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***Mixed Families:  
An Ethnographic Study of  
Japanese/British Families in  
Edinburgh***

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# Abstract

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Studies on mixed race and/or ethnicity families have tended to focus on the child's struggle with *identity*. Although this topic is very important, in order to better understand how mixed families function as a whole, and how mixed children are socialised, my thesis explored the entire family, with a focus on the parents and kin. Specifically, I looked at the negotiations that take place between the Japanese mothers' and British fathers' differences, and the way in which culture, including customs, beliefs, and preferences, are then shared and transmitted to the mixed children. This qualitative, ethnographic study focused on twelve Japanese/British families in Edinburgh. Because socialisation and the transmission of culture tend to happen in the midst of *doing mixed family*, the following areas of the mixed families' lives were explored: everyday lived culture, language choices, and food habits. When examining the foods eaten and the languages spoken by the mixed families, it seems that the mixed families are attempting to transmit both their linguistic and culinary heritages to their children, with their aspiration being to raise bilingual, bicultural children. In addition, this study explored the role that extended family and friends play in the lives of the mixed families as they attempt to form their new mixed family culture. The data collection was the result of 26 months of fieldwork consisting of participant observation at three local Japanese mother/toddler playgroups, interviews with both parents and extended family members, and home observations. Some major findings from the study were that, while mothers still tend to carry a heavier burden when it comes to everyday parenting, particularly in the domestic sphere, the fathers were also found to be involved in many aspects of everyday parenting. Additionally, both maternal and paternal kin were also found to offer the mixed families various types of support, with the most frequently mentioned types of support being practical and emotional. Further, mixed families were found to complicate this idea of 'national culture' because nationality is not tied to a culture. In this way, the transmission of culture becomes more fluid, allowing the British man to transmit "Japanese" customs and the Japanese woman to share her "British" interests with her children. Finally, while focusing on the intergenerational transmission of culture from parent to child, we find that children do indeed have agency in the transmission of culture, as they are the ones who ultimately decide whether their cultural heritage is a *gift* or a *burden*. The study thus offers a nuanced picture of mixed family lives in contemporary UK.

# Dedication

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To DD...  
My inspiration, motivation and treasure.  
May your mixedness be a gift.

To my Mom...  
For reading every word of my thesis, and never ever seeing the impossible.

# Acknowledgements

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This thesis, in many ways, reflects my life. It was written in three continents and was made a reality with the help and support of those around me...

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And finally, to the Japanese/British mixed families who participated in this study, a very special thank you for sharing your lives with me. This would not have been possible without you, and I am forever thankful. May you all continue to find joy in *mixedness*.

# Declaration of Authorship

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I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Edinburgh

- (a) that the thesis has been composed by the student, and
- (b) that the work is the student's own, and
- (c) that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

SIGNED.......... DATE.....**8 June 2015**.....

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# Glossary

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(O)Baa-chan: Grandmother

Butsudan: A Buddhist altar commonly found in Japanese homes.

Chirashi-zushi: "Scattered sushi", a dish that has sushi rice on the bottom and seafood and vegetable on top.

Dekichatta kekkon: "Already-Made (a baby) Marriage." Marriage on the basis of an unplanned pregnancy.

Donburi: Japanese rice bowl dish, dishes that consist of fish, meat, or vegetables served over rice.

Furikake: Dry Japanese seasoning, made up of sesame seeds, seaweed, bonito flakes, fried vegetables, and other spices, and sprinkled on top of rice.

Gaijin: "Outside person," foreigner.

Gochisousama(deshita): "That was such a feast!" Phrase used to indicate the completion of a meal.

Haiku / Tanka: Genres of Japanese poetry.

Happyoukai: Recital, performance.

Hiragana: The most basic type of Japanese syllabary [set of written symbols], consists of 46 characters.

Itadakimasu: "I humbly receive!" Phrase used before a meal.

Jikka: Home, hometown.

Takejiku: Hanging scroll.

Kamidana: "God-shelf." Household altar for Shinto gods.

Kanji: The third and final component of the Japanese syllabary [set of written symbols], consist of Chinese characters.

Katakana: The second component of the Japanese syllabary [set of written symbols], mostly used for foreign words, consists of 46 characters.

Karaage: Deep-fried marinated chicken.

Katsuobushi: Small pieces of bonito.

Kendo: "Way of the Sword." Japanese martial art.

Kingyo-sukui kitto: Goldfish scooping kit.

Konyaku: Konjac, also known as the Devil's tongue plant. Has a jelly-like texture, popular in Japanese dishes.

Korokke: Japanese-style croquette.

Kotatsu: Low table covered by a futon, frequently has a heat source under the table, commonly used in Japan.

Kuwashii: Detailed.

Mawaru-sushi: Sushi on a conveyor belt, usually referred to as Kaiten-zushi.

Mochi: Japanese rice cake.

Mochiko: Rice flour used to make rice cake.

