to detach Diego Garcia from Mauritius as the excision could be done by the use of an order in council. Wilson then made a proposition to Ramgoolam: agree to the detachment of Chagos from Mauritius with £3 million in compensation or Mauritius would not be granted independence (de l’Estrac, 2011). Ramgoolam chose independence and agreed to the detachment of the Archipelago from his territory. In a report of the Select Committee on the Excision of the Chagos Archipelago to the Mauritius Legislative Assembly (MLA), it is written that “the choice he [Dr Seewoosagur Ramgoolam] made between the Independence of Mauritius and the excision of the archipelago was a most judicious one...” (MLA, 1983 in Walker, 1986). Part of the deal between the two countries represented a lump sum of £3million together with a bilateral defence funding agreement, financial compensation for plantation owners of the islands as well as the removal by the UK authorities of the islands’ indigenous population (Sand, 2013). The UK government also agreed to finance the cost of resettlement of Chagos inhabitants (de l’Estrac, 2011).

Soon after, the UK government created the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) in 1965 using an order in council (Chan Low, 2011, as cited in Evers and Kooy, 2011; de l’Estrac, 2011; Vine, 2009). An order in council is a regulatory act carried out in the name of the Queen on the advice of the ‘Privy Council’ that bypasses parliament (de l’Estrac, 2011). The order made Chagos and three groups of islands from the Seychelles, namely Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches, a separate UK colony known as the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). In December 1966, the US and the UK signed their final agreement on the project. Britain signed a fifty-year treaty that granted the US access to the territory for military purposes, in exchange for a discount of approximately 14 million dollars on a US-purchased nuclear submarine

(Pilger, 2006). The Americans had made it clear all along that they did not want to see any inhabitants on the Chagos islands (Gifford, 2004). The lease between UK and US governments ended in December 2016 and it was renewed for another fifty years. The biggest island of the Chagos Archipelago, Diego Garcia, is today the location for one of the largest American military bases outside the US where Boeing B-52 bombers launched missiles at Iraqi targets in the 1991 Persian Gulf War (Vine, 2009).

The excision of Chagos has always been a controversial subject in Mauritius. Ramgoolam has long been accused by Chagossians of having “sold” Chagos for independence (Vine, 2009). A few years after the 1965 agreement in London, Ramgoolam said publicly that he had been forced by the British Government to choose between the independence of Mauritius and the sale of Chagos (de l’Estrac, 2011). A select committee set up in Mauritius in 1982 to look into the circumstances of the excision of Chagos and chaired by Jean-Claude de l’Estrac, then Mauritius Minister of Foreign Affairs, concluded that the UK Government had blackmailed the Mauritian delegation into detaching Chagos (Chan Low, 2011, in Evers and Kooy, 2011). Whether Ramgoolam was forced to sell Chagos, whether he was blackmailed or whether he had little choice as cultural anthropologist Vine (2009) argues, the fact is that the Chagossian people were never consulted. It took the UK Government six years to free the Chagos islands of their population. Families from the Chagos islands were often divided in the process of displacement. Some members of the same family were separating, some then sent to Mauritius while others were sent to the Seychelles. Similarly, Mauritian-Chagossian families were broken up when some family members migrated to the UK but others could not, for reasons of eligibility and the significant cost involved (Jeffery, 2011). The question of family separation is considered when discussing acculturation experiences of the participants in this study.

2.2.2 The forced removal of the Chagossians

The evacuation of the islanders took place over eight years, from 1965 to 1973 (Walker, 1986). Chagossians who had travelled to Mauritius for medical treatment or

to visit relatives were not allowed to return home. They were told that their islands had been ‘sold’ or ‘closed’ (Vine, 2009; de l’Estrac, 2011), stranded in Mauritius and isolated from their families on the Chagos islands (Jeffery, 2011). People from Mauritius who were working on Chagos, including skilled medical and school staff, were repatriated (de l’Estrac, 2011). Between 1965 and 1971, 251 families had left the islands (Walker, 1986), and the second stage of the removal began in March 1971. Residents of Diego Garcia were told by UK officials that the plantations were closed and people would be evacuated to the outer islands of Peros Banhos and Salomon (de l’Estrac, 2011). Diego Garcia hence became the first island to be depopulated while the US Navy began construction works on Diego Garcia and ordered the British to complete the expulsion.

Islanders were only allowed to bring a small box containing personal belongings on their journey and it was as if, as Mauritian journalist and author Shenaz Patel stated in her book ‘Le Silence des Chagos’, that a whole life required packing in one hour (Patel, 2005). Chagossians who were identified as Seychellois – for example unmarried men or men with families in the Seychelles – were returned to the Seychelles while the remainder of the Chagos population were sent to Mauritius (Walker, 1986). Islanders who resisted were told that they would be bombed or shot dead if they refused to leave Diego Garcia. Their dogs were gassed using exhaust pipes from military services while Chagossians also watched their pets put down (de l’Estrac, 2011; Jeffery, 2011). Living conditions deteriorated on Salomon and Peros Banhos islands and the islanders were forced to leave. Food was in short supply and medicines ran out. Salomon was completely evacuated in December 1972 followed by Peros Banhos in 1973 (de l’Estrac, 2011). The last removal voyage took place on the 26th May 1973 when the ship Nordvaer left Peros Banhos with 8 men, 9 women and 29 children (Vine, 2009). Madeley ‘(1985) described this last day as ‘a way of life was physically brought to an end’.

By the time of the last removal, the population of the islands had been reduced to about 830 (Walker, 1986). In total, around 1,500 islanders were displaced to Mauritius and around 500 islanders were displaced to the Seychelles (Jeffery, 2011).

The Chagossians' life in exile in Mauritius was one which was marked with poverty and marginalisation. The islanders joined an already marginalised section of the population known as the Afro-Creole and had landed in a country where ethnic categorisation played a significant role in defining an individual's life chances. In order to understand the situation of life in exile of the islanders in Mauritius, it is important to understand first the politics of ethnic classification in Mauritius.

2.3 ETHNIC CLASSIFICATION IN MAURITIUS

The Constitution of Mauritius divides the population into four categories: Hindus, Muslims, Sino-Mauritians, and the General Population. Hindus – comprising of (north Indian origin) Hindus as well as Tamils, Telugus and Marathis (Eriksen, 1998) – account for 49% of the total population, while Muslims account for 17% and, Sino-Mauritians for 0.4%. The General Population, who are mainly Roman Catholic, account for 32% (Mauritius population Census Report, 2011). The 'General Population' category comprises of all those who do not identify themselves in the other categories and consists of people of French origin as well as people of African descent, the latter being commonly referred to as Creoles. For Boswell (2006), the existence of the General Population category demonstrates the lack of acknowledgement and concern from successive governments about minority ethnic groups in the country. A consequence of this classification of ethnic groups is that most Mauritians identify primarily with their ethnic community or with a sub-group of one of the main ethnic communities (Carroll and Carroll, 2000).

2.3.1 Ethnicisation of languages in Mauritius

Another consequence of this form of separatism among ethnic groups is the ethnicisation of languages in Mauritius where language is a symbol of in-group belonging. Most ethnic groups have their own ancestral language. For example, a large number of Hindus whose ancestors originated in the former Indian province of Bihar speak the Bhojpuri vernacular. Those who trace their ethnic ancestry to China also have an ancestral language called Mandarin, while those of French descent – commonly known as Franco-Mauritians – speak French. Yet, the Mauritian Creole

language also known as Kreol or Kreol Morisien has been harder to categorise (Auckle, 2015), despite its slave origins. Mauritian Creole was created by people of African descent who were forced by the French and British colonial powers to give up much of their culture and language (Seetah, 2010). The Creole language is lexically of French origin and has been influenced by other languages such as the African language Bantu (Walker, 1986). Afro-Mauritians or Afro-Creoles – I will use the latter term – gave Mauritius two culturally unique attributes: Sega music and dance and the Creole language (Miles, 1999) although Afro-Creoles have less cultural attachment to Africa than Indo-Mauritians to India or Sino-Mauritians to China (Miles, 1999). While the Creole language is stigmatised because of its slave origins and does not have the official status of ancestral language, it remains the day-to-day language of most of the population of Mauritius (Auckle, 2005).

2.3.2 Marginalisation of the Creole ethnic group

In Mauritius, the Creoles are referred to as the population primarily of African descent, whose ancestors had been forcibly uprooted and later mixed with those from other ethnic groups (Eriksen, 2004). The Afro-Creoles ethnic group of Mauritius has been marginalised, a situation worsened by the political and social dominance of Indo-Mauritians (Eisenlohr, 2006; Boswell, 2006; Jeffery, 2011). Indeed, the dominance of people of Indian origin and the fact that successive prime ministers in Mauritius have always been of Indian origin (except for one instance when, as part of a power-sharing agreement between coalition partners, a non-Hindu became prime minister in 2003 for two years) prompted social anthropologist Patrick Eisenlohr to label Mauritius as ‘Little India’ (2006, p. 5).

Members of the Creole community have long been associated with negative stereotypes that depict them as favouring a self-indulgent, hedonistic lifestyle at the expense of both the acquisition of functional literacy and a stable professional and personal life (Miles, 1999). It has also been claimed that life chances of Creoles have been significantly affected by a variety of social problems, including teenage pregnancies, long-term unemployment, petty crime, and low educational levels (Eriksen, 2004). Indeed, the highest rates of failure for most examinations at school

were found within the schools located in primarily Creole-dominant catchment areas, also known as Zones d'Education Prioritaire or ZEP schools (Carroll and Carroll, 2000).

A study carried out in 2011 by the Truth and Justice Commission (TJC, 2011) for the Mauritian government, which focused on the history of slavery and its consequences, explored issues of discrimination and racism against Creoles in Mauritius. It was found that nepotism, based on kinship or other social networks, was common in Mauritius and, as a result, people of slave descent, that is Creoles, often struggled to find decently paid employment and achieve upward social mobility. The TJC report also stated that the problem of racism in Mauritius was still common and did not end with the abolition of slavery in the colony of Mauritius in 1835 or the achievement of its independence in 1968. The theme of racism was found to be important to young people in that study who expressed their frustration due to the persistence of discrimination based on skin colour (TJC, 2011). The deep ethnic cleavage existing between the different ethnic groups, especially between the dominant Hindu community and the socioeconomically marginalised Creole minority, are in contrast with slogans such as 'l'unité dans la diversité' [unity in diversity] or 'nation arc-en-ciel' [rainbow nation] which are commonly used in Mauritius by mainstream politicians in an attempt to idealise the harmonious relationships between the different ethnic groups. Scholars have questioned these clichés portraying successful multiculturalism in Mauritius. For Moorghen and Domingue (1982), the multicultural population in Mauritius was essentially an 'assemblage' of majority and minority groups with no deep feelings or belonging to the same nation.

2.3.3 The 'Malaise Creole'

The inequalities social problems encountered by Creoles (Eriksen, 2004; Boswell, 2006) were considered so alarming that Catholic priest Father Roger Cerveaux coined the term 'le malaise creole' [Creole ailment] in 1993. This term characterises the injustices that Creoles claim to face at the social, political and eventually the linguistic level (Miles, 1999). The cleavage between ethnic groups and the feelings of not belonging to the same nation by the Creole community was exposed in a series

of riots that broke out in February 1999 in Creole-dominant areas and which spread to the rest of the country (Miles, 1999). These riots were the second violent racial or ethnic riots in Mauritius; the first took place in February 1968, one month before the country obtained independence (Miles, 1999). The February 1999 riots took place after the popular Afro-Creole Seggae singer Kaya, who many felt represented the Creole community, died in suspicious circumstances while in police custody after he confessed to smoking marijuana in a concert in Port Louis. The riots, which lasted three days, were seen as an illustration of the 'malaise creole'. Afro-Creole people felt that that the country's wealth had not been distributed to them and that they had always been the most poor and the most deprived group of the population (Eriksen, 2004; Eisenlohr, 2006). This cleavage between ethnic groups, established during the colonial times and maintained through the setting up of the census in 1972, shows that a section of the population has never been acknowledged by successive governments (Boswell, 2006).

According to Eriksen, the Afro-Creoles, also known as 'ti-kreol' [little Creoles], may be the most stigmatised category of people in Mauritius (as cited in Vine, 2009, p. 139) and are considered as being "lazy, backward and known as stupid people, too close to nature and resembling Africans in a not particularly flattering fashion". Chagossian islanders arriving in Mauritius after their removal from their Chagos homeland were associated with the ethnic group of Afro Creoles (de l'Estrac, 2011).

2.3.4 'Ilois' identity compared with the Creole identity

While Chagossians were identified as Afro Creoles or 'ti-kreol' in Mauritius, they also were identified as 'Ilois' or 'zilwa.' However, although they had more similarities to the Creoles than with any other ethnic groups in Mauritius, the anthropologist Ian Walker believed that Chagossian islanders had a distinct identity from that of the Creoles (1986), which he referred to as the 'Ilois identity'. In his unpublished Master's thesis, Walker attempted to show that Chagossian islanders had a distinct way of life on their native islands. One characteristic was the significant number of unmarried couples on the Chagos islands and the 'mariage a l'essai' [trial marriage]. Walker also referred to the Creole spoken on the Chagos

islands as having slightly different vocabulary and different pronunciation from the Creole spoken in Mauritius (p. 16). The sega night which used to take place on the islands every Saturday night was another distinct trait of the Chagossian community. In addition, Chagossian women's roles were different to those of women in Mauritius. They were considered as equals to men in the sense that they were as physically strong as their male counterparts and were reputed to excel in fishing and drinking (Botte, 1980; Walker, 1986). Chagossian women were also usually the head of the household partly because the population on the islands were predominantly female.

Moreover, Walker also stated that children of native Chagossian islanders who were born in Mauritius were classified as 'Ilois' instead of 'Mauritian' (1986) because their personal circumstances were known by other people or because their behaviour was 'indicative of their Ilois upbringing', considering many Chagossians lived in the same enclaves as other Chagossians. For these reasons, Walker believed that Chagossians had a distinct way of life which made them different from the Creoles and as such he argued they should be identified not as Creoles but as a separate ethnic group.

The issue of identity has been a relevant question for the Chagossian population ever since they were forcibly removed from their homeland. Before their removal, the islanders were officially citizens of the UK and Colonies due to the fact that the Chagos was a dependency of Mauritius, which was then a British colony and as soon as Mauritius obtained its independence, Chagos islanders became Mauritian citizens (Johannessen, 2005). Their identity changed in 2002 after the British Overseas Territories Act was passed. Chagossians obtained full UK citizenship and became British. However not all of them were granted citizenship (Johannessen, 2005). For example, Chagossians who arrived in Mauritius before 1969 and who were left stranded did not obtain full UK citizenship and therefore were not British. Also, grandchildren of native Chagossian islanders born outside the UK were not entitled to British passports (ibid.).

The issue of identity for the Chagossian community has, therefore, been a topical subject for the past fifty years. Chagossians have been navigating between different self-identifications: Ilois or Chagossians; Mauritians; Creoles; British. Many Chagossians have never wanted to identify themselves as Mauritians, as they considered that the Mauritius government, especially the then Prime minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam had ‘sold’ the Chagos in order to obtain the independence of Mauritius from the UK government (Johannessen, 2005).

2.4 CHAGOSSIAN EXILE IN MAURITIUS

The Chagossians’ exile in Mauritius has been widely reported as being one of extreme hardship caused by poverty and discrimination. The islanders had arrived in Mauritius at a time when the newly independent country was already experiencing significant socio-economic difficulties. Researchers, journalists and social workers have investigated Chagossians’ life in exile in Mauritius and they all found that the islanders lived in marginalisation and poverty as a result of their forced displacement (Botte, 1980; Madeley, 1985; Walker, 1986; Vine, 2009; Jeffery and Vine, 2011).

Chagossians were abandoned on the quayside of Port Louis in Mauritius with no help from Mauritian authorities. Often they were housed by relatives and friends who lived in the slums of Port Louis (de l’Estrac, 2011). In April 1973 a group of islanders removed from Peros Banhos, refused to disembark in Port Louis, having heard about the fate of others who had arrived before them in Mauritius. They demanded to be returned to Chagos or obtain houses in Mauritius. After a week of protests, which Walker (1986) describes as ‘early militancy’, 30 families received a small amount of money and derelict houses in Port Louis from the Mauritius authorities (de l’Estrac, 2011). The Chagossians settled in the most deprived areas of the city and some had to beg to survive and feed their families. Among the areas where Chagossians settled in Mauritius were Baie du Tombeau, Cassis and Roche Bois where most of the participants of the present study spent their childhood.

2.4.1 Life at the margins

The unemployment rate in Mauritius was already around 20% when Chagossians arrived in Mauritius (Vine, 2009). The country had just gained its independence in 1968 and was trying to transform the economy that had been dominated by sugarcane production since the 18th century (Evers and Kooy, 2011). A textile industry began to develop in the 1970s along with other sectors such as large-scale fishing, tourism and offshore finance. It was only during the late 1980s that the unemployment rate in Mauritius decreased significantly (ibid). However, this did not help the Chagossians to secure stable employment as they had limited skills, making it hard to find jobs. One of the few skills Chagossians had was fishing (Vine, 2009). Many Chagossian islanders obtained casual manual work (Walker, 1986) but they were often exploited and their pay was often collected by middlemen who took much of their money (Botte, 1980; Walker, 1986).

Research carried out in Mauritius found that many Chagossian families had died in poverty while other islanders had committed suicide (Walker, 1986). Francoise Botte, a teacher and social worker who investigated the conditions of living in exile of Chagossian islanders in Mauritius reported that by 1980, the islanders were still dispersed among different suburbs of Port Louis and that their most prominent problems related to housing (Botte, 1980). She also reported that there were about 20 Chagossian girls and women who had turned to prostitute in order to earn money to feed their families (ibid.). Another research commissioned by the Mauritian government found that lack of financial security was the most urgent problem of the islanders (Sylva, 1981). Furthermore, the incidence of high mortality rates among the Chagossian exiles was attributed by a report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to diseases such as malnutrition, cardio-vascular diseases, type II diabetes, and substance abuse (Vine, 2009). The WHO report addressed a broad range of other issues that have affected the Chagossian displacees in Mauritius such as the lack of basic education.

2.4.2 Limited access to education

Lack of education was another problem for Chagossian islanders in Mauritius. The two schools on Chagos that opened in 1951 were closed in 1965 (Botte, 1980). The WHO reported that more than half of the adults surveyed had never attended school on the Chagos islands (Vine, 2009). Those who had left Chagos as children had no experience of proper education, as the few schools in Mauritius closed before the children's arrival (Jeffery and Vine, 2011, in Evers and Kooy, 2011).

Apart from the adults, Chagossian children were also penalised due to their lack of education. Some Chagossian children did not get a place in schools in Mauritius while others could not go to school as they had to work to help their families. Many left at the end of primary school as their families could not afford secondary education, which only became free in Mauritius in 1976 (Evers and Kooy, 2011). Among those who managed to enter secondary education, there was a high dropout rate among Chagossian adolescents in Mauritian schools (Vine, 2004). Chagossian students in Mauritian schools suffered negative stereotyping and discrimination (Walker, 1986; Vine, 2004). They were often seen as 'wild' and 'troublesome' and they were more likely to 'receive the blame' when fight occurred at school (Walker, 1986, p. 32). As a result, Ilois children socialised more with other Ilois children as a means to cope with discrimination and they were less involved in school activities involving Mauritian children (Sylva, 1981).

The Chagossians were considered as an 'unwanted group' in Mauritius and, according to Walker (1986, p. 35), these feelings were reinforced by the behaviour of members of the Creole ethnic group. Walker wrote that Chagossians were often asked to "go back where you came from" which led many islanders to avoid interacting with Mauritians. Jeffery and Vine (2011) describe the discrimination experienced by Chagossians in Mauritius as 'double discrimination'. Thus, Chagos islanders suffered discrimination as Afro Creoles but also as Chagossians (ibid.). As Chagossian islanders, they were referred to as 'zilwa' which had become a pejorative term to describe any person "behaving in an antisocial or immoral way" (Walker, 1986; Vine, 2009). 'Zilwa' is derived from the term 'ilois' meaning 'islander' which

indeed the islanders were, however, the term was used in a negative fashion (Vine, 2009), which prompted some Chagossians to conceal their island origins in order to avoid discrimination.

2.5 THE CHAGOSSIANS FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

The hardships experienced by Chagossian exiles in Mauritius prompted the community to start demanding justice. The islanders have, since their eviction, demanded compensation and above all the right to return to their homeland.

Chagossian women carried out two hunger strikes in 1978 and 1980 (Madeley, 1985) and in 1981, hundreds of Chagossians protested in front of the British High Commission in Port Louis and at the nearby Government House (ibid). After the Chagossian community in Mauritius started protesting and held hunger strikes asking for compensation, housing and jobs, the UK government contributed a sum of £4 million which was used to set up the Ilois Trust Fund to benefit the Chagossian community (Gifford, 2004; Vine, 2009). However, a significant condition attached to financial compensation involved the islanders renouncing all their rights including the claim to return to the Chagos (Gifford, 2004). They were asked to indicate their assent by signing or putting a thumb print on legal documents written in English. The Chagossians continued to claim the right of return to their homeland.

2.5.1 From 'Ilois' to 'Chagossians'

The first Chagossian organisation to take their cause on an international platform was the Chagos Social Committee (CSC) in Mauritius (Johanessen, 2015). The CSC (Mauritius) aimed to be the group recognised as autochthonous to the Chagos islands before the United Nations Working Groups on Indigenous Peoples in Geneva in the late 1990s. Assisted by a Mauritian barrister, the CSC (Mauritius) argued that the first people to settle on the Chagos islands arrived in the late 18th century and that over the years, they developed a society of their own (Johanessen, 2015). The CSC (Mauritius) also suggested a change of designation for the evicted islanders. Instead of 'Ilois' as they were referred to, the CSC suggested the term 'Chagossian'

(Madeley, 1985). It was from then on that Chagos islanders became widely recognised as the ‘Chagossians’ from the Chagos Archipelago.

2.5.2 Details of Chagossians’ forced removal uncovered

In 1997, UK Government documents related to the Chagos islanders’ expulsions were declassified under the Public Records Act. The details about the forced removal of the islanders were thus revealed, including the UK government’s pretence that the Chagos islanders were temporary contract workers even though they knew that they constituted a settled population (Marimootoo, 1997). These documents exposed how the UK government had managed to cover the fact that the Chagos islands had an already settled population ((Marimootoo, 1997). As a result, another Chagossian organisation in Mauritius, the Chagos Refugees Group (CRG), led by Olivier Bancoult, started a new court case against the UK government with the help of a British solicitor. In November 2000 the British High Court ruled in their favour and suppressed the 1971 ordinance that prevented Chagossians from entering the BIOT (Gifford, 2004).

UK officials announced a feasibility study on resettlement and issued a new ordinance that people born in Chagos islands and their descendants had the right to settle on all islands except for Diego Garcia (de l’Estrac, 2011), which was by now one of the American most important overseas bases. However, the situation changed following the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre. Prime Minister Blair invoked an order in council to overturn the judgement of the High Court, revealing why the government, under extreme pressure from the US, would not allow the return of Chagossians to their homes. In June 2002, the British government announced that the ‘independent’ feasibility study showed that the repopulation of the islands of the BIOT would be harmful to the environment (de l’Estrac, 2011, p. 182). Meanwhile, full UK citizenship was granted to Chagos islanders and their children born in exile (Vine, 2009; Jeffery, 2011). This meant that they could settle in the UK and live as British citizens. In brief, this was how hundreds of Chagossian families left Mauritius from 2002 onwards and settled in a town in South-east England, where the present study was conducted. The legal battle continued, however.

2.5.3 Legal upheavals over compensation

In 2003, the CRG lodged a new case before the High Court, this time demanding compensation and funds to finance a return to the Archipelago and to build the necessary infrastructure for a population (de l'Estrac, 2011). Judge Ouseley found against Chagossians who he said had accepted compensation in 1982 and had renounced their rights over returning to the BIOT (Allen, 2011, in Evers and Kooy, 2011). In 2004, the UK government enacted two orders in council that stipulated that Chagossians had no right of abode in the BIOT (ibid.). These orders in council were then overturned in a November 2000 High Court victory for the CRG (Vine, 2009). Furthermore, the Chagossians experienced another legal setback, this time from the District Court in Washington DC which rejected a demand for significant compensation from the US government. The US Court judged that the deportation had been carried out under English law and that consequently the US officials who had been involved in this process were covered by immunity (de l'Estrac, 2011). However, Chagossians continued with their legal action and returned to the English courts in 2005 where they challenged the legality of the two orders in council which deprived them of their right of abode on their Chagos islands. In April 2005, Chagossians won permission to bring a High Court challenge for financial compensation. As a result, in 2006, and for the second time, the High Court ruled their removal illegal, thus overturning the Orders in Council (Vine, 2009; de l'Estrac, 2011). However, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Margaret Beckett, appealed immediately but the government lost in May 2007 when Judges Waller and Sedley concluded that the Orders in Council enacted in 2004 were an abuse of power (ibid.). The judges also said that the Orders in Council "negate one of the most fundamental liberties known to human beings, the freedom to return to one's homeland, however poor and barren the conditions of life..." (ibid.). That was the third time that a UK Court had ruled in favour of the Chagossians. In the meantime, a group of Chagossians had been granted permission by the UK to visit their lands in March 2006 and to see the graves of their deceased relatives. They found that the base of Diego Garcia resembled something like an American city and that the other islands, for example, Bodham, Peros Banhos and Salomon had been abandoned (de l'Estrac, 2011). Short visits of Chagossians to their homelands have

since 2006 taken place regularly and include Chagossians from Mauritius as well as those from the Seychelles and the UK. These trips were emotional experiences for the islanders. It was shocking and upsetting to see their homeland after such a long time, and they regretted that they could not stay (Jeffery, 2011).

The British Secretary of State in for Foreign Affairs, Jack Straw appealed to the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords against the Appeal Court Judgment which declared the 2004 Orders in Council null and void (de l'Estrac, 2011; Allen, 2011, in Evers and Kooy, 2011). On 22 October 2008, the House of Lords ruled in favour of the Secretary of State by 3 votes against 2. Lord Hoffman for the majority declared, "The right of abode is a creature of the law. The law gives it and the law may take it away" (ibid.). Meanwhile, the UK government turned the BIOT into a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in 2010 to preserve the exceptional marine environment (de l'Estrac, 2011). A year later, Wikileaks revealed how this decision was a calculated move to prevent Chagossians returning on their islands than a desire to protect the environment. Wikileaks exposed a statement from the BIOT Commissioner and Director of Overseas Territories in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) who told the Americans that "establishing a marine reserve would be the most effective way to prevent the Chagos Islands' former inhabitants from resettling in the BIOT" (de l'Estrac, 2011). The then Mauritian government, led by former Mauritian Prime minister Dr Navin Ramgoolam (Dr Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's son), opposed the MPA project and took the UK to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (de l'Estrac, 2011). The tribunal ruled in March 2015 that the UK had acted illegally in the way it exercised territorial control over the Chagos Islands (Bowcott and Jones, 2015). The ruling, which was made under the 1982 United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to which the UK is a signatory, rejected the status of the MPA. The five-judge panel found that the creation of the MPA announced by Gordon Brown's Labour government breached its obligations to consult with Mauritius and was consequently illegally depriving it of its fishing rights. That ruling was welcome positively after the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR, 2012) had ruled in 2012 that the case of the forced expulsion of

Chagossians was inadmissible because the islanders accepted compensation in 1982 and waived the right to bring further claims before the UK national courts.

On the 23rd June 2017, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted in favour of referring the dispute over the sovereignty of the territory of the Chagos Archipelago between Mauritius and the UK, to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The objective is to clarify the legal status of the Chagos islands in the Indian Ocean as Mauritius has long claimed that the archipelago was illegally detached from its territory before independence. The motion was approved by a majority vote with 94 states voting for and 15 against (House of Commons Library, 2017).

Hundreds of Chagossian families have made their way to the UK. Although the move to the UK was not forced but a voluntary migration, it can be considered as another important milestone in the Chagossian history. After leaving their Chagos homeland fifty years ago to start a new life in Mauritius and in the Seychelles, the Chagossian population has this time left their life in life in exile to rebuild a new life elsewhere in the UK. As much as their new life in Mauritius or the Seychelles was an important step in the community's history of displacement, their migration to the UK can also be seen as another landmark in their history, while the population as a whole is still claiming the right to return to the Chagos islands.

Chagossian native islanders as well as other people born in Mauritius from Chagossian origin started to arrive in the UK in 2002 after they obtained full UK citizenship. Most of them have settled in the south-east of England in a relatively small diverse town with a current population of over 100 000 people. Many Chagossian adults, male and female, make a living from cleaning jobs in and around the town while others work in local superstores. Chagossian families enjoy the same rights as other British citizens and are eligible for the same range of benefits including housing support.

The forced displacement of Chagossians has attracted much scholarly attention since the beginning of the 21st century, although few academics in Mauritius and abroad researched the life in exile of the islanders back in the 1980s. Most of the research

conducted on the Chagossian community has focused on the native islanders' experiences of forced displacement and their life in exile in Mauritius – and to a lesser extent in the Seychelles – or their adaptation to a new life in the UK. Yet, there has been no published research about the young people of Chagossian origin who have settled in the UK. The present study aims to fill this gap through exploring the acculturation experiences of a group of young Mauritian-Chagossians in a town in south-east England. Considering the hardships that their families experienced in exile in Mauritius, including poverty, marginalisation and lack of education, I felt it was important to give voice to the young generation of Chagossians who were in full-time education, since it is understood that Chagossians who migrated to the UK did so with the purpose of obtaining better education to their children. The participants in this study were in post-16 education, that is, they were either doing their A Levels in local secondary schools or attending college or university. Amidst the challenging experiences of their parents and/or grandparents in Mauritius, I believe it was important to look at the adolescents' experiences of migration and residence in the UK.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aimed to explore the acculturation experiences of a group of adolescents of Mauritian-Chagossian origin who had migrated to the south-east of England between 2002 and 2011. In order to address and understand the current debate about acculturation and especially acculturation of migrant youth, this literature review consists of four parts.

Firstly, it draws on the theory of acculturation, which is central to this study. This chapter will examine how theories of acculturation have evolved over time. Acculturation is not simply a journey from one culture to another that eventually leads to the adoption of the new culture and the shredding of the old culture, but is a much more complex process.

Secondly, the chapter will review literature in the field of diaspora at the heart of which lies the significant role of homeland for migrants. I argue that the Mauritian-Chagossian community in England can be defined as a new diaspora in England. The section on diaspora includes meanings attributed to concepts of 'home' and 'belonging'.

Thirdly, the chapter will review theories of identity, with a focus on ethnic identity that is pertinent to the group of participants in this study.

Finally, I review the literature relating to the role of schools in the UK with a focus on multicultural education.

3.1 THEORIES OF ACCULTURATION

Throughout this section, I will present an overview of the main theories of acculturation and how this concept has evolved over the last fifty years. This overview will primarily examine Berry's bidimensional model of acculturation,

before considering the dialogical model of acculturation promoted by Bhatia and Ram (2001).

The concept of acculturation has been adopted in many disciplines, including anthropology, sociology and psychology, and has been used to explain dynamics involved when people from diverse cultural backgrounds come into continuous contact with one another (Park & Burgess, 1921; Redfield et al., 1936). There is, however, one definition which is widely quoted in the acculturation literature. Robert Redfield, cultural anthropologist defined acculturation as follows: ‘Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups’ (Redfield et al, 1936, p. 149-150). In this definition, acculturation comprehends the cultural and psychological changes resulting from the contact between different cultural groups and their individual members (Berry, 2003; 2005). Furthermore, this definition considers that the contact between different cultural groups has consequences for ‘either or both groups’. Acculturation as a collective phenomenon is understood to be a change in the culture of the group, whereas in psychological acculturation, it is understood as a change in the psychology of the individual (Berry, 2003). Whilst acculturation has an impact on all the involved groups, it is expected to have a greater impact on non-dominant groups and their members (Berry, 2001).

Two main theoretical perspectives can be identified in relation to acculturation. On the one hand, a social psychology approach led by Berry and colleagues which looks at migrant incorporation as a series of phases that eventually leads to permanent settlement within host society. On the other hand, a diaspora studies and cultural identity approach, initiated by Hall (1990) and developed by Bhatia and Ram (2001), based largely upon the study of post-colonial migrants to the UK and US society. This approach views ‘the formation of immigrant identity within a historical context, bound up in a set of political positions, based on negotiation, dislocation and conflict’ (Bhatia and Ram, 2009, p. 143). Both perspectives have validity and will be considered in this study. Berry’s work provides an analytical framework within

which it is possible to explore the different factors influencing acculturation experiences, while Bhatia and Ram's work provides a counterargument to models (such as Berry's) which claim that all immigrants undergo a universal psychological process of acculturation and adaptation. Bhatia and Ram's model is inspired by the dialogical self-theory created by Hubert Hermans. Both Bhatia and Ram as well as Hermans argue that universal models of acculturation minimise the injustices faced by many, especially the non-European migrants and have advocated the examination of the notion of diaspora to better understand acculturation of non-European migrants to Western countries. Because acculturation refers to cultural change, it is important – before we look at the most prominent models of acculturation – to briefly look at the role of culture and how it is understood in the concept of acculturation.

3.1.1 The relevance of 'culture' in acculturation

The term 'culture' is difficult to define since it is a very broad concept (Kuper, 1999b). As Shore (2002) recognises, 'people have a hard time getting their minds around the very idea of culture.' Much of the difficulty stems from the different usages and definitions of the term over the years. In a critical review of concepts and definitions of culture, the American anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckhohn, compiled a list of 164 different definitions (as cited in Spencer-Oatley, 2012) of culture. Despite the various definitions of the term, some key characteristics can be found. The long-standing dichotomy individualistic-collectivist cultures has been predominant in academic research for decades, although it is being strongly challenged in an increasingly globalised world.

Culture is associated with social groups. It refers to shared meanings and understandings held by a group of people (Triandis, 1995). This set of meanings and understandings, that is, attitudes and behaviours shared by a group of people is referred to by Hofstede as the 'collective programming of the mind' (1994, p. 5) which distinguishes 'the members of one group or category of people from another'. Yet, as Spencer-Oatley (2012) states, culture is a 'fuzzy' concept in the sense that members of a group are unlikely to share identical beliefs, attitudes and behaviours although they show what she calls 'family resemblances.' Similarly, although

Matsumoto defines culture as ‘... the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people’, he points out that these are different for each individual (1996). Another characteristic of culture is that it is learned in the sense that culture is ‘transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals themselves’ (Schwartz, 1992, cited by Avruch, 1998, p. 17).

In his worldwide survey in 1980, Hofstede found that cultures could be ranked on a dimension of individualist versus collectivist values. He surveyed IBM employees from 53 different countries (as cited in Gelfand and Triandis, 1996) and results from the culture analysis showed that wealthy western countries were high in individualism and developing countries were high in collectivism. Hofstede's theory has been widely used in several fields particularly in cross-cultural psychology, international management, and cross-cultural communication. Individualism is generally used to describe the predominant cultures of Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand while African, Middle Eastern and East Asian countries are characterised primarily by collectivism (Triandis, 2001). According to Hofstede, people in collectivist cultures give priority to the goals of their in-groups than their personal needs and shape their behaviour primarily on the basis of in-group norms (2001). In contrast, people in individualist cultures are autonomous from their in-groups, give priority to their personal goals and consider themselves as independent agents inspired by their own goals (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 2001).

The construct individualistic-collectivist has been widely used in research. For example, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) showed that children from European-American backgrounds were more motivated when they were given a personal choice, and less motivated when the choice was made for them. On the other hand, Asian-American children showed less motivation when they made their own choice but they showed the highest level of intrinsic motivation when in-group members made the choices for them. Furthermore, while people in individualistic cultures tend to speak openly, people in collectivistic cultures are said to use indirect and sometimes ambiguous communication (Holtgraves, 1997). As regards acculturation, Yeh and Inose (2003) found that international students in the USA who were from Europe experienced less

acculturative stress than students who came from Asia, Central/Latin America and Africa. In the UK, Vadher and Barrett (2009) explored experiences of British Indian and Pakistani young adults negotiating two cultures in the UK and whether they felt that the negotiation was conflictual or not. The findings were divided between participants who found it hard to live between their ethnic culture and their host society's culture and those who did not experience difficulty negotiating between the two cultures. The Pakistani young adults found the experience challenging and described the Muslim religion as an obstacle getting in the way of integrating fully into the British society (ibid.).

Having said that, the dichotomy individualistic-collectivist to describe cultures has been challenged by researchers who have questioned its usefulness as a universal model. They criticise the dichotomy for emphasising on differences between societies and for portraying cultural communities as holding mutually uniform views (Hudson and Sampson, 1999), instead of acknowledging that individuals change and that there are similarities across groups. One of the fierce opponents of the dichotomy is Dutch psychologist Hubert Hermans whose dialogical self-theory has been central to the conceptualisation of the dialogical model of acculturation; his model is considered in this study as an alternative to Berry's bidimensional model of acculturation. Hermans argues that cultural differences in a globalised world cannot continue to be conceptualised in terms of cultural dichotomies such as Western and non-Western cultures (Hermans and Kempen, 1998). He states that this distinction between cultures does not meet the challenges of globalisation which draws people from different cultural relationships into close relationships and which involves so many complex social processes. Instead of conceiving culture as geographically located and homogeneous, Hermans conceptualises culture as hybridised and multiple and as involving people from different cultural origins being connected (ibid.).

The present study does not view societies as exclusively individualist or collectivist societies. It is important to be attentive to cultural differences which exist between societies, however this study does not categorise Mauritius or England as either

individualist or collectivist societies. Rather, both countries share aspects of individualistic and collectivist characteristics. This study presents a nuanced view on characterising cultures so as not to limit interpretation of the findings in this study.

We shall now turn to the unidimensional model of acculturation in acculturation research which posits that if an individual becomes more affiliated with the ways of life of the host culture, her/his allegiance to the ways of life of the country of origin will weaken (Laroche et al. 1996).

3.1.2 The unidimensional model of acculturation

Acculturation was initially conceptualised as a unidimensional process where newcomers in a country would have to relinquish the heritage values and practices of the homeland in order to acquire the culture of the host society (Gordon, 1964). This unidimensional assimilation model conveys that immigrants begin with a strong preference for maintaining their cultural heritage, which starts to decrease gradually upon intercultural contact. Earlier groups of European migrants to the United States were perceived to have experienced this type of 'straight-line assimilation' (Schildkraut, 2007).