Mokusou: Meditation, bowing down to the martial arts training hall's shrine and teachers.

Mugicha: Roasted barley tea, served chilled.

Nabemono: "Cooking Pot." Used to make various Japanese pot dishes at the table.

Nomikai: Drinking sessions, after-work drinks.

Noren: Traditional door dividers made of Japanese fabric, usually with vertical slits for viewing and ease of entry.

Nyuugaku-shiki: School entrance ceremony.

Obon: "Lantern Festival," Japanese Buddhist custom for honouring ancestors.

Ocha: Japanese green tea.

Omamori: Buddhist lucky charm.

Onigiri: Japanese-style rice balls (rice formed into a ball or a triangle, usually wrapped in roasted sheets of seaweed).

Oniichan: "Older brother."

Owan: Traditional Japanese bowl, generally used for soups.

Randoseru: Elementary school backpack.

Romaji: "Roman Letters," the writing of Japanese words in Latin script.

Seiza: "Proper sitting." Kneeling on the floor with folded legs under thighs. The traditional form of sitting in Japan.

Setsubun: Holiday to celebrate the end of winter.

Shakuhachi: Bamboo flute.

Shitsuke: The upbringing, disciplining of a child.

Shougi: Japanese chess.

Somen: Thin, white Japanese noodles made of wheat flour, usually served cold with a soy-sauce based dipping sauce.

Soto/uchi: Outside/inside.

Tadaima: "I've returned home." Customary greeting when one returns home.

Tamago-kake gohan: A Japanese breakfast dish, consisting of raw egg and soy sauce on top of rice.

Tanabata: "Evening of the Seventh." Japanese astronomical festival celebrating the meeting of two stars with festivals and trees adorned with wishes written on colourful pieces of paper.

Tatami: Flooring mats, traditionally made of rice straw, used in Japanese-style rooms.

Tonkatsu: Deep-fried pork cutlet.

Udon: Thick, wheat-flour noodles.

Undoukai: Sports Day, held once a year in schools all over Japan.

Yakisoba: "Fried wheat flour noodles." Noodles served with meat and vegetables on top. Popular dish in Japan.

Yakiudon: "Fried udon noodles." Meat and vegetables served over thick wheat flour noodles.

Yasai: Vegetable.

Youyou-tsukuri kitto: Yo-yo making kit.

# Introduction

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## ***A Personal Journey***

Nearly 35 years ago, my Japanese father and my Mexican mother met and fell in love in Los Angeles, quite aptly, at an ESL (English as a Second Language) school. When they announced their intention to marry, there was some resistance from their extended family, particularly because of language barriers, as well as cultural differences that seemed insurmountable. Regardless, my parents eventually married, and I was born into a mixed family where we naturally switched between Japanese and Spanish in one conversation, and frequently had *enchiladas* for dinner one day and *sushi* the next. In my childhood home, I feel that I was taught the language, food, and traditions of both my parents' cultures almost equally. Further, instead of being *haafu*<sup>1</sup>, my parents always emphasised that I was *daburu*<sup>2</sup>. In my naivety, I had assumed that this balance of cultures at home had occurred naturally, but when I became a mother myself, I realised the "invisible work"<sup>3</sup> (Okita 2002) of my parents, which had made it possible for me to inherit both of their cultures.

When I began my PhD studies in the fall of 2010, I had just found out that I was pregnant, and was about to set out on researching second-generation migrants. After arriving in Edinburgh, however, I faced various challenges in regard to identifying and accessing this population. My supervisors and I then attempted to find a different research topic, somewhere in the field of ethnic minorities and education, but I could not find a topic that I was both passionate about and one which seemed manageable with my upcoming transition into motherhood. In the

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<sup>1</sup> A Japanese word originating from the English word "half" (half foreigner and half Japanese). It has remained the most popular term to describe mixed Japanese people from the 1970s until now (Murphy-Shigematsu 2001, pp211-212).

<sup>2</sup> Again, a Japanese word borrowing from the English word "double", "used to correct the deficiencies of the term *haafu*... emphasises that [mixed Japanese individuals] are not half anything but that they have the ethnicity of both sides of their parentage. It is considered a positive statement and a term of empowerment" (Murphy-Shigematsu 2001, p214).

<sup>3</sup> Okita (2002) used "invisible work" predominantly to describe the mother's responsibility surrounding her mixed child's minority language acquisition; however, *invisible work can* also be used for work (often gendered) that surrounds the domestic sphere (e.g. *foodwork* (Beagan, et al. 2008), housekeeping, childrearing, *kinkeeping* and being the "culture carriers" (Song 2003)).



meantime, my son was born. The experience of becoming a new mother proved challenging in regard to balancing my research work and caring for my newborn; however, having my son also provided me with the inspiration for my research topic: mixed families and how differences are negotiated in everyday family life.