Gordon (1964) classified assimilation into seven types and their sub-processes: (1) cultural assimilation and acculturation (change of cultural patterns to those of dominant culture); (2) structural assimilation (large scale entrance into institutions of dominant culture); (3) marital assimilation or amalgamation (large scale intermarriage); (4) identificational assimilation (development of sense of peoplehood based exclusively on the dominant culture); (5) attitude-receptional assimilation (absence of prejudice); (6) behavioural-receptional assimilation (absence of discrimination); and (7) civic assimilation (absence of value and power conflicts). Acculturation, in his view, would require the extinction of any form of ethnic identity in favour of an exclusively national identity.

The unidimensional model was the leading framework to understand immigrant adaptation for many decades. Nevertheless, the model was criticised for its shortcomings. The model failed to account for the fact that the host society would

also experience changes as a result of the presence of culturally distinctive migrants. It was also challenged for failing to consider the own cultural values of the individuals as well as the influence, with regards to culture adjustment to the new environment (Kim & Berry, 1985). Critics further argue that the unidimensional approach oversimplifies the process by ignoring the possibility of individuals identifying with both cultures and by not allowing for the possibility that an individual could identify more with their heritage culture, rather than the host culture, over time (Ryder et al. 2000). A unidimensional approach implies that ‘acculturation’ is an outcome rather than an on-going process and being “more acculturated” means becoming more like members of the host-culture. Criticism of unidirectional acculturation theories led to the development of the bi-dimensional acculturation school of thought.

3.1.3 Berry’s bidimensional model of acculturation

Since the early 1980s, cultural psychologists have recognised that acquiring the beliefs, values, and practices of the receiving country does not necessarily involve surrendering the beliefs, values, and practices of the country of origin (Berry, 1980). In contrast to unidimensional models, a bidimensional perspective suggested that minorities could interact with the host society while maintaining their cultural background (Berry, 1980; LaFromboise et al. 1993). The Canadian cultural psychologist John Berry is seen as one of the most influential acculturation theorists (Ward, 2008) and his bidimensional acculturation model is considered as the best-known illustration of the bi-dimensional approach. Given the extensive application of Berry’s work within acculturation research by many scholars, his model is reviewed here by looking at its merits as well as its shortcomings which have more recently been articulated by some acculturation scholars.

According to Berry, acculturating individuals are faced with two main issues: the degree of motivation to preserve and associate with their original minority ethnic culture and their motivation or acceptability to join in and identify with the mainstream majority culture (Berry, 1980, 2003). These two issues, that is, culture acquisition and heritage-culture retention are considered as independent dimensions which intersect to create four acculturation categories: *assimilation* (adopts the

receiving culture and discards the heritage culture), *separation* (rejects the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture), *integration* (adopts the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture), and *marginalisation* (rejects both the heritage and receiving cultures). It is important to note that the strategies developed by Berry have been formulated from the perspective of the minority group who adapts to a new environment (Berry, 1974; 1980) and are based on the assumption that members of the non-dominant groups are free to choose how they want to acculturate (Berry, 1997, 2005).

Assimilation refers to situations where migrants embrace the dominant culture and do not maintain their cultural identity. In this case, individuals might want to hide their cultural background and become immersed in the host society (Berry, 1997). The separation path is chosen when migrants hold on to their own culture and avoid interaction with others. In this case, individuals decide to focus on their own cultural group and discard any contact with other cultural groups. Integration refers to situations where migrants maintain their heritage culture while interacting with the larger social network. The marginalisation strategy is when migrants have little interest in maintaining their own cultural background and show little interest to interact with others. Often this is a product of exclusion or discrimination (Berry, 1997). By ‘strategies’, Berry refers to individual orientations and coping strategies that attempt to deal with the experiences of settling in a new society.

According to Berry and Sam (1997), and later reiterated by other researchers (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005), the best acculturation strategy is integration, also referred to biculturalism. Berry and colleagues (2006) studied more than 500 immigrant youth who have settled in 13 countries and assessed a number of concepts (including attitudes towards the four ways of acculturating; ethnic and national identities; ethnic and national knowledge and use; ethnic and national friends). They found that the most common acculturation strategy used by immigrants was integration. This strategy is said to be often associated with the most favorable psychosocial outcomes, especially among young immigrants. Bicultural individuals tend to portray higher self-esteem and overall better health (Schwartz et al. 2007).

The positive outcomes associated with the integration strategy are subject to various factors such as the degree of similarity between the heritage and receiving cultures (Rudmin, 2003). For example, migrants who come from English-speaking countries before they arrive in the English-speaking host society, may experience less stress or discrimination than migrants who are not proficient in English (Schwartz et al., 2007).

3.1.4 Criticisms of Berry's model

Despite the popularity of Berry's acculturation model, which has been implemented for over 30 years, it has nevertheless faced criticisms within the sphere of acculturation research. One of the main criticisms is the claim that individuals from different backgrounds are likely to experience the acculturation process in the same way (Berry, 1980; Berry and Sam, 1997; Berry et al., 2006). Some like Rudmin (2003) have questioned the fact that Berry's model claims that migrants are all likely to go through similar acculturation processes and question this 'one size fits all' approach (Chirkov, 2009) which characterise all individuals migrating to a new country equally, irrespective of their countries of origin and settlement and irrespective of their ethnic groups.

Another criticism is based on Berry's apparently unquestioned assumptions that a host society is a welcoming society. The model is seen to underestimate the involvement of the mainstream majority in the acculturation process and is considered as mainly highlighting the obligations of the individual to acculturate. Weinreich (2009) states that migrants in a xenophobic host society for example would be unable to adopt the 'integration' or the 'assimilation' paths as acculturation strategies; they would instead have no choice than to take the 'separation' strategy, relying on their network of family and friends to protect themselves from a potential hostile society.

Associated with this, is the reproach that Berry's model tends to ignore specific issues which may arise depending on the context and which may affect acculturation strategies. The four strategies are found to be too simplistic to understand the complexities of the acculturation process (Rudmin, 2009) and some argue that there

is a lack of empirical evidence for the existence of the strategies (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001). Furthermore, while Berry and colleagues have advocated 'integration' as the most preferred strategy among migrants, the criticism is that it lacks a clear definition and appears as a heterogeneous term (Arends-Toth and van de Vijver, 2006a) while others have wondered how exactly individuals achieve integration or what it really means to be integrated, or even whether the strategies are stable or change over time or within different contexts.

A further criticism related to the strategies of Berry's model is that the four strategies limit the acculturation experiences as the model does not consider the variations that can happen across domains or depending on specific situations (Taylor & Lambert, 1996). For example, an individual may adopt an integration strategy in the sphere of social life but a separation strategy at home (Arends-Toth & van de Vijver, 2003).

Furthermore, Berry's four-fold model has imitations due to the way that culture is treated as being fixed entities, whether it is the heritage culture of migrants or the culture in the dominant society (Rudmin, 2003; Weinreich, 2009). Berry's model tends to assume that the acculturation process involves only two cultures whereas there are often more than two cultures involved in the acculturation process. Horenczyk (1997) argues that 'immigrants may adopt distinct orientations towards the various subgroups of the society with which they are interacting'. This suggests that migrants may not be acculturating to one culture of the majority but more precisely to a particular group of the society. The view of considering culture as geographically localised as we have seen earlier in this chapter has been questioned in academic research. A number of researchers have indeed argued that the conception of independent, coherent and stable cultures becomes irrelevant in an increasingly interconnected world (Hermans and Kempen, 1998). They believe that culture is not unchanging and stationary but rather dynamic and spreading across geographical boundaries. According to Bhatia and Ram (2001), bringing together one nation with culture does not take into account the 'counter narratives, contested identities and the historical inventions that continuously challenge any unified understanding of a nation' (ibid.).

The limitations of the bidimensional model with the four-fold acculturation strategies have led to, more recently, another model called the Dialogical Model of Acculturation which has begun to gain support from various academic fields.

3.1.5 The dialogical model of acculturation

I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents. I prefer this to the idea of a solid self and identity to which so many attach so much significance. These currents, like the themes of one's life, flow along during the waking hours, and at their best, they require no reconciling, no harmonizing. They are off and may be out of place, but at least they are always in motion, in time, in-place, in the form of all kinds of strange combinations and moving about, not necessarily forward, sometimes against each other, contrapuntally yet without one central theme... With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place

Said, 1999

Postcolonial theorists believe that individuals do not acculturate from one culture (for example Mauritius) to another culture (for example England) in a linear trajectory. In contrast to the traditional view of acculturation, Hermans and Kempen (1998) suggest alternative ways of considering acculturation of migrants and they suggest that acculturation should be thought of as 'mixing and moving' (p. 117). In order to understand the Dialogical Model of Acculturation (DMA), it is important to look first at Herman's dialogical-self theory from which it stems.

The central concept, the dialogical self, is inspired by James and Bakhtin. According to James 1890, in Hermans and Kempen, 1998), the *I* refers to the self- as- knower, comprising of three components: continuity, distinctiveness and volition. The continuity is distinguished by a sense of personal identity which retains its uniformity over time (James, 196, in Hermans and Kempen, 1998). The subjective nature of the self-as-knower follows on to the realisation of distinctness from other people or one's uniqueness. Finally, the constant adoption and dismissal of ideas proves the dynamic processing of experience indicating a sense of volition. According to James, the *Me* refers to the self-as-known which could be broadly explained as all that an individual can name as his or her own, for example, 'his

clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account' (ibid.). James' conception of the 'extended' self is comprised of several characters who he sees as belonging to the 'me'. Hermans et al (1992) found that such characters are more explicitly elaborated in Bakhtin's work. The Russian literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin proposed a metaphor of the polyphonic novel in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929/1973, cited in Hermans, 1996) in which he analysed Dostoevskian discourse. Bakhtin contends that the fictional characters created by Dostoevski, one of the 'most brilliant innovators in the history of literature' (Hermans, 1996), were given free voices. They each had their own voices and told their own stories. As in a polyphonic musical work, multiple voices accompany and oppose one another in dialogical ways. James, as a theorist of the self, acknowledged not only the unity but also the multiplicity of the self. Bakhtin, on the other hand, as a literary theorist, elaborated on the multiplicity of characters and their mutual relationships by using the notion of multivoicedness (Hermans, 2001; Hermans and Dimaggio, 2007).

Inspired by James' notions of the self and by the Bakhtinian polyphonic metaphor, Hermans, Kempen and Van Loon (1992) conceptualised the dialogical self in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions. In this conception, the *I* is able to move from one position to another depending on changes in situation and time. The *I* can also fluctuate among different and opposed positions and has the capacity to give a voice to each position, which enables dialogical relations between positions (Hermans, 2001). The voices then perform like characters who tell their stories, from their own experiences. The notion that one person can occupy many I-positions is a prerequisite for the dialogical self. Besides, the *I* in one particular position can 'agree, disagree, understand, misunderstand, oppose, contradict, question, challenge and even ridicule' (Hermans, 2001, p. 249). Hermans points to the important role of dominance or social power played in the construction of the dialogical self (1996). According to Hermans, since the voices and positions of the dialogical selves are relatively autonomous, some 'individual' voices can dominate or overpower other voices (Bhatia, 2002).

3.1.6 From dialogical self to a dialogical approach to acculturation

Based on his dialogical self-theory, Hermans challenged the universalist perspectives on acculturation and suggested a rethinking of acculturation. The psychologist argued that an increasingly interconnected world society requires attention to dialogical relationships between different cultures, different selves and different positioning in the self (2002). According to Hermans, acculturation is much more than a process from culture A to culture B (Hermans and Kempen, 1998). Rather, it involves ‘tensions between voices representing original and host cultures’ (Hermans and Dimaggio, 2007, p. 44). Arguing his point, Hermans not only challenges the conception of self, but also challenges the conception of culture as core and essential entities. He proposed instead a more dynamic conception as ‘a multiplicity of positions along which dialogical relationships can develop’ (Hermans and Kempen, 1998).

Hermans and other proponents of the dialogical approach to acculturation challenge the assumption of universality claimed by the acculturation model proposed by Berry and his colleagues. Berry’s model sees culture as being geographically located in two places. Instead, Hermans emphasises the relevance of mixture, contact zones and multiple identities. He believes that more attention should be given to the periphery or meeting point between cultures and not to two restricted locations. Hermans’ theory about a dialogical self and his conception of culture as being hybridised instead of homogeneous, multiple instead of fixed, gave way for the dialogical model of acculturation. To illustrate the process of hybridisation and multiple identities, Hermans and Kemptan gave the following examples: Mexican schoolgirls dressed in Greek togas dancing in the style of Isadora Duncan; a London boy of Asian origin playing for a local Bengali cricket team and at the same time supporting the Arsenal football club; an event of Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam; or a group of native Americans celebrating Mardi Gras in the US (2007). These examples show that an individual migrating to a different country may come with more than just one culture and may have to experience not just with one but with various aspects of new cultures.

Hermans' dialogical approach to acculturation is defended by postcolonial theorists such as Ram and Bhatia who contest the four acculturation strategies proposed by Berry's model, more precisely the integration strategy. They argue that acculturation processes are too complex and are better understood from a dialogical perspective as proposed by Hermans. Bhatia explains the Dialogical Model of Acculturation through post-colonialist Edward Said's *Memoir out of Place* (1999) which, according to Bhatia (2002), is an illustration of Hermans' multiplicity of voices and I-positions. In *Out of Place*, Said talks about his struggles with his hyphenated, postcolonial identity as a Palestinian-Egyptian-Christian-Arab-American. Said moves between a number of different I-positions and 'voices' from his childhood days of living in pre-war Palestine, to his 'colonial' schooling in Egypt, and to his life as a student in the US (Bhatia, 2002). His name Edward Said inspired his defence of multiplicity. Edward was a Western name that stood out during his childhood in Palestine and Egypt. He writes about how the 'Edward' part of his self was created and why that part always felt disconnected from 'Said'. He recalls that his parents were Palestinians who lived as 'Christian minorities' in 'colonial Cairo'. As a student in a colonial school in Cairo, he and a group of Arab boys would speak in Arabic to rebel against the rules of the school which forbid the use of any other language apart from English. '.... We spoke more, rather than less, Arabic, as an act of defiance against what seemed then, and seems even more so now, an arbitrary, ludicrously gratuitous symbol of their power' (p. 184). By speaking in Arabic, Said is not just privileging the 'Arabic language' but he is voicing his Arab I position. The themes of 'multivoicedness', 'polyphony' and fluctuations between multiple I positions resonate throughout Said's memoir. Migrating to the US as a student intensified his fight to reunite the different voices of his self and the different parts of his identity (Bhatia, 2002). He recognises that the Arab I-position that was a source of so much pride in the British schools in Cairo, had to be repressed when he arrived in the US. His "nationality, his background, his origins and past actions" appeared to be the root of his problem. So he decided to avoid talking much about his family or his origins. He wanted to become like the others 'as anonymous as possible' (cited in Bhatia, 2002). It took Edward Said about fifty years to feel less uncomfortable with his

‘foolishly English name’ ‘Edward’ (ibid.). He finally embraced a freedom stemming from the realisation that he was more than one self.

Due to these challenges and complexities between different roles, various and sometimes opposed voices, Bhatia and Ram are adamant that the dialogical model of acculturation becomes the only viable option in the global world of today. Bhatia and Ram believe that the experiences of non-European migrants to Western host countries are likely to be different than European migrants, due to different historical backgrounds. Other scholars have concurred with this argument and believe that a greater cultural distance often implies less sociocultural adaptation. Groups which are perceived to be more different from the mainstream society tend to have a lower social status (Hagendoorn, 1995). Galchenko and Van de Vijver (2007) conducted a study to address processes of psychological acculturation by exchange students in Russia. Using a sample of 168 exchange students in Moscow from China, North Korea, and countries in sub-Saharan Africa and in the former Soviet Union, the study found that a larger perceived cultural distance between mainstream and immigrant culture is associated with less psychological and sociocultural adaptation. The Chinese and North-Korean group reported to experience the largest perceived cultural distance and the lowest levels of adjustment. In the United States, where most acculturation research is done, research on how migrant youth are adapting to the US has been dominated by stories of xenophobia, negative stereotyping and discrimination (Suarez-Orozco, 1996; Yakushko, 2008).

In addition, the Haitian community in the US also suffers stereotypes and discrimination due to cultural difference. Haitian migrants in the US are considered as ‘triple minorities’ because they are foreigners, black and speak a language not commonly spoken in America (Bryce-LaPorte, 1993). Kreyol – similar to Mauritian Creole – is a French-based creole language of Haiti. Scholars have argued that students of Haitian descent struggle to adapt to their new environment and arrive in American classrooms with challenges (Doucet, 2014). According to Doucet, the majority of Haitian students in American schools need and are entitled to instruction in their mother tongue. The widely-cited Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study

(CILS) which surveyed more than 5 000 students with immigrant parents in South Florida and southern California (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) reported that children of Haitian immigrants were not achieving academically despite their high aspirations in education. Analysing the results of the CILS data further, Stepick et al. (2001, p. 231) concluded that the paradox of high aspirations of Haitians and low academic performance of students was the negative ‘context of reception’ experienced by Haitian migrants, that is, the unwelcoming environment in the US characterised by hostile government policies and racial and ethnic prejudice. In addition, Haitians were disadvantaged by their low levels of parental education, and by speaking a language shared by no other group. Stepick relates the academic struggles of Haitian students to their identity struggles of being Haitian and American.

Another group – this time geographically closer to Mauritius – that perceives they are discriminated against by the host country due to their cultural differences is migrant youth from Reunion Island, a neighbour island of Mauritius which is a French colony. Migrants from Reunion Island have reported negative experiences when acculturating in France (Labache, 2002). Born outside of the hexagon, speaking Reunionese Creole apart from French, Reunion islanders have got different cultural traits which makes it difficult for many to integrate into the French ways of life in mainland France (ibid.). Perceived racism and discrimination add to the feeling of a lack of belonging; they are categorised as foreigners in a country where they are citizens.

Therefore, instead of models that claim that all migrants undergo a universal psychological process of acculturation, Bhatia and Ram (2009) propose the dialogical model of acculturation to account for cultural differences between home and host societies. They propose that the notion of ‘diaspora’ can help understand migrant experiences and that it has important implications for rethinking traditional notions of acculturation. Indeed, postcolonial and diaspora theories dispense with fixed national and cultural boundaries and allow us to think more in terms of traveling cultures where here and there, past and present, homeland and host land are constantly negotiated with each other (Bhatia & Ram, 2001).

3.2 THE CONCEPTS OF HOME AND BELONGING FOR THE CHAGOSSIAN DIASPORA

Diaspora is a relatively new term in migration studies. It refers to a migrant population displaced from an original homeland and who continues to identify itself with the homeland where it seeks to return (Safran 1991, Cohen 1997). Based on this classical definition of diaspora, there is no doubt that the Chagossian islanders forcibly removed from their islands between 1967 and 1973 and their families constituted and still constitute a diaspora in Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Given that the Chagossian community has lost its homeland and has long been fighting for the right to return to their place of birth, I consider that diaspora is appropriate for this study. I argue that the Mauritian-Chagossian community in England can be defined as a new diaspora in England. All features and categories that make a diaspora community which have been identified by scholars in the field (Sheffer, 1986; Dufoix, 2003; Cohen, 1997) can also be applied to the Mauritian-Chagossian community in the UK.

3.2.1 Definitions of diaspora

The term diaspora has a long history and has consistently been connected to experiences of displacement, dispersal and migrancy (Tsagarousianou, 2004). Etymologically, the concept is derived from the Greek word '*diasperien*', where '*dia*' means 'across' and '*sperien*' means to 'sow or scatter seeds'. It originally refers to the naming of 'the other', which in history has denoted displaced communities of people who have been unsettled from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration or exile (Tsagarousianou, 2004). For the Greeks, diaspora was a way to understand migration and colonisation. Historically the term has been used to describe the forcible exile of Jews to Babylon in 586 BC after the demolition of the Jerusalem temple and the term 'diaspora' became synonym of homelessness, dislocation, and suffering (Cohen, 1997). The term was also used to describe Armenians who were persecuted in the Ottoman Empire between the 18th and 20th centuries, Palestinian and African populations where people were concerned with

displacement, nostalgia of their homeland, collective identity and boundary maintenance (Brubaker, 2005; Georgiou, 2005; Tsagarousianou, 2004).

It was only in the 1990s that the term started to be used in scholarly, policy, public and media discourses (Brubaker, 2005). William Safran was a pioneer in the field and, taking the Jewish experience as a critical base, suggested that the term diaspora could apply to other populations. He defines the diasporas as characterised by six main distinguishing features. Firstly, people in a diaspora originated from a common 'centre' scattering to two or more 'peripheral' or far off lands; secondly, the geographical location, the history and the accomplishments of their homeland are strongly preserved in their memories, dreams or myths collectively; thirdly, feeling somewhat estranged and shielded from the host community, these communities are distinguished by their strong belief that they are not – and may be it is not possible for them to be – fully integrated into the host society. The fourth feature is that generally diasporas believe that one day they or their descendants would or should go back to their heritage homeland because they consider that to be their genuine, perfect home. The fifth feature characterising diaspora is their collective firm belief that they should all be dedicated to reinstating their ancestral homeland and its success and security. Lastly, diasporic communities usually identify with their original homeland in one way or another either through their own or other people's experience – indeed such a solid connection with their homeland is crucial for their shared unity and 'ethno communal consciousness' (Safran, 1991, pp. 83-84).

In 1997, Robin Cohen added additional features to Safran's conceptualisation of diaspora. In his book 'Global Diasporas: an introduction', Cohen argued that diaspora should include people who not only left their homeland 'traumatically' but also those who voluntarily spread 'in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions'. Cohen also considered the positive aspects of diasporic communities such as their diversity and plurality. Cohen (1997) follows Safran's logic and defines common features of diaspora as follows: scattering, in many cases, in a painful and disturbing manner, of a group of people to two or more far off lands; on the other hand or in addition to, people move away from their homeland to look

for work or trade prospects; they hold strong collective myths and memories of their ancestral home, including its history, locality, suffering as well as its accomplishments; a nostalgic idea of their real or imaginary heritage home with a collective pledge to preserve and rebuild it and to ensure its security and success; the recurring growth of a programme that has everyone's approval to go back home, even though many members might be contented with irregular visits or only a connection to their homeland through other people; a strong ethno-collective consciousness founded on a shared history, a feeling of uniqueness, a show of mutual cultural and religious traditions and faith in a joint destiny sustained over a long period; an uneasy affiliation with host societies, signifying that the group does not enjoy mainstream approval or that there is a chance that they might face another catastrophe; a feeling of empathy and shared responsibility with co-ethnic members settled in different countries where the idea of a homeland might have become just a token; in tolerant, diverse host countries, the chance of a unique, inventive and fulfilling life.

The Chagossian islanders – displaced from the Chagos islands which belonged to the then colony of Mauritius – formed a diasporic community in Mauritius after their forced removal. Based on the consequences of the forced displacement of Chagossian islanders from 1965 and 1973 as elaborated in chapter one, there is no doubt that Chagossians spread in Mauritius and in the Seychelles constitute a diaspora. I argue that the Chagossian community settled in the UK is a relatively new Chagossian diaspora. While the new generation of Chagossians did not leave Mauritius 'traumatically' (Cohen, 1997), their migration in the UK has been the result of the forced displacement and has been motivated by a difficult and poor life in exile in Mauritius; hence their migration took place in a 'painful and disturbing manner' (ibid.)

3.2.2 New meanings of diaspora

The evolution of migratory processes over time and the creation of new migrant communities have changed the meaning of 'diaspora.' Instead of the focus being on the nostalgic linkages diasporas have of an original homeland and to the idea of distinctive identities and 'boundary maintenance' (Brubaker, 2005; Tsagarousianou,

2004), scholars focus on 'boundary erosion' which implies fluidity and diversity. Clifford (1994) for example, argues that diaspora does not have to have a focal point, and return to a place called 'home' is not required. In the same vein, Hall disagreed with the idea of diaspora linking with a 'fixed' past. Hall questions the possibility of return to the past and argues that it is more precarious than recurrently thought. For Hall, diasporic experiences almost always constitute new spaces and cultural identities undergo constant transformation and are subject to continuous 'play' of history, culture and power (Hall, 1993).

Earlier theorisation of diaspora fitted well with the experiences of the native Chagossian islanders. The characteristics of dispersal, homeland, return to a fixed past resonate to the Chagossians who indeed were dispersed nearly fifty years ago from their homeland Chagos and are still longing for a return. However, for this study I accept the idea by Tölölyan who points out that: 'The term that once described Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community' (Tölölyan, 1991, p. 4.). This idea points out the possibility of a more flexible use of the concept and allows a distinction to be made between 'contemporary' and 'classical' diasporas. Later theorisation of diaspora provides a suitable analytical approach to explore the acculturation experiences of the new generation of Chagossians who have migrated to England. Those scholars who have challenged the classical notions of diaspora, such as Brah (1996), consider that the concept of diaspora entails a notion of home and that an idea of displacement and dislocation from that home is at the core of the concept of diaspora. At the heart of a diaspora is therefore the importance of a homeland, whether territorial or symbolic.

3.2.3 Multiple meanings of home

It is not an easy task to define home. In social science, home has been traditionally conceptualised as a fixed place; 'being at home means being stationary, centred, bounded, fitted, engaged, and grounded' (Rapport and Dawson, 1998). In the traditional 'settler' migration model, the term 'home' typically refers to the country

of origin. However, in today's highly globalised and mobile world, the literature on transnationalism identifies several ways in which 'home' can be conceptualised.

Brah (1996) refers to social relations as constituting a sense of home in a locality, describes the social relations as including family and friendship ties. Others highlight the role of the country of origin and residence in the creation of multiple belongings and several places called 'home'. For example, Magat (1999) separates 'little home' from 'big home'. 'Big home' encompasses one's national identity and belonging whereas 'little home' is a more fluid place established by individuals and filled with daily activities (ibid.)

Linked to the idea of social relations, home has also been conceptualised as being the lived experience of a place (Brah, 1996) such as 'its sounds and smells, its heat and dust...' The latter suggests that familiar materials and physical things like the landscapes and roads in an area, can create a feeling of home. These experiences have been described as 'a set of practices' by the social constructionist Berger, that is, 'the untold story of a life being lived' (1984, p. 64). The idea of imagined places is very present in literature about home and belonging. For Brah, home has two meanings. As has been seen earlier, home for Brah (1996, p. 192) can be 'the lived experience of a locality'; on the other hand, she believes that home can also be a 'mythical place of desire in the diasporic imagination' that creates a longing to feel at home. That is, for diasporic people, although they do not necessarily yearn to return to their country of origin, home is the object of their longing, and these people have a desire to *feel at home* in their current residence. What Brah calls a place of desire, others call a symbolic and idealised place (Mallet, 2004).

Although the association of home with a fixed place has been questioned over the years, one cannot overlook the significance of 'place' when discussing the concept of home. The family and friendship ties mentioned above that make the feeling of home are found in a place, somewhere, somehow. Similarly, the 'sounds and smells' as well as the roads referred to by Brah (1996) above are found in a 'locality' somewhere. For these reasons, the notion of place attachment is considered an integrating concept incorporating many aspects of people-place bonding (Altman &

Low, 1992) linking specific settings with comfort and safety (Hernández et al. 2007) or providing an emotional link to a physical site.

3.2.4 A sense of loss

Leaving behind familiar surroundings and relationships to adapt to a new country is likely to cause a sense of loss often referred to as ‘ambiguous loss’. The concept of ambiguous loss was proposed by American scholar, educator and family therapist, Pauline Boss (1991; 1999). Ambiguous loss is defined as the impossibility of mourning and healing after losing a loved one, in the case of someone who is physically absent but psychologically present. Migrants in general experience “ambiguous loss” in relation to friends and family members left behind in the country of origin (Boss, 1991; 1999). As this type of loss is not necessarily recognised as one, the suffering and accompanying sadness is not recognised (Boss, 1999), but this can cause severe depression (Boss, 2006).

Suarez-Orozco et al., (2002) conducted in 2002 an interdisciplinary study of 385 early adolescents originating from China, Central America, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico with the aim of documenting the adaptations of immigrant youth which had recently arrived in the US. Suarez-Orozco et al., (2002) found a relationship between family separation and increased levels of reported depressive symptoms. According to Suarez-Orozco et al., (ibid.) ‘ambiguous loss’ is particularly relevant to parent-child separation during migration which could lead to complications in the resolution of grief. Suarez-Orozco et al., (2002) found that children who were separated from their parents were more likely to report depressive symptoms than children who were not separated from their parents during migration. They also found that children who were separated from both parents had a higher level of reported symptoms compared to children who were not separated.

3.3 FINDING ONE’S PLACE IN A FOREIGN LAND

Earlier, in the colonial period, European colonisers went all over the world and took their ‘cultural baggage’ with them. Today’s migrants do the same, but are often denied the right to practise their cultures, and they remain physically distinct and are treated as ‘ethnic’ others, even though we should be aware that everybody is ‘ethnic’

Acculturation revolves around retaining one's ways of life in the home country and adopting new ways of life in the host country. Like European colonisers taking their 'cultural baggage' with them all over the world (Menski, 2002), migrants moving to a new place travel with theirs. One of the research questions of this study is 'How did the participants navigate between their heritage culture(s) and the host culture(s)?' This inevitably involves looking at the issues of identity among the participants. The process of settling in a new country is a challenging experience for everybody but even more challenging for migrant adolescents which Schwartz et al. (2006) describes as a 'double challenge'. While having to acculturate into the host society, migrant adolescents, they argue, also have to deal with the identity issues occurring during adolescence (2006, p. 3). For Rumbaut (1994, p. 790), the process is 'complex and stressful' as children of immigrants experience the process of having to define a meaningful place in their new society, that is to define an identity for themselves. In the acculturation literature, ethnic identity tends to be studied more than any other aspect of identity (Phinney, 2006). Ethnic identification involves one's 'sense of self in terms of membership in a particular ethnic group' (Phinney et al. 2001, p. 496).

3.3.1 Understanding ethnic identity

In a research review on ethnic identity in adolescents and adults, Phinney (1990) found different definitions of 'ethnic identity' including feelings of belonging and shared values. Others referred to self-identification, feelings of belonging and commitment, a sense of shared values and attitudes (White & Burke, 1987). Cultural aspects such as language, behaviour, values and knowledge of the group's history have also been investigated and was also suggested by some that ethnic identity was achieved as opposed to being given (Hogg et al. 1987).

Ethnic identity is influenced by various factors. For example, attitudes that one holds towards one's own ethnic group are likely to impact the person's examination of his or her ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990). Indeed, people can have both positive and negative attitudes towards their own ethnic group. Negative attitudes can include feelings of inferiority, a desire to hide one's cultural identity (Phinney, 1990).

Negative feelings about one's group may also result from negative stereotypes young people may have been exposed to (Phinney et al., 2001). Another consideration that may impact on ethnic identity concerns those young people who come from ethnic minority groups. As such, the groups they belong to are less represented in society which could put the young people at risk of facing discrimination and prejudice. Another factor influencing ethnic identity is the difficulty that some people have about self-identification. Ethnicity is generally determined at birth or assigned to a person by others on the basis of ethnic background or phenotype (Phinney and Ong, 2007). People can choose their ethnic labels, however it can be difficult for those whose parents come from two or more distinct groups (Phinney, 1990). Mann (2004) supports this view and reports that migrant adolescents whose families come from more than one heritage cultures may experience difficulty or even distress in trying to make sense of who they are as regards as who the in group is.

3.3.2 Verkuyten's four components of ethnic identity

Verkuyten's approach which consists of four components of ethnic identity (2004) is useful to make sense of ethnic identity and what it entails. The first component is *'being'*, that is, self-definition or self-labelling what one is, that is, what connects the members of the group (for example, homeland, natural parents, visible characteristics); the second component is *'feeling'* which refers to a sense of belonging and positive feelings towards one's ethnic identity (for example, importance, evaluation, commitment); next is *'doing'* which refers to ethnic involvement (for example, participation in group activities, social circles, command of language, music, food, clothes); the last component is *'knowing'* which refers to the extent to which people are interested in and knowledgeable about their ethnic group (for example, group beliefs, culture, history). Verkuyten's approach shows that individuals have choices between different possibilities of self-identification and group belonging while they can select which components to adopt depending on the situations and contexts (2004).

The final section of this chapter will therefore review literature on the role of UK schools in the adaptation of migrants, with an emphasis on multicultural education.

3.4 THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS

What is looked for is not the assimilation of the minority communities within an unchanged dominant way of life, but the ‘assimilation’ of all groups within a redefined concept of what it means to live in British society today
The Swann Report, 1985, p. 2

Schools play an important role in the acculturation process of migrants as they symbolise the host society (Vedder and Horenczyk, 2006). Schools are also considered as a micro-some of society and an awareness of migrant children’s experience is an awareness of their experiences of much life (Reynolds, 2008). However, despite the importance of school experience, ‘an abundance of studies show that immigrant youth in the Western world benefit insufficiently from schools’ (ibid., p. 419). The increasing diversity of pupils in the UK has changed the façade of school environments in the UK. In January 2010, out of the 6.5 million pupils in maintained primary and secondary schools in England, 1.5 million were ethnic minority pupils (School Census, 2010). The influx of migrant children in the UK impacted on schools and was regarded as a problem, to such an extent that UK schools were said to be ‘swamped by migrants’ (Express, 30/09/2006 in Reynolds, 2008, p. 4). Information on pupils’ first language provides further insights on the diversity of schools’ populations. At 2010, there were nearly 900 000 pupils in English primary and secondary schools whose first language is believed to be other than English (ibid.). Educationalists in the UK have been trying to find ways to deal with migrant pupils since the 1960s. Multicultural education in the UK has experienced many twists and turns in policy over the years.

3.4.1 Fifty years of multicultural education

To understand multicultural education today, it is important to understand how it has evolved over time. Multicultural education has been implemented across different phases over the last fifty years. Lynch (1986) named the periods: the ‘laissez- fair’ phase; the immigrant and English as Second Language (ESL) phase; the deficit phase; the multicultural phase; and the anti-racist phase. Gillborn (2001) however

identified the following stages: ignorance and neglect (1945 to late 1950s); assimilation (late 1950 to mid-1960s); integration (mid 1960s to late 1970s); cultural pluralism and multiculturalism (late 1970s late 1980s); Thatcherism (mid-1980 to 1997); and naïve multiculturalism.

The dilemma of teaching students with different backgrounds in UK schools started in the 1960s with the arrival of the influx of migrants arriving from British Commonwealth countries where the focus was on the assimilation of immigrant children into 'British life' (Tomlinson, 1983). It was the role of education to encourage 'the suppression and depreciation of ethnic and cultural differences' (Troyna, 1993). However, the assimilation strategy resulted often in racism experienced by minority ethnic communities; therefore it was replaced by integration which was defined as 'equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance' (Arora, 2005, p. 21). Rather than expecting them to assimilate into the British society, more attention was paid in the 1970s to the needs of ethnic minority communities in preserving their linguistic and cultural transitions (Tomlinson, 1983). However, there was a growing perception that African-Caribbean students were failing at school and were not acquiring the basic qualifications required for employment (Modood and May, 2001). Moreover, African-Caribbean youth, especially boys, were in conflict with school staff and other institutions. The integrationist approach would make way for multicultural education. The aim of multicultural education was to understand and celebrate difference through education and this was reflected in the curriculum by educating about different cultures (Bartlett and Burton, 2007). In its simplest form multicultural education incorporated an awareness of the music, clothes, food and festivals of minority ethnic groups into the curriculum (Gardner, 2004).

The then Labour government demanded an inquiry into the causes of the underachievement of students of West Indian origin (ibid.). An interim report was produced in 1981 after research from six local education authorities. Racism was highlighted as a factor explaining the poor educational performance of African-Caribbean students. The inquiry's emphasis on teacher racism caused controversy

and Anthony Rampton was forced to resign, to be replaced by Michael Swann (Modood and May, 2001).

The final inquiry report, known as the Swann Report was published in 1985. In the policy 'Education for All', the report stated that the problem facing the education system then, was 'not how to educate children of ethnic minorities, but how to educate all children' (1985, p. 10). '*Education for All*' considered that the task for education was to prepare all pupils for life in a multiracial and culturally diverse society. The document moved away from previous assimilationist and integrationist education policies and promoted a more inclusive multicultural curriculum (Modood and May, 2001). However, multiculturalism was criticised for not addressing issues of racism in schools and its negative impact on teacher and pupil attitudes, and minority ethnic pupil attainment. Anti-racists regretted that multiculturalism was turning a blind eye on contexts of racism (Modood, 2005).

3.4.2 Multicultural versus anti-racist education

The critics came predominantly from anti-racists who mocked multiculturalism as 'saris, samosas and steel bands' (Troyna, 1993, p. 5), meaning that multiculturalism was an approach to education which patronised ethnic minorities and reinforced white assumptions of minority groups as exotic and primitive.

Anti-racist educational policies were then favoured for the emphasis they placed on equal educational opportunities and for encouraging teachers and students to think critically about any racist attitudes (Bartlett and Burton, 2007; Gillborn, 1995) they might hold and to challenge racist pupil attitudes in the class. The works of Gillborn (1995), Mac an Ghaill (1992), Troyna & Williams (1986) for example, among others also suggest that the situations in other British schools are similar. Multicultural education was removed from the national curriculum in the early 1990s (Modood, 2014).

Educational policy makers responded to criticisms against multiculturalism by shifting to ideas of inclusion. The 1997 Educational Green Paper '*Excellence for All Children*' was the first step towards an inclusive model for education (Reynolds,

2008). This was confirmed two years later in the National Curriculum which added a statutory inclusion statement, requiring teachers to overcome all forms of discrimination in their schools (ibid.)