### **Mixedness**

In the early 1900s, the “first wave” of scholarship surrounding mixedness was produced. These early studies tended to emphasise a “pathological” view of mixedness (Caballero 2004). However, beginning in the 1990s, a “new wave” framework began to appear which normalised mixedness (Caballero 2004). While much of this research came from an American context (e.g. Root 1992, Spickard 1989, Waters 1990, Zack 2002), a rich body of work was also produced in Britain (e.g. Ali 2003, Ifwekwunigwe 1999, Katz 1996, Olumide 2002, Phoenix and Owen 2000, Tikly, *et al.* 2004, Tizard and Phoenix 1993, Wilson 1987). It is particularly important to examine British literature surrounding mixedness because the American construction of mixedness tends to be a more divisive concept when compared to the more open, “personal choice” approach found in Britain (Caballero 2004, p34).

One of the pioneering mixedness studies in Britain was Wilson’s (1987), which challenged the stereotype of the mixed child as the “social misfit, caught between the social worlds of black and white” (Wilson 1987, p176). She concluded that many children have a positive mixed race identity, “content to be both black and white without perceiving a contradiction between the two” (Wilson 1987, p176). Similarly, Tizard and Phoenix (1993, p161) found in their study of young mixed people that 60% claimed a positive racial identity, and many actually emphasised the advantages of being mixed. Both of these landmark studies were fundamental to the literature surrounding mixedness from a sociological approach because they increased our understanding of this population through rich qualitative data gathered from individuals who dealt with mixedness in their everyday lives.

Nearly a decade later, in 2005, Tyler published an important study that not only expanded mixedness to include more than simply black/white, but also included the voices of mothers. Moreover, Tyler (2005, p491-492) explored mixed families and

how nature, culture, biology, descent, and ancestry intersect as racial identities are inherited, particularly for women who can experience kinship through biological aspects (e.g. gestation) as well as cultural aspects (e.g. ways of thinking and speaking). Another important researcher that focused on women in mixed families was Twine (2010), who coined the term “racial literacy” when studying white mothers in mixed families. She explains that “racial literacy” is how parents (both white and non-white) prepare their mixed children to recognise, name, challenge, and manage everyday racism. In the present study, race was not identified as a challenge for the Japanese/British families, although the children are indeed interracial children. As such, there is not a section dedicated to racial issues; however, some discussion on the apparent lack of this is included. While studies that focus on the intersection of race and mixedness are important, another aspect to consider is class. A landmark study that accomplished this was McKenzie’s (2013), which looked at working-class white mothers of mixed children. McKenzie (2013, p1344) concluded that, amidst the everyday challenges due to stereotypes surrounding their residence, class, and mixedness, these women have persevered and found “local social capital,” within their community, in the form of respect and value from their their black relatives and their status as mothers.

In the last decade, studies that focus on the entire mixed family have begun to surface (e.g. Bauer 2010, Caballero 2010, Caballero, *et al.* 2008). One study that wove together different mixed family members’ accounts was Bauer’s (2010), which found mixed families creolising London as they “do kinship” through the generations by “the rejection, borrowing and mixing of cultural elements from both Britain and the Caribbean, [the families] have innovated their own forms of family in the local context, thus asserting their claim of belonging in London” (Bauer 2010, p251). Further, regarding the mixed individuals themselves, Caballero and colleagues (2007), acknowledging both the theoretical complexities of mixedness and the realities of mixed peoples’ experiences, concluded that instead of finding negative, confused mixed children, they found mixed children who felt others perceived them as such (Caballero, *et al.* 2007, p350). Consequently, parents in mixed families must prepare their children for society’s perception of mixedness, not because they

believe in the one-drop rule, but because they recognise the need to prepare their children for the reality that “racism and racial hierarchies continue to structure British life” (Twine 2010, p143). In order to do so, mixed families must strive to maintain strong social networks because it is often in neighbourhoods and among kin, as Caballero (2010) found, that parents find support, a sense of racial and cultural awareness, and a sense of belonging.

Mixedness has now become a societal phenomenon, not only in academia, but also in other spaces, stirring up “societal interest, hostility and curiosity, especially given the historical and current obsession with ‘mixing’ and the offspring of such ‘mixed’ unions...” (Song 2009, p337). However, the majority of studies in Britain have remained focused on black/white mixedness. While part of the reason for this is because of the dominance of black/white mixed families, it is also, as Britton (2013, p1311) states, a reflection of the historical, binary division of black and white in Britain. My study, which explores Japanese/British families and the intergenerational transmission of culture contributes to the scholarship of mixedness by addressing, among other things, the intersection of nationality, migration, and race with *mixedness*, from different family members’ perspectives.

### ***Why a Sociological Study?***

Park’s (1928, p893) classic study suggested that in mixedness, “where the changes and fusions of culture are going on — that we can best study the processes of civilisation and of progress.” In order to examine such changes and fusions of culture, it is important to explore mixed families and how they do family (Morgan 1996) at the individual level, in their everyday lives. It is also important to consider early socialisation in mixed families because racial attitudes and identities begin around the same time as weaning and toilet-training (Katz 1996) and include “intimate penetration of the consciousness by the parents and family...” (Wilson 1987, p53). Further, scholarship in the field of psychology (cf Juang and Syed 2010, Knight, *et al.* 2011) has also stressed that early socialisation, particularly through the parent-child relationship, is crucial and is often where different aspects of culture, including familial and national practises and values, are shared and transmitted. Building on the importance of early socialisation, this sociological study explores

parental thoughts, choices, and decisions surrounding, not only the socialisation and identity formation of their mixed children, but also the transmission of culture because, as Waters (1990) found, mixed individuals often do not have the opportunity to choose which ancestry to identify with, as it has already happened through early socialisation at home, and mostly through decisions made by their parents. In this way, a positive family environment, according to Root (2001, p63) can aid a healthy development for mixed individuals because it allow for a safe exploration of the world, while also acting as a place of refuge, as well as a place to decode and challenge messages about race and ethnicity. Further, although studies have shown that friends, teachers, and media influence young people greatly, the mixed young people in Tizard and Phoenix's (1993, p132) study considered their parents the strongest influence.

Parents in all families face similar challenges, including negotiating and balancing their different cultures, since no two families come from identical cultural roots (McGoldrick, *et al.* 1982). However, migrant or mixed families are faced with additional challenges, including transmitting their respective cultures to their children, informing and introducing them to the minority culture, preparing them for the dominant society (Imamura 1990<sup>4</sup>), and, in some cases, teaching them "racial literacy" (Twine 2010). Further, for migrant and mixed families, the situation becomes more complex because intermarriage tends to dilute both parents' cultures, making the children's ethnic socialisation weaker (Waters 1990), causing mixed children to become less likely to identify with a single group (Kalmijn 1998, p396) and less likely to be prepared to enter either parents' society. Raising mixed children can indeed be a challenging task for parents, particularly when attempting to do so amidst assumptions and stereotypes that see parents of mixed children unable to raise children with healthy racial identities (Caballero 2007, p1). As a result, parents in mixed families often seek support from their social networks (e.g. friends and kin) in introducing and sharing their cultures with their mixed children. In this way, the mixed families' social networks become an important part of the mixed

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<sup>4</sup> While Imamura (1990) originally referred to this "two-fold challenge" belonging to the migrant mother in a mixed family, I believe this can be applied to migrant parents in general.

children's socialisation into both of their parents' cultural heritages. In conclusion, much literature surrounding *mixedness* has been written from the perspective of the mixed individual (e.g. Murphy-Shigematsu 1997, Tessman 1999, Urdy, *et al.* 2003) and in fields ranging from psychology to philosophy to mental health. Yet it is important to examine mixedness from a sociological perspective because by discussing and observing individual experiences, behaviours, and choices in everyday life, we can better understand mixed families and how parents negotiate different aspects of their cultures during early socialisation, as well as the role that the mixed children, kin, and friends play in the transmission of "culture."

### **Terminology**

Navigating the definitions of terms can be a complicated procedure, often becoming "one of the most theoretically challenging aspects of researching people from mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds" (Caballero 2009, p28). Nonetheless, because definitions are an essential part of academic studies, I offer this section with definitions of key terms used in the study.

First of all, I have chosen to use *mixed* to describe families comprised of Japanese mothers, British<sup>5</sup> fathers, and their children. The most important reason for choosing to use mixed is because it was the most frequently used term among the participant families, as well as by scholars (e.g. Caballero, *et al.* 2008, Edwards 2008, Song 2003, Tizard and Phoenix 1993, Wilson 1987). In addition, mixed is how the UK Census describes those who identify with more than one ethnic/racial background. There are drawbacks to using this term though, including Burke's (2009) argument that "mixing" sounds too mechanical; nevertheless, using mixedness in a study that attempts to encompass the perspectives of both parents seems ideal because, as Caballero and colleagues (2008, p vi) found, it "allows us to signal the dynamic and relational processes in which the mothers and fathers ... were actively involved" within their families, both in transmitting culture, as well as in everyday parenting.

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<sup>5</sup> Although referring to both Scottish and English men, because I do not specifically differentiate between the two groups, they are simply referred to as *British* throughout the study.