In the meantime, the Macpherson Inquiry into the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence by five white young people was published and revealed there was 'institutional racism' in this case (Macpherson, 1999 as cited in Hesse 2000, p. 238). For sociologist Stuart Hall, this event shows the contradictory state of British multiculturalism (in Hesse, 2000). The multicultural policy was further questioned after the riots in a few English cities in summer 2001 involving mainly young Asian youth and after the events of September 11 in the USA (Bhavnani, Mirza and Meeto, 2005). Two reports were commissioned by the British government after the 2001 riots: the Cantle report and the Denham one (Ratcliffe, 2012). Both reports admitted tensions between groups and the Cantle report referred to 'parallel lives' lived by white populations and South Asians in northern towns in the UK (ibid.) Even the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips, advocated the abandonment of multiculturalism which he said represented 'separateness' and did not encourage minorities to be truly British (Observer 04/04/04 in Bhavnani, Mirza and Meeto, 2005, p. 2). The multiculturalism policy was replaced by the community cohesion policy in 2002 (Kundnani, 2002). Citizenship studies were introduced to the curriculum as a way to promote community cohesion (Vertovec, 2007). With schools being assigned the duty to promote community cohesion, it was hoped that community cohesion and the creation of strong positive relations between people from different backgrounds would support the objectives of inclusion (Reynolds, 2008).

Vertovec (2010) termed this period as 'post-multiculturalism' during which interventions were sought to tackle separatism and promote diversity in favour of shared values, resonating strongly with discourses on integration and assimilation (McGhee, 2008). Those new interventions such as community cohesion and citizenship did not mean the end of multiculturalism. They exist as 'post-multicultural' interventions which sit in conjunction with multiculturalism (McGhee,

2008). According to Reynolds, the creation of social cohesion is central to an inclusive education (2008). As Blanco and Takemoto's explain: 'The goal... is to enable each individual to retain and develop his or her cultural identity...schools [should] create welcoming communities and build an inclusive society where education for all can be achieved' (2006, p. 58).

3.4.3 Challenges faced by migrants in UK schools

We have seen in the previous section how educationalists and policy makers in the UK have attempted to accommodate migrants in the education system and approach an increasing diversity in school populations since the 1960s (Reynolds, 2008). Despite the commitment towards 'inclusive schools' and the good intentions of community cohesion, despite all the twists and turns over the past 50 years, much of the research exploring the experiences of ethnic minority pupils in UK schools has raised numerous challenges still faced by migrants. The key obstacles remain a perceived lack of understanding of their needs as new pupils; perceived negative stereotyping, racism and discrimination; and perceived lack of multicultural curriculum. In recent years there has been a steady rise in the school population of children whose language is reported to be other than English. In 2013, there were over 1 million school-age students between 5 and 16 years old in English schools whose first language was known or believed to be other than English, out of a total student population of 8.2 million (Arnot et al., 2014). Children who arrive in UK schools with little or no English are categorised as English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils.

3.4.4 Lack of English proficiency

The challenges and stress that language learners in schools experience have been addressed in research. Chen (2007), for example, observed three Chinese children aged between eight and eleven years old newly arrived in the UK during their first year at school, in an attempt to understand what 'equality for opportunity' meant for them. The children were often sent to younger class groups for literary and numeracy support. Chen found that the pupils experienced deep feelings of isolation, misunderstanding and frustration and they felt neglected by the school staff that did

not seem to be aware of the pupils' feelings of exclusion. Chen questioned the principles of 'inclusion' and 'equality' that govern the EAL policies in the UK. The author called for more focused support for small groups of new arrivals out of the mainstream classrooms.

Support indeed seems to be what EAL pupils need when they first arrive in a new school in the host country. Literature into the psychological assessment of EAL pupils has provided some interesting insights into some of the challenges faced by them. In a study by Ryan and Sales (2011), Polish students in UK secondary schools said how they felt when they first arrived and were not proficient in English. One participant, Marek, reported that he was scared being on his own and language barrier inhibited him from being himself. Luckily, he had a Polish friend who had joined the school on the same day as the participant and he said 'it was easier when there were two of us' (ibid.).

Not very much is known about the emotional experiences of English language learner pupils in the UK, who are faced with the challenge of learning English, nonetheless the studies mentioned above highlight the role that emotions play in language learning and how stress for example can affect EAL pupils. Krashen (1994) was the first linguist to draw attention to the affective dimensions of language learning and while he believed that language acquisition occurs naturally, he felt the process was not easy. Negative influences such as anxiety, lack of self-confidence and inadequate motivation to speak a second language can negatively impact language acquisition. In addition to this, children who come from poor economic status families, minority ethnic groups and who speak low-status English are more vulnerable to experiencing low self-esteem, which often coincides with anxiety or hostility toward English language learning (Crawford, 2004).

The term 'language anxiety' was defined by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) as a separate and distinct phenomena particular to additional language learning. The possibility that anxiety interferes with language learning has long interested scholars, language teachers and language learners themselves. The concept of anxiety itself is multifaceted, and is categorised as a situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz, 2010).

Much of the language anxiety literature is purely based on adult language learning experiences, particularly those of university students, and so is not applicable to the experiences of younger people. Nevertheless, this body of literature does provide support for a close relationship between language and emotions, in particular second language learning and emotions.

Buddy systems or the role of peer support has been found influential in relation to the emotional wellbeing of EAL pupils. When considering peer support offered to EAL pupils, language can play a key role as it is the primary means of communication through which support can be offered and received. Arnot et al. (2014) found in their study that pupils who had received the support of a child from the same linguistic background insisted on the positive impact this had in helping them integrate in school and then join in wider friendship groups. Indeed, friendship groups usually tend, at least initially, to be organised around same linguistic backgrounds (ibid).

The first language indeed seems to play a crucial role in acquiring another language. An action research project (Kenner, C., Gregory, E. Ruby, M., 2010) examined how second and third-generation British Bangladeshi children learn bilingually in after-school community language classes and investigated the benefits that can be gained if children use Sylheti/Bengali alongside English in the mainstream classroom. Children found it difficult to use Sylheti/ Bengali in the classroom, although they were accustomed to using it in the playground and at community class, where they switched between languages. Children wanted to be able to use Bangla for learning in school and felt it was an important part of their identity. The authors argued that working in both languages can enhance children's learning, through conceptual transfer, use of translation, developing metalinguistic awareness and drawing on cultural knowledge. Second and third generation children still have bilingual skills, but are in danger of losing them unless they have sufficient support to develop their mother tongue. In addition to community language classes, children need to do academic work bilingually in mainstream school in order to fully develop concepts and skills in mother tongue as well as English. Only then will they achieve the full benefits of bilingual learning.

3.4.5 Perceptions of negative stereotyping and racism

There is a substantial body of literature documenting the experiences of racism among minority ethnic pupils in secondary schools (Crozier and Davies, 2008). As stated earlier, the Rampton report in 1981 highlighted racism as one of the main factors of the underachievement of African-Caribbean students (Modood and May, 2001). The Swann Report published in 1985 addressed the same problem. It regretted that 'covert and unintentional' racism in the educational context was a cause for concern (Swann, 1985, p. 4) and expected schools to tackle 'racist attitudes' otherwise this would constitute a 'fundamental mis-education' (ibid., p. 6). An increase of reports of racist incidents was noted after the Stephen Lawrence inquiry in 1999 (House of Commons, 2009) and brought the issue of 'institutional racism' to the fore of national debate. It is now acknowledged through research that discrimination exists in UK schools (Gillborn & Youdell 2000). Discrimination can take many forms and include experiences of bullying, negative stereotyping and racism.

McCulloch (1998) asserts that secondary education in England and Wales has systematically failed the ordinary child over the past hundred years and this is particularly true of African-Caribbean boys. Arnot, David and Weiner (2001) argue that it is hardly surprising that African-Caribbean boys fail to achieve educational qualifications in GCSE since schools often mark them down as having learning and behaviour difficulties and as being in need of specialist help. Stereotypes of young Black men include images of aggression, low ability and sexual promiscuity (Gillborn, 1997), while young Black women are stereotyped as boisterous. Black pupils in Archer's study in the UK reported that their teachers saw them as challenging and loud (2008). Archer explains that from the perspective of the teachers, the 'loudness' of Black pupils was linked to a lack of educational motivation. In contrast, the Black girls in the same study said they were proud to be loud because being loud was a trait of Black Women. They also explained that their loudness was a reaction to their experiences of discrimination at school (ibid).

Asian young people also suffer stereotypes from the dominant society, but in a different way. Asian communities are stereotyped as extremely authoritarian and

Asian children are said to be brought up in families dominated by the father (Gillborn, 1997). Also, Asian male students are seen as being of 'high ability' (Mac an Ghail, 1988, p. 64) while South Asian girls are considered quiet and passive (Connolly 2000) as well as fascinatingly submissive. Asian pupils including British Chinese are also considered 'good pupils', 'clever', 'hardworking', 'quiet' and 'well behaved' (Archer, 2008, p. 98).

According to Rumbaut, perceptions of discrimination affect the way young people define their ethnic identities. Those who experience discrimination are less likely to embrace the host country's identity (1994). Not embracing the host country's identity means holding on to one's original or heritage culture and not engaging with the new one, which reminds us of Berry's separation strategy of acculturation as explained earlier in this chapter. This may therefore be one of the reasons why migrant students tend to befriend other migrants only which Ackers and Stalford (2004) calls a 'migrant bubble'. Young migrants seem to rely on other migrants as social support in the process of adaptation in the new country, a situation which can result in a form of segregation or a lack of social interaction in school settings. This has been identified in the UK as a cause of concern (Burgess et al., 2005). In a previous paper, Burgess and Wilson (2003) identified areas of particularly high segregation for South Asian pupils and found that these coincide almost exactly with the locations of severe public disorder in 2001 in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley (mentioned earlier in this chapter). Young migrants often find it easier to befriend other migrants for different reasons. Feeling lost in their new environment, they might look for a feeling of security, comfort and solidarity as well as a way of asserting themselves (Simsek, 2013, p. 18). That feeling of comfort and solidarity that migrants often get in the EAL department of their school. In Reynolds' study, the head of EAL in one of the schools said that friendships are often formed in the EAL department because this is where new migrants spend the first and most nervous time at the school: 'Even if they don't speak the same language, those that were in the EAL department together tend to be friends until they leave school. They get to know each other better than anyone else and stick together' (Reynolds, 2008, p. 14). This example fits well with the idea of a 'migrant bubble' as referred to by Ackers and Stalford (2004).

Cline et al. (2002) found that discrimination affects how pupils perceive their own culture and their identity. Young people in their study reflected on their experiences of prejudice and what this meant to be part of their culture. In predominantly white schools, teenagers may feel uncomfortable displaying behaviours relating to their heritage because it may be met with negative peer reactions (Cline & Abreu, 2005; Thijs & Verkuyten, 2014) and they may feel pressure to conform with their peers. Cline & Abreu (2005) suggest that this reticence may be ameliorated if an ethos of cultural diversity and respect is fostered in schools.

This chapter began by reviewing literature on the main theories of acculturation and how they have evolved over time from the straight-line assimilation framework to the dialogical model of acculturation that challenges the dominant bi-dimensional model of acculturation by Berry and colleagues. Then the chapter looked at literature on diaspora including discussion on the importance of homeland for migrants. Following this, this chapter addressed the question of identity with a focus on ethnic identity. The three frameworks of acculturation, diaspora and identity are intertwined as they all address notions of homeland, sense of belonging and the difficulties of navigating between at least two ways of life or cultures. Finally chapter three looked at literature relevant to the role of school experiences in acculturation research as the current study focuses on the migrants' acculturation in relation to their schooling experiences.

The Chagossian community is a relatively new group of migrants in the UK, as such it is an under researched group. Previous research was primarily ocused on the consequences of the forced displacement of islanders and their families (Jeffery, 2011; Vine, 2009). However, very little is known of the experiences of the young generation of Chagossians. The present study aims to fill this gap by exploring the experiences of young people of Chagossian origin who arrived in the UK as children and who were at the time of the study aged 16 and over.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology considered for exploring acculturation experiences of a group of Mauritian-Chagossian secondary school students in south-east England. The research questions were: 1) How did the participants navigate between their heritage culture(s) and the host culture(s); and 2) What were the participants' perceptions of their school experiences in England? A qualitative paradigm was used to answer these research questions. In what follows I will first provide a rationale for qualitative research, before highlighting the significance of adopting a narrative approach and stating how I selected participants for this study. This will be followed by a discussion of data collection, ethical considerations and the limitations of using a narrative approach. The chapter will conclude with a description of the data analysis.

4.1 RATIONALE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

This study explores acculturation experiences of young people of Chagossian origin who were born in Mauritius from Chagossian parents and/or grandparents, were brought up there and migrated to England. Acculturation experiences are complex, and even more so for children and teenagers; along with adapting to a new country, they also have to go through the normal developmental stages. A qualitative approach enabled me to deal with that complexity since 'qualitative researchers...are interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events' (Willig, 2013, p. 8). Considering that the topic of migration experiences of the young generation of Chagossians is under-researched, I set out to understand and 'focus on exploring, in as much detail as possible' (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 1996, p. 61) the young people's experiences as relatively new migrants in the UK.

Qualitative design offers a humanistic style of research focused on the lived experiences of people in their everyday world. The key tenet of qualitative research is that researchers 'seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is

created and given meaning' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In addition, a qualitative design is well adapted for small-scale research (Denscombe, 2007). This study relies on in-depth interviews with a small group of people and does not call for technologically sophisticated or large-scale surveys for the purposes of data collection and analysis.

4.2 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

Ontological and epistemological perspectives are concerned with a person's worldview about reality. Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality or the nature of being and existence (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Holloway, 1997). The ontological question refers to the form and nature of reality and thus what there is that can be known about it. Epistemology is concerned about *how* we come to know what we know; or the relationship between the person who seeks to know and what can be known (Holloway, 1997; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The researcher's ontological and epistemological premises can be viewed as a *paradigm*, or "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17). While it is acknowledged that there is a range of differing paradigms or belief systems in modern research inquiry (Guba and Lincoln, 1998), broadly speaking, approaches tend to fall between two main, opposing paradigms. These are the scientific paradigm and the interpretive paradigm, each having different ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning them. This study falls under the interpretive paradigm.

4.2.1 Interpretive paradigm to understand human behaviour

The interpretive paradigm emerged in the 1960s as an opposing epistemological position to positivism when researching social phenomena; it is premised on the belief by a large body of researchers that the world cannot be viewed as an objective reality but must be understood in relation to the subjective interpretations of human behaviour and experiences (Bryman, 2001). The basic principle of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality is constructed by the people active in the research process and that researchers should attempt to understand the "*complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it*" (Schwandt, 1994, p.118). That is, social reality is constructed by the individuals who participate in it. The German

sociologist Max Weber suggested that sociologists inquire into people's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions regarding their own behaviours in order to gain what he called '*Verstehen*' - or '*understanding*' (Crotty, 1998). Each individual in this study has a unique way of making sense of the world, which is 'valid and worthy of respect as any other' (ibid.).

As a researcher, I consider that there is not one single and objective reality in the social world, but different interpretations of reality according to different perceptions and viewpoints. I support the relativist ontological position since I agree that reality is subjective and differs from person to person. Relativism relates to the ontological idea that knowledge always comes from a developed perspective where 'truth of x is relative to the truth of y' (Zimmerman, 2007; p. 314). As Blaikie puts it, the world does not exist independently from our perceptions of it (2007).

4.2.2 Social interaction and language at the heart of social constructionism

The methodological approach for this research is rooted in the perspective of social constructionism as it accepts that each individual has their own unique experiences and therefore their own realities. This thesis assumes that multiple realities are constructed or negotiated by individuals, in social context, via language. Language holds an essential place in social constructionism as social constructionists believe that people exist in language which provides a means of structuring the way the world is experienced. Burr (1995) suggests that language provides subjects with positions which they can occupy. As people speak, their talk positions them in certain ways. These positions are not static; in fact the ability to position one's self in a variety of ways allows us to occupy a number of identities, which we feel are relevant for the context in which we are situated.

The focus on social interaction and the role of language which are at the heart of social constructionism are largely synonymous with Bakhtin's conception of language. The soviet philosopher, literary critic and cultural theorist Mikail Bakhtin was interested in understanding the way in which words and selves were dialogically constructed across time and space. He articulated his claims about human psychological experience by way of literary criticism. For Bakhtin, dialogue is both

the essence of what it means to be human and it is where meaning is located. So for him, there is no meaning outside a dialogue: 'to be means to communicate.... two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence' (Bakhtin, 1984). In line with social constructionism, Bakhtin considers the self as a social construction. His views connect with those of Burr in terms of how language provides individuals with positions they can occupy, that is, without language, a person has no position therefore no self. It is only through dialogue that a person comes to view herself as a self. According to Bakhtin's notion of dialogic self, it is not possible to think of a self that is not dialogically constructed since we are never outside language. This idea of being always positioned somewhere in dialogic space makes way for multiple voices between ourselves and others (Hermans, 2001). It is out of this process of dynamic engagement and relationship that individuals can make sense and meaning is created (Gergen, 2001).

While participants in this study all shared a common cultural aspect in the sense that they were all of Chagossian origin, participants, at times, held different and opposing views of the world especially with regards to their acculturation journey. Their different and opposing views represent their subjective realities constructed and negotiated through the various social interactions they have had in Mauritius and in the UK, which represent their various social contexts which have shaped their perceptions. My study aims to explore their different experiences and find the different 'truths', (Crotty, 1998), through a narrative approach and dialogue which enabled the individuals and me to make sense of their lived experiences and which created meaning. In my research, I acknowledge the social aspect of the construction of knowledge, meaning and power (Emerson & Frosh, 2004). Throughout the study, I recognise my contribution in the co-construction of the narratives created between myself and the individuals.

4.3 NARRATIVE APPROACH

The history of narrative begins with the history of (hu)mankind; there does not exist,
and has never existed, a people without narratives

Roland Barthes, 1966, p. 1

The term 'narrative' carries various meanings and is used in a variety of ways by different disciplines. Narrative inquiry is an umbrella term encompassing a number of diverse views with regard to what counts as narrative, and with regard to how to analyse and present narrative accounts. There is no simple, clear definition of what 'narrative' actually is. There is considerable variation in how researchers have employed the concept of narrative and, consequently, in methodological approaches and analytical techniques. Narrative often refers to the entire *life story*, that is, the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible (Atkinson, 2001, p. 125). Narrative can also refer to *discrete stories*, which recapitulate several events the narrator witnessed or experienced (Riessman, 2008). In addition, narrative can refer to extended accounts of lives that develop over the course of interviews.

4.3.1 Narratives as discrete stories to give meaning to social life

Narrative inquiry has drawn interest from across a range of academic disciplines, with the fields of linguistics, psychology and sociology having been particularly influential in the development of different traditions within narrative inquiry. The present empirical study employed the concept of narrative as a set of discrete stories and, as far as the nature of truth is concerned, people's narratives are not considered as accurate representations of reality. Rather I considered them as a part of their on-going story that represents a certain manifestation of their social and psychological worlds (Crossley, 2000). Thus, participants' narratives demonstrate how they interpreted and made sense of their social and psychological worlds before and especially after migration to England.

Narrative research provides meaning to human experience and existence (Polkinghorne, 1988). It enables individuals to construct a unique story based on his/her interpretations and experiences (Faircloth, 1999). It is this story that constructs knowledge and provides meaning, therefore contributing to our understanding of social and cultural life, rather than uncovering what the truth this. Narrative research enables researchers to explore 'why', 'how', 'what is it like' and 'what does it mean to you' (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p. 22). This is exactly the

principle of social constructionism. A narrative approach to research does not assume objectivity but privileges subjectivity (Riessman, 2008); the focus is on gaining insights into the different meanings that people ascribe to their experiences.

4.3.2 Narratives construct identities

Narratives also have the potential to define identity (Bold, 2012); individuals can, through storytelling, construct their identities (Yow, 1994). As Goodson and Sikes (2001) argue, narrative inquiry enables the researcher to better understand the multiplicity of identities and the subjective nature of the self. Indeed, the way that participants in this study retold events and how they interpreted their different experiences enabled me to see them in different lights and appreciate their different and sometimes opposing selves, depending on different experiences. This links back to Hermans' theory of dialogic self and the notion of multiplicity of selves, from a dialogical and constructionist perspective. Related to the question of identity is a further function of narratives which is to 'give voice' to silenced individuals (Goodson, 1995, in Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p. 78). By giving them voices, narratives are said to help transform lives of individuals (Holloway, 1997; Bold, 2012). This metaphor of giving voice is particularly relevant to this study as the Chagossian population can be considered as a population that lost its voice fifty years ago, when they were expelled from their homes in order to give way for one of the biggest US military bases in the world. There have been studies on this displaced population focusing on the experiences of the native islanders, however the experiences and the voices of the young generation of Chagossians are yet to be heard. Narrative interviewing, in this study, gave the young people a voice. They told their stories, as the young generation of a displaced population and who had to find a place for themselves in England.

Narratives have been important to researchers in the field of migration because of their ability to explore knowledge of life experiences and illuminate diverse aspects of migrant life. Because the purpose of the study was to understand acculturation from the participants' own perspectives, the choice of narrative was appropriate. While this study was small-scale, and analysed personal stories from a relatively small number of participants, I believe it is also important to also acknowledge the

significance of meta narratives which provide a social, cultural, political and historical backdrop which may position participants in particular ways and are likely to impact on both the nature and content of the narrative accounts. Examples of meta narratives were drawn upon by some participants themselves; this is to say that I felt it was important to consider the impact of broader and socio-political contexts on the stories people tell: ‘how they draw upon, resist or transform these discourses as they narrate their selves’ (Chase, 2005, p. 667).

I considered that a narrative approach was one which respects participants’ stories and could contribute to developing an understanding in their own words from their own points of view, whilst acknowledging my role in co-constructing these stories. I hoped to generate conversations with the participants in ways that would privilege their perspectives and processes of meaning-making in relation to their acculturation experiences. I felt that this approach best suited my research and that a loosely structured, open interview agenda would allow for ‘flexible and rich talk’ (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p.32).

4.4 APPROACHING AND SELECTING PARTICIPANTS

Nine young people of Chagossian origin participated in the study. Initially I targeted between 10 and 15 participants; however, I had underestimated the difficulty of recruiting participants, considering I did not want to contact people who I knew already. The criteria for inclusion in this study were young people who:

- were born in Mauritius and had at least one parent of Chagossian origin
- were 16 years old and over
- arrived in England between the ages of 6 and 15 years old
- were in full-time education

There were also two participants who, after having participated in the first round of interviews, did not respond to the invitation of a second interview. Following failed attempts to contact these participants, I decided against using interview data

collected from them during the first interview. Due to time constraints, I stopped recruiting more participants after I had interviewed nine young people.

Children who migrate to a new country between the ages of six and fifteen are referred to as the 1.5 generation of migrants. This is a term coined by Ruben Rumbaut, Sociology Professor in the US. It is widely accepted in research that these migrants typically face more challenges in the host country than the second generation of migrants. This is mostly because they have to navigate between their homeland and their host country (Rumbaut, 2005). School adjustment can be seen as a form of psychological adaptation for young migrants, and this adaptation is often problematic (Berry, 1997).

Participants were accessed via personal contacts I had in the Chagossian community, and via one secondary school. I had asked a few parents, at the primary school where I worked, if they had – or if they knew other people who had – children aged 16 or over. Two of the parents did have children over 16 years old and passed on to me their children's contact details, after first having received agreement from the children. From these two participants (Jamel and Annabelle), I had access to two more participants (Tony and Elisha). Three other participants (Rose, Charlie and Sandy) were accessed via a friend of mine within the Chagossian community. The remaining two participants were accessed via one local secondary school. I had contacted six local secondary schools but only one agreed to collaborate. I asked a senior leader at the school to distribute the Participant Information Sheet to potential participants. The school that collaborated with the project contacted three pupils on my behalf, all of whom agreed to participate in the research; the school then provided me with their names and email addresses. Out of the three pupils, only two responded to my emails and were subsequently involved in the study.

The interviews were conducted in a quiet room in a local church and in a local community centre. Before agreeing and booking the quiet room, I made sure that participants were happy to meet me there. The quiet room was used between October 2012 and July 2013 to carry out interviews with five participants. Two participants were interviewed in another room in the same church. The place was familiar to the

participants; it was not far from where they lived and some of the participants regularly attended Mass there. The participants were able to choose the days and times of our meetings. Later, when I had recruited more participants, I conducted interviews at the local community centre. This was to avoid having to wait until I could book the quiet room; I wanted to meet the participants as soon as possible, considering how difficult it had been to find new recruits. Once again I made sure the participants knew where the community centre was and they agreed to meet me at that place. Interviews took place during the summer holidays, so the centre was noticeably quiet, except for one day when the venue was busy and the noise slightly affected the sound quality of recordings. Writing the transcripts later, I was reassured that the interview had not been affected.

4.5 COLLECTING DATA THROUGH INTERVIEWS

If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, why not talk to them? Conversation is a basic mode of interaction. Human beings talk with each other...interact, pose questions and answer questions. Through conversations, we get to know other people, get to learn about their experiences, feelings and hopes and the world they live in.

Steiner Kvale, 2007, p. 1)

The narrative interview is a qualitative research method (Riessman, 1993; Flick, 1998) and is considered a form of unstructured, in-depth interview. The narrative interview is not the question-answer type found in most interview situations; it allows the interviewee to use his or her own spontaneous language in the narration of events (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000). Narrative interviews were chosen as the specific technique for the data collection. All the interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder.

I planned two interviews with each participant. The first interview was deliberately loosely-structured (Burgess, 1984). This interview favoured more open-ended questions. Some topics also emerged in the normal flow of the conversation. However, although open-ended interviewing is characterised by a minimal number of questions from the researcher, one participant found it difficult to engage in the conversation and

tell the story of this aspect of his life in one flow. As a result, I had to ask probing questions to generate data. This particular interview did not flow naturally and looked more like a question-answer type of interview. The second interview fitted well with the social constructionist approach taken in this study whereby it is advocated that both the interviewer and the participant create and construct a social reality (Miller and Glassner as cited in Silverman, 1997, p. 99). The questions that I devised for the second interview arose from listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts from the initial interviews.

The first four participants were interviewed from October 2012 to January 2013. The remaining participants were interviewed from May 2013 to September 2013. Out of the nine participants, seven were interviewed twice. The other two were interviewed once and three times respectively. Sandy was interviewed once as she had already informed me that she would not be available for two interviews. Her father had passed away two months prior to the interview and she had a very busy life, helping her mother looking after her two very young siblings, as well as preparing to start university. Nevertheless, she agreed to stay longer if needed during our one and only meeting, in order to answer any questions I might have. Jamel was interviewed three times. He was the first participant I contacted and met. At that time, I had thought of having three meetings with each participant: two meetings for interviews and the third one to discuss any visual materials that I had asked them to bring. Jamel did bring some photos on our third meeting and we discussed the events related to the photos. After Jamel, however, I had no further success with participants bringing photos which led to the decision to abandon the idea of using visual methods and having a third meeting. In total, 18 interviews were conducted transcribed, translated and analysed. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 2 hours. To protect their anonymity, pseudonyms have been employed.

4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research involving human participation should work within the parameters of ethical considerations. Ethical guidelines from the University of Brighton (2012) and from

BERA (2011) were followed in this study. Ethical approval was obtained according to the Tier 1 requirements from the University of Brighton, prior to my field work collecting data from the participants in this study. It was important for me to consider the ways in which I was involved in a research with integrity in relation to my moral position and ethical responsibilities as researcher. I was aware that the participants were young adults under the age of 20 and that sharing stories of their life could be sensitive, I made sure that relevant ethical considerations were followed.

4.6.1 Informed consent

Consent involves the procedure by which an individual may choose whether or not to participate in a study. The researcher's task is to ensure that participants have a complete understanding of the purpose and methods to be used in the study, the risks involved, and the demands placed upon them as a participant.

I made sure I had a consent form as well as a participant information sheet before the interviews took place and which explained the project and what was required of participants involved in the study. I also ensured that participants fully understood what they were consenting to. Participants were informed about the aims of the research and told how and why they had been selected. The information sheet explained the data collection procedures and the storage thereof; the destination of the audio recordings; issues of confidentiality and anonymity and the processes in which the participants would be involved. Participants were also informed as to how the information gathered would be used and how, and to whom, the results would be reported. The information sheet informed participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. It also provided contact information, including a contact for any complaints about the research. They were then invited to sign a consent form (copies of participant information sheet and consent form can be found in the appendix). To help ensure that participants were fully informed of what they were being asked to do, the consent forms and information sheets were available in both English and Mauritian Creole. Informed consents were signed in duplicate. A copy was kept by the researcher while the second copy was given to the respective participant.

4.6.2 Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality

A further ethical issue related to anonymity and confidentiality. The question of anonymity was made clear in the participant information sheet as well as in the consent form.

Confidentiality and anonymity are related but distinct concepts. As Bulmer (2001) notes, the right of individuals to keep their affairs private or confidential, is far from straightforward. To assure someone of confidentiality means that what has been discussed will not be repeated, or at least, not without permission. In the research context, confidentiality is a grey area; researchers have a duty to report on the findings of their research and they cannot do so if the data they collect is confidential, that is, the data cannot be revealed. Bearing that in mind, what I could ensure was not to disclose identifiable information about participants and to try to protect the identity of the participants. I explained to the participants how this research would be disseminated and the limitations of confidentiality. That is, I explained that confidentiality in the research context did not mean not being able to report the findings, because this was the purpose of the interviews and the collection of data. I explained that findings relevant to the research aim and research questions would be reported and that any sensitive information not relevant to the study would not be reported. I also clarified that if there was any information which I thought was related to the participants' safety, then I had an obligation to share with the university.

As regards anonymity, I anonymised places such as the town where the research was situated and the schools where the students had studied or were studying at. Pseudonyms were used in transcripts and reports instead of real names of participants. Some participants said that they did not mind if their names were going to be used, however I explained that the potential identification of one participant could lead to the unwanted identification of others. I also explained that I had an obligation to meet the requirement of confidentiality and anonymity and, together, the participants and I, therefore agreed that all the participants would be allocated a pseudonym. Also I made it clear that once the interviews were transcribed these

would be deleted from the dictaphone. This made me reflect on the power relationship between researcher and participants and I felt that in this case, the researcher (myself) made the final decision about how the results of the study would be presented.

4.6.3 Quality and rigour for qualitative studies

Within an interpretative research tradition there is the clear acknowledgement that understanding research is never neutral (Riessman, 2008). Rather, it is recognised as a subjective process of interpretation. Goodson and Skies (2001) point out that narratives are not simply reports of experiences; sense is made of these experiences, during the collaboration between the researcher and the participants. Because of this co-construction of meaning, there are two levels of judgment that need to be attended to: the extent to which we can judge the validity and trustworthiness of the participants' stories; and the extent to which we can judge the validity and trustworthiness of the researcher's analysis and interpretations (Riessman, 2008). Instead of 'validity', 'generalisability' or 'reliability', terms that have been recognised as more appropriate tools for the evaluation of qualitative research include for example 'rigour' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), 'trustworthiness' and 'transparency' (Griffiths and Macleod, 2008).

The purpose of this study was not to uncover truths, but rather to understand meanings that the participants gave to their experiences as migrants in the UK. From a social constructionist perspective, I did not set out to find objective reality in the participants' lives. Instead I sought subjective and multiple realities from their individual perspectives. I was confident that the transparency of the research process, the data analysis process and the presentation of the findings would be regarded as trustworthy by readers (Riessman, 1993). I was satisfied that I provided enough detailed description of how the research process had been carried out, including collection of data through interviews, transcription, translation and data analysis.

The transcript of the first interview was taken to the second meeting and was discussed with the participants. I asked them to read the transcript. Following this I discussed with them some key events and/or experiences they had shared with me in

the first interview. Participants had the opportunity to agree and confirm what they had said previously, or disagree and correct any information that they thought was incorrect. In one case, a participant asked me not to use a part of her transcript related to some activities she was involved in with her friends. I eventually did not use this specific information. The participant review for assessing whether the manuscript has captured their intentions is referred to as the 'member check' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Using the member check is also a 'means of equalising power relationships within the research relationship' (Koelsch, 2013, p.171) by facilitating the co-construction of knowledge between researcher and participant. During the second interviews, I asked the participants to contact me if ever they wanted to discuss the transcripts. None of the nine participants contacted me.

In terms of the credibility of the study, many quotes, also referred to as 'thick description' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) were used in the report of the findings. Thick description refers to the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context (Holloway, 1997). An additional purpose of rich thick description, identified by Creswell and Miller (2000), is to draw the reader more closely into the story or narrative. This is in order to increase coherence, and evoke feelings for, and a sense of connection with, the participants. Using thick description of interview segments was a way to ensure not only credibility but also the trustworthiness of this study.

I am aware that narrative research remains open-ended and subject to others' differing interpretations (Polkinghorne, 1988); and from this perspective, my interpretations must be considered as tentative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is essential to remember that these narratives were composed within a specific context at a specific point in time (Riessman, 2008). It is likely that in a different context, within a discussion held with someone else, these narratives would differ. It is not my intention to make claims that the findings are 'true', 'objective' and 'replicable'. Rather, the usefulness of this study lies in developing an in-depth understanding of how a small number of young Mauritian-Chagossian migrants made sense of their acculturation experiences in South-east England. What the stories of this study do is

capture insights into the acculturation experiences of a relatively new group of migrants.

4.6.4 Language and translation in cross-cultural research

It was through language that meanings were interpreted and shared in this study. All the participants were given the choice of language between Mauritian Creole and English: they all preferred Mauritian Creole. The interviews in this study were subsequently translated from Mauritian Creole to English. Decisions about translation have an impact on the validity and trustworthiness of research (Birbili, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, I have to be explicit about the translation-related decisions that were made.

The original data were in Mauritian Creole and I used a combination of literal and free translation since one difficulty in translation is that of making participants' words accessible and understandable (Birbili, 2000). While a literal translation (translating word for word) could be seen as remaining close to what participants said, this type of translation could also affect the readability of the text which in turn could affect the meaning of the text (Honig, 1997). A number of authors argue that the crucial task of data translation in an intercultural or cross-language social research setting is to translate *meaning* rather than words (Crane et al, 2009). This entails obtaining a 'conceptual equivalence' rather than simply a literal equivalence of the term, for the latter does not always express the essential meaning of the source language. Wang, Lee and Fetzer (2006) define conceptual equivalence as having a similar meaning and relevance of the constructs in the two cultures.

Not all concepts are universal and not everything is translatable (Esposito, 2001). In some cases, there is direct lexical equivalence between two languages, yet the term or expression which may carry 'emotional connotations' in one language may not necessarily carry the same emotions in the other language (Birbili, 2000). Words and assumptions we use carry within them a set of assumptions, feelings, values and connotations which are unique to our culture and may not exist in the target language and culture. Where the two languages did not offer direct lexical equivalence, I made

conscious efforts to obtain conceptual equivalence rather than literally translated equivalence (Temple, 1997).

For the purpose of this study, I was the researcher-translator as I shared the same first language as the participants. I attempted to maintain the conceptual equivalence method in translating the interviews from Mauritian Creole to English. While I ensured that the English text was readable and comprehensible by the English reader, I tried to remain faithful to my participants by keeping the flavour of their original data (Cohen et al., 2007). This included their nuances, style and, on some occasions, even their sentence structure. Below is an example of a translation of an extract from Mauritian Creole to English, including instances that signal my attempts to keep a sense of the origin data. It is an extract from Tallie's first interview. She recalled how she felt after she migrated to England and left her elder sister in Mauritius.

... Kan mo pu assizer mo mazine mo bann fami laba koma nu ti ete avan apre dan dimans nu tu nu ti zwenn. Ek mo bann kamarad surtout mo ser tultan nu ti ensam. Kot ena moi ena mo ser kot ena mo ser tultan nu ti ensam tu le zour. Bann la ti crier nu caleson avek semiz, [smiling] tultan nu ti mars ensam

... Mo ser c'est... zame monn alle enn plas san li zame linn alle enn plas san moi

(Tallie, interview 1)

If I did a literal translation of Tallie's words "Kot ena moi ena mo ser kot ena mo ser tultan nu ti ensam tu le zour", the translation would have been: "Where there's me there's my sister where there is my sister we were always together everyday." Although one could guess what the participant wanted to say, it would not necessarily have been readable and comprehensible. In Mauritian Creole, I understood what Tallie meant so I translated her words into an English version that would give a similar meaning to what the participant had originally said in her native tongue. The original words thus became: "She was always where I was and I was

always where she was; we were always together, everyday.” In the other line “Bann la ti crier nu caleson avek semiz [smiling] tultan nu ti mars ensam”, there is that ‘flavour’ that Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) recommend to keep when doing translation for research. The term “caleson avek semiz” from French ‘calecon et chemise’) is an idiom commonly used in Mauritius. Literally it means “trousers and shirt”. In fact there is a similar idiom in French “comme cul et chemise”, which has the same meaning as the Mauritian idiom as it is also used to describe two inseparable people. In English, there is a range of expressions that convey the same meaning, such as “like bullets and guns”, “connected at the hip”, “thick as thieves”, “like left and right” or “like two peas in a pod”. However I thought that none of the English expressions would convey the image of the metaphor used by Tallie, therefore I chose to translate it literally into “trousers and shirt.” The final translation of the extract above was:

... When I sit down and think of my family there how we were before and how we used to see each other on Sunday. And my friends especially my sister we were always together. She was always where I was and I was always where she was we were always together, everyday. They used to call us shirt and trousers [smiling] we always walked together

... My sister it's... I've never been somewhere without her and she's never been somewhere without me

(Tallie, interview 1)

A different kind of translation problem occurs when sentences in the language of data collection involve grammatical and syntactical structures that do not exist in English. Syntactical style is one of the most difficult features to carry from one language to another (Ercikan, 1998). In this case, the sense of sentences was translated into English and rules of English structure were applied. Although gaining grammatical and syntactical equivalence is important, the more important aspect of this research was to convey meanings accurately, namely to achieve a more accurate conceptual interpretation.

4.6.5 Researcher's positionality

A further ethical consideration in this research was related to my position as researcher. I was investigating the lives of the participants, while I myself shared aspects of their culture. I came from the same country as the participants (Mauritius); I spoke the same language, (Mauritian Creole); I lived at the time of the study in the same town in the South-east of England. All these similarities made me indisputably an insider researcher. There is no doubt that this position is an emotional one. As Plummer (2001) argues, gathering stories in the form of narratives evokes emotions that give rise to meaning for both the respondents and the researcher. When the participants talked to me, it was clear that I was not necessarily 'just' a researcher to them. Despite the differences implied in the relationship between researcher and participant and despite the formality involved in the paperwork, I felt that in their eyes, I was a Mauritian woman living in the same town, speaking the same language; in short, therefore, I was like them. I did not feel I had to introduce myself as Mauritian or clarifying that I was not a Mauritian of Chagossian origin. Therefore, I did not say anything about me not being of Chagossian origin. Nevertheless, the fact that I came from the same country, spoke the same language and lived in the same town in some ways qualified me as being a member of the same "community". Yet as far as I was concerned, I did not see myself a complete insider researcher simply because I was not of Chagossian origin and I was not of the same age as my participants. For me, I was simultaneously inside and outside.