Because this study is specifically on mixed families, the word *family* deserves some discussion. I am not focusing on family in the sense of biological or blood connections; instead I am focusing more on “relatedness” (Carsten 2004) and how families interact with one another and *do family* (Morgan 1996), using Cheal’s (2002) definition of how families work as a reference point:

*From the moment we are born, we are social beings. Somebody picks us up and holds us, comforts us, cleans us, and feeds us... Despite the many changes which we experience in our lives, family groups are often among the most enduring of our social experiences. The particular family group to which we belong may be small, consisting perhaps of only two people such as mother and child. Or, our family group may be very large, providing us with extensive social ties upon which we draw for many social purposes. Either way, there is a common experience of participation... (p152).*

This participation that Cheal (2002) refers to is observed in the *everyday*, which Highmore (2002, p16) suggests is “both ordinary and extraordinary, self-evident and opaque, known and unknown, obvious and enigmatic.” As such, when studying the family, Morgan (1996, pp189-190) also emphasises, the necessity to observe the everyday aspects of family life, “however odd they might appear to the observer” and however mundane or regular, because “practises are often little fragments of daily life which are part of the normal taken-for-granted existence of the practitioners.” This study of mixed families thus embarks from such aspects of sociology of the family; in addition, it is also influenced by research in migration studies, in particular, the study of transnational families. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002, p3) define transnational families as “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders.” Thus, how the mixed families balance, not only negotiating differences in their home, but also maintaining ties with their transnational kin, reveals how complex *doing mixed family* can be.

The third and final term that I draw attention to is *culture*, since the key area in this study is on the negotiation and transmission of culture in mixed families. I begin by offering Marshall’s (1994, p137) definition, which emphasises that “culture is all that in human society which is socially there than biologically transmitted.” This social

transmission that is found in humans is unique, particularly when considering how people acquire and are strongly affected by the skills, beliefs, and values from others around them (Boyd and Richerson 2005). As such, transmitting a culture becomes a fluid way of sharing aspects of one's preferences, which can include, for example, anything from "Scottish" music to the "Japanese" way of eating noodles. Culture is thus a difficult term to define, as Stuart Hall (1980, pp59-60) put it, "The fact is that no single, unproblematic definition of 'culture' is to be found here. The concept remains a complex one ... 'Culture' is not a practise; nor is it simply the descriptive sum of the 'mores and folkways' of societies ... [Culture] is threaded through all social practises, and is the sum of their inter-relationships."

In this way, mixed families may assume that they are negotiating between "Japanese" and "British" practises or cultures. From a sociological perspective though, the matter is more complex because for one thing, cultures are not homogenous. Equating culture to a country is much too arbitrary because, as Miller (1997, p36) argues, "national identities typically contain a considerable element of myth." In other words, national identities are somewhat fictitious and "Japanese" or "British" cultures per se are nonexistent. Instead, national identities are characterised by having a community of people who have something in common, what Miller (1997) refers to as a *common public culture*:

*It extends to social norms such as honesty in filling in your tax return or queueing as a way of deciding who gets on to the bus first. It may also embrace certain cultural ideals, for instance religious beliefs or a commitment to preserve the purity of the national language. Its range will vary from case to case, but it will leave room for different private cultures within the nation (p27).*

This idea of a common public culture is perhaps best representative of the use of "culture" in this study and is in line with Katz's (1996, p173) argument, that culture is not a "unified set of sounds, tastes, practices or beliefs"; instead, its nature is uniquely constructed and negotiated within families.

While the intergenerational transmission of culture may seem like a naturally occurring phenomenon within families, it becomes somewhat inorganic when we factor in migration and mixed parentage. Boyd and Richerson (2005, p14), for

instance, emphasise that when migration takes place frequently, the socialisation of children in foreign lands becomes more dependent on isolated, individual learning of the minority culture in the home, as opposed to a more ubiquitous sense of culture, a shared transmission of one culture from both outside and inside the home. This competition between cultural values inside and outside the home can thus be particularly difficult for migrant families, and can “severely circumvent the role of the family in socialising children in the expected direction” (Zhou 2005, p152). Further, in mixed, migrant families, while socialisation from parent to child may occur, the beliefs, behaviours, practises, and attitudes of two people with different upbringings in different cultures can further complicate matters (Crippen and Brew 2013, p264), and as Bauer (2010, p52) found, can cause ongoing struggles, conflicts, adaptations, and accommodations as the family find strategies to negotiate difference in their everyday lives.

Finally, while the transmission of culture tends to be thought of as a top-down approach, from parent to child, Grusec (2011, p245) argues that “Children impose their own framework on parental influence attempts, sometimes misconstruing them or actively rejecting them ... For this reason, socialisation can be considered an event in which parents assist or aid children to adopt the values of their particular social context, rather than one in which they impose those values on their children.” This fluidity of the transmission of culture allow for the mixed children themselves to work out their own identity, reflecting on what is really valuable to them (Miller 1997, p44). Further, this evolving sense of identity can influence how mixed individuals later form a cultural identity, which Hall (1990, p225) defines as a “matter of ‘becoming’ as well as ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation.” This seems like a fitting visualisation for this study on mixed families and culture because, in order to find a cultural identity, individuals must indeed take their parents’ heritage (past) and weave it together with their own experiences of mixedness (present), and in this way, someday find their own cultural identity (future).



The terms *mixed*, *family*, and *culture* have been addressed in this section in order to provide some background on how the terms were selected for this study.

Emphasising such terms can be controversial and may also raise more questions than answers, but as Root (1992, p10) suggests, perhaps confusion is a “necessary element in the deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of our social relationships in a qualitatively different way.”

### **Background and Context**

While it is important to provide definitions for key terms, equally important is contextualising the study, which focuses on Japanese women/British men couples and their children. Hence, to begin with, since all migrant participants are Japanese in Britain, a section on Japanese migration to Britain is provided, and then, because the Japanese nationals in my study are all women, a section is devoted to Japanese women. The last two sections focus on mixed marriages and families, providing background information, including statistics on the increase of both groups.

#### ***Japanese in the UK***

In 2010, the Embassy of Japan in the UK reported that, while the majority of Japanese nationals (59,437) reside in England, largely in London, there are 1,225 Japanese nationals residing in Scotland. Further, according to the Consulate-General of Japan in Edinburgh [personal communication], the office which covers Scotland and the North East of England, 17 Japanese nationals reported marriages in 2010, compared to 262 in the rest of Britain. Finally, the majority of Japanese nationals in Britain identified as permanent residents were found in the education sector, as students, researchers, and professors, with women far outweighing men (Embassy of Japan in the UK 2010). In comparison, during my fieldwork, while I did indeed encounter many more Japanese women in comparison to men, I did not encounter any women who belonged to the education sector, suggesting that either women exit the education sector upon marriage, or that the type of Japanese women migrating to Britain is diversifying.

### ***Japanese Women***

This higher number of Japanese women living abroad may in part be due to international marriages. In their analysis of international unions, the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2010) found that a significant number of non-Japanese husbands were coming from the West, particularly the United States and Britain. This increase in unions between Japanese women and Western men can be attributed to several factors, including the 1980s *Bubble* that strengthened the Japanese economy and allowed more Japanese, particularly women, to travel, study, and work abroad. These factors, coupled with the rise in travel, resulted in a demand for more English teachers in Japan, thus increasing meeting opportunities between British and Japanese individuals. More recently, the globalisation of educational institutions and workplaces, along with the Internet, have also contributed to the rise in mixed unions because often, after Japanese women have lived in the Western world, they find themselves “unsuited to the expectations of Japanese men” and with education, have become a “deviance from normative Japanese femininity” (Nemoto 2008, p231). Consequently, an increasing number of Japanese women are seeking out Western men who represent modernity, advancement, gender equality, and romanticism, as opposed to Japanese men who are equated with conservativeness, sexism, and backwardness (Jones and Shen 2008, Kelsky 2001), thus resulting in the formation of mixed unions.

### ***Japanese/British Unions***

Mixed couples exist outside the “normal” patterns of romantic relationships (Rockquemore and Henderson 2010, p101), yet such couples are increasing and merit attention from a sociological angle. While mixed couples can be defined as two individuals from any different background (including socioeconomic class, religion, nationality, race, and ethnicity); in the present study, mixed couples refer to couples with one British partner and one Japanese partner. Further, the mixed couples in the study also confine to Cottrell’s (1990) characteristics of mixed unions: 1) both partners continue to maintain ties (e.g. citizenship) with their home countries, and 2) they include migration of either one or both partners.

In Britain, spousal migrants are currently the largest migrant group in the country (Charsley, *et al.* 2012, p861). Further, the Office for National Statistics (2014) reported that, in Britain, nearly one in ten couples (9% or 2.3 million) are in inter-ethnic relationships, up from 7% or 1.7 million in 2001. Likewise, according to Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2010), the number of international marriages (defined here as a legal union between a Japanese person and a non-Japanese person) has also increased significantly, from 5,546 in 1970 to 34,393 in 2009, with non-Japanese spouses coming from a diverse number of countries. Yet as Constable (2005, pp3-4) notes, "Such marriages are especially interesting because they do not represent a global free-for-all in which all combinations ... are possible. Rather, they form marriage-scapes that are shaped and limited by existing and emerging cultural, social, historical, and political-economic factors" such as the Southeast Asian brides who marry Japanese men in hopes of upward socioeconomic mobility and the Japanese women who marry Western men to escape conservative and sexist Japanese men (Kelsky 2001). Reasons behind international marriages, as discussed earlier, vary, and as Tizard and Phoenix (1993, p132) found, it may be that couples from different backgrounds simply meet and fall in love, with "colour being irrelevant." However, in the case of the Japanese/British couples, it seems that a more likely possibility is that their time abroad influenced or impacted their decision to marry internationally. Another reason, suggested by Yamamoto (2010), states that Japanese men and women [and I would include any individual, regardless of nationality, who marries internationally] were "internationally-minded" prior to meeting their spouse, and an international marriage supported their desire to explore difference (Katz 1996, p161). A final accompanying reason may be that being in a mixed families gives "internationally-minded" parents a sense of pride and value, making life more "interesting", and giving their children "a birth status 'of not being just white'" (Mckenzie 2013, p1353). Yet at the same time, once two individuals from different backgrounds come together, they often feel the transition from a place of admiration of an outside culture to feeling threatened by it (Wilson 1987, p148) as they realise they will never truly belong to a culture that embraces their partner and children.