According to Bonner and Tolhurst (2002), there are three key advantages of being an insider researcher: a superior understanding of the group's culture; the ability to interact naturally with the group and its members; and a previously established, and therefore greater, relational intimacy with the group. It is these familiarities with participants that can help the insider researcher gather a richer set of data (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). In the case of this research, had I not been close to the Chagossian community, I may not have gathered rich data. I gained access to the participants through local contacts and one school because I did not want to interview anyone who I knew personally, for example friends' children. In my role as insider researcher, interacting with the participants was not a problem. The fact that I was

familiar to the community, familiar to the place, and spoke the same language facilitated communication and interaction. It was easy for me to build a rapport with the young people and I believe I gained access to rich and insightful data because of my position as insider researcher.

Having said that, insider researchers can often have difficulties to balance their insider role and their role of researcher (Kanuha, 2000). For example, greater familiarity may lead participants to assume that the researcher already has prior knowledge about a topic (DeLyser, 2001). There were a few rare instances where participants assumed that I knew the topic they talked about. Below are two examples illustrating this difficulty where one participant assumed that I had prior knowledge of what she was talking about. In this first example below, Annabelle used the collective pronoun “we”, suggesting that I would understand and agree to what she was saying. In that case, she was making a comparison between the way in which Mauritian-Chagossian pupils were treated in England to the way “white” people visiting Mauritius were treated.

Like in Mauritius if a white person comes to visit your school, we will welcome them but not here, they will look at you with big eyes they will tell you to return to your country even though we have the right to be here.

(Annabelle, interview 2)

Here Annabelle used the pronoun ‘we’ to refer to herself, other pupils from Mauritius and myself. She presented that statement as a fact that I was supposed to know and she assumed that I agreed with her. In the second example below, Annabelle said the words “if you know what I mean” which could imply that I was expected to understand what “things” she referred to. Annabelle had said that her parents had no intention to go back to Mauritius.

I think maybe because of things that have happened, if you know what I mean. Maybe this is why they don't want to go back to Mauritius but they say they will go on holiday to Mauritius

R : When you say things that have happened, do you mean hard life in Mauritius?

A : Yes, hard life in Mauritius

R : Ah

A : [laughs] I think you have to be a millionaire to be able to live in Mauritius

(Annabelle, interview 2)

After reading that extract later, I realised that while I queried the “things” that had happened, I also implied that they referred to “hard life in Mauritius” which Annabelle confirmed. Meaning here was communicated via incomplete descriptions, which made me wonder later how much of this interaction may have gone unsaid. If I was not an insider researcher, the participant would probably not assume that I knew what “things” she referred to in order to explain why her parents did not want to go back to Mauritius. Furthermore, by including me in her stories with the pronoun “we”, Annabelle implied that because both she and I came from the same country and spoke the same language, I would understand everything she said and would be able to relate to it. This is what Pitman (2002) called an “illusion of sameness” (p. 285). Having said that, I regretted that I implied that ‘things’ represented ‘hard life in Mauritius’. By anticipating the participant’s answer, I was assuming this was what she meant; because of my insider researcher position, I felt I could assume what she meant. Therefore, though my awareness of the advantages that came with being an inside researcher aided me in my research, I was also keenly aware of the difficulties that this status could bring.

Naples (2003) argues that neither insider nor outsider exist as fixed positions, rather they are constantly negotiated by the researchers. As such, one can occupy more than one position at a time. I felt that I occupied both my insider and outsider statuses at the same time throughout the research process. I also acknowledged my other

positions as a Mauritian, as a migrant myself and as a female researcher. For example, when the participants discussed issues related to their Chagossian parents and/or grandparents, I felt Mauritian and was curious to know how they felt about the forced displacement, for example; when the participants shared their experiences of arriving in the UK and settling in their new environment, I could relate to some of their experiences since I am a migrant myself and I was a parent with children of approximately the same age as the participants.

Thus, the importance was not whether one is classified as an ‘insider’ or an ‘outsider’, but how such positions are acknowledged and understood throughout the research process. It was therefore important to acknowledge that my positionality influenced how the research was constructed and how the participants’ experiences were interpreted. As Skelton said, ‘We are not neutral, scientific observers, untouched by the emotional and political context of places where we do our research’ (2001, p. 89).

4.7 LIMITATIONS OF NARRATIVE AND CO-CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

As with any methodology, there are limitations to be considered with narrative research. The narrative interviews enabled participants to share their experiences freely without having to follow a strict and rigid question and answer pattern. As a result I obtained too much data; the limitation that I faced was that I had to filter and select data which would answer the research questions. I therefore found myself in a situation where I used narrative to give voice and get ‘flexible and rich talk’ (Emmerson and Frosh, 2004), yet I felt frustrated that I would not be able to use all of the ‘rich talk’. For example, Jennifer shared stories about her school experiences in her secondary school in Mauritius and spoke at length about how she felt being a student in that school. I could only use a fragment of that story which answered the research questions. The process of taking the decision to get rid of data was frustrating and not one to be taken lightly.

The other limitation, linked to the above, was that not all participants produced rich data. Some data were richer than others according to how much participants engaged in the conversations. For example, Tony was shy in our meetings and had to be prompted numerous times to share his experiences; his interviews sounded more like questions-answers rather than narratives. They did not ‘flow naturally’ (Dornyei, 2007) and as a result, his transcripts were not ‘rich in detail’. As a researcher, I questioned my ability to keep the participant focused and encourage him to engage more in the conversations.

As regards co-construction of meaning, the limitation was that I had to know the limits of my role as co-creator. There was a balance to strike between wanting to hear the participants’ stories and give them a ‘voice’ – and constructing meaning with them without being an intruder and corrupting the whole purpose of the narratives. I had a role to play in co-constructing their stories as researcher and as meaning-maker and the dilemma was to be able to balance those roles while focusing on the interviews. I had to know how I positioned myself and what my voice(s) would be. My ‘authoritative’, ‘supportive’, and ‘interactive’ voices (Chase, 2005) varied according to the participants and the conversation we were engaged in. For example, I used a more interactive voice at some point with Jennifer when we were discussing her sense of belonging to an ethnic group. Jennifer initially said how she felt no connection at all with any aspect of the Chagossian group since her Chagossian born father had left Chagos when he was a baby; therefore he had no memories of his homeland that he would have been able to pass on to Jennifer. However, when I gave Jennifer the dates of the displacement of Chagossian islanders and when she matched her father’s birth year with the time the removal of islanders happened, it suddenly became clear to her that her father would probably have returned to Chagos if his family had not been stranded in Mauritius. As a result of this realisation, Jennifer’s statement about her sense of belonging suddenly changed to a more nuanced one as regards her feelings towards her father’s homeland, the Chagos. This is an example of how using the ‘interactive’ voice, Jennifer and I co-constructed a meaning to her feelings of belonging as regards ethnicity. It was therefore clear here that my collaboration with the participant shaped the data.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is an important aspect of qualitative research. As Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) note, 'the strength of qualitative data rests very centrally on the competence with which their analysis is carried out'. There are various analytical approaches for qualitative studies. Combining methods is also common for researchers (Reissman, 2008; Mason, 2006). In this study, I have used thematic analysis combined with aspects of the voice-centred relational approach. The first approach was useful and enabled me to develop the themes from the data. The voice-centred relational approach helped me to find the multiple and often opposing voices of the participants.

4.8.1 Thematic analysis

I have focused predominantly on Braun and Clarke's (2006) method for thematic analysis in order to analyse the data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns and themes within data through minimally organising and describing a data set in detail (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is one way of analysing narratives where the main focus is on content (Reissman, 2008). Using this method, the researcher develops themes from which data is interpreted. After detailing the data analysis process, I will explain how key themes developed from the data analysis, or in other words, what the process involved in deciding the themes that addressed the research questions.

Through the development of a framework for conducting thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) considered how theoretical and methodological issues relate to thematic analysis and explore the importance of "thematizing" meanings, using thematic coding. The aim of developing the framework was to demarcate clear stages in the analytic process to support researchers in ensuring they are engaging actively in a decision-making process. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe the process of undertaking thematic analysis as "involving a number of choices which are not often made explicit, but which need explicitly to be considered and discussed" (p.82). The process of conducting a thematic analysis should also involve an ongoing reflexive

dialogue on the part of the researcher in regard to these issues emerging throughout the research process.

Thematic analysis can be completed inductively ('bottom up') or deductively ('top down'). I analysed the data, for the large part, inductively by coding it without trying to fit it into any pre-existing theory, in order to ensure that my findings were driven from the data. To a lesser extent the data was analysed deductively from a perspective that had emerged from my literature review. I outline below the different phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While I have followed Braun and Clarke's framework which looks very neat and linear, the data analysis was more of a recursive process in which I always had to go back-and-forth between the different phases. The data analysis of the interviews was done manually by myself.

Phase	Description of the process
Familiarising yourself with the data	Transcribing interviews, reading and re-reading the transcripts, noting down initial ideas
Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the transcripts in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating examples for each code
Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential link
Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back to the analysis of the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

Table 4.2a The process of thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006)

I explain below how the analysis of transcripts was undertaken based on each phase of Braun & Clarke's (2006) framework above.

Familiarisation with the data

This first step of the analysis was about engaging with the data. This involved immersing myself in the data through listening to the recorded interviews, transcribing the data, repeated reading of the transcripts, and translating the interviews from Mauritian Creole to English.

Transcription of interviews can be one of the lengthiest aspects of the whole data analysis process. I spent on average 12 hours transcribing each interview at the beginning. It quickly became clear that some expressions and utterances as well as non-verbal communication such as hand, face and body gestures did not convey anything meaningful in the speech. As Kvale (1995) argues, completeness during transcription is not achievable. Instead, he suggests that researchers focus on the usefulness of the transcription. As far as I was concerned, a useful transcription was one that was faithful, one that was not going to lose any of the meaning necessary for effective analysis of the research questions. To achieve that objective, I had to be careful when removing non-verbal communication and other expressions, as my decisions would have serious implications for both the reliability and validity of the study. For example, expressions such as ‘erm’ or ‘koma dire’ [literally ‘uhmm’ or ‘like’ in English] were removed in some parts of transcripts where I felt that those utterances did not convey any speech that was meaningful in the context of the study.

All the transcribed interviews were then translated into English. As explained in the ethical section of this chapter, a number of authors argue that the crucial task of data translation in an intercultural or cross-language research setting is to translate meaning rather than words (Crane et al, 2009). This involves the retention of the conceptual equivalence of what is being said by the respondents so that responses in different languages can be compared in a systematic manner that does not undermine the validity of the results. Wang, Lee and Fetzer (2006) define conceptual equivalence as having a similar meaning and relevance of the constructs in the two cultures. While I ensured that the English text was readable and comprehensible by the English reader, I tried to remain faithful to my participants by keeping the flavour of their original data (Cohen et al., 2007), their nuances, style and, on some

occasions, even their sentence structure. The *Diksioner Morisien* published in Mauritius (Carpooran, 2009) was of great help during the translation exercise. Once all the interviews were transcribed, they were securely saved, on a password protected computer, in folders named after each participant's pseudonym.

Generating initial codes

Coding is the process of thoroughly working through the entire dataset to note ideas, concepts, and any data relevant to the research aim and questions. A code is a word or short phrase which provides a concise summary of something of interest in the data. Some codes might be descriptive and simply summarise the content of the data (semantic codes). Other codes can be interpretative, and offer some analytic interpretation of the content of the data (latent codes).

I first 'cleaned' the data. This meant removing arbitrary information such as participants' names and the dates and places of interviews; also, questions and non-verbal utterances which did not affect the flow of the interaction. I then applied the technique of open coding. This is described as 'the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 1). I manually compiled a list of codes for words, sentences and paragraphs as I proceeded through the transcript. The codes were ideas, concepts, and points of interest relevant to answering the research questions. The initial codes at this stage comprised short phrases, which I ensured were as self-explanatory as possible. Each code needs to capture the essence of what is in the tagged data segment, so that it is meaningful without reading the data. At times one segment had more than one code attached to it. The coding exercise was revisited several times. The whole open coding exercise generated hundreds of codes for all the participants' transcripts. I agree that coding evolves as it progresses (Boyatzis, 1998).

The next step was to transform descriptive codes to interpretive codes. I looked at each participant's transcripts and grouped all the similarly-coded segments together. For example, one participant referred many times to her family, especially to her mother. I grouped all the segments about her mother together. Next, I looked at the

segments about the participant's father and I noticed that they were similar to those listed above. It became clear that she regarded both of her parents very highly and was grateful for what they had done for her and her sister. Those segments were then compared to other segments that referred to her elder sister and her younger brother, which led me to interpret that the data for this participant conveyed a sense of family solidarity. Therefore, all the different coded segments in one participant's transcripts could feed into one code labelled 'family'. I did the same exercise for the whole data set. This process of clustering similar segments enabled me to look for similarities and differences and see where I could merge codes where there was a high degree of overlap between them. It was an iterative process of always returning to the transcripts to ensure the accuracy of codes and see if they could be revised. At the end of this process of merging codes and removing others, I had a list of codes.

Searching for themes

The next step was to search for themes. A theme is described as 'capturing something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some type of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 82). One way in which I changed codes into themes was to find similar codes, not across one participant's transcript but through the whole data set, and merge them together into a common idea.

Once I finished coding, I collated all the coded data. I had to ask myself whether a potential theme was relevant to answering my research. I also had to see whether the potential theme was evident across more than one or two of my interview transcripts. Yet, I was aware that themes may be important even though they are not apparent across a large proportion of data items (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Reviewing, defining and naming themes

The fourth and fifth stages of the analysis involved reviewing the themes. This stage was a continuity of the previous stage whereby I analysed all the related groups of codes in order to identify and finalise themes.

All the themes were revisited and some of them were renamed or merged together while others became sub-themes. The theme of 'loss', for example, was arrived at after a pattern was identified in the feelings of most of the participants; migrating to England meant that they left behind family, friends, homes, schools, and routines. Themes were not obvious and straightforward. They were developed gradually once all similar patterns were put together and thought of carefully.

Thematic analysis proved a useful method to make sense of the data collected from the transcripts. Yet I felt there was something missing: the voices of the participants. Themes on their own cannot capture the complexity of the young people's experiences and portray their voices. This research assumes that each individual involved in this study has a unique way of making sense of the world, which is 'valid and worthy of respect as any other' (Crotty, 1998, p. 68). To stay true to the constructionist perspective adopted in this study, I had to find the multiple and often opposing voices of the participants (Hermans, 2001). I used the voice-centred relational approach.

4.8.2 The voice-centred relational method of data analysis

The voice-centred relational (VCR) approach of data analysis consists of four readings of transcripts. I used the second reading of the VCR method which enabled me to find the voices of 'I' in the transcripts. The other readings were not relevant since I had already analysed the data thoroughly through thematic analysis. The VCR approach allowed the participants' voices to be heard.

The origin of the VCR method

The VCR method of data analysis was originally developed by Brown, Gilligan and other colleagues (Brown and Gilligan, 1992), and has its roots in clinical and literary approaches, interpretive and hermeneutic traditions and relational theory (Brown and Gilligan, 1992). While the VCR method was first devised within a psychological model and was concerned with listening to the 'care and justice voice' in narrative accounts, the method was further elaborated by Doucet and Mauthner (1998). They adapted Gilligan's method to reflect their interdisciplinary backgrounds and their

specific research interests. The researchers' concern was essentially how to keep respondents' 'voices and perspectives alive while at the same time recognising the researcher's role in shaping the research process and product' (ibid.). This understanding of people as being enmeshed through social relationships is in line with the dialogical-self theory explained in Chapter Three. The theory is that many voices are all part of the same composition but are distinctive in themselves (Said, 1999). In order to keep research participants' voices 'alive', the researcher/interpreter is obliged to listen attentively to the voice relating to the story.

The four readings of the VCR method

The VCR method has four categories of reading transcripts: reading for the plot and for our responses to the narrative; reading for the voice of the 'I'; reading for the relationships; placing people within cultural contexts and social structures (Doucet and Mauthner, 1998). I used the second reading of the transcript, which traces how the participant represents her/himself in the narrative. Attention is focused on how the respondent uses personal pronouns, which helps to show how the narrator experiences him- or herself. Reading for the voice 'I' creates a space between the participant's way of speaking and seeing and our own, so the researcher/interpreter can discover 'how she speaks of herself before we speak of her' (Brown and Gilligan, 1992, cited in Doucet and Mauthner, 1998). The use of personal pronouns performs the function of identity construction (Duszak, 2002).

Looking for the 'I' voices

Firstly, I re-read all the 'cleaned' transcripts to look for the pronoun 'I', but also other pronouns if they related to the 'I'. Each 'I' phrase that I thought was meaningful and relevant to the research questions was then extracted. Next, I grouped all similar 'I' phrases together that represented one voice. I then determined which voice occurred most frequently; the voices 'loved and cared for' and 'fragile and vulnerable' were two of the predominant voices of this participant. The latter voice is a disempowered one that portrays Annabelle as a little girl who was

distressed after her family was separated as a result of migration. This voice shows the reality of the effects of migration, especially chain migration where the mother or the father migrates and leaves the children behind with a caregiver. Some examples of the 'fragile and vulnerable' voice within the text include 'I used to cry', 'I wanted my mum', 'it was a difficult time for me'.

Looking for the 'I' voices was a recursive process, like thematic analysis. I needed to make sure that I was not discarding other important voices. The process of finding different voices of 'I' also enabled me to find the multiple cultural positions or identities of participants. Chapter Three showed how migrants sometimes find themselves negotiating between two or even more cultural positions. Using the VCR method enabled me to see how some participants juggled between various cultural positions.

Contradicting voices, contradicting identities

When I had found all the 'I' voices in each transcript I then identified the opposing voices. Opposing or contradicting voices are not always evident as they are sometimes interwoven with or lost in another dominant voice. I did not find opposing voices in all the participants' narratives. In Sandy's transcript for example, I saw how she positioned herself as a victim when she first arrived in England, she was not at all fragile and defenceless. On the contrary, her story portrayed her as a fighter who retaliated in the face of adversities. In her extract, there were more phrases that portrayed her as 'victim' than as 'fighter', and in all those phrases Sandy represented herself as being the lonely new migrant in school who seemed to be everybody's target. Moreover, she used negatives which could exacerbate the way she was being treated and which seemed to confirm her position of victimhood. For example, 'nobody liked me', 'I had no friends' and 'she will never look at me' indicate that Sandy felt she was being targeted. Yet, despite this depiction, I found that the participant was able to react to those who she claimed had provoked her. In short, the exercise of finding contradicting voices was helpful because it reminded me that interview participants sometimes want to portray a certain image of themselves.

The VCR approach was useful as it enabled me to hear and listen carefully to the voices of the nine young people in this study. Finding the multiple and sometimes contradicting voices of participants also proved useful when it came to examining their different cultural positions and their sense of belonging. Not only did the second reading of VCR analysis enable me to find the voices of the participants, but it also allowed me to use some of the voices to confirm as well as strengthen themes already identified through thematic analysis. For example, the ‘migrant voice’ found in some participants’ narratives confirmed the theme ‘migrant bubble’ while the ‘Creole voice’ was used to strengthen the theme ‘who am I?’ which presents findings related to participants’ sense of belonging to one or more ethnic groups in Mauritius.

The analytical process has been described in detail in this chapter. It is important to note that the analysis did not progress in a purely sequential way; many times I had to go over the different stages and return to transcripts in order to clarify my thinking. The thematic analysis enabled the development of several themes while the VCR analysis allowed the exploration of the voices of individuals. The findings will be presented in the following chapter; they are divided into two clusters, organised around the two research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS – PART ONE

The empirical findings of the study have been organised in two chapters, Chapter Five and Chapter Six. Drawing from the participants' interview data, the findings will be presented according to the two research questions which the study sought to address:

- a) How did the participants navigate between their heritage culture(s) in Mauritius and the host culture in England?
- b) What were the participants' perceptions of their school experiences in England?

Chapter Five will present findings related to the first research question and Chapter Six will present findings related to the second research question.

Chapter Five is divided into four main themes:

- Sense of loss;
- The importance of a close-knit way of life in Mauritius;
- Ambiguous sense of belonging; and
- Complexities of ethnic identity.

Before presenting the findings, this chapter provides pen portraits of each participant who took part in this research. The portraits are presented in alphabetical order.

5.1 PEN PORTRAITS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

5.1.1 Annabelle

Female; 16 years old at time of study; arrived in England at the age of nine.

Annabelle arrived in England at the age of nine with her elder sister, to reunite with their parents. The family lived in Roche Bois, a suburb of the capital city Port Louis. Annabelle's father was a cobbler and a shoe maker. Annabelle's mother, born in Mauritius from Chagossian parents, migrated to England when she obtained a British

passport as she hoped to secure a better future for her family. Annabelle's mother worked as a cleaner in England and sent money to her family in Mauritius. Annabelle's father joined his wife three years later and worked as a cleaner. Annabelle and her sister stayed in Mauritius and were looked after by their maternal grandmother. While still in Mauritius, Annabelle's elder sister stopped school at the age of 15 to look after their poorly grandfather; the grandmother had to continue to work to make a living. A year after Annabelle and her sister arrived in England and reunited with their parents, their brother was born. At the time of the study, Annabelle had just finished year 11 and was waiting for her GCSE results while her elder sister, who had been to college in England, was working in a food restaurant. Their younger brother was in primary school. Annabelle hoped to study for A levels but was not sure if she wanted to go to university or get a job to help her family.

5.1.2 Charlie

Female; 19 years old at time of study; arrived in England at the age of 13.

Charlie arrived with her younger brother and their mother, a native Chagossian islander. Their father stayed in Mauritius. Charlie's mother had been displaced from the Chagos when she was 7 or 8 years old. She lived in poverty in Mauritius and had never been to school, neither on the Chagos islands nor in Mauritius. Charlie and her family lived in Cassis in Mauritius, another neighbourhood close to the capital city of Port Louis where Charlie's mother was a factory worker in Mauritius and her father was a dock worker. Charlie's mother, whose elder daughter had already migrated in the south-east of England and had her own family, hoped for a better future for Charlie and her younger brother. She wanted her children to get a good education. In England, Charlie's mother was a cleaner. Charlie had finished school three years prior to data collection; she had failed all her GCSEs except for French. At the time of the study, she was attending college where she was studying IT. Charlie wanted to get a college qualification and wanted to go to university, although she was uncertain what she wanted to study.

5.1.3 Elisha

Female; 17 years old at time of study; arrived in England at the age of 11.

Elisha arrived in England with her mother and her younger sister. They reunited with Elisha's father who was born in Mauritius from Chagossian parents. Her father had all his family in England including his Chagossian parents. They all lived in the same town. Before migrating to England, Elisha and her family lived in Morcellement Ilois, Baie du Tombeau which is a suburb near the capital city of Port Louis. She enjoyed her childhood place and loved her friends and her teacher in her old primary school who share the same birthday with her. Elisha's father was a welder in Mauritius and her mother was housewife. Her father got a job as housekeeper in a hospital in England and her mother did not work. Elisha did not like her first few years in England because she used to get bullied in secondary school. At the time of the study, Elisha was in Year 12 studying for AS levels. She hoped to finish her Alevels and go to university although she was not sure if she had the ability to do higher education. If she would manage to do it, Elisha hoped to study shoe design at university.

5.1.4 Jamel

Male; 17 years old at time of study; arrived in England at the age of 11.

Jamel arrived in England with her younger brother, younger sister and their mother. The family reunited with Jamel's father who was born in Mauritius from Chagossian parents. The family used to live in Morcellement Ilois, Baie du Tombeau. Jamel's father was a pastry cook in Mauritius and he was also a part time taxi driver. He decided to migrate to England in the hope of better prospects for his family. Jamel's father became a cleaner in England. His wife and his three children reunited with him after about two years. At the time of the study, Jamel was in Year 12 preparing for his AS levels. Despite some negative experiences at school when he was a new arrival, over time he liked his school where he had made very good friends with peers who came from diverse migrant backgrounds. Jamel was especially proud to be a member of the school choir as a musician. Jamel hoped to pass his A levels before

he would decide whether to stay in England and go to university or go back to Mauritius.

5.1.5 Jennifer

Female; 18 years old at time of study; arrived in England at the age of 13.

Jennifer was the only participant in this study who lived in England without her immediate family. Her parents had persuaded her to migrate and live with her three cousins, the eldest one was then 20 years old. Jennifer lived in Pamplemousses, a village in the north of Mauritius. Her father worked in a sugar factory and her mother had a cleaning job after having worked a number of years in the textile industry. Jennifer's father was a native Chagossian islander who and held a British passport, however he did not want to migrate to the UK as he did not want to start life all over again; it would also have been difficult for his wife to learn English and pass the Life in the UK Test which were some of the requirements that British passport holders' partners had to meet. Jennifer was the only child in her family and found it very hard to leave her parents behind in Mauritius. She trusted her parents who said that she would have a good education in England and better prospects for the future. Five years later, Jennifer was in year 13 and preparing for her A levels at the time of the study. While being a full time student, she also worked part time at a fast food store as she had to contribute to rent together with her cousins. Jennifer wanted to go to university and study languages.

5.1.6 Rose

Female; 19 years old at time of study; arrived in England at the age of 8.

Rose had the longest stay in England, having lived 11 years in the host country. Rose and her elder brother were among the very first children of Chagossian origin who arrived in the town in South-east England. In Mauritius, Rose and her family lived in Baie du Tombeau. Her father, worked as a tractor operator; her mother, who was a dress maker, was born in Mauritius from Chagossian parents. She migrated to England on her own leaving her husband and her two children in Mauritius, but she

returned to Mauritius after a few weeks as she found it very hard to live far from her family. However, she decided to come back to the UK where she was told her children would better educational opportunities including the prospects of going to university. Rose's father reunited with his wife a few months later while the children stayed in Mauritius with grandparents until they too migrated to England. He found a cleaning job in England. At the time of study, Rose was going to start her second year at a university in London where she was studying journalism.

5.1.7 Sandy

Female; 18 years old at time of study; arrived in England at the age of 14.

Sandy arrived in England with her father and her younger brother to reunite with her mother. The family lived in Baie du Tombeau in Mauritius where Sandy's father worked in retail. He got cancer when Sandy was a child and this was what urged the family to leave Mauritius, especially considering that Sandy's mother's Chagossian family had started to migrate to England. Sandy's parents hoped that her father would get better healthcare and social help due to his illness. In England, Sandy's mother gave birth to twins. When her father's health deteriorated, Sandy looked after the twin sister while her brother looked after the twin brother. She was also responsible for all the paperwork in the family as her parents lacked English proficiency. Her mother was a full time carer of her husband until he passed away two months before Sandy was interviewed. At the time of study, Sandy had just finished Year 13 and was preparing to start medical studies at university. She used to dream of becoming a doctor, however since her father passed away, Sandy said that having a good job did not matter. What was important was to look after her family especially her young siblings.

5.1.8 Tallie

Female; 17 years old at time of study; arrived in England at the age of 15.

Tallie was the most recent arrival among all the participants. She had lived in England for two years before she was interviewed. In Mauritius, the family lived in

Pailles, an area near the capital city of Port Louis, however Tallie had spent most of her childhood in Cassis, a suburb of Port Louis. She came from a large extended family including great aunts and great grandmothers. Tallie's father worked in a chemicals factory in Mauritius. As a British passport holder, he came to England first with a British passport. His wife and two sons joined him soon while Tallie remained in Mauritius with her elder sister who had a family of her own. In England, Tallie lived with her parents, two younger brothers and a great aunt. At the time of study, Tallie was in Year 12 preparing for A levels. She claimed to be a model student in her secondary school and an example for the new arrivals. Sandy aimed to go to university and study languages in the hope of becoming a teacher or a translator.

5.1.9 Tony

Male; 17 years old at time of study; arrived in England at the age of 13.

Tony came to England with his younger brother to reunite with their family. In Mauritius they lived in Police quarters in Coromandel, as Tony's father was a police officer, however Tony and his family spent much of their time in Roche Bois where most of Tony's large extended family lived. Tony's father migrated first as he was the British passport holder. He was born in Mauritius from a Chagossian mother. His wife and his daughter joined him later, leaving behind Tony and her brother. At the time of data collection, Tony was in year 12 preparing for AS levels. He liked going to school where he was a musician in the school choir. Tony dreamed of being a professional barber one day. Besides, he gained his pocket money by cutting the hair of family and friends. He wanted to have his own business comprising of a barber shop and a night club. Tony hoped to go to university to study business studies.

5.2 SENSE OF LOSS

The term 'acculturation', as understood in this research, refers to new migrants' process of adaptation in a new place; it revolves navigating between the ways of life of the country of origin, and the ways of life of the host society (Phinney, et al.,

2001). The overarching theme ‘sense of loss’ groups data which describe how migration to England meant a sense of loss for all of the participants.

5.2.1 Losing family ties

The theme of family was one of the most prominent themes that emerged during the data analysis. All the participants spoke at length about their family, and their accounts demonstrated the strong family connections they had. ‘Family’, for most of the participants in this study, implied not only close relationships with the nuclear family but also with the extended family in Mauritius. As explained in Chapter Two, migration of people of Chagossian origin from Mauritius to England has been achieved mostly through stepwise migration; that is, the adult who holds the British passport (the one of Chagossian origin) travels first to England. The British passport holder needs to find a job with the required salary, and find accommodation, before his or her partner and children can join him or her. As a result, migration for many Mauritian-Chagossian families involved separations within the nuclear family.

While most of the participants in this study eventually reunited with their parents in England, two participants – Charlie and Jennifer – did not experience reunification with both parents. Their family structure had changed due to migration. Their circumstances were different from those of the rest of the participants. Jennifer, whose father was a native Chagossian islander, migrated to England at the age of 13 and settled with her three cousins, themselves without their parents. While her family saw Jennifer’s new life in England as an opportunity she could not miss, her migration to England had also meant a rupture within her family unit. She was only a child when she left Mauritius to come and live with her three female cousins in South-east England. The oldest one was 20 years old and Jennifer was the youngest of the four girls. The decision to migrate was one she had embraced with the approval of her parents. It was not an easy choice for an only child.

I was 13 years old and I travelled with my cousin without my mum and dad, it was hard... so I’m still here today... I’m staying... now I’m 18 years old...I started [school] in September in Year 9. I’m

now in Year 13 and next year when I finish I want to go to university.

(Jennifer, interview one)

Jennifer found herself in a new country at a very young age with her three cousins. Her quiet life in Mousse, Mauritius with her parents was suddenly a distant memory. After four years in England, at the time of the interviews, although she said ‘it was hard’ Jennifer was proud of herself, for having made it, and proud that she was ‘still here today’.

Charlie was another participant for whom family reunification did not happen during the five years that she, her younger brother and their mother had lived in England. Five years during which Charlie had not seen her father except on a computer screen via Skype. She said that her father planned to come and visit but that he would not stay because he did not want to have to start a new life in a new country at the age of 61, and because he would not be able to bear the cold weather. Thus, for Charlie too, migration to England had meant a rupture within the family unit.

Annabelle also experienced a sense of loss as a result of migration and felt emotional every time she evoked the time when her mother, then later her father, migrated to England. She was very young when her mother left Mauritius, followed by her father some time later. Annabelle and her sister were looked after by their grandmother. She said that the family separation was a challenging experience.

Every night, I used to cry (voice filled with emotion) I wanted my mum I asked when she would come and get me

... It was a difficult time for me

(Annabelle, interview two)

Not only was the family separation hard for Annabelle but it was also hard for her mother, who migrated on her own to England. Annabelle said that her mother was

so homesick and missed her family so much that the first time she left, she returned to Mauritius after nine months.

I used to live at my mum's mum's house during the week then we went to my dad's mum's house in the weekend [my mum] was homesick she missed us then after nine months she returned to Mauritius she came to see us regularly

... I was about six years old when my mum came to Mauritius she brought lots of presents for me

I was walking on the streets people were looking at me (laughs) because they said, 'Hey she's got lots of presents, her mum has come to Mauritius' (laughs)

(Annabelle, interview two)

Annabelle enjoyed the presents that her mother brought for her and seemed to relish the fact that other children were envious of her; however, her joy was short-lived, since her mother returned to England. Annabelle started crying at night again, and asking for her mother; she remembered how her grandmother could not comfort her.

My grandma was not someone who understood she would tell my mum she had to come and get her children bla bla bla. My mum said, 'You have to understand because I have to work first before I can come and get them'

(Annabelle, interview two)

Annabelle's mother worked in England to send money to the grandmother to provide care to the children. The extract above portrayed Annabelle and her sister as being a burden for the grandparent, who used to ask her daughter to come and get her children. The time without her parents was portrayed as the most difficult time Annabelle had ever experienced. She portrayed herself as a child victim of the

migration of her parents, as well as the victim of the impatience of her grandmother. While she regretted that her grandmother was not very co-operative in the absence of her parents, Annabelle was grateful to have had her neighbours to treat her and her sister while their parents were abroad.

They had money because their house was so beautiful and when they went out they took us with them because my sister and I had never been to Water Park [a water theme attraction]

(Annabelle, interview one)

Annabelle described her neighbours as being quite wealthy, and depicted herself and her sister as being underprivileged and unfortunate children who had never been to Water Park before. Also as a result of migration, Annabelle's sister had to stop attending school in order to look after their poorly grandfather. Although Annabelle said that 'there was no other solution', she blamed her grandmother for being the catalyst behind her sister's interrupted schooling, and described her sister as powerless.

It was my grandma who put that idea in my mum's head she said Dorine should stop school. She was about to move to England whatever then my mum talked to Dorine and said she should stop school but Dorine did not want to stop school, she wanted to continue with her education

She looked after my grandpa, she did house chores and my grandma took over when she was back home

(Annabelle, interview one)

For these reasons, the participant felt relieved when she and her sister were reunited with their parents in England. Migrating to England was the best thing, and being reunited with her parents was the most important thing for her.

Tallie's story was another example of the present theme, although in her case she had not been separated from her parents but from her elder sister. Her sister had her own family and had stayed in Mauritius when Tallie migrated to England to reunite with the rest of the family. Leaving her big sister behind was very difficult for Tallie, who said that they were best friends.

... we were always together she was always where I was and I was always where she was. We were always together, everyday. They used to call us trousers and shirt [smiling] we always walked together. My sister it's...

I've never been somewhere without her and she's never been somewhere without me.

(Tallie, interview one)

The term 'trousers and shirt' is a common idiom used in Mauritius to describe two inseparable people. While there were a few English expressions which conveyed a similar meaning, I could not find one that carried the image of the metaphor of 'trousers and shirt'.

Migration had not only affected Tallie's family network and left her without her elder sister, but had also left her without her great-aunt, to whom she was much attached.

My great grandma's daughter she died ten days after I came here...we were very close. She lived in the same house with me. When she fell ill she lived with me we were together every day. When I came here she died ten days later I was very sad.

(Tallie, interview one)

Another illustration, of how family separation also included extended family, was in Rose's story. She had been affected by the separation from her cousin, who she

regarded as a brother. This left Rose distressed and upset to a point where she questioned the point of migration.

My cousin lived in almost the same house like a little bit on the other side but it's almost together we were together everyday, we grew up together. It was when we came here like we lost touch and when we went on holiday in Mauritius in 2010 I saw him again it was very weird between us. We didn't reconnect quickly, it took some time. When I think that I was closer to him than to my brother because he is same age as my brother and we talked to each other, we were together everyday

(Rose, interview one)

For Rose, the eight years during which they had not seen each other had fractured their relationship, as they separated as children and reunited as teenagers. Rose regretted that migration to England had caused her so much harm and believed that she would have been happier if she had stayed in Mauritius.

Everyone can say here we have advantages in education, money, food is much cheaper, your pay is good but for me what is more important in life is your happiness. If you don't have happiness, if your family is not here... because here there are just us four, we have only that. We can't go next door, go to our cousin's, go next door to see our grandma, we don't have this here, we only have this in Mauritius. But when you have your family you are happier in life, in everything that you do. There are things you look forward to...

(Rose, interview one)

The stories shared by the participants about the lost family ties and how they missed their relatives in Mauritius depicted a collectivist way of life in Mauritius where

everyone lived in a close-knit community and looked after each other. Remembering and talking about it, in the way they did, showed how the participants attached a great importance to this aspect of their life in Mauritius.

5.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF A CLOSE-KNIT WAY OF LIFE IN MAURITIUS

All of the participants had experienced living in the same neighbourhood as their relatives, which explains their strong attachment with members of their extended family and neighbours.

5.3.1 Sense of proximity with loved ones

Jamel used to live in the same neighbourhood as his grandparents, which meant they saw each other regularly. Jamel admitted he was very close to his grandparents.

... when my mum and dad would go out we went to sleep over there. In Mauritius if I was not at home, I was at my grandma's

R: You spent almost all of your time there

Almost yes because on Sundays and all that when my dad like.... even when my dad was still there but for one year that my dad wasn't there every Sunday we would go to my grandma's and we spent one Christmas there... My grandpa each time would go to the shop and all that he would take us with him like that.

(Jamel, interview two)

Tallie also valued her extended family. She came from a big family, with great-great-grandmother, great-grandmother and great-aunts, who were all native Chagossian islanders. After migrating to England, she was reunited with her great-grandmother, with whom she had lived in Mauritius.

My dad's mum, she's dead now... her mum and her mum and her mum they lived together. The grandma lived until 103 years old.

R: So grandma, she's dead. Now this grandma she has her mum, which means... your great-grandma. She has her mum and her grandma, both...

Great-grandma. And my great-great-grandma

R: Your great-grandma had her mum, your great great-grandma. She's still here?

No she's dead now. She died on her 103rd birthday.

R: When was that?

Hmm.... 2010. The year I came here. She died on the 27th May on her birthday then I came in November

R: So your great-grandma is still here?

Yes she lives with me. She just went to Mauritius yesterday.

(Tallie, interview one)

Another participant, Sandy, had lived with her grandparents since she was a baby. When her parents moved to their newly-built house, Sandy preferred to live with her grandparents until she started secondary school. Her grandparents' house was close to her primary school, so that could be a reason why she preferred to stay there. She eventually moved into her parents' new house when she started secondary school, but had to move back to her maternal grandmother's house when her mother migrated to England. Her father was ill and could not look after her and her brother, so they all moved back to the grandmother's house until they left Mauritius and reunited with Sandy's mother in South-east England. Later Sandy was reunited with

her maternal grandparents in England as both were of Chagossian origin and had British passports.

Many participants acknowledged the close geographical proximity with their extended family in Mauritius, and valued the close connections they enjoyed with their relatives in there. Family was so important for Jennifer that she did not want to miss her cousin's first holy communion.

... I was very close to him I consider him as my brother... he made his first communion I felt that I wanted to be there with him... my aunt came here this year [2012] in May on holiday then she was saying that my uncle had been asking if no one was coming to Mauritius for the first communion of his son then my aunt said to him, 'No they are not coming now, they will come in December'. Then my uncle like was disappointed then I... like I was sad when my aunt said that so I said ok I'll go...

(Jennifer, interview one)

Jennifer felt she had an obligation to attend the holy communion of her cousin, and the extract above shows that there were expectations from some members of her extended family that she should be there. Although she did not have to go, Jennifer made the decision to be there and did not regret her visit after what happened. It was during this visit that her grandmother passed away. This portrayed the importance of family presence, in good times and bad. The family was united as one to celebrate together the first holy communion of Jennifer's cousin, another's cousin's civil wedding and Jennifer's 18th birthday; it was also united as one to support each other when the grandmother passed away.

5.3.2 Sense of community and togetherness

In the village where Jennifer lived in the north of Mauritius, there was a busy community and social life in which Jennifer was involved from a very early age. Her face lit up when she recalled the groups of which she was part.

I was involved a lot in social activities in many clubs I was everywhere in everything [smiles]. For example many end of year parties, we participated in Mothers' Day activities and in many of those activities on the estate I was more involved in dancing. I love dancing [smiles] I loved singing too. I was also in scout since I was 8 years old then I left when I moved here but I've learned many things in scout we did a lot of hikings and all that...

... I was also in the group Pastoral des Jeunes de la Paroisse [Pastoral care of the youth of the parish] I learned things about Mass... we met other young people like us like activities with young people, trips young people like and we also participated in the Mass. I was also in the choir then at some point I did I started learning how to play guitar and I went to a music school...

(Jennifer, interview one)

Jennifer's extracts depict a sense of togetherness in her village, where young people were encouraged to join local groups and where there were activities intended to promote harmony among the inhabitants. Jennifer said that when she first arrived in England she wanted to join a scout organisation, but at that time she could not speak English. The active little girl in Mauritius was now a young migrant, in full-time education and working part time in a fast food store to contribute towards paying the rent.

This community life described by Jennifer was also experienced by Tallie in her old neighbourhood in Mauritius, in a suburb of the capital city where she grew up. Life was simple and beautiful according to Tallie, who remembered the frequent gatherings which were part of their way of life.

... We used to enjoy and have fun every day in Mauritius. We don't go out every day [here] we used to go out with family but here it's

cold we don't go out much. We go out on our own, my mum goes to town, my mum goes out on her own

... We were all together. Almost all of the people in XX lived in harmony. We had relatives everywhere, everywhere, they all... everybody knew everybody

... In Mauritius everybody was together but here... I don't get to see my friends. Everyone is at their place, busy, school, work. There's no time

(Tallie, interview one)

In this extract, Tallie highlights the difference between her life in Mauritius and her new life in England. In Mauritius, the family spent time together; they went out together. With migration and the new life in England, the collective pronoun 'we' had changed into 'her' and 'I'. The 'fun' the family enjoyed in Mauritius had changed into 'our own' or 'her own'. The 'together' had changed into 'busy' and 'no time'.

This sense of community and togetherness in different localities extended beyond blood relations and involved not only relatives but also neighbours. Neighbours, too, looked after each other and provided support in times of need. Jamel's affection for his neighbours is obvious in the extract below.

We called them Uncle and Auntie they liked us very much. Then every time my brother would climb on the ros kari [a stone roll used to crush spices] he shouted, 'Uncle' then Uncle replied, 'Hey, big head what's the matter?' When they made things like roti or dhall puri, like they brought some for us...

... for New Year and all that when we finished the fireworks they would invite us to share samosas etc we would eat and all that. They were good neighbours.

(Jamel, interview one)

The extract above describes a harmonious relationship between neighbours. The interaction between the neighbour and Jamel's brother, depicted with humour, clearly portrays a sense of familiarity between them. The sharing of food is also a common practice in Mauritius among neighbours; this is further evidence of the sense of togetherness which seemed to be part of the social fabric of the Mauritian-Chagossian community in Mauritius.

Likewise, Annabelle recalled how her neighbours in Mauritius were kind and caring towards her and her sister when their mother had migrated to England.

... there were people who liked me and my sister they looked after us like we were their own children because they knew my mum was not there and when they went out they used to take us with them because they had children too.

... my sister and I had never been to Water Park [a water attraction theme park] one day they went there then they paid for us and when they go to Jumbo [a superstore] to do their shopping they take us with them and they let us sleep over sometimes

(Annabelle, interview one)

In the absence of her mother, Annabelle's neighbours showed love and attention towards her and her sister. Although the participant was very young when her mother migrated to England, she nevertheless remembered the places her neighbours had taken her and her sister. The fact that Annabelle used to go out with the neighbours and sleep over at theirs, suggests that there was trust between the two families.

Annabelle was grateful for the care and affection given to her by the neighbours. She was also grateful for what her parents had done for her and her siblings, and felt indebted towards them.

I've said that when I grow up when I have a job (voice filled with emotion) I will reimburse my mum and my dad everything they have done for me and my sister because you have to be grateful for people in life

... If I don't get the opportunity to go to university I would like to get a good job. How am I gonna say I would like to work at the airport. I would also like to help my parents for all they've done for me (smiles)

(Annabelle, interview two)

Annabelle felt it was her duty in the future to pay back her parents for everything they did for their children. This was what motivated her to get a 'good job' and earn money.

5.4 AMBIGUOUS SENSE OF BELONGING

Another aspect of the participants' experiences navigating between their ways of life in Mauritius and the ways of life in England can be seen in the stories they shared about their sense of belonging to a homeland. Participants found it difficult to discuss feelings of attachment to a homeland.

5.4.1 Uncertainty of home

This study found that it was not easy for the participants to say what they meant by 'home'. Participants defined home in different ways, often in contradicting ways, and most of them found it difficult to describe what home was for them.

Rose was the only participant to have a clear sense of what home meant.

My home is Mauritius, my home is Mauritius

R: How would you define home?

How would I define home? Hmm..... I say my home is Mauritius because it's there that I feel more comfortable. My family is there, I know my place there, I was born there like it's in a place... as soon as you enter Mauritius you're happy

(Rose, interview two)

Rose had the longest stay in England and was the only participant to have exclusively English friends. She seemed the most assimilated of the nine participants. For these reasons, her perceptions about home may be surprising; however, we have also seen earlier in this chapter how Rose missed her extended family, regretted that migration had caused her sorrow and believed she would have been happier in Mauritius. Therefore, despite appearing settled, despite speaking Mauritian Creole with an English accent, despite her friendship experiences and her length of stay, Rose did not feel at home in England.

Other participants were not as direct as Rose. For Tallie, home could be Mauritius but she hesitated.

I don't know if I go to Mauritius, I would feel the same. I would have got used to here, a quality of life I don't know if I will feel the same

... I'm trying to weigh things a bit on both. I have my family in Mauritius I have everything I was born there I grew up there but I need to start getting used to here if I want to live here

R: You need to start getting used but have you got used, to an extent where you can say, home is here?

Not really but I'm starting to get used

R: So where is your home then?

Mauritius. I was born there, that's why

R: What is home? What does it mean for you to say you feel home in Mauritius?

I feel comfortable I feel free. I feel everything in Mauritius. I go out, don't need to wear a jacket but not here. When I go out here, hat, gloves, jacket, scarf

R: In which way do you feel free?

Hmm... I feel free to walk anywhere friends because everybody knows everybody in Mauritius. I know I will meet someone I know everywhere. Even if I'm lost, I know I will meet someone I know I will inevitably meet someone

(Tallie, interview 2)

Tallie's extract above shows how she vacillated on the question of home. Before she said that home was Mauritius, she seemed to have wanted to call England home; however because she was new to the country, she did not feel she could it call it home yet. Her words "I need to start getting used" suggest that this was perhaps what she had set herself to do; she was keen on getting used to her new place. In the meantime, the one place she felt home was Mauritius, as this was where she felt free and comfortable and where she knew people.

Tallie was not the only one for whom the question of home was delicate. Elisha found it hard too when I asked where she felt at home.

Don't know...

R: For you what does it mean to feel like home?

I was like born in Mauritius I feel more home here like I've got used to it here

R: How do you feel, what are your feelings when you are in a place you can say yeah that's home?

People like me. I feel home too in Mauritius because I was born there and stuff like that I don't know (smiling)

R: Is it a positive feeling?

Yeah...

R: But when you come back here you feel... home

I guess

R: It's hard isn't it?

Yes

(Elisha, interview two)

Despite being uncertain of what home was for her, Elisha's extract indicates that she felt at home in England rather than in Mauritius; or, as she said, "more home here" because "I've got used to it here". Yet I had the impression that she did not want to say that she felt at home in the host country, or that she did not want to say that she did not feel at home in Mauritius where she was born.

5.4.2 Home is where family is

Home does not always refer to a birthplace; it can refer to wherever family is. This was how Sandy defined home.

Home? I consider here as home. My little sister was born here.

What will we do in Mauritius? My immediate family is here

R: So home for you is here?

Hmm

R: What is home, what does it mean?

Where your family is where your immediate family is... My grandma told me that when they first arrived in Mauritius, Mauritian people did some racist things to them. Mauritius ok but they say like it's hard to live now. I'd rather consider here home because... I don't think I will go back. Have to consider it home as from now

(Sandy, interview one)

Sandy's extract above demonstrates that she refers to England as home because this was where her immediate family was located. Sandy's father had passed away, after a long illness, a few weeks before she was interviewed. Part of the reason that her family migrated to England was that they believed the father would get better health treatment and support in the UK. Although her father passed away, Sandy believed he had obtained adequate health treatment and the family had received sufficient support from social services. This may explain why Sandy considered that England was home. Moreover, as well as her mother and siblings, Sandy's extended family, that is, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins – who she was close to, as they used to live in the same vicinity in Mauritius – also lived in England in the same town. In other words, Sandy had been reunited with all her family and extended family in England, hence she felt comfortable living in her new place since she had all her family with her. What the extract also shows is that Sandy refused to call Mauritius home and would rather call England home. This was a choice she made based partly on her Chagossian grandparents' hardships living in exile in Mauritius. Sandy was told how her grandmother was a victim of abuse from Mauritian people. These stories of xenophobic abuse towards Chagossian islanders have been expounded in the first chapter, which explained the ethnic categorisation at work in Mauritius and

how the Chagossian islanders joined the already marginalised group of Afro Creoles or Ti-Creoles when they arrived in Mauritius after their expulsion from their homelands. Sandy's position on the situation on Creoles in Mauritius will be addressed later in this chapter, but the extract above portrays how the socio-political situation of a country, in this case Mauritius, can affect one's sense of belonging. Sandy's father was not of Chagossian origin and Sandy was born and brought up in Mauritius before migrating to England, yet she did not consider Mauritius as home. Likewise, because England represented a safe place for Sandy's Chagossian grandparents, a place where her ill father and vulnerable family had obtained help and support, Sandy was ready to call England home.

Like Sandy, another participant's definition of home was more linked to family than to the place itself.

R: What does home mean?

Where you were born, where you grew up and stuff.

R: Where is your home ?

Mauritius like R (smiles)

R: If your home is in R and you feel home in R, don't you miss it?

I miss it yeah a little bit... I miss my family more than R. Rather my family

R: It may not be the place then, it may well be the people who live in that place

Yes... If all my cousins were here, I don't think I would want to go to Mauritius. I want to go on holiday but not to live for good.

(Tony, interview two)

While Tony said that his childhood place in Mauritius was his home – as he was born and grew up there – he added that he missed his extended family more than the place itself. His attachment to his family was far more important than his attachment to the place, which would have been insignificant if Tony had all his cousins with him in England. However, unlike Sandy who felt at home in England, unlike Elisha who actually regarded England as home, or Tallie who was keen to call England home, Tony did not mention the host country at all. He did not show any hesitation as to whether home was England or Mauritius. For him, it was clear that home had everything to do with his connection to Mauritius. Although home was more linked to family than to the place itself, it had been an important place for Tony. It used to be home for him when he was in Mauritius and yet, it was now a holiday destination.

5.4.3 Conflicting ‘here’ and ‘there’

The stories about home shed light on how participants viewed their birthplace. The place which used to be ‘home’, had become a holiday destination. As we have seen, some still called it home, some called it home while acknowledging that it may not be home anymore, others called it home only because of the family they had there, and others felt they had two homes now. Perhaps this was part of the acculturation process: the questioning of the importance attached to the birthplace, and a sense of ambivalence towards the place they were born and grew up, as well as towards the host country. Most of the participants seemed to be torn between the two worlds.

This ambivalence between those two worlds are best shown in Elisha’s extract below.

When I went to Mauritius it was weird. I went in July

When I was there [the first time] I wanted to come back but this time when I went I didn’t want to come back (smiling)

Like when you're over there with all your family, cousins you go out it's nicer than here, it's boring

There's nothing to do [here] except like if you go out to go to the cinema, shopping, go to London this kind of thing

Life here is easier [here] like you can have everything you want you can get job easier here, it's hard in Mauritius to find a job

I only like to go there (laughs) to have fun, party and stuff that's the only thing I like and also my cousins but I don't really like life in Mauritius like it's dangerous there. You can't go out at night and stuff there are many drug people

When I'm there I can do so many things, I can go to the beach and stuff. It's the same here yeah but it's not like Mauritius there is more fun in Mauritius and stuff like that

I love both because there are good and bad things in Mauritius.... their income

In Mauritius like I have all my family this is why I like Mauritius. Here like (smiling) I like it here too..... it's hard to explain

I like here more because I have like.... like.... more facilities

....here like you can go out at night whereas in Mauritius you can't like there are these... these people on the streets.... like my parents won't let and all that whereas here you have more freedom

R: When you say people on the streets who are you thinking of?

Like.... the drunkards (smiling) the drug people and all that

(Elisha, interview two)

Elisha's extract is lengthy but I have included it to demonstrate the ambivalence and contradiction in how she felt about both Mauritius and England. Elisha said she did not want to come back to England the last time she went on holiday to Mauritius, where life was not "boring" as it was in England. In Mauritius she spent time with family, went to the beach, had parties, had fun; whereas in England there was only "cinema, shopping and going to London". She added that she did not "really like life in Mauritius" after she had just mentioned all the things that she enjoyed doing there. Despite family, beach and fun, life in Mauritius was "dangerous"; especially at night, as the streets were not safe. This suggests that England represented a much safer place for young people to go out at night. Perhaps realising that she was contradicting herself, Elisha admitted that she loved "both" places and it was "hard to explain". She recognised that she liked her life in England, as the place offered "more facilities". "Facilities" has been translated literally from Elisha's word "facilite" in Mauritian Creole; however a more accurate English version of her words would be that life was easier and more comfortable.

Elisha's extract depicts the confusion she felt in describing her perceptions, thoughts and feelings about Mauritius and England. The lack of clarity in her words illustrates in turn the confusion about the process of acculturating to another country. It is what scholars have described as the continuous back and forth between 'there' and 'here'. Elisha was not the only participant who was ambivalent on this issue. Most of the young people in this study found it hard to express their thoughts and feelings towards one place or the other.

Jamel, for example, despite missing Mauritius so much, and presenting it as the only place he would want to go and live, also said that he would miss England so much if he left it.

If it was only me I would go to Mauritius every year. Mauritius it's another mood there are cousins all the cousins ride motorcycles and all that. I'm thinking if I was there I would be riding motorcycles too I would be like them sometimes I think of that but other times I think about here

If it was only me like I would work, I would work here then I would go I would go every year for maybe 2 months. I like Mauritius more just think now they are already on school holidays they are going to the beach every Sunday think here you are in the cold (smiling) in the house we live it's very cold

(Jamel, interview one)

Like Elisha earlier, and other participants in this study, Jamel missed family and the beach in Mauritius. The huge contrast in weather and social life played a role in the acculturation process of young migrants from Mauritius. Leaving a hot tropical place like Mauritius and adapting to a northern cold place like England had not been easy for the participants in this study. Also, the beach was an important aspect of their social life; as it is for anyone from Mauritius. Going to the beach is, for many families in Mauritius, a regular trip out and can be said to be part of the social fabric in there. Coming to a country like England and having to stay indoors was challenging to most participants. Yet, while Jamel wished he was in Mauritius to enjoy family and fun at the beach, the young man also realised that he had become accustomed to life in England during the five years that he had lived there, and that it would have been hard to leave it behind.

But if I have to return to Mauritius one day, I will miss here in a way because here school it's different like

I will be glad to go to Mauritius in a way because the fun there is another thing like I don't know

R: What is there in Mauritius that you say is 'another thing' – what is the other thing – what is that thing that exists there but not here?

Don't know when there are parties like in Mauritius when you walk by you see lots of people walking (smiling) talking, the sun is high like everywhere music but here like when you walk it's not the same

...when we went to France my mum said it was nice there we could move but the problem is job then my dad asked me, "Do you prefer here or there?" I said here I want to finish my studies because I've started it look at school I wouldn't have done 6th form here the teachers understand me better I decided to stay

(Jamel, interview two)

Jamel, like Elisha, was in a quandary; he was attached to his birthplace Mauritius while at the same time he realised that he had started to like his life in England. This realisation seemed to be confusing for him as he could not explain it; hence his words "I don't know", suggesting here that he could not explain how he so liked Mauritius and missed life there while at the same time had started to enjoy his life in England. Also, through Jamel's answer to my question about that "other thing" in Mauritius that he missed and could not find in England, we get another understanding about what made life in Mauritius special for him, and perhaps for other participants. Apart from family and beach, Jamel alluded to a mood, which had to do with hot weather, music, parties and lively places; life with "lots of people walking". All of these things are characteristics that were non-existent in England, let alone in the town in South-east England where the study was set. Nevertheless, perhaps to his own surprise, Jamel liked his English secondary school – where he had obtained the chance to do his sixth form and where he felt that he was understood by teachers. Jamel recognised that he was successful in his education

and his efforts were appreciated in school. He had also obtained the opportunity to learn music and he was a respected drummer in his school.

All these stories shared in this section have portrayed that defining home was a challenging task for most of the participants. They were all, at the time of the interviews, living in both worlds; and their narratives depicted a sense of ambivalence when talking about home and host countries. This ambivalence surprised a few participants themselves, because it revealed the confused, contradictory tangle that acculturation experiences can often be. Some of the findings presented in this section were co-constructed by participants and researcher, as some of the extracts displayed have shown, by keeping my questions in the conversations. The next section of this chapter will – unsurprisingly – follow this one, in the sense that it will now focus on participants’ interpretations of their sense of ethnic identity; which links to a sense of belonging.

5.5 COMPLEXITIES OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

As discussed in chapter three, ethnic identity is a key feature of the sense of belonging. Research exploring the Chagossians’ life in exile in Mauritius has long examined the sense of belonging of the islanders. Arriving in Mauritius in the early 1970s, Chagossians joined the already marginalised ethnic group of Afro-Creoles in Mauritius also known as Ti-Creoles. However, despite the physical similarities with Afro-Creoles in Mauritius, Chagossians had a distinct identity of their own referred to as the ‘Ilois identity’ (Walker, 1986). They had had a different way of life on the Chagos islands and were culturally different from the Creoles in Mauritius and the other ethnic groups. The question of identity came at the fore in 2002 when Chagossians obtained full UK citizenship which meant that they were British (Johanessen, 2015). The issue of identity and belonging for has been a pertinent subject for this community for the past fifty years. They have been navigating between different self-identifications, that is, Ilois or Chagossians; Mauritians; Creoles; British. I asked the young generation of Chagossians in this study how they perceived their ethnic identity.

Their attitudes towards their birthplace and the host country, explored previously, provided something of an indication of the group or groups to which they felt more affiliated. Yet, since the question of identity can be a sensitive and complex subject in itself – as we have seen in chapter three – the findings pertaining to participants' attitudes and feelings towards their sense of themselves ethnically, were even messier and more ambiguous. I explored the young people's views on three ethnic categories: Mauritian; British; Chagossian. The results revealed that there were other groups, than these three, to which some of the participants felt they belonged.

5.5.1 Mauritian by birth, African through cultural similarities

A few participants defined themselves as Mauritian simply by virtue of birth. Annabelle was one of these.

I consider myself Mauritian. Coming to England does not mean I'm British. My Mauritian friends say they are British and I say no, you were born in Mauritius which means you are Mauritian

(Annabelle, interview one)

Similarly, Elisha defined herself as Mauritian. She was not Chagossian; neither was she British, nor English – because she was different from English people, especially in terms of eating habits.

[I am] Mauritian

I don't see myself as a Chagossian (smiling)

Not British

I feel I'm more Mauritian (laughs), I'm a Mauritian. The way the English are I'm not the same, like the way they eat I love eating curry

(Elisha, interview one)

Elisha believed that eating habits are part of one's ethnic identity, and although curry is acknowledged to have become a typical British dish and a way of life for many British people (Taylor Sen, 2009), the participant believed that eating curry was not what English people did. Nevertheless, apart from being adamant that she was definitely not Chagossian or British, Elisha showed a strong identification with being Black African beyond being Mauritian. This was seen when she talked earlier in this chapter about her affinity with her friends from African countries, who she said were loud like her.

It's that Mauritian are like black people we are loud

*Black people are loud (laughs) I just know it I don't know (laughs)
like I have many friends I've got African friends and stuff and
they're like so loud so it's just like everyone knows that Black
people are loud you know what I mean*

*they're like they're like me (laughs) yeah cause we're Black
probably (laughs) I don't know cause they have like the same
personality and stuff*

(Elisha, interview two)

Elisha uses the pronoun “we” above and it is not clear who she refers to, exactly. She may have wanted to include me with her, but I was not certain whether the ‘we’ referred only to Creole people from Mauritius or to Mauritian people in general; however, because she also makes reference to “Black”, I believe she meant Creole people from Mauritius. Still, Elisha associated herself with Black African groups as she shared similar personality traits – such as being loud – and similar interests, such as having fun. Therefore, it seems that Elisha self-identified as Mauritian by virtue of birth while at the same time associating herself with an African identity by virtue of personality traits and common interests.

5.5.2 Chagossian identity at school

In the same vein, other participants self-identified in one way, yet their stories pointed to other affiliations; although they did not declare them, perhaps because they did not realise it themselves. For example, Jamel – who self-identified as Mauritian – also represented himself at times as Chagossian, although he said he did not denote himself as Chagossian.

I say I'm Mauritian

R: Now that you know your dad is of Chagossian origin [as he did not know that before migrating to England] do you not feel like there is a - like you connect a bit with the Chagossian identity?

No because I don't know I (smiling) I don't know because like even my parents themselves they never maybe if my parents came from Chagos themselves then

(Jamel, interview three)

However, Jamel did represent himself as part of the Chagossian group when he talked about his position as a pupil of Chagossian origin at school. Having learned about the forced displacement, from his school teacher, Jamel wished he had known about the history earlier – when he first arrived – so he could have used the knowledge to defend himself against what he perceived to be xenophobic abuse.

Say someone tells me like what are you there used to be a teacher like if... someone tells you why did you come here and stuff I would have thrown that in his face - take our country and this kind of thing

(Jamel, interview two)

The use of the pronoun “our”, used by Jamel to refer to the people of the Chagos archipelago, implies here that Jamel felt a sense of belonging towards his Chagossian grandparents’ homeland. In addition, when Jamel talked about that same teacher, he said that the latter was interested with the history and “he wanted to know us more”. The collective pronoun ‘us’ refers to the pupils who were of Chagossian origin, therefore Jamel identified himself as a pupil of Chagossian origin. This seemed to be his cultural position in secondary school and he proudly embraced this position as a member of the Mauritian-Chagossian drummers at school.

5.5.3 Mauritian-Chagossian identity

Likewise, Tony was also a drummer in that same group but unlike Jamel, he self-identified as Mauritian-Chagossian. Yet he chose this identification in school only.

*In school they thingy us like Mauritian Chagossian they say
Chagossians, Chagossian musicians and stuff*

*Is it because at school they say Mauritian Chagossian, that you
say you are Mauritian Chagossian?*

Because my grandma was born there and stuff

*If someone asks me I would say I’m Mauritian. If you ask me
how I came to England like...*

Then you would explain

Yeah

(Tony, interview 1)

Tony clearly chose when to identify as Mauritian and when to identify as Mauritian-Chagossian. The latter identification seems to be an ascribed identity from school, which Tony happily accepted. This ascribed identity seemed to be one that Tony chose to use only in school. This is not how he would describe himself outside school

though. I met Tony for the second interview six months later. I addressed the question again to see whether there was any change in his thoughts.

R: What does Mauritian Chagossian mean ?

Mauritians with Chagossian descent I think

R: Is that different from a Mauritian ?

Maybe

R: In which way ?

Sometimes a Mauritian like normal they would not know those histories they would not know what happened they would not be in England for the same reason

R: How do you represent yourself outside school, with your friends?

Same.

R: Which is...

Mauritian Chagossian because they identify themselves in the same way (Tony, interview 2)

Tony seemed proud to be identified as Mauritian-Chagossian. In contrast, Charlie would not take on this identification.

I don't think anyone knows what it means to be Mauritian-Chagossian and stuff

(Charlie, interview one)

5.5.4 Victimised Afro-Creole identity

Charlie self-identified as Mauritian by virtue of birthplace. Yet her story, especially her school experiences in Mauritius, uncovered a cultural position other than that of Mauritian. Charlie presented herself as a Creole, but more specifically as a victimised Creole in her old school where she perceived ethnic tensions. Charlie and her other Creole friends were not allowed to braid their hair in a Rasta hairstyle.

She [a teacher] said there are children like who can't do it I found that like a bit a bit like there was no reason because if we had hair that could be platted, it means that we could plat it but she said no. There were more Muslim children in the school I think this is why she said that I don't know. She said that there are children that cannot plat their hair. The school was found in Pailles in an area where there are many Muslim people there are a few Indians and Catholics [by Indians, Charlie means Hindus]

R: Did you plait your hair?

Yes sometimes like during summer holidays in December I had rasta in my hair and I had to remove it when I went back to school

(Charlie, interview two)

For Charlie, the Creole pupils suffered discrimination as they were in a minority in that school. Charlie assumed the teacher prevented the Creole girls, from styling their hair as they wanted, because she did not want to upset the Muslim girls who were in the majority. Charlie alluded to a subtle ethnic disagreement here involving two ethnic groups, Muslim and Creole, referred to as 'Catholics' by Charlie. Having spent her formative years in Mauritius, she was aware of the ethnic classification in

Mauritius and here she portrayed herself as belonging to the minority Creole group of girls whose interests she believed were not defended by the school.

In the same way, another participant identified herself as Creole and shared a similar story; although she did not go to the same secondary school in Mauritius. Jennifer stated how Creole girls in her old school were not allowed to dye their hair. Like Charlie's old school, Jennifer's school was found in an area where Creoles were in the minority.

You know how young people like to colour their hair, fer alert but in the school rules, children were not allowed to colour their hair, they had to have their natural hair when they come to school but now every time they tell us off us and I dyed my hair too, since I started in Form 1 [year 7] I dyed my hair. They always tell us off they said we were not allowed to dye our hair we had to make sure that our hair was black before thingy. Then we would lie to them and said that the dye was our natural colour but of course they knew we lied (laughs) but...hmm....

The other religion that dyed their hair they were not told off, the people let them do what they wanted with their hair but we had to dye our hair black again. It was always it was an argument. We always argued about hair a lot a lot a lot.

(Jennifer, interview two)

Although in Jennifer's story it was not about Rasta hair but more about hair colouring, both examples are similar in two ways. First, the point of contention in both cases was the hair of Creole girls – which, in the case of the two participants, was Afro hair. Second, both participants were conscious that their Afro hair was seen as a problem by their respective schools, where the majority groups were Muslim in the first one and Hindu in the second one (referred to as 'the other religion' in Jennifer's extract above). And like Charlie, Jennifer had spent some of her formative

years in Mauritius and also seemed to be aware of the ethnic categorisation at work in Mauritius. In fact, Jennifer perceived strongly that Creole pupils in her old school were victims of ethnic discrimination.

There was the manager who thingy that school but there are many teachers hmm of Hindu religion most of them, only one was Creole catholic

Every time the Catholics were the ones to be blamed

There was also thingy how do you call it because we are Creole we can't read, they are Indians they know better

R: This is what they said?

No (smiling) look where I am

Like my cousin she's here in England too, when she was in year 6, her teacher told her, 'you can't read, you will pick up rubbish on the street when you grow up'. Look where my cousin is today in England, she's doing her Fashion Designer Course and she is in her final year. My cousin always says that she will go and see the teacher and she will tell her where she is now and my cousin got A in every subject at the end of year 6 and the teacher didn't believe it

(Jennifer, interview two)

Not only were Creole pupils in minority in Jennifer's old school, but the Creole staff was in the minority too – there was only 'Creole Catholic' teacher. Moreover, in the extract above, Jennifer pointed toward a common assumption in Mauritius; that Creole people are uneducated, or not as educated as other ethnic groups such as Hindus. This assumption, which Jennifer had experienced in her old secondary school, was addressed at length in Chapter Two in the section about ethnic division

between different groups in Mauritius; especially between Creole groups and others. Jennifer also mentioned her cousin's experience in an attempt to say that she was not the only one who perceived that Creole children were treated differently in schools. Jennifer clearly identified strongly with her Creole identity and the extract above showed her perceptions about how Creole people were treated and considered by dominant ethnic groups. She was proud of what she and her cousin had achieved as regards their academic journey in England; not only did Jennifer portray herself as a Creole victim in Mauritius, but also as a clever Creole girl whose academic journey was a proof that the stereotypes against Creole people in Mauritius were prejudicial and wrong.

5.5.5 Reactive ethnicity

Jennifer strongly associated herself with the Creole group of Mauritians, as well as defining herself as Mauritian by virtue of birth. However, when asked if she felt a comparable connection to her Chagossian ancestry, Jennifer was determined that she was not associated with being a Chagossian as she was not born there and knew nothing about her father's homeland; he himself did not know anything about the Chagos, having left the islands as a baby to live in Mauritius.

My dad was born on Diego, my mum Mauritian. My dad was brought up in Mauritius, my dad does not know Diego, he was just born there. I'm Mauritian (said with a confident tone). I don't know for me I'm Mauritian. The British passport I am using it because I can do many things with a British passport. I was born in Mauritius I have lived where I lived since I was born. I am Mauritian, I don't know

If say there was nothing about territory, no military base on Diego. If like my dad even if he was born there then came to Mauritius, but that he used to travel between Mauritius and Diego, then maybe I could have a doubt on who I am. I was born in Mauritius I've lived where I lived since I was born. My mum

and dad lived there I go there on holiday I stay there. Me, I'm Mauritian I don't know...

100 per cent yeah. Actually nothing will change that

R: But do you feel some connection or some affinity with Chagossian?

No I don't think so

(Jennifer, interview two)

For Jennifer, because her father had left the Chagos as a baby and had no attachment with his homeland, she too felt no attachment with being Chagossian. However, her stance suddenly changed when we discussed the dates of the removal of Chagos islanders from 1967 to 1973.

R: Do you know when it happened – how many people – how many islands are there in Chagos?

There were 2 yeah? There was an archipelago there were three... there is Diego, Peros, Salomon. What was the other question?

R: When did the removal happen, how many people were there?

I don't know how many people were there were – 2000 people, yeah?

R: Hmm (I nodded)

Were there 2000 people? (smiling and happy that she got the right answer) I have learned that, hmm, then.

R: When did the forced displacement take place?

1969? Isn't it?

R: In fact it took place between 1968 and 1973. It didn't happen in one go but they gradually removed the people. People who were in Mauritius couldn't go back and were told that the islands were closed.

(Jennifer, interview two)

Jennifer remembered something.

Oh yeah here you go. My grandma wanted to try to go back and she wasn't allowed to because you remember when I said that my dad was ill and he had to come to Mauritius to get healthcare. Basically, when my grandma wanted to go back she wasn't allowed to go back this is when it started because my dad was born in 1965.

(Jennifer, interview 2)

As soon as I said that the removal took place between 1968 and 1973 and that from 1965 onwards people who visited Mauritius were not allowed to go back to Chagos, Jennifer remembered the reason why her father may have stayed in Mauritius after his mother brought him there when he was six months old. Jennifer said that her father was born in 1965 and worked it out herself: her father came as a baby, because he was ill, so that must have been sometime between 1965 and 1966. When her grandmother wanted to go back to Chagos sometime between 1966 and 1967 she was not allowed to travel, so this could be the reason why they had always lived in Mauritius. Jennifer said she remembered having heard her family talk about this.

Now I remember a little bit because I know it is about these dates

R: Your dad was born in 1965, he was born on Diego?

Hmm (nodding).

R: So how old was he when he came to Mauritius?

6 months.

R: Ok, 1965, 1966 then he was brought to Mauritius because he needed hospital treatment?

Hmm (nodding).

R: Then when your dad was well and when your grandma wanted to go back, she was told she couldn't?

Yes this is all I remember this is what they said they wanted to go back. When I will go home I will have to ask that again but I think my grandma wanted to [go back] because I think my grandma had settled there when she tried to go back she couldn't.

(Jennifer, interview two)

This was a revelation for Jennifer because till then she had not been sure why her father, who had arrived in Mauritius when he was six months old, had not returned home to the Chagos. After saying that she felt no connection with the Chagossian history, because she was born in Mauritius and her father grew up in Mauritius, Jennifer made sense suddenly of the reason why her father may have never gone back to his homeland. That realisation may have explained the following reaction.

But even if I say I'm 100 per cent Mauritian, I support the Chagossians. I will always be on the Chagossians side in a way because if it wasn't for Chagossians, I would not be here.

(Jennifer, interview two)

Jennifer sounded somewhat apologetic when she said those words, which contrasted largely with what she had said previously about her ethnic identity – that she did not feel any connection of any kind with the Chagossian identity. It was as if she had just found a connection with the Chagossian group, and came to the realisation that the forced displacement of the Chagossian islanders had affected her father even though he was still a baby.

5.5.6 Multiple identities

Jennifer's extracts above indicate how discussing a sense of belonging to ethnic groups can be a complex enterprise. Migrating to England with a British passport can make it even more challenging for migrants, such as those in this study, to define themselves and feel a sense of belonging. Rose admitted that she was confused.

I'm not even sure (laughs). I was talking to my mum about it because my dad was born in Rodrigues, my mum was born in Mauritius but of Chagossian origin my mum's parents were both born on Diego but her dad I think was half Sri Lankan and from my dad's side his mum was born in Seychelles but there are Portuguese and French in him.

R: So you don't know about your ethnic identity?

Well, I will say Mauritian but I know there are other things. I will define it as Mauritian.

R: You feel Mauritian, would you say you're Mauritian?

I'm not sure either on this one because Mauritians are people like their family are all in Mauritius but in my case my family went to Diego and all that Rodrigues but well I was born in Mauritius but.

R: Have you ever asked yourself that question before?

Yes often because sometimes at work when people ask me where I come from I say Mauritius but then they say you don't look like Mauritian. Then I have to tell about my family and where they come from here, there (laughs). I think that if I didn't move here I would not have asked myself the question.

(Rose, interview two)

Having more than one ethnic origin made it difficult for Rose to describe her ethnic identity. She chose 'Mauritian' without conviction.

5.5.7 British passport makes me British

Only one participant was not confused at all. Sandy had said earlier in this chapter that she did not feel at home in Mauritius but instead regarded England as home. Below is what she said as regards ethnic identity and her sense of belonging.

I consider myself Mauritian but only in looks. If I say oh I'm British I've got British nationality I'm fine. Mauritian, I see that I don't see thingy. My dad was half-Indian [her father was of Indian origin] but like they are those who are getting the best things in Mauritius we don't get anything in Mauritius. Mauritius is like India – you watch the news and everyone wears the saree.

Literally I say I'm British.

R: You're British, not Chagossian?

Chagossian (laughs)? Don't even have a country to go to. If, like, there was a chance to go back then I would say, yeah, never mind.

(Sandy, interview one)

In the above extract, Sandy was being sarcastic and referring to a strong perception in Mauritius; that is, people of Indian origin 'are those who are getting the best things

in Mauritius' whereas Afro-Creoles, 'don't get anything'. This was in line with what Charlie and Jennifer had referred to earlier regarding ethnic categorisation in Mauritius. Jennifer perceived that Creole pupils in her old school suffered discrimination because they were in the minority. Sandy endorsed these views and perceived that Creole people in Mauritius do not get their equal share. Sandy, like Jennifer and Charlie, showed her sense of belonging to the Creole group in her use of the collective pronoun 'we', despite the fact that her father was of Indian heritage. In addition, she also seemed to be very much aware of the ethnic divisions between different groups in Mauritius and the perception that people of Indian origin were more contented than were people of African origin. Sandy's phrase 'Mauritius is like India' is a common one in Mauritius when disparities in socio-economic status between different ethnic groups are discussed.

Perhaps for all these reasons, Sandy found it easy to describe herself as English rather than Mauritian. She could not associate with being part of the Chagossian group because Chagossians 'don't even have a country to go to'. Therefore for Sandy, ethnic identity was linked to a place; but a place where one would feel welcome and accepted. In her view, her Chagossian grandparents did not feel accepted in Mauritius; as a result, she could not identify with being Mauritian. Similarly, she did not feel she belonged to the Chagossian group as there was no place that Chagossians could call home. Sandy had British nationality, she lived in England, her father had obtained adequate health treatment, her family had obtained support from social services in their difficult times, therefore it seemed that for all these reasons, Sandy chose to self-identify as English.

This chapter has presented findings related to the first research question of the study. The next chapter will move on and exhibit findings related to the second research question focused on participants' school experiences in England.

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS – PART TWO

Chapter Six will present findings related to the second research question of the study, that is, ‘What were the participants’ perceptions of their school experiences in England?’