As such, from a sociological perspective, mixed unions are a complex topic of interest, and have been for much time, as is seen with Resnik's (1933) study of *inter-marriage* as an examination of two people from different cultures negotiating two different cultures first as individuals, then as a couple, and later on as a family. More recently, McGoldrick and colleagues (1982), have suggested that cultural differences, particularly in regard to childrearing, are usually a direct correlation to marriage troubles. Most recently however, Jones (2012, p14) found that, while it is generally believed that the greater the differences between a couple, the higher the risk of divorce; this does not always seem to be the case, and mixed marriages may actually be less likely to end in divorce since the couple realise early on that their marriage requires work to overcome obstacles, and as a result, may have a stronger commitment from both partners to make the marriage work. It should be noted, however, that McGoldrick and colleagues' (1982) study on intercultural marriages was conducted in the United States, while Jones' (2012) study focused on international marriages in Asia. Nonetheless, regardless of location, mixed unions are complex and perhaps best described as a reconciliation process based on both partners' bringing with them their own cultures and then, through negotiation, finding a new mixed family culture (cf Katz 1996, Yabuki 2009). In addition, as Brahic (2013, p712) found in her study, mixed unions can also be seen as an opportunity to "rediscover, celebrate and ultimately engineer their bi-nationality, seeking to seize what they perceive as an opportunity to move beyond bi-nationality to realise mixedness." Or perhaps more realistically, as Bauer (2010, p52) states, mixed families, like all families, more than being a site of intercultural exchange, mixed families are sites of support and strength, as well as conflict and pains, as they *do mixed family*.

### ***Mixed Offspring***

Over the last few decades, post 1960s in particular, there has been an increase in mixed couples in Britain, and consequently, a 'biracial baby boom' (Caballero 2004). Likewise, in Japan, the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare (2010, Table 4.2) reported that, just within the last decade (2000-2009), between 23,000 and 25,000 children were born to international couples. Further, in Britain, the 2011 Census

found that the mixed population had nearly doubled in the last decade. In Scotland specifically, the *mixed* population was 0.25% or 12,764 in 2001 (Scottish Government 2004); in 2009, less than a decade later, it more than doubled to 0.6% or 28,351 (Annual Population Survey).

Scholarship surrounding mixed children, particularly regarding their struggle with self-identity (e.g. Murphy-Shigematsu 1997, Root 1992, Tizard and Phoenix 1993, Wilson 1984), has grown alongside the increasing population of mixed individuals. However, studies focusing on other family members (i.e. mother, father, extended family, friends), tend to be more limited. Such studies, however, are important to consider, particularly when considering that mixed children's identity is strongly influenced by their parents and their childhood family home. For example, Wilson (1987, p146) finds that when parents foster a strong cultural awareness as well as encourage a mixed identity in the home, children create a healthy identity. At the same time, Wilson (1987) and Tizard and Phoenix (1993) also found that many mixed children did indeed struggle with their identity, not so much because of individual reasons, but because they believed that, by identifying more with one culture, they deny the parent of the other culture. Further, this ability to maintain a positive, confident identity was directly related to the young people's relationship with their parents, and the support and advice offered to them (Tizard and Phoenix 1993, p120-121). As a result, in the present study, I chose to focus on the mixed family as a whole, but particularly on the parents because even before their mixed children begin to self-identify, their parents are already identifying them, as is the case when choosing which box to tick in the Census, and this in turn directly influences the children's self-identity in later life (cf Qian 2004, p747).

### **Research Aims and Objectives**

I will be examining the family practises of mixed families and specifically how the parents, who come from Japan and Britain, choose to negotiate different aspects of their culture (e.g. language and food) while raising their mixed children. The decision to focus on the parents in the mixed families was made because the family represents the first social group into which an individual becomes incorporated, and the parents' ethnic identity and attachment fostered during childhood significantly

influences the child's later ethnic group identity (Keefe 1992, Tizard and Phoenix 1993, Waters 1990, Wilson 1987). Further, the parents are the ones charged with socialising their young children, of negotiating differences with their partners and ultimately, as Caballero and colleagues (2008) suggest, giving their children a sense of belonging. As a result, the main objective of this study is to better understand how parents in mixed families negotiate differences between themselves and share aspects of their cultural heritages with their children while doing family.