Chapter Six is divided into five themes:

- Experiencing English language for the first time;
- Ambiguous relationships with staff;
- Conflictual peer relationships;
- Finding solace in shared experiences; and
- Same group conflict.

Before presenting the findings, a brief description of the schools attended by the participants in this study is provided below. Annabelle, Jennifer and Tallie had been to School 1; Jamel and Tony had been to School 2; Charlie, Elisha, Rose and Sandy had been to School 3. All the information on the schools was taken from their Ofsted inspection reports. Direct reference cannot be included as this would reveal the identity of the school.

6.1 SCHOOL DESCRIPTIONS

6.1.1 School 1

Jennifer was in Year 13 studying for A levels, Tallie was in Year 12 studying for AS levels, and Annabelle had just finished Year 11 and was waiting her GCSE results at the time of data collection. School 1 had become an academy school – that is, maintained by a trust and not by a local education authority – one year before data collection. It was a much larger secondary school than ‘average’ with over 1100 students in 2014. Most pupils were of White British heritage although the proportion of students with English as an additional language (EAL) increased over the years, especially after 2014. The catchment area of this school includes neighbourhoods of

social disadvantage. The number of students with special educational needs is above national average. The proportion of pupils receiving support through pupil premium is above average too. Academic achievements had been recorded as being low for the past few years. School Number 1 received a ‘requires improvement’ grade in the last Ofsted’s inspection.

6.1.2 School 2

Jamel and Tony were both in Year 12 studying for AS levels at the time of data collection. This school was a maintained comprehensive school – that is, maintained by the local education authority. It is a larger than average sized secondary school. Most pupils were of White British heritage although the number of students of minority ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language (EAL) increased in recent years to reach just above national average in 2012. In that same year, the number of students with special educational needs was identified as being of a ‘much higher proportion’ than in most similar schools and reached well above national average in the following years. Similarly, the number of pupils eligible for pupil premium such as those who are looked after or receive free school meals increased over the years and reached above average. Academic attainment in this school declined and School Number 2 received a ‘requires improvement’ grade in the most recent Ofsted’s inspections.

6.1.3 School 3

At the time of data collection, Charlie was at college and had left School Number 3 years before. Elisha was still at school and was in Year 12 studying for AS levels. Sandy had just finished school and was preparing to go to university and Rose had left the school one year before and was going to university. School Number 3 was a voluntary aided and faith school – that is, a Roman Catholic school maintained by the local education authority. It was an average sized secondary school at the time of data collection with 940 students on roll in Ofsted’s report of 2012. Most pupils were of White British heritage although the number of students of minority ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language (EAL) was above average. The number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities

was average too. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals was below average. Secondary School Number 3 received a ‘good’ grade in the most recent Ofsted’s inspections.

6.2 EXPERIENCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR THE FIRST TIME

One of the main challenges faced by the majority of participants was the inability to speak English. Language had a direct influence on the participants’ experiences of education, as communication in English was vital to their learning and the building of relationships in school. The relevance of English for young people from Mauritius needs to be understood in the context of the multifaceted language structure that exists in Mauritius. As established in Chapter Three, language is a complex issue in Mauritius, where English is the official language but remains the language of administration and of the elite. The mother tongue, Mauritian Creole, was not the official medium of education in public schools until 2014, therefore children in Mauritius were not taught to read or write Mauritian Creole in school and it had no official lexicography (Baker and Hookoomsingh, 1987; Carpooran, 2009). All participants had studied English at school in Mauritius, but did not speak the language there. Arriving in England with no proficiency in English meant they were categorised as pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). Data relevant to the language barrier revealed how the inability to speak English affected some participants greatly when they first started school in England, although the level of the impact varied.

6.2.1 Stressful experience of learning English

Jennifer, who arrived in England at the age of 13, explains the difficulty she had when she learned to speak English.

I know in England I have to speak English and I didn’t know how to speak English. I mean I learnt it at school on paper but we didn’t talk.

Because English people here, they don't speak a way that someone who doesn't know English will understand. Because they speak fast, they have an accent so I found it very hard.

(Jennifer, interview one)

Jennifer knew she was coming to England and that she had to speak English. However, it was only once she was in England that she realised that she did not know how to speak the language. A further difficulty Jennifer faced was that she found that English speaking people spoke fast and this made it more difficult for her to understand when they talked.

In contrast, Sandy understood when people at school spoke English, but she could not speak English herself.

I understood English it's not that I didn't understand anything I understood but, very difficult, I couldn't speak it. All the children wanted to speak to me (laughs) I have to look at them I don't know what to do. When teachers speak to me I understand, I understand what they say to me I do it but I can't, I can't develop the English.

(Sandy, interview one)

In Sandy's situation, pupils from her school spoke to her but all she could do was 'to look at them'. These words illustrate the powerlessness Sandy faced because she did not speak English. She said she could not 'develop the English' which implies that, for her, language development is something that you are able to progress with, something that evolves.

That inability to speak English affected Sandy, especially when another pupil reminded her that she could not speak English.

... then in class there was XXX [name of student] and all that hmm I think she was the only Mauritian in my class then. One day she

teased teased me she said she came [to England] a little bit before me she said to me, "I've been here that long and I can speak English you don't speak". It made me... you understand she said she had been here that long she can speak English and I don't. Then I said to her, "Maybe you're cleverer than I am that's ok" (laughs).

(Sandy, interview one)

Sandy used the word "teased" to describe the student's behaviour towards her, she did not appreciate that she was reminded by another pupil from the same country that she could not speak English. Sandy's experience of not being able to utter a word in English, and Jennifer's example of how she could neither understand nor speak English, gives an insight into how these participants felt when they first arrived in England with very limited command of the English Language.

Going to school and not being able to speak was daunting for many of the participants. Charlie remembered how difficult it was to go to school and not being able to communicate.

I was so nervous, like I was scared at the beginning and stuff... I was anxious, was worried like how to understand

(Charlie, interview one)

In the short extract above, Charlie used four adjectives to describe how she felt: nervous, scared, anxious and worried. While Charlie did not elaborate more on each of these feelings, they illustrate how Charlie desperately wanted to understand what people said when they spoke to her in English.

Another participant, Elisha, described how she did not say a word in English because "I thought my voice would become big when I speak English". In her mind, speaking English would change her voice. In Elisha's case, she feared the embarrassment of hearing her voice sound different in English. In her eleven year

old mind at the time, switching language could change people's voices. Starting secondary school with no English, and being a shy girl, Elisha was bullied by a group of boys in year 7. While she understood what they said to her, she could not speak English.

Sometimes they used to take the mick out of me that kind of thing. Told me that apparently I smell of BO and stuff like that. Don't know, I don't smell and stuff... and stuff like that. Then sometimes I used to... I didn't like when they did that then sometimes I bunked lessons... school... not school I would go in the toilet I would just chill only because of that.

(Elisha, interview two)

When asked why she did not report the boys at the time, Elisha replied that "I was scared in case I sound (laughs) like a boy with a big voice when I speak." Elisha chose to hide in the toilet and isolate herself to avoid being bullied by this group of boys. A teacher who knew about the situation talked to Elisha about it and together they resolved it.

Jamel had a different experience to share. He was so excited to go to his new school for the first time that he had rehearsed what to say in English when people would ask him his name.

I thought I would have been able to answer simple questions like, "What is your name?" So I practised saying "My name is Jamel."

(Jamel, interview one)

These four words represented hard work to Jamel, who had only just arrived in England from Mauritius. However, when he was asked what his name was at school, Jamel was too shy to say anything. In his case, shyness – as opposed to fear or embarrassment – prevented him from speaking in school.

6.2.2 Positive experience

In contrast to the experiences described above, two participants – Rose and Sandy reported having learned and acquired the language quickly and without difficulty. Rose attributed her quick English acquisition to the confidence she felt from her first day in primary school, and she portrayed herself as a successful language learner.

The first day I started to talk with almost everyone, but like to be able to really like talk and they talk back to you it took, not too long... because I started school I think it was 4 weeks before school ended... no 4 months. I think in these 4 months I already made friends I already completely understood the language.

... I remember there was another Mauritian boy in my class in primary school when I first started. I think he arrived 2, 3 months before me but he couldn't speak English whereas I had already started to talk to people on my first day I found it a bit strange but anyway I don't know maybe it depends on different people... I'm not sure but sometimes it's yourself your personality you're confident... you find yourself like have the ability to do it and you will be able to do it, if you are a bit like shy it can take you longer but I didn't have any problem`

(Rose, interview two)

Apart from being confident at a very young age, Rose also had more exposure to English and less exposure to Mauritian Creole when she first arrived to England. In 2003, Rose and her elder brother were among the very first children of Chagossian origin to migrate to England. Apart from her elder brother, there was only one other Mauritian-Chagossian pupil in her primary school. Later when she moved to secondary school, she and her brother were the only pupils from Mauritius. This meant that Rose had to communicate only in English to her school peers. The influx of pupils from Mauritius arrived a few years later – from around 2005. Thus, Rose was not exposed to the Mauritian Creole spoken by peers at school, in the way other

participants in this study were. Besides, Rose was the only participant who spoke Mauritian Creole with an English accent, which suggests that she was more fluent in English than in Mauritian Creole.

With regard to Sandy, she arrived to England later than the other participants – after the influx of pupils from Mauritius who arrived from 2005 to 2011 – and joined a school where there was already a significant number of pupils from Mauritius. However, she said that she was not shy and made friends easily with English-speaking pupils.

6.2.3 Peer language support and EAL provision

With the exceptions of Rose and Sandy, the participants in this study arrived as part of the main influx of pupils from Mauritius and attended secondary schools where there were significant numbers of pupils who spoke Mauritian Creole. Charlie considered herself lucky that there were pupils speaking her language in her school. The first Mauritian girl who spoke to her ‘introduced me to other people then we talked and we are still friends today’ (Charlie, interview one). As a result, Charlie felt less lonely, knowing she had people to talk to. Similarly, Jamel was introduced to another boy from Mauritius and who had started school before Jamel. He was Jamel’s assigned buddy, who ‘could speak English and accompanied me when I had to go and get my things’. Another participant had cousins already in the secondary school she attended.

Two of the three secondary schools involved in this study offered EAL provision, and participants who attended these two schools were grateful for, and benefited from, EAL support in their respective schools. The learning support provided by EAL staff proved so beneficial that Jamel regretted that it no longer existed when he was in sixth form.

Things like EAL do not exist anymore it has been cancelled I think... last year in year 10 and year 11 for my GCSE I took Learning Support [EAL] like I did that with her [a staff in EAL] and sometimes I did it with another Miss. I asked her if we would

have that in 6th Form she said no but that I could come anytime she could thing but she was a good teacher. I have to say thanks to her I've learned how to speak English

(Jamel, interview one)

Jamel also felt gratitude towards his English teacher, Miss A, who helped him learn English. The extract above illustrates that not only did he enjoy the help he received from the EAL Learning Support group, but that he felt that he still needed more learning support from the EAL staff even after his GCSEs. Jamel was disappointed that the scheme stopped. As a result of it stopping, his language needs – and presumably also those of more recent arrivals with no English – were not met in school.

The majority of the participants recognised that lack of English language skills was a serious obstacle during their adaptation to school in England. The perceptions of participants presented in this section revealed the extent to which language acted as a barrier for most of the participants, in terms of them adapting, and fitting into, a new environment. There were also examples of two pupils whose experiences of acquiring command of the English language had been positive. Rose and Sandy had acquired English rapidly, which they believed was partly due to their confident personalities. Rose also had more exposure to English language at school than other participants.

Those participants who identified lack of English as an obstacle attended schools where there were significant numbers of pupils from Mauritius who had arrived before them and who provided help with acquiring English to the new arrivals. Additionally, EAL provision, from which participants considered they benefited greatly, was provided in two schools. Participants were grateful for the help they obtained from EAL staff at school, as well as from other teachers who helped them when they first arrived. The following section will consider the participants' relationships with school staff.

6.3 AMBIGUOUS RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAFF

Five out of the nine participants in this study recounted only positive experiences with teachers in their respective schools. The remaining four participants reported both positive and negative perceptions of their relationships with their school teachers – they appreciated the attitude of some teachers but condemned the attitude of others. None of the participants had solely negative experiences with their school staff.

6.3.1 Staff support appreciated

Participants who attended one of the the two schools with EAL provision recognised that the support from the EAL staff made a positive difference to their school life.

Jennifer was particularly grateful to an EAL teacher who supported her and other new arrivals at her school.

It's hard for us to integrate in a school where no... where the... where the language is not our first language, where there are people totally different and their way of life completely different like the way we lived but Miss R was always there, every time if I had a problem, I would go and see her.

(Jennifer, interview two)

The EAL department offered Jennifer not only language support but also a presence whenever she had ‘a problem’, so she knew she could rely on somebody to turn to in her new school. Tallie attended the same school and she also recognised the support she received from the same EAL staff who helped her to integrate into the school environment.

Miss R has helped me a lot since I started, the only teacher who has always supported me. She has helped me a lot. I have to say thanks to her I've got good grades. She was always there when I needed her. When I was free and if she was free too she would help

me. Sometimes she would tell me what to do or what not to do but she has looked after me well.

(Tallie, interview one)

Both Jennifer and Tallie referred to Miss R as someone who was always available. Both girls appreciated the teacher's readiness to help them when they first arrived, especially times when they 'needed' help. Tallie felt indebted towards the EAL teacher for her 'good' GCSE grades; and her words 'she has looked after me well' imply a nurturing and caring role that Miss R had towards Tallie and other new arrivals in her school.

Similarly, Jamel was grateful for the support he received from EAL staff in his school. He was not the only pupil who benefited from this support.

At that time in my school there was a place called EAL Learning Support then all the Mauritians who just arrived like they went there speak English and all that. The Miss was called Miss J she taught things about English she was a good Miss until now like she told me ... things like EAL do not exist anymore it has been cancelled I think don't know now she's an English Miss but now she does things in English but she was always... like last year in year 10 and year 11 for my GCSE I took Learning Support like I did that with her and sometimes I did it with another Miss. I asked her if we would have that in 6th Form she said no but that I could come anytime she could thing but she was a good teacher I have to say thanks to her I've learned how to speak English

(Jamel, interview one)

The participants' stories portray a relationship with their EAL teachers which extended beyond the formal teacher/student relationship and included other features such as accessibility, patience, kindness, care and nurture. Apart from the support

from EAL staff in their respective schools, participants also valued the support provided by non-EAL staff which helped them realise their potential.

Tallie, for example, acknowledged the support she received from other teachers in her school. They helped her achieve her expected grades at GCSE by organising after-school revision sessions.

I stayed everyday after school do to Maths we studied until about 6 o'clock, I stayed in school. Revise, revise, revise!

(Tallie, interview one)

Tallie, who had arrived in England in Year 10, felt that her teachers encouraged her and were motivated by her attitude to learning.

They push you to do the right thing. If they see you are really interested they don't let you down

(Tallie, interview one)

Similarly, Charlie acknowledged the help she obtained from teachers who spoke French to her as this was beneficial in helping her to access the learning in class. Sandy, too, was grateful for the help of a teacher who spoke French and who had enabled her to move to higher academic sets after the teacher recognised her academic potential.

Participants valued other teachers because they showed an interest in the Chagossian forced displacement and encouraged the new pupils from Mauritius to integrate within the school. Jamel reported how one teacher in his school supported Mauritian-Chagossian pupils by encouraging them to join in various activities. The teacher was curious when the influx of pupils from Mauritius arrived in his school and conducted some of his own research on their forced displacement.

I think he was interested, like with the history, then I think he wanted to know us more

(Jamel, interview two)

Jamel explained that he learned more about the forced displacement himself after the teacher shared what he had learned with the pupils from Mauritius.

Like where language, how our language was created... this kind of thing like he was even more interested in these things like because we didn't.... we only knew that the British took that... then the Queen the people went mad that the Queen gave them that... that's all we knew (smiling). We didn't know anything more... then he thing... like he told us a few things

(Jamel, interview three)

This extract displays how Jamel knew very little about the forced displacement of his Chagossian family before his teacher researched the history and shared it with him and his peers from Mauritius. It was the teacher's eagerness to want to 'know more', and his interest in the history of the new arrivals, that impressed Jamel. The teacher formed a relationship with the group of Mauritian-Chagossian pupils, learned about their background, spent time with them and made attempts to learn their language.

He understands Creole now because he can speak French... But now he can speak Creole you can see he observes, he wants to understand now when we speak he understands... like now we can't speak too much [laughing]

(Jamel, interview two)

Although Jamel joked at the fact that he and his friends now had to be careful when speaking Mauritian Creole in front of the teacher who had learned their language, he

had only words of praise for the teacher. Jennifer showed similar admiration towards one of her teachers who demonstrated an interest in the Chagossian history and planned a lesson on the topic of the forced displacement of Chagossian islanders.

... and yet he's English. I think he knows the Chagossian history better than I do... In my class Public Services last year, just before I finished Year 12, we had an assignment where we had to talk about discrimination like a bit mixed with government, law and the topic he chose was Chagossian. He chose that and I couldn't believe it and he talked and there was even a debate

R: In the class?

Yes like he did a debate on what they thought but many children many children were on the Chagossians' side because obviously what the British did was wrong. Then many children knew the reason why we are here and what is our past that kind of thing. But I didn't expect that my teacher would do something about Chagossian [voice slightly trembling with emotion], yeah

(Jennifer, interview two)

The phrase 'and yet he's English' suggests that Jennifer did not think that an English teacher would be interested in the Chagossian history, or would want to dedicate one lesson to this topic. Jennifer's comments here reveal stereotypical views she had of English people. In this specific example, she felt appreciative of the teacher's decision to link the history of the Chagossian islanders to the subject of discrimination. Jennifer shows her excitement that the class debate helped to inform her peers about the reasons why people from Mauritius, of Chagossian origin, migrated to England. She was also excited that 'many children' sympathised with the Chagossians who had been wronged by the British government. That lesson was very important for Jennifer because it educated a class of pupils on the forced displacement of Chagossian islanders, and thus explained the arrival en masse of

people from Mauritius in England. It also allowed Jennifer to realise that her teacher was genuinely interested in the background of pupils of Chagossian origin, and thought it was important to share that interest with other pupils.

6.3.2 Negative perceptions of teaching staff

Despite the positive experiences with teaching staff illustrated above, four participants shared negative perceptions of the teaching staff in their schools. Teachers were accused of practising favouritism and of holding negative stereotypes of pupils from Mauritius.

A few participants recognised that sometimes Mauritian-Chagossian pupils behaved badly in school. Elisha gave an example where a small group of boys from Mauritius were expelled from school because of their behaviour.

I think one of them brought a knife in school I think two did that another one threw a stone on a school teacher's car

(Elisha, interview two)

Jennifer felt that some teachers in her school did not like the Mauritian-Chagossian pupils and accused them of favouring English pupils..

We always get in trouble... It's us that go to the office, with English there will be a little, 'Ah make sure next time you don't do that again' but us straight to the office... You know I don't like the teachers so I don't care

(Jennifer, interview two)

Jennifer's statement above portrays her perception of an 'us and them' picture in her school whereby English people received favoured treatment from staff while Mauritian-Chagossian pupils were victimised. For this reason, Jennifer developed an antipathy towards teachers in general in her school. In the same vein, convinced that the teachers were biased, some pupils did not report any incidents to them.

It was pointless to go and speak to a teacher because the teacher was not on our side... This is why like an English person would say something, we would not go to a teacher we would go to that same person we had a problem with... Let's say I go to that person I've had an argument with, it means I will be sent to the office. The teacher would always I am to blame but they would never think they would never ask first why I had an argument in the first place with that person.

(Jennifer, interview two)

Thus, instead of reporting incidents to teachers, Jennifer and her friends confronted the other involved. Other participants also perceived some teachers to favour English pupils above those from a Mauritian background. Elisha, for example, believed that incidents involving pupils from Mauritius were not taken seriously by teachers, who said that they had 'to have proof' (Elisha, interview two). Elisha added that sometimes the Mauritians had evidence of incidents, such as in the case of an incident when an English girl allegedly called a Chagossian-Mauritian girl 'dirty Mauritian'. However, this was not taken seriously by the teacher. Similarly, Tony remembered an incident in his school when he alleged that teachers had practised favouritism, in the case of a Mauritian-Chagossian boy who was excluded after having been involved in a fight with a girl.

He was in the right because like the girl pushed him. I think the girl wanted to hit him then he pushed the girl. They stopped him from coming to school and stuff for many days he missed school a lot.

(Tony, interview one)

According to Tony the boy had good reasons for pushing the girl; he reacted and defended himself against a girl who 'wanted to hit him'. However it was not clear whether the girl had threatened to hit him or had actually hit him. The outcome was that the Mauritian-Chagossian boy was suspended from school for a number of days.

Jamel also recounted a story about one member of the school management team allegedly practising discrimination against pupils from Mauritius. He reported that the staff had started ‘hating’ Mauritian-Chagossian pupils and he could not explain why his attitudes towards the pupils had changed over time.

He couldn't have been bad because when I first started school he asked me if I had had my lunch I said yes I had had my lunch already since break... He asked if I was hungry I said yes then he took me to the canteen he gave me roast dinner he asked if I would take some more I said to him, 'I eat everything' (laughing) I was talking to him although I couldn't speak English I said yes yes then I took a plate and served myself with food.

(Jamel, interview two)

Jamel remembered this member of staff's act of kindness when he was a new arrival at the school. A few years later, Jamel did not understand why that same person always reprimanded Mauritian-Chagossian pupils. Jamel and his friends were accused of forming gangs and scaring other pupils. Although Jamel acknowledged that some Mauritian-Chagossian pupils sometimes caused trouble, he thought that overall they suffered discrimination from the particular member of staff because they went around together in small groups of only Mauritan pupils and spoke Mauritian Creole. The participant recalled that the father of one of his friends was not happy that his son was not allowed to speak his mother tongue in school, and he visited the school to talk about it with one of the senior leaders. Jamel however explained that rather than speaking Creole regularly in school, the boys spoke Creole only rarely, for greetings.

But we don't speak like whatever. We talk to each other like 'What's the matter' or that kind of stuff. He doesn't like these things

(Jamel, interview two)

Jamel tried to justify the fact that sometimes he and his school peers spoke their language in school. The relationship between the member of staff and the group of Mauritian-Chagossian boys deteriorated to the point where Jamel and his friends thought that some of the school senior management did not want them in school.

Like music and all that he doesn't want it anymore. As soon as we go into music 'What are you doing here?' ... Once he asked us not to come upstairs anymore and we had to stay downstairs. Then we would go downstairs he would kick us out, we would go down he would ask us to go out go and play football whatever

(Jamel, interview two)

Jamel's extract portrays a school environment in which Mauritian-Chagossian pupils may have suffered from stereotyping.

Some participants felt they were perceived as troublemakers. Jennifer gave a few examples to support this allegation.

There are two bells ringing after lunch but we never rush, we take our time and we're not the only ones there are many children like us but it's always us who get the blame it's us who have to leave the canteen before other children.

(Jennifer, interview two)

In the extract above, Jennifer acknowledged that she and her Mauritian-Chagossian peers often left the canteen late; however, although they were not the only ones to do so, they were the only ones to be reprimanded. She gave another example.

You know how young people like to wear short skirts to school. It's always our skirts that are the shortest, skirts of English girls are never the shortest. We always get in trouble.

(Jennifer, interview two)

In this extract, Jennifer also compared the treatment received by Mauritian-Chagossian girls in her school to that received by English girls. For her, English girls were favoured at school, while Mauritian-Chagossian girls were watched closely. In both examples, Jennifer implied that Mauritian-Chagossian pupils were reprimanded and blamed falsely by school staff.

While this example above specifically affected girls in Jennifer's school, Tony recalled how he and other Mauritian-Chagossian boys in his school were accused of theft.

They stole a mobile but like when they stole that mobile I wasn't there like there were I think two, three Mauritians. I wasn't there and a friend was not at school but the girl when like she showed a picture of me and the boy who was not at school... The Assistant Head teacher came to get me like he came and looked into my bag and stuff they came to see the other boy as well but he was not in school they looked into his bag.

R: How did it all end?

I think they found the mobile, it was someone else I think... it was not us that took it though the mobile was there.

(Tony, interview one)

Tony went on to describe another theft accusation involving another mobile phone. In this case his younger brother was involved.

Like a boy took a mobile, he was Mauritian but my brother was like touching his pocket like my brother I think he knew the boy had taken the mobile my brother asked him to return the mobile then the boy asked him to accompany him, my brother went

... Then they told my brother to stay. My brother got into trouble too. They kept my brother they stopped him from going to his classes and stuff

(Tony, interview one)

In both cases, Tony and his brother got into trouble. Tony had been searched in vain; while his brother had been examined by staff, and had been prevented from going to his classes until the matter was resolved.

6.3.3 Opposing views

Tallie and Rose were the only participants who did not identify themselves at all with pupils from Mauritius, especially those who walked in groups and were loud. On the contrary, they thought that some of them deserved the treatment they got from school staff. Tallie saw the loudness as a problem.

That's the only problem, they are loud. I don't know if they have a loud voice (smiles) but they speak very loud

(Tallie, interview two)

It is clear from this extract that the participant dissociated herself from other pupils from Mauritius with the use of the pronoun 'they'. Tallie did not want to be part of the same group and for her, being loud was a problem, even though they may have a loud voice.

Tallie was the only participant, among those who commented on their relationships with school staff, to defend vehemently the teachers in her school. Her stories contrasted starkly with those of two other participants who went to the same school as her. Tallie insisted that teachers in her school treated children well and was adamant that those pupils who complained about teachers, needed to correct their own behaviour first.

If they are quiet, they behave like me, they will not get into trouble. Sometimes they look for it. I've been in classes, I've seen them shouting at teachers. They shout, they bang on tables, they throw tables away... The teacher does not have to, they're doing it, they're helping us. In return we could show some understanding, we could be a little bit sensible for them.

(Tallie, interview two)

In the extract above, Tallie defended the teachers and blamed the pupils. She set herself as an example that Mauritian-Chagossian pupils should follow. Later in the conversation, she mentioned that she was liked by all her teachers and that her favourite teacher at school was her Maths teacher who was from Iran and with whom she chatted 'like friends'.

This section has presented findings related to the participants' relationships with school staff. They had both positive and negative relationships with their school teachers. None of the participants had only negative experiences to share, however the stories about relationships were quite ambivalent. Some participants were grateful and felt indebted towards some teachers for their support, their care and their interest in the Chagossian history, yet the same participants disliked their teachers from the same school for their attitudes towards pupils from Mauritius. Those teachers were perceived to favour English pupils over Mauritian-Chagossian pupils. The extracts also revealed feelings that the pupils were perceived as being loud and troublemakers. Only one participant defended the teaching staff in general and blamed the pupils instead. The next section will present findings related to participants' relationships with school peers.

6.4 CONFLICTUAL PEER RELATIONSHIPS

This section will present findings relating to the participants' relationships with their school peers. The findings reveal tensions in school settings among Mauritian-Chagossian pupils and other peers, and not necessarily native English pupils. Most

of the participants reported perceptions of prejudice and discrimination in their respective schools and formed relationships with pupils of the same background and/or with other immigrant youth. Other stories pointed more towards a positive social integration and mixed friendships although these were at times limited to the school.

6.4.1 Perceived racism

Elisha was one of the very first participants to mention 'racism' which she believed was common practice in her secondary school. In her first interview, she recalled how a friend of hers, a South Asian girl, had been bullied at her school.

There were racist children and all that like they didn't really like Black people. I think it exists in every school

(Elisha, interview one)

I wanted to know more about her views on 'racism' which she said happened in her school, during the second interview.

They didn't really like Mauritian children.

R: Was the school aware of that?

The school knew.

R: Who told the school?

Didn't I tell you about a friend who got in a fight with a white girl? She called the girl dirty Mauritian and stuff? A white girl called my friend dirty Mauritian and stuff. Then my friend got pissed off [underlined words are participant's own words]. She got in a fight and stuff. Then my friend told the teachers what the girl had said to her. They [the teachers] said apparently she had called her white

something. As if she was racist too. Then my friend got excluded for a day.

R: What happened to the other girl?

She got excluded too.

(Elisha, interview two)

Elisha's choice of words in this extract shows that she did not accept that her friend could possibly have used racist language. The participant did not trust the teachers who had said that 'apparently' her friend had called the other girl 'white something' and her words 'as if' in the same way indicate that she did not believe that her friend made any comments with a racist slant.

Elisha gave other examples to show how, according to her, pupils from Mauritius were ignored and ill-treated by other groups of pupils.

When they look at us, they don't come close to us that kind of thing.

(Elisha, interview two)

Elisha's stories show an attitude of "us and them" in her school, the "us" being the pupils from Mauritius and the "them" being the English pupils. In her accounts, Elisha depicted a picture where pupils from Mauritius were not liked in her school. A similar picture was depicted by other participants. Annabelle for example recalled how she was the victim of abuse, although in her circumstances, the abuse did not come from native English pupils but from a pupil of a European migrant background.

Recently about two months ago a Portuguese boy he is Portuguese himself [underlined words show emphasis placed by participant through a change in tone] and said to me, "I can make you go back to Africa" and I didn't do anything wrong... and he's a child he makes excuses he says apparently he is depressive I can't see any

signs of depression in him because if he was depressive he would not talk to us like he does. He doesn't do it only with me then he says, "Oh I'm sorry, I have relatives that come from Africa and I'm telling you to go back to Africa".

R: What did you say to him?

The teacher heard. The teacher apologised and said he was messing around. I said to the teacher if he was messing around, one thing I said to the teacher I said that he was not supposed to mess around, he has to bite his tongue before he speaks. The teacher asked me if I wanted to take it further then I said I'd leave it but if he does that again I would inform other staff.

(Annabelle, interview two)

Annabelle highlighted the fact that the pupil who perpetrated the abuse was Portuguese "himself", implying that he should not have been prejudiced against other migrants. Other participants reported stories about prejudice at school, whether they were personally involved or not. Both overt and covert forms of prejudice were recalled, such as the example given above by Elisha where some English pupils avoided any physical contact with pupils from Mauritius.

Subtle prejudice was acknowledged by other participants. Jennifer commented, "It's the way they act" when she explained that new arrivals, although they cannot understand everything other pupils say, can see other pupils talking about them or laughing at them. Covert prejudice was also conveyed in jokes. Jennifer remembered that someone asked her jokingly the reason why she came to England.

I think that even if they were joking they still have something behind because they wanted to say this because they said why we came to England why we didn't stay in our country.

(Jennifer, interview two)

Jennifer did not take the “joke” as a joke and thought that the person truly wanted to know why she came to England instead of staying in her country.

Charlie too had witnessed prejudice disguised in jokes.

They do in jokes like so that people don't get too angry but in a way they are saying the truth.

R: Can you think of an example?

Like you're black go back to your country and stuff go back to where you come from what are you doing here, things like that... but on the other hand like you can see that they are not joking.

(Charlie, interview two)

Comments about their skin colour or requests to “go back” or “go back to Africa” were repeatedly mentioned by several participants. Jamel experienced it once when he had abuse shouted at him one morning on his way to school. He was then a new arrival with very little English. His abuser was a young man who had previously gone to the same school. He asked Jamel to “go back to Mauritius”.

At that time I didn't understand a lot of English then I couldn't speak English.

R: You couldn't answer back.

Couldn't answer back. I walked and I left.

(Jamel, interview three)

Lack of English meant that Jamel could not respond to the abuse, so he said nothing and walked away. New arrivals who had little or no English were more likely to be victims of abuse based on prejudice. Jennifer was sensitive to the plight of the younger ones.

... I don't know how they're coping the little ones and especially the little ones who just started I don't know how they are coping.

(Jennifer, interview two)

Jennifer looked worried when she said those words and I sensed that she was probably remembering her own experiences when she was a new arrival to the school. So I asked her:

R: Was it hard for you then when you first started?

Yes.

R: How hard on a scale of 1 to 10, how hard was it?

9.5. Only because of the language problem. When they would say something I would understand but I would not be able to answer them.

... But when people say something because I can't like answer them, it kills me inside [her own words] Do you get what I'm saying?

R: Yes.

But my experience at XXXX [name of her school] has had ups and downs but I know I'm achieving what I want to achieve.

(Jennifer, interview two)

The phrase used by Jennifer – “it kills me inside” – sheds light on her state of mind at the time when she remained silent when she felt persecuted. After having shared her personal experience, Jennifer quickly cheered herself up and said that she was achieving what she wanted to achieve, perhaps to finish on an optimistic note and not to ponder on past negative experiences.

6.4.2 Reacting to perceived abuse

Jennifer was not the only participant who did not want to ponder on past negative experiences. Charlie chose to minimise the difficulties related to prejudice and discrimination which had prevailed in their schools.

... they could say 2, 3 [meaning very few] offensive words like that but that was it they didn't do anything more but I don't care about it.

(Charlie, interview two)

According to Charlie, there were not many incidents involving prejudiced abuse in her school, and in her view, therefore, the problem was not that serious. When asked if she had personally witnessed prejudice, she replied that it had not happened to her, but to other students.

... with other people, not with me.

R: Why not with you, why with others?

Because I think there are children who are a bit... err... show off they are bit show off they like to pick a fight. Sometimes... it's not just the white people's fault the black people pick a fight sometimes with them then like they have to say something.

(Charlie, interview two)

Charlie here distanced herself from the incidents and said she had not been involved personally, but her friends had. In doing so, she acknowledged that a certain level of discrimination was directed at her group of Mauritian-Chagossian friends as a whole and not at herself as an individual member of that group. Moreover, in that extract, Charlie almost justified the prejudice by saying that the victims of the prejudice “picked a fight”; and as a result the people they argued with defended themselves by

making racist comments. Not only did Charlie minimise the problem by almost denying it, but she also thought that some “black people” who get abused deserve it.

Others, like Annabelle, were bolder. The way she chose to react against prejudice and discrimination was by claiming her rights as a British citizen. For those who gave her “dirty looks” and asked her to “go back” to her country, she had these words:

I say to them, “Excuse me but my parents have passport and I have the right to live here, if I didn’t have the right to live here, I would not come to school”. (laughs)

(Annabelle, interview two)

Annabelle’s shield was her British passport that she had obtained before migrating to England and which gave her the same rights and privileges as a native British citizen. As noted previously, full UK citizenship was granted to Chagossians in 2002. Jamel wished he had known more about the forced displacement when he started school in England; he said he would have used the information as a defence when xenophobic attacks were made against himself or his friends.

Say someone tells me like what are you..... if like someone tells you why did you come here and stuff I would have thrown that in his face, “Take our country” and this kind of thing.

(Jamel, interview two)

To Jamel, the knowledge of his family’s history was something tangible that he could use to hurt people, especially those who made xenophobic remarks.

Jennifer actually used knowledge of the forced displacement. When she had learned to speak English and had acquired some knowledge on the forced displacement, she did not hesitate to use that knowledge to counterattack the opponents.

... they said why did we come to England? Why we didn't stay in our country?

... but I say it's not my fault why I have come in their country. If like their government didn't take my dad's country I would not have been in their country... I say that I should not have been in England today I never pictured myself to be in England to come and speak English... Then I told them to go and learn about the history of their own country, their government then they will know why I have landed in their country don't ask me any questions now why I have come to your country.

(Jennifer, interview two)

After learning what happened to Chagossian islanders and the role of the British government in the forced displacement, Jennifer used that knowledge to answer those who said why she did not stay in Mauritius. The participant showed how their own government and their own country were responsible for the migration of Mauritian-Chagossians to England.

Other pupils reacted differently to arguments or tensions.

They may raise their hand to hit but the teacher would have got in to separate them.

R: Is it mainly talking than physical fight?

Hmm.... but obviously a Mauritian will struggle more in the fight with talking this is why Mauritians have more a tendency to hit.

R: Ah... because they won't be able to talk that much.

Yes.

(Jennifer, interview two)

While what Jennifer said above could be seen as condoning violence when pupils from Mauritius fought against other pupils in school, the point she was trying to make was what pupils from Mauritius often engaged in fights at school because they could not express themselves well in English.

Physical fights involving Mauritian-Chagossian pupils at school were mentioned by other participants. Sandy, for example, was involved in a fight with a girl when she had only just started school. Prior to the fight, they had had an argument because the girl had asked Sandy why she had no hair and Sandy had replied, “Why are you fat?” (interview 1).

I went in the Maths lesson I was standing in the line. When children were pushing behind I knocked her by accident. She looked at me she fought with me. She pushed me, I pushed her. I pushed her and she stopped fighting with me since that day and she does not talk to me she doesn't look at me.

... I said thank God I could have been suspended on the very first day I do not know why I pushed her but I got angry when she told me the things she did.

(Sandy, interview one)

Sandy was new to the school when this incident took place, but she showed that she was not going to be intimidated by anyone. The girl with whom she fought ‘stopped fighting’ with her since that day.

Fights also happened in Jamel’s school. He recalled one between a boy from Mauritius and an English one.

We gave them a correction. A Mauritian boy beat an English boy.

(Jamel, interview three)

Although Jamel said that he was not involved in the fight, he associated himself with the boy from Mauritius and his use of the collective pronoun “we” implies that he could have been part of the fight. Jamel said that fights between groups of boys happened more in the previous years and started after a group of English boys would suddenly “throw something at you” or “swear at you” (interview three).

All those accounts depict a hostile school environment, where Mauritian-Chagossian pupils – at least those in this study – felt persecuted and felt unwanted.

Nevertheless, this representation is confronted by Rose, who did not agree that pupils from Mauritius were victimised. For Rose, a group of Black people walking together in England was deemed to be a deliberate attempt to attract people’s attention.

... they walk with Mauritian groups and when you walk in small groups like with people a little black and all that you are in an English country people will look it’s normal. Maybe in that way they see it, they see it, they see that like as a racist way but... well I don’t see things like this.

(Rose, interview two)

According to Rose, foreign people with dark skin walking in groups in England, draw the attention of native English people. For the participant, the attention that they get is “normal.” She refers here to Mauritian-Chagossian people who tend to walk in groups and – although she did not say it – speak their language. Rose also refuted the allegations that pupils from Mauritius were victims of prejudice and discrimination from other groups of pupils. She said she had seen the opposite.

What I can say I have seen [emphasis by tone of voice accentuated by participant] Mauritian children bully English. I can’t say I have seen English bully a Mauritian no. I haven’t seen that one.

(Rose, interview two)

Rose's words above have to be put in context. They were said after she had shared incidents she had personally experienced when she was in secondary school. She had been harassed and verbally abused by a group of girls from Mauritius.

Every time they would wait for me after school, they would follow me home, shout abuse in Creole.

(Rose, interview two)

This came to an end when the girls left school after GCSEs while Rose stayed at school and did sixth form; however those incidents had affected Rose, who thought she knew why the girls behaved that way.

I have it in my head that they think I've been here for a longer time than they have like I see myself as English and I don't. They are completely wrong.

(Rose, interview two)

Like all the stories presented in this section, Rose's extract above demonstrates relationships of "us" and "them" between the immigrant youth in this study and other pupils in their respective schools. The only difference in Rose's story was that in her case, she did not identify herself with the other Mauritian-Chagossian pupils in her school – therefore in her eyes, they were the "them". In the other stories presented earlier, the "us" represented the participants and the "them" represented other pupils of other backgrounds.

These tensions and conflicts presented above affected the friendships at the schools participants went to. The majority of research participants formed their friendships with pupils of the same background as well as with other immigrant youth. A few stories pointed towards mixed friendships although these were at times limited to the school.

6.5 FINDING SOLACE IN SHARED EXPERIENCES

Having friends from similar backgrounds, or simply having friends who were also immigrants, seems to have offered social support to the youth interviewed for this research study.

6.5.1 Being able to communicate

Jennifer remembered how she made friends with pupils from Mauritius right from the beginning when she first joined the school.

Since I started school Miss R showed them to me she said they were Mauritians like me la la la la and my first class was a French lesson and there were only Mauritians in that French class. This is how I got to know them. In my tutor form I was in, there were 3 Mauritians so with me that was 4 we talked and would meet up.

(Jennifer, interview two)

Befriending pupils from the same country and speaking the language meant that Jennifer did not feel alone in her new school. Considering she arrived in England with very little English, she had three pupils to whom she could speak Mauritian Creole. Charlie had a similar experience and was glad she met a few pupils from Mauritius.

I didn't speak English then I didn't understand I would have found it very hard. Also I'm a person don't speak to people and stuff. I'm a bit shy I'm not like to go and have conversation with people I would have found it very hard.

(Charlie, interview two)

Therefore for Charlie and Jennifer, as well as for other participants, being able to interact with students from the same linguistic background represented an advantage, especially because of their very limited communication skills in English. Their

friendships with children from the same country helped them to feel more confident at school and to find their way around.

6.5.2 Different language, same journey

Over time, the friendship groups evolved to include other young people from different linguistic backgrounds, but who all had an immigrant background. For example Charlie, who only had Mauritian-Chagossian friends in her secondary school, befriended someone from another immigrant background at college.

She comes from Nepal she came like she also has no one because she just arrived so there's like just me and her.

(Charlie, interview two)

Charlie had found someone who shared common experiences, that is, she was new to the country and had no other friends at college. Their mutual experiences brought the two girls together.

Similarly, after four years at school, Jennifer's friendship network had evolved to include other pupils from different immigrant backgrounds.

... there's me and my Brazilian friend, there's an African girl, two African boys, there are three Muslims. We are always there [in the study room] but I'm always with my Brazilian friend in the study room.

(Jennifer, interview two)

The young people in Jennifer's friendship group were all of immigrant background and seemed to share similar experiences such as migrating to a new country, having to learn to speak another language and experiences of feeling different.

In contrast, Elisha only had African friends in her friendship group. Earlier in this chapter, she had said, in an attempt to explain the 'loud' reputation of Mauritian-

Chagossian pupils, how she thought that people from Mauritius shared similarities with people from Africa. This time, Elisha said that her best friends were people from Africa, mainly from Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

They're like me (laughs) yeah ... Cos we're Black probably (laughs) I don't know.... Cos they have like the same personality and stuff. We share the same interests like we have lots of things in common...

(Elisha, interview two)

Although Elisha did not elaborate on the “lots of things” that she and her African friends had in common, the extract above refers to their “same personality” and “same interests”. Elisha had explained earlier in the conversation that she considered herself to be “loud” in the same way that she perceived African people to be. Elisha went on to say that she and her African friends enjoyed going out together.

Whether it was for leisure and fun, whether it was for sharing their experiences of being a migrant in England, whether it was a question of personality or whether it was to feel stronger in the face of discrimination and exclusion, the fact was that most of the participants chose to socialise with pupils of the same ethnic background or of different but still migrant backgrounds. Jamel summed it up in the following words:

There are all immigrants in our group... like those who are apart... All those who come from somewhere else.

(Jamel, interview three)

Jamel was trying to explain why he had no white English pupil in his friendship group: he could only befriend those who came from another place.

6.5.3 Separation from white English students

For Charlie, the white English people symbolised “the other”.

I don't really speak to them, the English I don't really speak to them. I've got like nothing to do with them and stuff.... They are different I don't know but I saw the difference when I came so this is why I don't really speak with them until now.

(Charlie, interview two)

Despite saying that the English people were “different”, Charlie could not explain how and why they were different from others.

The English are different from us. They are like... I find that they have a bit more... more freedom than we do. Like they don't have manners (smiles) in a way, their mums are not like strict or don't teach them manners, let's put it this way, they don't teach them manners. Like us, my mum says don't speak like this to adults, don't swear, don't do this, don't do that but they do whatever they want. They don't have limits like for us, our parents set limits for us like.

(Charlie, interview two)

A number of points emerge from this extract. Charlie explained that the English young people lacked manners, and made a comparison between the way people in Mauritius are brought up and the way people in England are. After five years spent in England at the time of the interviews, Charlie had never had an English friend.

Likewise, Jennifer commented on English peers who she thought lack manners. They were “too rude” and were “not polite at all”. She referred to xenophobic incidents that happened in her school, mainly as a result of negative stereotypes that she perceived were attached to Mauritian-Chagossian pupils. Jennifer's friendship group did not include any English peer.

For me I think I would not have been able to mix with the English. I would talk to them in class but I don't see myself walking with an English, chatting and laughing no. Apart from at work it's different honestly at work, at work it's different completely different.

R: With English people?

Yes the people are so different I don't know maybe because they're older.

But in school my friend is a Brazilian. Me and my Brazilian friend we go everywhere but when I think of when I was smaller not small but I was in year 11, year 9 to 11, I was only with Mauritians. I never mixed with English at all, at all, at all, at all.

R: And now you're in year 13, you've got your Brazilian friend, have you not got English friends?

I would only talk in class but outside the class I would not walk with them I would not sit with them only my Brazilian friend, that's all...

This is why I think I don't sit in the common room I always go in the study room... I feel weird every time this is why I prefer.... this is why my friends always tell me, 'Why don't you come in the common room?' It's a big space, a sofa, a TV like everybody can sit down, chat, relax only for the 6th form. In the study room we have to sit down quietly and do our work (laughs).

R: So you prefer the study room.

I don't like to find myself sit down with them... I don't like it when I would get in the room and everyone would turn and look at me. This is why.... this is what makes me bizarre. This is why I prefer

the study room, in the study room there's me and my Brazilian friend, there's an African girl, two African boys, there are three Muslims. We are always there but I'm always with my Brazilian friend in the study room.

(Jennifer, interview two)

The extract above was lengthy but I considered it was important to show the extract in length as it shows Jennifer's ambiguous rapport with English people. While she had no English friends at school and had never had one since she started school five years prior to the interviews, she enjoyed the company of her English colleagues – Jennifer had a part time job in a local fast food store – and thought that may be her English colleagues were different because they were older. The repetition of the phrase “at all” shows that she never mixed with English children at school and implies that it may have been a deliberate choice from her not to socialise with them. In contrast, she befriended pupils of migrant backgrounds like her own. She chose not to go into the common room where all the sixth formers gathered because she did not feel at ease sitting in a place where English people were. As a result, Jennifer isolated herself in the study room. The extract portrays Jennifer as a pupil who, after five years spent in a school, still found it hard to integrate; she almost excluded herself from the rest of the school environment. On the other hand, Jennifer felt a sense of security and comfort in the company of pupils of the same ethnic background or of different minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority of participants from Mauritius in this study socialised with peers coming from different parts of the world such as Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Portugal, Brazil, Romania, Poland and Nepal.

6.6 SAME GROUP CONFLICT

While socialising with people of the same ethnic background is quite common among young people from a transnational background, there was one participant in this study who did not have any friends, at least in their secondary school, from a Mauritian background. Rose said that all her friends were English. As explained

earlier in this chapter, Rose had started school in England when there were hardly any other pupils from Mauritius because the influx arrived later.

They didn't know that we [Rose and her brother] were Mauritians and we didn't know them from Mauritius and we, we didn't go to talk to them. Since then we remained with our English friends. Then when they started to know like we come from Mauritius then they didn't really talk to us although we, we would try they like kept their distance they made their own Mauritian group we are not part of that group... I don't know why but maybe they feel more comfortable with people they know people that speak their language that they don't want to leave that group to go and meet other people.

R: Did you ever try to make friends, speak Creole and all that with them?

I tried yes but... anyway maybe they're thinking well, "They have been here since they were little, they know English with these people they don't really want Mauritians" but we, we were... alone... I don't think they see it that way like they avoid us.

(Rose, interview two)

In that extract, Rose portrayed herself and her brother Jerry on one side, and the new arrivals from Mauritius on the other side. The two groups did not know each other and there was no interaction between them. Rose's words "we remained with our English friends" implies that she and her brother already had their friendship groups well established in school and the arrival of the new pupils from Mauritius did not change that. The collective pronoun "our" in that phrase reveals an attachment that she had with their already established friendship groups. Rose also said that the new arrivals did not want to build a rapport with her and her brother, maybe because they may have felt more comfortable with people who spoke their language and they may

not have wanted to “meet other people”. Here, Rose positioned herself and her brother as the “other people” who did not speak the language of the new arrivals. Yet they both spoke Mauritian Creole – although they were fluent in English.

This distant relationship between Rose and a group of Mauritian-Chagossian girls at school deteriorated into a more serious confrontation between Rose and the group. As explained earlier in this chapter, Rose alleged to have been harassed and verbally abused by a group of girls from Mauritius.

This chapter showed the participants’ experiences at school. While there were positive experiences with EAL staff and supportive mainstream teachers, overall the majority of the participants had negative experiences when interacting with staff, but mainly with other school peers. Some participants felt unwanted in their school settings and felt that they were victimised. Many found comfort with peers from the same country or peers with other migrant backgrounds. The next chapter will discuss the main findings with existing literature.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study explored the acculturation experiences of a group of Mauritian-Chagossian secondary-school students in south-east England. It sought to examine two specific aspects of acculturation: how the young people navigated between their home ways of life and the host country's ways of life, and their perceptions of their school experiences.

The study identified four key issues related to the first research question.

Research question one: How did the participants navigate between their heritage culture(s) in Mauritius and the host culture in England?

1. Cultural distance challenged the acculturation process.
2. Participants lived with a sense of loss.
3. Participants had conflicting feelings about homeland and host society, and over the very term 'home'.
4. Participants' sense of belonging and of group identity was varied and conflicted.

Three key issues related to the second research question were identified.

Research question two: What were the participants' perceptions of their school experiences in England?

1. Lack of proficiency in the English language was a major obstacle.
2. Participants had both positive and negative experiences of their relationships with school staff.
3. The majority of participants did not interact with peers representing the host society.

This chapter will discuss these main findings in relation to existing literature.

7.1 CULTURAL DISTANCE CHALLENGED THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS

The study found that the cultural differences between the home country of the participants and the host country made the acculturation experiences of the young people challenging. The participants lived in close-knit communities in Mauritius where family played an important role in their lives. The majority of the young people in the study had a strong attachment with their family including members of their extended family, who lived in the same neighbourhoods. The stories depicted a sense of family proximity, a sense of togetherness; family gatherings, which often included neighbours, were part of the social fabric of the Mauritian-Chagossian community.

7.1.1 Leaving a close-knit community behind

Participants' stories highlighted the importance of extended family. Jennifer, for example, felt she had to attend the first holy communion of her younger cousin in Mauritius because the elders in her family expected her to be there. It was during this visit that her grandmother passed away. Jennifer's example portrayed the importance of family presence in good and bad times. The family was united as one to celebrate together the first holy communion of Jennifer's cousin, another's cousin's civil wedding and Jennifer's 18th birthday; it was also united as one to support each other when the grandmother passed away. Jennifer showed her obligations and duties towards the in-group which was her family.

Anabelle's feelings towards her family provide another example of the close-knit community the young people had left behind. While she wanted to go to university after her A levels, Anabelle was undecided, as she also wanted to find a job so she could earn money and help her parents financially. She felt grateful for the sacrifices that her parents had made for the well-being of their children, and therefore she wanted to repay her parents. The well-being of her family surpassed her own individual goals (Triandis et al., 1988; 1995). The sense of togetherness and

solidarity extended beyond family and included neighbours who were considered, in effect, family members. They looked after each other, shared food with each other, shared joy and grief together.

These findings align with findings from previous research about the transition in the host country often involving negotiating in between the two ways of life (Ghuman, 2003, Eriksen, 2015). Mori (2000) as well as Yeh and Inose (2003) revealed that Asian international students may have greater difficulties in attempting to make social connections and make friends, in a Western culture which emphasises individualism, assertiveness, and self-sufficiency over interdependence and relatedness.

7.2 LIVING WITH A SENSE OF LOSS

The way in which participants described their collectivist way of life depicted an idealised version of their past. Most of the young people in this study painted a positive picture of their life in Mauritius. Perhaps that was the way they coped and navigated life between homeland and the host society – by romanticising the past and bringing it into the present (Dickenson and Erben, 2006). Participants were nostalgic about their past life; family and friends, home, and neighbourhood. Parents, sisters, cousins, grandparents were all ‘physically absent family members’ who continued to be ‘psychologically present’ in the young people’s minds and hearts (Boss, 1999; 2002). The childhood home, and things they used to do there, was another focus of nostalgia. As Dickenson and Erben state, nostalgic thoughts mourn a loss although they include acceptance of the loss; which gives mixed feelings to the sentiment (2006). Migrating to England was characterised by a sense of loss and the most prominent loss was that of family ties. The study illustrates that loss took various forms; participants lost their homeland, their homes, their family and friends, their language.

7.2.1 Ambiguous loss and psychological repercussions

Migrants in general experience “ambiguous loss” in relation to friends and family members in the country of origin (Boss, 1991; 1999). Ambiguous loss is defined as

the impossibility of mourning and healing after losing a loved one, in the case of someone who is physically absent but psychologically present. For participants in this study, ‘ambiguous loss’ refers to relatives and friends who are alive in Mauritius but do not physically interact with the migrant anymore. The majority of the participants shared stories about how they missed relatives left behind in Mauritius. For example, Jennifer had found migrating to England without her parents – at the age of 13 – extremely stressful. Jennifer’s parents were still alive, so she could still go and visit them; which she did twice in five years. In other words, she was physically in her new country but psychologically in Mauritius with her parents. As this type of loss is not necessarily recognised as one, the suffering and accompanying sadness is not recognised (Boss, 1999), but this can cause severe depression (Boss, 2006).

Findings illustrated the poignancy of the process of separation the young people had been through. Jennifer was anxious that something bad would happen to her parents in her absence and found it hard to be far from them. She lived in uncertainty of not knowing what would happen tomorrow or if they would be reunited again. This finding resonates with Solheim, Zaid and Ballard’s study of Mexican migrants abroad (2016) which found that participants described feelings of loss at being unable to live together as a family, and were uncertain about when they would be reunited. This state of uncertainty is described by Falicov as living in “provisional limbo” (2005, p. 199) and is associated with feelings of loss that may prevent migrants from moving forward.

The findings related to the sense of loss are in accord with previous literature; often, in the process of migration, families endure prolonged periods of separation before they are reunited (Suarez-Orozco et al. 2002). There have been several studies – mainly in the United States – related to family separation as a result of migration, which have shown that there are considerable psychological repercussions for immigrant youths who have been separated from their parents (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011), especially for younger children.

Annabelle's story is an illustration of how family separation can affect younger children. She was five years old when her mother left Mauritius first, followed by her father, while Annabelle and her sister remained in Mauritius and were looked after by their grandmother. Annabelle found the experience of living without her mother, and later without both her parents, very hard. She described how she used to cry for her mother every night and long for a family reunification. Parreñas (2005) and Suarez-Orozco (Suarez-Orozco et al. 2011) who have studied the emotional ramifications of migration, especially on children, both found that extensive periods of separation of parents and children, arising from migration, causes pain such as loneliness, insecurity and anxiety in the children. We also saw in the previous chapter how Annabelle's mother missed her children so much that she visited her family as frequently as she could and brought presents for her daughters. This concurs with findings from Parrenas' study (2005) on how Filipino migrant mothers coped abroad without their family, in which mothers were found to negotiate emotional strains by the commodification of love; that is, when transnational mothers compensated for their absence with material goods. Suarez-Orozco et al. (2011) also found that migrant children in their study received gifts from their mothers abroad.

Another participant, Tallie, was pleased to reunite with her parents and younger brothers, but at the same time felt incomplete after she left her elder sister in Mauritius. The two sisters who used to be like "trousers and shirt" – that is, they were inseparable and were best friends – were now living miles apart and had not seen each other for over two years. This resonates with what Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011) refer to as "bittersweet feeling" to describe the loss that young migrants feel when they have to leave their caretakers behind to reunite with their nuclear family abroad. Although Tallie's sister was not her caretaker, they were very close to each other and perhaps even closer after Tallie's parents had migrated first to England. Suárez-Orozco et al. (ibid.) reported that one Salvadorian girl was excited to reunite with her family, while at the same time sad to leave her aunt and uncle who had been her "parents" for eight years. Living without her sister was difficult for Tallie but she chose to focus on her education and future career and the opportunities she felt she was getting while living in England. The choice that Tallie made – to look at her

gains rather than at her losses – refers to what O'Reilly (cited in Jeong Kim, 2008) calls a “trade-off”. Migration sometimes resulted in “trading intimacy for liberty”; that is, missing loved ones left behind, in return for freedom. In Tallie's case her choice, not to ponder on the difficult experience of having to live in the UK without her sister, could be seen as trading intimacy for opportunities and education. Similarly, Jeong Kim, in her study of Korean young migrant women's identities in the UK found that .they also traded intimacy for achievement in education and career.

7.2.2 Losing childhood innocence

The sense of loss also includes loss of freedom and childhood innocence. Jamel, for example, remembered how he was free in his childhood home in Tombeau: free to run around, play, and ride his bike on the streets. He lost all of this when he migrated to England. His family shared a house with another family from Mauritius; Jamel and his siblings were not allowed to make noise because of neighbours; they had to be careful with the things in the house as nothing was theirs; he could not go out and play like he used to in Mauritius, due to the cold weather. He was frustrated, and over time had learned to stay indoors. Jamel's story is in line with findings from a study conducted by Orellana et al., (2001) in California, in which they analysed children's presence and participation in processes of migration and in the constitution of transnational social fields. Orellana et al's study reported on a migrant woman from Guatemala who did not want to bring her seven-year-old son to Los Angeles as he was more accustomed to freedom of movement in his home country, whereas in Los Angeles he would spend a lot of time indoors. In Guatemala, the boy was surrounded by family –including grandparents, cousins, uncles and aunts – while his sister, already with the mother in Los Angeles, “is alone, closed up in an apartment filled with toys. Even if she has a closet overflowing with toys, she's stuck inside” (p. 13). While Jamel was happy as a child to reunite with his father in England and was excited with the anticipation of coming to England, he was soon disenchanted by the shock of his new life and his restricted freedom. Coming from a place where he spent much time playing out of the house and on the streets, he found himself spending most of his time “stuck inside.” Not only was he not free to run around and

play on the streets, but he also had to be quiet, as he was told that the noise might disturb the neighbours.

7.3 CONFLICTING FEELINGS ABOUT ‘HOME’

Feelings towards homeland and host society often conflicted, and while most of the participants romanticised their life in Mauritius, especially life in their childhood places where they grew up, they found it difficult at times to call it ‘home’.

7.3.1 Multiple meanings of ‘home’

The study found that home had different meanings. This aligns with literature about the concept of home. One of the meanings attributed to home was associated with social relations such as family and friends. For Rose, Mauritius was ‘home’ because of her extended family left behind there, which she missed greatly. Likewise another participant, Tony, also referred to his childhood place in Mauritius as home because of his many cousins he missed there. For both Rose and Tony, their family ties constituted a sense of home in their childhood place in Mauritius and provided them with a feeling of comfort (Brah, 1996). For Tony, his childhood place was not a place he longed to go back to. His attachment pointed more towards his family in that place, than to the place itself, hence giving support to the idea of home as being about social relations and not necessarily a fixed place.

Sandy also defined home as a place where her family was, and since almost all her family was in England, living in the same town, she considered England home. She also did not hesitate to call the host country home because she refused to call Mauritius home. Sandy was resentful of her birthplace, and did not feel any ‘emotional link’ to her homeland (Milligan, 2003). In contrast, she felt a connection to the host society, which had provided her and her family with comfort and safety in terms of health treatment and family support when her father was ill. This is in line with Ignatieff’s description of home (2001) as a place of feeling ‘safe’.

Some participants – Jamel, for example – felt at home both in Mauritius and in England. Home in Mauritius, for Jamel, was linked to a place, to his childhood

locality. He was fond of his childhood place in Mauritius and shared his stories about his life in Tombeau. He was nostalgic about his house there, the things he used to do as a child, the roads where he rode his bicycle, the shop his grandfather used to take him to, and the familiarity of the place. This finding links to other conceptualisations of home as being the lived experience of a place (Brah, 1996). Brah explains the lived experience as being familiar with a place's physicality – for example, being familiar with the place's roads, its sounds and its smells. Sights, sounds, smells and tastes emanated strongly from the participants' reminiscent accounts of life in Mauritius. The sunshine, the loud music in the streets, the voices of people talking and greeting each other, smells of food and also of the sand and sea at the beach; all of this reverberates with the depiction of Mauritius as a holiday destination, and links back to earlier sections in this chapter where data portrayed how much the participants in this study idealised their home country. These descriptions resonate closely with Agnew's (2005, p. 10) remark about migrant memories being 'surrounded by an emotional and sensory aura that makes them memorable'. At the same time, Jamel realised that he had started to get used to his life in England and that he could call it home too. He was torn between his sense of belonging to his birthplace and his newly found sense of belonging to his host society – or at least to his school, where he had learned music and was a recognised drummer, and also where he had the opportunity to do sixth form with a prospect of going to university.

7.3.2 Subjective sense of belonging

Belonging was, for most participants, not automatically set in relation to mixing with the dominant group, that is, they still felt a sense of belonging to England even if they did not socialise with the dominant group. Even when they felt their sense of belonging was being challenged – through, for example, experiences of perceived racism or cultural diversity – participants asserted and claimed belonging to England. For example, Jamel and Tony did not socialise with the dominant group in school or outside school and had kept their friendship groups limited to peers from Mauritius or peers from other migrant background. Nevertheless they still felt a sense of belonging to their school and both said that they would be happy to live in England after their education. These findings stand in stark contrast to the prevalent notion, as

propagated in the Cattle Report (Cantle, 2001) on the 2001 riots, that belonging and “integration” are contingent upon ethnic minorities’ assimilation into a so-called “mainstream”.

Brah asserts that home can also be an imaginary place; diasporic people have a desire to feel at home (1996) in a place that could well be the migrants’ current residence. This was seen in Tallie’s narrative. She was the most recent arrival to England among the participants, and after two years of living in England she said that she needed to start getting used to her life in England; at the same time she called Mauritius home as this was the place where she was born and grew up. When asked what home in Mauritius represented for her, Tallie said that it meant comfort, freedom and hot weather. Yet, she also wanted to call England home and was positive about starting to get used to the place. Tallie therefore had the desire that Brah refers to, to feel at home in her current place of residence, and seemed to be involved in a work in progress to call England home. She was trying to “weigh things a bit on both”, that is, homeland versus host society. Similar to all of the other participants, she felt an attachment to her birthplace, missed family and friends, longed for the weather, the familiarity of places and the special “mood”; nevertheless she felt that she had to “start getting used to here” if she wanted to live in the country.

7.3.3 Home is a place of opportunities and economic safety

One reason why Tallie was so keen to call England home was because she believed that it represented a land of opportunities for her. Other participants felt too that England would offer them the prospects of higher education, and that was the main motivation behind their family’s migration. The findings presented in the previous chapter indicated how all the participants in this study were determined to succeed in their formal education and they all dreamed of going to university. Rose was already studying journalism at a London university; Sandy had already got a place in a university to study biomedical science. Others were still in secondary schools and aiming to study at university. Charlie was at college and despite having failed her GCSEs in England after she first arrived in the country, she was hoping to succeed in

her courses at college and maybe go to university. These stories show determination portrayed by all the participants, who considered educational success as a form of personal accomplishment. Despite some past negative school experiences, and perceptions of being targeted and stereotyped, they were determined to achieve educational success. Their determination to succeed academically reverberates with a study by Pang (1999) which demonstrated how children of first-generation Chinese immigrants in Britain succeeded academically despite obstacles and in the face of continuing racial discrimination in the education system (Francis and Archer, 2005). For all these reasons, some participants such as Tallie, Jamel and Elisha were keen, or had started to get used to the host society and were willing to call it home.

Despite the idyllic place of Mauritius, the participants did not want to go back for good to that place they so beautifully depicted. Many mentioned the high costs of living in Mauritius as a hindering factor for any possibility of return. Annabelle, for example, said that one had to be a “millionaire” to afford the costs of living in Mauritius. She had a material comfort in England that she suggested she would not have if she went back to Mauritius. Both Annabelle’s parents worked and so did her elder sister; she was pleased that she could afford to buy clothes every week. She even sent gifts to friends in Mauritius. Likewise, Tony mentioned the opportunities he and other young people from Mauritius had in England, such as fashion clothes and travelling. Naturally he found it easier to visit relatives, in France, from England than he could have done from Mauritius. Borrowing from O’Reilly (cited in Jeong Kim, 2008), it can be said that the participants were ready to trade family closeness, beach and hot weather, lively neighbourhoods and parties, for opportunities that England seemed to be able to offer them. That is, education and career, travel, financial stability and safety. The young people were ambitious and to achieve these ambitions they were ready to compromise the positive things about homeland for the positive things in the host land. This resonates with what Solheim, Zaid and Ballard’s (2016) study with transnational Mexican migrants who were engaged in an on-gong struggle to balance economic gains with emotional costs. The authors called this a “trade-off”.

7.4 MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

The uncertainty of home brought to the fore the uncertainty of belonging and the ambiguity of ethnic identity. There was sometimes a difference between feeling a sense of belonging and identification with Mauritius, England, or Chagos. The study found that allegiance went to various groups, beyond labels of Mauritian, English and Chagossian. The study found that self-definition (or self-labelling) alone was insufficient to get an understanding of the participants' sense of belonging to an ethnic group. Paying attention to other components of ethnic identity, such as participants' positive or negative feelings towards one group, or their involvement in specific activities enabled a deeper understanding of their attachment to one or more groups.

7.4.1 Mauritian and African Identities

Often self-identification meant a loyalty, an allegiance, a symbolic ethnicity by virtue of birth. The majority of participants identified themselves as Mauritian. This is what Verkuyten calls the "being" component of ethnic identity (2004, p. 198), that is, self-definition based on what connects the members of the group such as homeland, natural parents or visible characteristics. Participants defined themselves as Mauritian for Mauritius was their homeland and to many, it was also their parents' homeland. Birthplace is key in determining identity categories for adolescence (Tovar and Feliciano, 2009). Elisha, for example, self-labelled herself as "Mauritian" by loyalty to her place of birth. However, while self-labelling as Mauritian, Elisha's stories depicted a strong affiliation to the Black African identity. Most of her friends were African and she said that she had noticed similarities between her African friends' demeanour and that of young people from Mauritius, such as the personality trait of being loud. She was proud of her found affinities with her African friends. Although "Black African" was not a label she used to identify herself, her narrative portrayed her as Black African. Elisha enjoyed being with Black African friends, she socialised with them in and outside of school, they shared the same hobbies. These characteristics describe Verkuyten's second and third component of ethnic identity (2004), that is, 'feeling' and 'doing'. Elisha had positive feelings towards Black

African identity and this affiliation was important to her; also she participated in activities with her Black African friends who were in her social circles. Elisha spent time with African young people who shared the same interests and with whom she had a social life in and outside school.

7.4.2 Creole and British identities

Three participants' narratives depicted an attachment to the Creole group. As explained in Chapter Two, Creole people in Mauritius are of African descent and many have the perception that they are marginalised. Research has shown that the marginalisation of Creoles in Mauritius has been aggravated by the dominance of Indo-Mauritians and the prevalence of ethnic categorisation in the Mauritian society (Jeffery, 2011; Boswell, 2006). Creoles have always counted among the most impoverished sections of the population and did not benefit from the economic progress of the country (Eisenlohr, 2006).

Jennifer and Charlie shared stories that demonstrated their negative experiences in their former secondary school in Mauritius. Both participants felt that they had been discriminated against because they belonged to the Creole ethnic group; for example, they were not allowed to style their hair the way they wanted. Sandy also exhibited a Creole identity although she did not have the same experiences as Jennifer and Charlie. Sandy refused to call herself Mauritian for two reasons. First, she remembered how her native Chagossian grandparents always said that they had been victims of xenophobic abuse when they arrived in Mauritius after their displacement. Sandy's account is consistent with the general sentiment in Mauritius related to how the Creole ethnic group was a marginalised group who suffered from discrimination as ethnic minority group (Boswell, 2006; TCJ, 2011). Sandy believed that the Creoles in Mauritius were seen as an inferior ethnic group and that the Indo-Mauritian group had more socio-economic power, a perception that is mirrored in existing research (Eisenlor, 2006; Jeffery, 2011) and demonstrate that she, despite her young age, was well aware of the ethnic classification in Mauritius. The discrimination that Sandy's Chagossian grandparents had experienced had affected the way Sandy perceived her own culture and identity (Cline et al., 2002). This is

what Khan found in her study with African Mozambican Immigrants in Portugal and England (2003). One participant in her study refused to be ‘Mozambican’ because she was emotionally ‘hurt’ when living in Mozambique, under FRELIMO’s government [the dominant political party in Mozambique].

Unlike the other participants, Sandy did not feel any emotional attachment to her place of birth. On the contrary, she felt a sense of belonging to England, where her immediate and extended family lived, and where her ill father had received adequate health care as well as family support before he passed away. Sandy’s story aligns with findings from previous research about the role of societal influences in ethnic identity formation (Cote and Levine, 1988). Sandy held positive attitudes towards the host society because of how her family had benefited from it; this in turn affected the sense of belonging that she felt towards England. Sandy rejected her “Mauritianness” and adopted rather the “British” identity while considering herself a Creole from Mauritius.

Although interwoven, there was a difference between feeling a sense of belonging to a place called ‘home’ and a sense of belonging to a group. For example, Jamel identified himself as a Mauritian, yet while he may have felt a sense of belonging towards Mauritius, he did not want to plan his future there; he was uncertain about calling it home and indecisive about returning to that place. In contrast, although he had had a few negative experiences at school, he felt a sense of belonging to that school; and more precisely to the school club of which he was a member. Jamel was one of the participants who did not socialise with the majority culture in his secondary school. His circle of friends comprised pupils from Mauritius, Africa, Portugal and Sri Lanka. Jamel’s story illustrates the ambiguity and ambivalence that other participants felt when talking about their sense of belonging. Therefore, his self-identification as Mauritian could only be a symbolic ethnic identity to show his allegiance to his birthplace; because in practice, Jamel felt that he belonged more to his English school rather than to Mauritius. He had fond memories of the past and of Mauritius, and considered the place a holiday destination. This finding is similar to a finding in Phelps and Nadim’s study (2010) in Norway. The author found that for

some participants felt Norwegian to some extent and were cautious to proclaim a Norwegian ethnic identity (2010). Although Jamel did not proclaim a British identity, his stories show that he had a sense of belonging to his school, especially to the musicians, yet he also felt outside Britishness.

7.4.3 Difficulty to Self-identify

One participant, Rose, had difficulty in self-identifying herself. Rose did not know what label to use, as her parents had different origins. Her mother was born in Mauritius of Chagossian parents, her father was born in Rodrigues, an island that belonged to Mauritius, and her parents' parents were themselves of other origins. For these reasons, Rose said she did not know which ethnic group to identify herself with.

Rose arrived in England at the age of 7 or 8 years old, she was more fluent in English than in Mauritian Creole, she did not have any friends from Mauritius in school, and she had visited her homeland only twice in 11 years. If we use Verkuyten's components of ethnic identity (2004), we would attribute these characteristics to the 'doing' component – which refers to ethnic involvement such as participation in group activities, social circles, command of language, music, food, clothes. These characteristics indicate a successful acculturation in the host country. However, during the second interview, it transpired that Rose questioned the meaning of happiness and said that she would have been happier living in Mauritius with her extended family; especially with one cousin who she used to regard as a brother. Although she was more fluent in English, she said that she loved speaking Mauritian Creole; she still missed the connectedness of her old neighbourhood in Mauritius; and she had even thought of going to university in Mauritius, but later changed her mind. These characteristics indicate Verkuyten's second component of 'feeling' (2004) which refers to positive feelings towards one's ethnic identity illustrated for example by the importance one gives and the commitment one gives to a group. This suggests that she felt a strong sense of belonging to the Mauritian group, even though she seemed to have had the most successful acculturation process among all the participants in this study. This ambiguity is acknowledged by Verkuyten who states

that ‘people may become socially and culturally assimilated to a great extent while still maintaining a strong sense of ethnic belonging’ (2004, p. 161). Besides, Rose said that Mauritius was the place where she felt home, and yet she could not self-identify herself. Her difficulty has been acknowledged in research which has demonstrated how difficult it is for those whose parents come from two or more distinct groups to choose their ethnic labels (Phinney, 1990; Mann, 2004).

7.5 LACK OF ENGLISH IN THE WAY OF ACCULTURATION

Lack of proficiency in the English language characterised the school experiences of the participants, as all of them arrived in England with little or no English. It was found to be a key obstacle for the majority of participants. The majority found lack of English a stressful experience and described a range of negative feelings such as frustration and fear. What helped most participants when they first arrived was peer language support as well as EAL provision. This findings were in line with previous research (Ryan and Sales, 2011; Arnot et al., 2014). Only two out of the nine participants reported having found English language acquisition easy, and they attributed this mostly to their confident personalities.

7.5.1 Emotional encounter with English

Overall, the findings provide support for the claim made by Ochoa et al. (2004) that English language learners are likely to experience frustration, anxiety, depression, lower self-esteem and stress. The previous chapter presented accounts of young people who described their anxiety, fear, frustration and humiliation as a result of not being able to speak English when they first arrived in England. Elisha’s story, for example, exemplified the anxiety and fear of language learners. She feared embarrassment when, at the age of 11, she irrationally believed that her voice would become big “like a boy” if she spoke English. Elisha said clearly how the language barrier had inhibited her from being herself, especially after her negative experience in year seven when she felt she was bullied by a group of boys. Her language anxiety, along with her fear of being bullied, caused her to hide in the toilet whenever she knew she would encounter those boys in specific lessons. Elisha

recognised that her lack of proficiency in English caused her to lose the self-confidence she said she had in her home country before migrating to England. From being a lively and “bubbly” girl in Mauritius, she became very quiet and shy. This finding resonates with Ryan and Sales’ study (2011) which explored processes of adaptation, accommodation, negotiation and identity formation in the context of education among a group of Polish migrants in London. A Polish participant said how the language barrier had turned him into another person in the sense that he could not express himself well enough in English to show who he was: “My English just doesn’t let me show them who I really am” (ibid.).

Furthermore, the present study showed how a small number of participants shared how they felt frustrated because they were not able to speak or understand English when they first arrived. Frustration is what Chen’s study (2007) reported after observing three newly-arrived EAL children in the UK during their first year at school. The participants in Chen’s study, who arrived from mainland China, experienced deep feelings of isolation, misunderstanding and frustration due to lack of proficiency in English and a perception that their needs were not met at school.

7.5.2 The role of personality traits for language learners

The findings indicated that peer language support was beneficial to some participants. Charlie, for example, commented on how relieved she was when she received help from a few girls from Mauritius in her secondary school. She could not imagine (considering she had no English, as well as her experience of shyness) what it would have been like if nobody spoke her language in school. Charlie felt confident knowing she could communicate in Mauritian Creole in her new school. Arnot et al. (2014) found similar examples in their study; the linguistic support that some pupils received from peers who spoke the same language helped them to integrate better, and later join in wider friendship groups. Being able to speak their first language in school provides an emotional respite for EAL children who feel the stress of learning and communicating in English. Kenner, Ruby and Gregory (2007) also found how second- and third-generation British Bangladeshi children said they

wanted to use Bengali or learning in school, and felt their first language was an important part of their identity.

Not all new migrants struggle with acquiring the language of the host country. The present study showed how Rose and Tallie reported that they acquired English very rapidly and in their case, self-confidence as well as more exposure to the host language facilitated their rapid language acquisition. These participants said they had an outgoing personality, were not shy and made friends easily in their schools. One of these two participants, Rose, had the longest exposure to the English language, compared with the other participants, and in her English primary school, there was only one other pupil who was from Mauritius apart from her brother. Moving to secondary school, Rose and her brother were the only Mauritian-Chagossian pupils at the time. During her first years in England, Rose had immersed herself in the language of the host society and made friends with native English speakers. This involvement into the culture and the language of the host society, as well as the lack of contact with co-ethnic peers at school accounts for the fact that Rose was a fluent English speaker; she also spoke Mauritian Creole with an English accent, indicating that she was more exposed to the English language than to Mauritian Creole.

7.5.3 The significance of EAL provision for newly-arrived pupils

To remedy the lack of language proficiency, the participants in this study reported that they received support in their respective schools, mainly from EAL departments but also from other staff who would regularly come and support them in lessons. In this study, EAL staff were portrayed as having played a central role in providing language and support – but most importantly in providing time and care to the new arrivals. Participants whose schools had EAL departments described how they were pleased with the support they received from the EAL staff. Most importantly the young people felt a sense of comfort and nurture that they needed as newly-arrived pupils. Jamel, for example, regretted that the EAL department did not exist anymore in his school; there were times when he wanted to go there, although he knew he was no longer a new arrival in the school. Tallie was also grateful for the help and support she received from the EAL staff in her school. This finding is in line with

Reynolds' study (2008) exploring migrants' experiences in two secondary schools in the UK. All the students in both schools in her study listed at least one EAL staff among their favourite teachers. The author reported how the EAL staff in both of the schools studied offered support to the new migrants, often doing more than they were supposed to – which was to teach English.

7.6 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAFF

Five out of the nine participants recounted only positive experiences with teachers. The remaining four reported both positive and negative perceptions of their relationships with teachers. None of the participants had only negative experiences with school staff. Two types of school staff were particularly valued by most of the participants: EAL staff, and teachers who were interested in the history of the forced displacement of Chagossian islanders. Stories reflecting negative experiences with school staff included perceptions that some teachers held negative stereotypes against pupils from Mauritius and accorded preferential treatment to English pupils.

7.6.1 EAL staff valued for their care and nurture

Participants remembered teachers who had cared for them, encouraged them and supported their adjustment to their school. Most of the positive remarks about staff related to the EAL staff, and participants were grateful for the support they were given. These staff were admired, not only for their academic support but also – perhaps more so – for their nurturing and caring attitudes towards new arrivals. These findings concur with other studies that highlight the positive role of school staff in the lives of new migrants. Anderson et al. (2016) found in their study of new migrants' school experiences that participants were grateful for the support they received from both mainstream and EAL teachers who gave them a “warm feeling”. Similarly, Reynolds (2008) reported how the EAL staff in two schools she visited was highly regarded by students. Reynolds witnessed, in one school, an EAL staff member giving her lunch to a migrant student who had not eaten all day and had a headache. Reynolds found a similar level of care in a different school where an EAL teacher told the researcher that the job of the EAL teachers was very emotional as

they were so involved with the migrant students. What participants in the current study described, about the help they received from the EAL staff when they were new arrivals in their school, mirrors these findings. For example, Tallie commented on how Miss N. was “always there when I needed her” and “looked after me well”. As a new arrival, she “needed” the security of knowing there was one adult she could turn to in that school. The EAL department was like a haven for Tallie and another participant who went to the same school.

7.6.2 Mainstream staff valued for their interest in the forced displacement

Apart from EAL staff, mainstream teachers who showed interest in the participants’ backgrounds were also valued. Two participants, Jamel and Tony, who went to the same school, showed admiration for a teacher who took an active part in the school lives of new arrivals from Mauritius. This teacher learned about the forced displacement, developed an interest in the young people and involved them in various school projects. These findings support the various assertions in the literature that teachers should know the background of migrant students in their schools. Verma et al. state that teachers must “know” their pupils “as the first prerequisite for providing an appropriate and inclusive education” (1994, p. 35). “Knowing” a migrant student means being aware of their background and needs and not generalising about them according to their “race”, ethnic, religious or migrant identity (Miedema, 1997). In the present study, Miss A and Mr T learned about their new pupils’ background, and they were the only teachers in that school mentioned favourably by those two participants.

Jennifer gave a similar example of how she held a teacher in high esteem when she realised that the teacher supported the Chagossian cause. Jennifer’s teacher had dedicated one lesson to the forced displacement of Chagossian islanders, which had helped to educate other pupils in the class about the reasons why new pupils from Mauritius – in significant numbers – arrived in their school. The participant was impressed by the “white” teacher’s initiative. Before the interviews, Jennifer had been at her school for four years; and it was the first time in four years that she had

seen a mainstream teacher dedicating a lesson to the forced displacement of Chagossian islanders.

These findings are consistent with previous studies. For example, Reynolds (2008) found that the mainstream teachers at the two schools in which her research was based did not seem to have a great awareness of the background of their students. Reynolds reported how two mainstream teachers in one school did not know where one newly-arrived boy was from, even though they both seemed to know the pupil very well and had even met his father on several occasions.

7.6.3 Perceived feelings of being unwanted

While participants were appreciative and grateful towards particular teachers, they also perceived that teaching staff overall did not like pupils from Mauritius and held negative stereotyping against the young people.

One of the stereotypes participants in this study referred to in the previous chapter is 'loud'. This resonates with previous studies investigating into young migrants' school experiences in the UK. For example, Arnot et al. (2001) reported that schools often marked African-Caribbean boys as having behaviour difficulties. Also, Archer's study (2008) reported perceptions of a group of Black pupils, who were seen by their teachers as challenging and loud. Two participants did not regard the label "loud" to be negative. Elisha, for example, drew a parallel with African pupils who were "loud" and said that pupils from Mauritius shared similarities with their African peers. To be "loud", for her, was a cultural trait of pupils from Mauritius. Elisha's comment supports findings from Archer's study (2008), in which a group of Black girls reported that they were proud to be loud because being loud was a valued aspect of their radicalised femininities – and being loud was also a reaction to their experiences of discrimination at school (p. 95).

Another stereotype mentioned in the previous chapter is 'theft.' Tony said how Mauritian-Chagossian boys in his school – including himself and his younger brother – got into trouble because they were accused of theft. A similar finding was found in the study conducted by Wright et al. in 2000, where one Black pupil stated:

“...most teachers...they think that all Black people do is steal things...” (Wright et al. 2000, p. 78).

The two Mauritian-Chagossian boys in this study also reported how in their school, pupils from Mauritius were seen as ‘troublemakers’ operating in ‘gangs’. Jamel described how the Head Teacher used to tell the boys off every time he saw them walking in groups around the school, and how he and his peers were often seen as a gang and asked to move to another place or to stop speaking their mother tongue. This finding concurs with Muir and Smithers’ (2004) report which states that while white boys are seen as a “group” when gathered together, Black boys are seen as a “gang”. Foster (1990) describes how teachers, by holding onto stereotypical views, can create a self-fulfilling prophecy; that is, the teacher’s expectations of a student can become how the student behaves (Reynolds, 2008).

As a result of these perceptions, participants in this study felt unwanted in school. The feeling of being “unwanted” reverberates with public discourse these past years about how the presence of migrant children is putting pressure on schools (Reynolds, 2008). For example, in 2012, the then Minister for Immigration Damian Green argued that “the number of pupils with English as a second language makes life difficult for teachers, parents and pupils. Whether or not they can speak English, everyone suffers when it's more difficult for teachers in the classroom. This is also a huge pressure on local authorities trying to cope with uncontrolled immigration” (Green, as cited in Portes, 2012).

7.7 PEER RELATIONSHIPS: DIFFICULTIES OF INTEGRATION

The majority of the participants in this study did not interact with peers representing the dominant society. Instead, they befriended young people from Mauritius or peers from other migrant backgrounds. Most of them described relationships among peers as being fraught with tensions, and some perceived that Mauritian-Chagossian pupils suffered from prejudice and negative stereotyping. Their stories depicted school settings as sites of tension where pupils from Mauritius felt targeted. However, two

participants had different school experiences in the sense that they interacted positively with members of the dominant society. For these two participants in this study, pupils from Mauritius did not enjoy a positive reputation in school and were often the ones who caused trouble to others.

7.7.1 Perceptions of bullying and racism

Different forms of prejudice, both overt and covert, were reported in the previous chapter. It reported subtle incidents in which Mauritian-Chagossian pupils had been ignored, and avoided any physical contact with other pupils. As Rosenbloom and Way state, experiences of discrimination can be so subtle that students are sometimes unclear about whether they are experiencing discrimination (2004, p. 421). Elisha reported that she was bullied by a small group of boys when she was in year seven because she could not speak English. She did not report these incidents as she was scared that her voice would make her sound like a boy if she spoke English. Elisha chose to hide and isolate herself to avoid being bullied by this group of boys. Her experience confirms what previous studies found; that is, new migrants with limited English were more susceptible to bullying in schools (e.g. Benton and Gomez, 2008; Reynolds, 2008; Cline et al., 2002). In four out of five focus groups that Reynolds conducted in a school (2008), there was acknowledgement that new migrants were susceptible to bullying. Cline et al. reported that over a third of the participants in their study reported experiences of hurtful name-calling and verbal abuse, either at school or during the journey to or from school (2002).

An example of verbal abuse reported in this study was the phrase “Go back to Mauritius” or “Go back to Africa”. Some participants reported perceived racist incidents, between English boys and Mauritian-Chagossian boys, which sometimes broke into violence. The stories exhibited an “us and them picture”, with the “us” being the pupils from Mauritius and the “them” being the English peers; although one participant recounted a story where the alleged abuser was an English-speaking pupil from a European migrant background. This finding resounds with what Arnot et al. found in their study (2014). In their exploration of how schools conceptualised and addressed the linguistic, academic and social needs of EAL youth in the East of

England, they found in one secondary school that newly-arrived pupils had been victims of racist incidents and had been told to “go back to your own country”.

When asked if they reported the incidents to school staff, participants in this study said that there was often no point reporting incidents to teachers as they did not take them seriously. This finding resonates with previous research which has shown that for a long time teachers in UK schools have tended to underestimate reported abuse in schools (Cline et al., 2002; Francis and Archer, 2005; Crozier and Davies, 2008). Overall, the stories shared in this study are consistent with previous studies which have documented the experiences of racism among minority ethnic pupils in secondary schools in the UK.

7.7.2 ‘Us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy

Amidst those tensions, the majority of participants found it hard to socialise with peers from the dominant society. The previous chapter detailed some of the stories of the young people who lacked social mixing with the majority society in their respective schools. The “us and them” dichotomy seemed to prevail in the three secondary schools.

This finding reverberates with previous studies of ethnic minorities in UK schools. South Asian pupils, for example, were criticised for not mixing with their white peers and not fully participating in school (Crozier & Davies, 2008) while Turkish students in London schools were seen as being “always together at school” (Simsek, 2013). Over time, the majority of participants in this study moved from socialising with people from the same country of origin – when they first arrived – to eventually socialising with other migrant pupils. They established social networks with other migrants with whom they share similar migration experiences. Peers from the same group supported each other (Crozier and Davies, 2008). The stories shared in this study are in line with Ackers and Stalford’s 2004 study, which puts forward the view that many migrant students befriend other migrants, creating a sort of “migrant bubble”. The stories of two participants, Jennifer and Charlie, even portrayed a disaffection/alienation from the school community. Both participants had never befriended a white English peer at school or at college as they felt they had nothing

in common with English peers. Jennifer commented that she did not feel at ease when in company with white English young people in her school; she did not go into the common room with other sixth-formers, but rather stayed in the library alone or with other students from migrant backgrounds. In their study of a group of Polish students and their families in UK schools, Ryan and Sales (2011) found that participants found it difficult to make friends with white English students. The students described white English people as “unwelcoming”. Participants in this study had friends from such places as Sri Lanka, Portugal, various African countries, and Nepal.

Staying with their in-groups led to some participants feeling targeted and stereotyped, especially if they spoke their first language in school settings. Groups of boys from Mauritius in one school were thus considered as belonging to “gangs” when they walked together in small groups. This finding echoes what Alexander noted in her study about Asian young males (2000). Similarly, Crozier and Davies (2008) reported teachers’ perceptions of an “Asian gang culture” as a result of South Asian students not integrating into the dominant culture. In the present study, not only were the boys blamed for walking in their own groups, but they were also banned from speaking Mauritian Creole in their breaks and at recreation times. Edward Said, the postcolonialist academic, shared a similar experience in his memoir ‘Out of Place’ (1999). As a student in a colonial school in Cairo, he and a group of Arab boys spoke in Arabic to rebel against the rules of the school which forbid the use of any other language apart from English. Said described this ban as ‘an arbitrary, ludicrously gratuitous symbol of their power’ (Bhatia, 2002).

7.7.3 Positive interaction

The study found two opposing stories which portrayed positive inclusion in two different schools. Rose, the participant who had been in the UK the longest and Tallie who had been in the UK for the shortest time, did not report feeling of feeling stereotyped or discriminated against.

Acculturation research recognises the importance of personal factors in the acculturation process. Berry claimed that personal factors such as personality traits

are believed to influence acculturation (Berry, 1997). Both Rose and Tallie self-reported that they were not shy and were open to meeting new people and making new friends. Rose, in particular, believed that her extraversion had helped her acquire English language rapidly in primary school. Likewise, Tallie said she did not find it hard to make friends in her new school since she had always been keen to meet new people and make new friends. They may not be the only extravert respondents in this study, but Rose and Tallie's self-expressed extravert personalities are likely to have helped in their acculturation process, as they have both had positive experiences with establishing contact with the host culture.

The fact that neither Rose nor Tallie arrived in England as part of the main influx may have had an impact on their acculturation process. They may not have been as noticeable as the other participants. These two participants' experiences could thus be compared with the experiences of a group of Roma migrant pupils in a UK school (Reynolds, 2008) where new arrivals were involved in tensions with other peers. One member of staff in a secondary school believed that the Roma were targeted simply because they were a highly visible group. The staff member said: "The Roma are noisy, in your face, and they are immediately identifiable. They hang around in big groups and they are darker than the rest of the school population." Like the Roma, Mauritian-Chagossian pupils often arrived in large groups in a town in South-east England. As has been established earlier, the new arrivals from Mauritius walked in big groups and spoke loudly in Mauritian Creole – a then unknown and unheard language in schools. Their difference made them a highly visible and identifiable group, like the Roma, and hence more likely to be targeted. Similarly to this present study, Reynolds' study presented one Roma pupil who was identified by the researcher as having a positive inclusion experience. He started school when there were not many Roma pupils and "no one paid much attention to him." The pupil fitted in "quietly" and made many friends, just as Rose in this study did. She started when there were few if any other pupils from Mauritius. We could also draw a comparison with Tallie's story. She arrived after the big influx and fitted in "quietly" and did not hang around with groups of students from Mauritius already there in her school. The Roma student changed, though, when a big group of Roma migrant

students arrived in his school. He was involved in fights and his behaviour suffered. Reynolds wrote that this pupil's arrival in the school as part of only a small group of migrant students was beneficial to his inclusion experience. Tensions mounted in the school when migrant students arrived in big numbers. Therefore, while the personality traits of Rose and Tallie may have had a positive impact on their acculturation experiences, the other reason why these two participants had no difficulty socialising with members of the majority society may have been because they did not arrive as part of the main influx of pupils from Mauritius.

In the next section, findings will be synthesised in an overall discussion about the acculturation experiences of the group of young people in this study in light of existing literature in acculturation research.

7.8 HOW THE FINDINGS HELP TO UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS OF ACCULTURATION

The study considered Berry's acculturation model and the Dialogical Model of Acculturation developed by Bhatia and Ram (2002). Berry's bidimensional acculturation model looks at migrant incorporation as a series of phases called 'acculturation strategies'. The dialogical model provides a counter-argument to the bidimensional model, which claims that all migrants undergo a universal psychological process of acculturation and adaptation. It argues that non-European migrants settling in Western countries are likely to face other challenges. Both models have provided this study with a useful framework of how to understand the acculturation process of migrants in the host society.

7.8.1 Interacting with the host society while maintaining the ways of life of the country of origin is possible

The bidimensional model argued that it was possible to interact with the host society while maintaining one's cultural background (Berry, 1980) and that migrants did not have to surrender the beliefs, values and practices of the country of origin. This study has found that interacting with the host society while maintaining the ways of life of the country of origin is possible. None of the nine participants had given up on the

ways of life of their country of origin. They all spoke Mauritian Creole – although Rose spoke the Mauritian Creole with an English accent – and they all preferred the interviews to be carried out in their mother tongue. The two boys in this study, Jamel and Tony, went to the same school, where both of them had joined a group of musicians, and they often played their traditional music from Mauritius. All the young people had maintained strong ties with family and friends in Mauritius and most of them had travelled to Mauritius more than once since they first arrived in England.

7.8.2 Navigating between more than two cultures

The present study does not fit neatly with Berry's bidimensional model, which assumes that the acculturation process of migrants involves only two cultures – the culture of the home country and the culture of the host society. The findings of this study are concordant with criticisms (Rudmin, 2003; Weinreich, 2009) of Berry's model, which suggest that there are often more than just two cultures involved in the acculturation process. The dialogical model proposes that migrants arriving in a country are likely to come from more than one culture (Bhatia and Ram, 2002). In the case of Mauritian-Chagossian young people in this study, the findings clearly showed that the young people were navigating between more than two simple distinct groups. They did not arrive in England with only one culture, and did not have to acculturate only to one culture in England.

Participants came to England with more than one cultural position. They arrived in the UK as migrants of Chagossian origin and their affiliation to the Chagossian group could not be underestimated when exploring their acculturation process; the young people were also part of was the Afro-Mauritian Creole ethnic group in Mauritius. To describe them simply as Mauritian would be to oversimplify the complexity of their identities. They were part of the Chagossian as well as the Afro-Mauritian Creole groups. Correspondingly, the host society of England did not comprise one single culture into which the new migrants could acculturate. In this study, the town where the participants had settled was a cosmopolitan one, with various immigrant communities. We have seen in the previous chapter how participants socialised with

young people of other migrant backgrounds, and some of them had established robust networks with their friends. The young people, therefore, had acculturated not just into the dominant group of the English society but also into sub-groups of the society such as the Black African group.

7.8.3 Ways to acculturate: not necessarily a choice

According to Berry, the ways in which people go about their acculturation vary (Berry, 2005). The present study confirms this. The nine participants had their own unique experiences and although they represent one group of young people of Chagossian origin, they had different experiences and perceptions on their migration journey, as we have seen in Chapter Five. However, the findings of this study are at odds with Berry's claim that members of the non-dominant groups are free to choose how they want to acculturate (Berry, 1997; 2005), when the host society is a welcoming one. Most of the participants in this study cannot be said to have chosen freely how they wanted to acculturate. Jennifer, for example, isolated herself and found it hard to socialise with white English school peers; she adopted a separation strategy. This may not have been her choice, but possibly the best option she had, considering her experiences at the time.

7.8.4 Experiencing more than one acculturation strategy at the same time in the same context

Berry's model acknowledges that individuals explore different strategies, but will eventually settle on one strategy that is more useful and satisfying than the others (Berry, 1997). Although this study did not set out to measure the participants' acculturation strategies, it found that a few participants were exploring more than one acculturation orientation at the same time – and not just in separate contexts such as 'home and private lives' (Arends-Toth and van de Vijver, 2003), but often in the same context. For example, two participants in this study displayed the orientations of 'separation' and 'integration' in a single context, the school environment. They used 'integration' through their involvement in specific activities together with other school peers including White English young people. Nevertheless, they also used the 'separation' orientation at other times at school, when they were with co-ethnics and/or other migrants, or when they felt harassed.

7.8.5 Acculturation as a continuous process

The bidimensional model of acculturation has been found too limited to capture the messy and complex experiences of the young migrants involved in the present study. In contrast, the dialogical model of acculturation has been found more suitable for making sense of the participants' acculturation experiences. This study found that acculturation, rather than being the end of a process, is an on-going process and a continuous navigation. This possibility of moving between various cultural positions and not settling on one acculturation strategy is best explained by the dialogical model. This model argues for a multiplicity of identities coming from multiple cultures. We have seen how the participants arrived in England with more than one cultural position, and various cultural positions were available for them in the host country.

This chapter discussed the main findings of this study in relation to existing literature. The next chapter will conclude the research project, will highlight the implications of the findings and will identify avenues for further research.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

This final chapter summarises the thesis. The key findings and contributions will be highlighted before I reflect on the implications of the current work. The limitations of the research will then be addressed and, finally, I will outline possible directions for future research.

8.1 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

The aim of the study was to explore the acculturation experiences of a group of young people from Mauritius, of Chagossian origin, living in South-east England. People of Chagossian origin represent an under-researched group of migrants in the UK. At present, no published research has investigated the experiences of the younger generation of Chagossians who have settled in the UK. This study aimed to fill this gap by exploring the experiences of the children and grandchildren of Chagossian islanders who have migrated to the UK. Nine young people of Chagossian origin aged between 16 and 20 years old participated in the research. They were all in full-time education. Two research questions were posed:

- a) How did the participants navigate between their heritage culture(s) in Mauritius and the host culture in England?
- b) What were the participants' perceptions of their school experiences in England?

To explore the acculturation experiences of the participants in England, the study reviewed literature on acculturation theories, and considered two main theoretical frameworks: the bidimensional model of acculturation and the dialogical model of acculturation. Berry's model is one of the most prominent of the relevant models and has conceptualised acculturation around two dimensions: retaining or surrendering

the beliefs, values and practices of the home country; and adopting or rejecting the beliefs, values and practices of the host country. The bidimensional model is well known for the four acculturation strategies migrants are assumed to adopt: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation. Opposing Berry's model, the dialogical model suggests that acculturation cannot be understood using four fixed strategies, and that the experiences of non-Western migrants to Western countries will be different from the acculturation of Western migrants.

8.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study found that cultural differences between Mauritius and England affected the acculturation experiences of the participants. Migrating to the host society without the support network of family (including extended family), which is a characteristic of a collectivist society (Triandis et al., 1998), caused a great sense of loss in the majority of the participants. The young people also felt the loss of their childhood neighbourhood in Mauritius and their 'lived experience of [their] locality' (Brah, 1996); that is, their day-to-day routine and activities. Family separation affected the young people, and some of them described how they felt as a result of being separated from their parents, grand-parents, siblings and cousins, who were 'psychologically present' in the young people's minds (Boss, 1999; 2002). Reminiscing over past life in Mauritius was part of the negotiation between the home country and the host society. Feelings towards homeland and host society often conflicted. Home had multiple meanings for the participants, including home as specific places, home as people (Brah, 1996) and home as feelings of comfort and safety associated with people (Nowicka, 2007). Despite the fact that participants romanticised their country of origin, especially their childhood place, some of them exhibited feelings of belonging to England. Linked with issues of belonging, navigating between home and host societies also involved questioning one's sense of identity. Ethnic identity was an important element in the acculturation process. The majority of the participants identified as Mauritian. Only one participant identified as British and none identified as Chagossian, although one used the hyphenated identity

Mauritian-Chagossian. Some participants' stories demonstrated their allegiance to other ethnic groups, such as 'Creole' and 'Black African.'

As regards school experiences, it was found that schools were indeed key sites of socialisation where new migrants made contact with members of the dominant society. Most of the participants described challenging school experiences when they first arrived. Lack of proficiency in the English language characterised the school experiences of the participants, as they arrived in England with little or no English. The majority of the young people in this study found this lack of English a stressful experience, and described a range of negative feelings such as frustration and fear (Ryan and Sales, 2011). The few participants who rapidly acquired English language skills attributed this acquisition largely to their confident personalities. English as an Additional Language (EAL) support proved very beneficial to newcomers (Reynolds, 2008). Participants had both positive and negative experiences of their relationships with school staff. None of the participants reported only negative experiences with teachers. EAL staff members were valued for their caring and nurturing attitude; mainstream teachers who showed an interest in the forced displacement of Chagossian islanders were valued and respected too (Verma et al., 1994). Negative experiences with staff included perceptions that some teachers held negative stereotypes about pupils from Mauritius, and accorded preferential treatment to white English pupils (Archer, 2008). What characterised participants' perceptions of relationships with their school peers was the fact that the majority of them did not interact with peers representing the host society. Apart from two participants who socialised with English school peers, and had positive experiences with them, the participants described relationships fraught with tensions. Friendships for most of the participants were formed with peers from Mauritius or from other migrant backgrounds.

8.3 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

8.3.1 Acculturation strategies are fluid and not static

The four strategies on which the BMA builds contributed to an understanding of the different orientations participants in this study adopted during their acculturation process. However, Berry (1997) stated that migrants would settle on one of these strategies, and this study found that the participants did not. Instead, they used more than one acculturation strategy, at the same time and in the same settings; for example using ‘separation’ and ‘integration’ in the same school. Therefore, this study finds that acculturation strategies are not static points which are used neatly in turn by migrants. They are flexible and fluid, and vary according to contexts. This study therefore finds that context, in acculturation research, is important. Acculturation should not be viewed as a straightforward or a complete process (Bhatia and Ram, 2009) but rather as an on-going one involving the use of a range of strategies; often, more than one strategy at the same time.

8.3.2 Acculturation involves more than two cultures

This study also found that migrants did not negotiate between two cultures, but between various cultural positions. The findings of this study are concordant with criticisms (Rudmin, 2003; Weinreich, 2009) of Berry’s model. They suggest that there are often more than two cultures involved in the acculturation process. In this study, participants arrived in England from Mauritius – which is far from having a homogeneous national culture. They settled in a town in South-east England – which is a very diverse place, with interactions between cultures from all over the world. Conceptualising acculturation as a process which involves simply two cultures allows only four likely acculturation strategies (Rudmin, 2003), and restricts our understanding of acculturation as an on-going process. The on-going process of identification has been explained by proponents of the dialogical model as involving back-and-forth movement between different voices (Bhatia and Ram, 2002). This study found that these different voices were particularly heard when the participants discussed their perceptions of home, their sense of belonging, and their ethnic identity.

8.3.3 Multicultural schools in an increasingly diverse society

This study confirms that the school setting is paramount in acculturation research. There have been studies researching school experiences of migrants in the UK schools; yet there has been no published research focusing on the school experiences of Mauritian-Chagossian students. The findings of the present study indicate the depth and range of the needs of the young migrants when they first arrived in school, and in particular how crucial the support of the EAL staff was for them. As regards interaction with the dominant society, most of the stories in this study portrayed school settings where migrants socialised mainly with co-ethnic peers, or peers from other migrant backgrounds. This study finds that there is reason to question whether UK schools are able to cope with the complexities of the new diversity.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS ON POLICY

Findings from this study, especially those pertaining to the participants' school experiences, have the potential to inform educational policy at local, county and national levels; they can inform policy to support the positive acculturation experiences of young migrants in education as regards inclusion of young migrants in schools, particularly relatively new groups of migrants. According to the latest UK government figures, the latest school census figures put the total 'EAL' population at over 1.2 million (DfE, 2016a). Policy makers and educational practitioners may have to interrogate the support given to new arrivals in UK schools.

What this study has demonstrated as regards school experiences of the participants when they first arrived in England, is that their needs went beyond language needs. As new arrivals, participants in this study needed a place in their new school where they would feel safe, and nurtured. EAL departments in two schools offered that support. The need to be accepted and to feel welcome was also stressed in participants' stories. Staff who showed an interest in the new arrivals and in their historical background, including the forced displacement of Chagossian islanders, were remembered and appreciated. In addition, some stories portrayed staff as holding negative stereotypical views of Mauritian-Chagossian students, classifying

them as ‘loud’ and ‘trouble makers’. As much as showing interest in new students’ background can facilitate their acculturation in the school community, negative stereotyping can impede on their experiences and prevent inclusion. Besides, as this study has also shown, the majority of the participants found it difficult to socialise with peers from the host society and befriended more easily peers from other migrant backgrounds. These stories portrayed a sense of exclusion rather than inclusion – although two participants had different stories which portrayed positive interaction with members of the host society at school. Schools are places where migrants make contact with members of the host society. To promote positive acculturation experiences for young migrants in UK schools, it is important to encourage interaction between cultures for both new migrants and members of the host society. With the increasing numbers of young migrants who are encountering the education system, this thesis argues for the urgent need to recognise and make appropriate provision for EAL learners. The concept of ‘super-diversity’ coined by Vertovec (2007) is even more current now than when it was thought of. By providing an in-depth examination of the stories that participants shared about their experiences of migration and acculturation, this thesis has exposed the psychological dimensions attached to acculturation. While the findings in this study cannot be generalised, they reflect similar experiences faced by other groups of migrants as reported in previous research; those challenges represent barriers to inclusion.

This research matters to practitioners, schools and policy-makers in finding ways that schools can better accommodate young migrants. The following are some suggestions.

8.4.1 Suggestion 1

The thesis suggests that the government spells out how they want to address the needs of young migrants in UK schools as there is no current government policy regarding the inclusion of migrants/EAL students in UK schools. The 2012 document was the last stated government summary statement about EAL and was produced by Angela Overington of the DfE (NALDIC, 2012). It was circulated for a short period of time before being withdrawn from the DfE website. The reason why

the 2012 policy document was removed from the DfE website is not known here. Some of the points of the brief summary of government policy for EAL learners (NALDIC, 2012) were the following: a) the Coalition Government's policy for children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) is to promote rapid language acquisition and to include them within mainstream education as soon as possible; b) pupils learning EAL are generally taught in the mainstream class alongside their peers; at both primary and secondary level, EAL teachers or advisers work in collaboration with classroom teachers to plan lessons and teaching materials; c) children benefit enormously if they are given opportunities to continue to develop their first language alongside English; d) the government believes the main responsibility for maintaining mother tongue rests with the ethnic minority community themselves and they 'believe that English should be the medium of instruction in schools'; e) publicly-funded schools remain under a statutory duty to promote community cohesion. It is for schools themselves to decide how to fulfil this duty in the light of their local circumstances.

8.4.2 Suggestion 2

This study suggests that cohesion in schools be assessed by Ofsted like it used to be before 2011. Promoting understanding and mutual respect among young people in school settings should be considered as important as the grades students gets for GCSEs. The duty placed on schools to promote community cohesion was introduced in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and came into effect in September 2007. Ofsted had a duty to report on how schools contributed to community cohesion. However this responsibility on Ofsted was abolished by the Education Act 2011 and as mentioned in the 2012 government document, schools have to decide by themselves how to fulfil this duty. While it may be wise that schools make their own decisions on how to promote community cohesion according to their local contexts, it is also wise that this duty be taken seriously by Ofsted.

8.4.3 Suggestion 3

This study suggests that schools in the town where this study was set and perhaps in neighbouring towns would benefit from having EAL departments that look after the

young migrants. One school in this study had a dedicated EAL team who provided new arrivals with linguistic, academic and emotional support. This study has demonstrated how the EAL staff helped to mitigate some of the anxiety and insecurity that participants experienced when they were new arrivals. There is an increasing number of young people of Chagossian origin who have settled in that town of south-east of England. The school could be a model for other surrounding schools where leaders could work in partnership with each other and share good practice. Those school leaders would be the ‘outsiders’, one of the roles identified by Ball and colleagues needed to translate policy into practice (2012). The ‘outsiders’ encourage entrepreneurship and partnership. Recognising that migrants from Mauritius of Chagossian origin constitute a growing group of migrants in that part of the county, the pool of outsiders could initiate a project to better support the young people of that new community as well as new arrivals from other countries and encourage each school to set up a department to support them.

8.4.4 Suggestion 4

This study suggests that schools – especially schools with growing number of new migrants – should allow new EAL students to speak their mother tongue in school especially to those who have yet to acquire the language of the host country. This study also recommends that English should not be the only medium of instruction in schools. An important aspect of inclusion is about accepting differences. The 2012 document makes it clear that the government wants new migrants to acquire English rapidly and that English should be the only medium of instruction in schools. As far as this study is concerned, the majority of participants had school peers who came from the same country and therefore spoke the same language, Mauritian Creole. This was considered an advantage for newly arrived migrants who only spoke one language at the time. Two participants who went to the same school, reported that they were not allowed to speak Mauritian Creole in their school, even when they were not in lessons. The possibility for new migrants to be able to speak the mother tongue when this is the only language they can speak provides them with a sense of comfort and normality. Also, the policy of using English as the only medium of instruction does not apply to schools like the ones in this study where there are staff

who speak other languages and who could help new migrants who speak the same language. In other English speaking countries, bilingual education has been proven to be the most effective educational programme for the long term success of bilingual pupils (NALDIC, 2012). For this to materialise, schools need to be audacious and use their ‘enthusiasts’ and ‘translators’ (Ball et al., 2012) to encourage the use of other languages in school. ‘Enthusiasts’ are those who invest time and effort and use creativity to make things happen in school (ibid.). ‘Translators’ are those who produce texts and artefacts and organise events to share good practice around school. They constitute a core of ‘policy activists’ in schools (ibid.). What they would advocate and enact is an environment where non-English languages are allowed and used to reflect the diversity in their schools. One example could be wall displays stating a slogan such as ‘It is ok to speak your language in this school’.

8.4.5 Suggestion 5

This study advocates that the National Curriculum should be revisited to reflect the ‘super’ diverse (Vertovec, 2007) place Britain has become. Findings from this research indicated how school staff and students were not aware of who the students of Chagossian origin were and why they had migrated to England. The few teachers who learned about this new community did their own research and shared their knowledge with the students themselves. One of them devoted a lesson on the forced displacement of Chagossian islanders; another teacher encouraged a group of students of Chagossian origin to join an extra-curricular activity where they could tell the history of the forced displacement through arts. These teachers were appreciated and respected by participants. The feeling of being accepted and valued could be a part of a sense of belonging to the school. This study and other previous research focused on young migrants in UK schools, show how urgent it is to teach young people history in a way that acknowledges diversity and multiculturalism. This new way would also inculcate critical thinking and could potentially lead to an even more tolerant and more cohesive society.

8.4.6 Suggestion 6

Teachers need to be better equipped to meet the needs of migrant students entering UK schools, and this has direct relevance for initial teacher training programmes. It is important to note that there have been no PGCE or B.Ed. courses specialising in EAL which came to an end in the 1990s as one option of specialisation for student teachers (Butcher et al., 2007; Murakami, 2008). Nevertheless, there are a number of postgraduate accredited courses at certificate, diploma and masters level available in the UK for those who want to be specialist teachers of EAL. School staff need to be adequately prepared for teaching in the increasingly multilingual classrooms which now reflect the education system in Western countries.

8.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

One limitation is that it is a small-scale study involving only nine participants. As such, the findings are not representative of all young people of Chagossian origin who have settled in the UK.

A further limitation of the research is that there were a few inconsistencies concerning the number of interviews. The standard was two interviews per participant; however, circumstances dictated that one participant had only a single interview, while another one had a total of three interviews.

8.6 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As the thesis developed, a range of issues became evident that would benefit from further consideration, and these points are outlined below.

Firstly, some findings of this study can be compared with what Chagossian children had experienced in Mauritius after the forced displacement more than 40 years ago. This study found that some participants suffered negative stereotyping such as ‘loud’ and ‘trouble makers’ as well as discrimination in schools; as stated in Chapter Two, Chagossian students in Mauritian schools had suffered negative stereotyping and discrimination and were seen as ‘wild’ and ‘troublesome’ (Walker, 1986; Vine,

2004). I think one avenue for further study would be research into those similarities as regards school experiences of students of Chagossian origin.

Secondly, the study found that only one participant in this study identified as Mauritian-Chagossian. Further research could be conducted to explore why the young generation does not seem to have an allegiance to the land of their parents and grandparents. Considering the importance of identity for the Chagossian population, and the fact that the community is still claiming the right of return to their homeland, it would be pertinent to understand what seems to be a disengagement, of the young generation, from Chagos. Linked to this, longitudinal research would extend the research findings presented in this thesis to investigate the journeys of the participants, and see whether their feelings of belonging, towards home country and host society, shift over time.

Next, the study demonstrated that EAL provision in schools was beneficial to the new arrivals in terms of helping pupils to learn English; but also that it was a vital source of emotional support. There is scope for further research to provide a better understanding of the relationships between new arrivals and EAL staff in schools.

Finally, considering the scale of recent immigration – a wider exploration of inclusion experiences, across more schools, and among other migrant and non-migrant students, would be invaluable.

8.7 PERSONAL REFLECTION

This thesis aimed to explore the acculturation experiences of a group of young people of Chagossian origin. Towards the end of the research I realised that my interest in researching the participants' journeys from Mauritius to England had taken me on a personal journey. A journey through which I interrogated my own beliefs and thinking in relation to issues addressed with the participants, issues that I realised had, for me, always been latent but were never addressed.

While the participants shared fond memories of their childhood places in Mauritius, missed their loved ones and were nostalgic of ‘the lived experience of a locality’ (Brah, 1996), I too reminisced over my life in Mauritius, missed loved ones left behind and became nostalgic about ‘sounds and smells’ and ‘heat and dust’ (ibid.). I missed going to places I used to go to; walking the streets I used to walk; wearing clothes I used to wear; in brief, I missed living ‘the untold story of a life being lived’ (Berger, 1984). I also thought of my children who were very young when we left Mauritius. At times, I felt I had uprooted them from their homeland.

When the participants were confused about their ethnic identity, I remembered that I myself had always been confused about my ethnic identity. Having a mother of Indian origin and a father of African origin, growing up in a typical Creole neighbourhood, my siblings and I did not seem to fit in. I never felt I belonged to that community, I never felt Creole, but I did not feel I belonged to the Asian community either.

During the course of the thesis, while I learned about the dialogic self and multiple voices, I learned more about my own self and realised that the different voices in me and the different roles I lived in the silence of my mind were nothing to be concerned about. A fixed and unified identity is a ‘fantasy’ (Hall, 1990). My multiple and often opposing and contradicting identities reflected more who I was. My ethnic and cultural differences had shaped me and while there is no ‘ethnic box’ that represents accurately where I came from, I accept now that to be ‘other’ is a privilege. This position also enables me to cherish and celebrate differences.

When the young people shared stories about their school experiences, I wondered whether my children, who were of a similar age to some of the participants, had had positive or negative experiences at school. I remembered that they were always happy to go to both their primary and secondary schools and never liked to miss a day at school. It was reassuring for me that they had positive experiences at school, that they had a strong sense of belonging to the school community, and that they had many friends from the host society as well as from other migrant backgrounds. I am happy that both of my children seem to have integrated very well in the host society.

It also pleases me that when they travel to Mauritius, they enjoy being with family, eating traditional Mauritian food, and dancing the ‘sega’ music at family parties; and when leaving Mauritius, they are sad to say good bye and at the same time excited to return ‘home’ to England.

My children’s experiences make me hopeful – England has been good to me and to my family. I hope that all the young people who gave their time freely and shared their personal stories to me will have had the opportunity to feel loved and accepted in England, and are having very positive experiences at university, at college or at work. Their stories and their journeys have made me want to explore journeys of other young migrants.

Two years after data collection, I started to work as an EAL staff in one of the schools where some of the participants had studied. I work with young people from Mauritius, Romania, Lithuania, Pakistan, Iran, Greece, Portugal, Venezuela, and China among other places. These young people are not just statistics of new migrants in UK schools. They are real people who arrive with very little or no English at all – the EAL department is a haven for them. This is the place where they come to learn English; ask how to say something in English; request another copy of their timetable; do their homework with the help of bilingual dictionaries; learn about Shakespeare and Jacobean era, Robert Louis Stevenson and Victorian gentlemen, and war poetry; have lunch and meet friends; cry when peers have pulled their hair or have called them names or have asked them to go back to their country. These are not stories I read in an academic study. These are stories I hear and witness almost everyday.

These are voices that need to be yelled so that educators and policy makers can hear them.

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