Another research aim surrounds the transmission of culture. The transmission of culture is generally thought of as a vertical, top-down approach from parent to child; yet as Karracker and Coleman (2005, p152) argue, children influence their parents, and parents influence their children: "These influences take place simultaneously and continually, and changes in either parents or children resulting from these processes then impact future interactions and paths of influence." As such, the role that children plays in the intergenerational transmission of culture will be investigated, and whether children also transmit culture to their parents, from a bottom to top approach. In addition, we explore the fluidity of the transmission of culture, and whether the horizontal transmission of culture also exists, thus allowing, for example, the British man to "transmit" aspects of his culture and preferences to his Japanese partner. Finally, the idea of 'national culture' is discussed as we see how complicated it becomes in the mixed families because nationality is not tied to culture, thus can the Japanese parent "transmit" British culture, and vice versa.

Finally, while some aspects of culture are transmitted intentionally, as in parents teaching their children about "social behaviours, interactions, and relationships" (Fabes, *et al.* 2006, p303) much of culture is transmitted unintentionally, and sometimes even unconsciously, as children learn culture through observation and "witness and experience [culture] within the family" (Fabes, *et al.* 2006, p303). For this reason, a final objective of this study is to immerse myself in the lives of the mixed families and allow for opportunities to see the mixed family in various situations, both inside and outside the home, to see to what degree culture affects and influences everyday family life.

## **Thesis Outline**

This thesis begins with a methodology chapter, giving a detailed description of the methodological decisions made for this qualitative, ethnographic study. Further, because I was anxious not to let my data be determined by the literature, rather than a lengthy literature review upfront, I have chosen to discuss literature relevant to key themes emerging from the data at the beginning of each chapter. My first findings chapter begins with a general introduction to the mixed families and their everyday lived culture, emphasising the transmission of somewhat unintentional cultural aspects, including home décor and children's enrichment activities. The second and third findings chapters focus on specific aspects of culture (language and food) and how they are negotiated in mixed families. The reason for this can be traced back to my participant observation at the playgroups, where I had the opportunity to meet and speak to several parents from mixed families about my research project and the negotiation and transmission of cultures. When the playgroups participants first heard the word "culture," they tended to immediately mention language and food. Another reason for this is because, while aspects of culture such as language, religion, and customs may be easy to assess, values, feelings of a shared past, and identification with the culture are harder to assess, but as Tizard and Phoenix (1993, p79) found, food preferences is an ideal way to explore culture because it is a deeply rooted aspect of culture. For such reasons, two chapters will be devoted to these topics. In the final two chapters, I will examine the role that the mixed family's social networks (i.e. kin and friends) play in supporting the mixed families, and in particular, how they support the parents' desires to raise bicultural, bilingual children as they forge a mixed family culture.

Ultimately, my thesis will shed light on an often-misrepresented and under-studied, growing population: mixed families, a type of family becoming prominent in our modern globalised world (Bauer 2010, p252). On one hand, as Brahic (2013, p712) proposes, perhaps such families offer opportunities to "rediscover, celebrate and ultimately engineer [the mixed children's] bi-nationality," attempting to embrace the opportunity to "move beyond bi-nationality to realise mixedness." This seems a somewhat simplistic solution to a deeper issue. It is somewhat reminiscent of the

*melting pot* metaphor, that we simply need to accept our differences and celebrate them. On the other hand, Caballero and colleagues (2008) along with Edwards (2008), suggest that, at times, ordinary concerns such as children's safety, discipline, health, and family finances may have greater significance in everyday parenting as opposed to racial, ethnic, faith, or cultural differences. In this study, while I also found parents focused on *ordinary concerns* regarding their mixed children, I found parents to be perhaps more ambitious, wanting their children to not only be raised as healthy, kind children, but to also be bicultural and bilingual.

When asked to describe their identity, Hall (2001, p29) reports that, similar to most children, mixed children first referenced their *family* and their *home*, yet he continues with this startling thought: if the children were then asked for a broader self-identification, "biracial" would rarely be a term they would choose to use. This study, conducted in the US, contradicts Wilson (1987) and Tizard and Phoenix's (1993) earlier studies that found mixed young people in Britain, for the most part, positively identifying as "mixed." However, Hall's (2001) study is important to consider because it may be that, from a young age, mixed individuals understand that, regardless of how they self-identify, society may never fully accept them as such. At the same time, it suggests that parents of mixed children are faced with a great responsibility. Imamura (1990) proposed that migrant mothers are faced with a two-fold challenge; this study suggests that this two-fold challenge needs revising: today's parents of mixed children are not only charged with socialising their young children, of negotiating between their two cultures as they prepare their children for two societies, they must also teach them "racial literacy" while they negotiate between everyday concerns, including the children's health and education, alongside longer-term goals, such as raising bicultural, bilingual children, and lastly, giving them a sense of belonging in the family home (Caballero, *et al.* 2008). By observing how culture plays out in the everyday lives of the mixed families, I hope to gain a better understanding of how parents negotiate their differences and then begin to share aspects of their cultures with their children. In order to continue this exploration of mixed families, we begin with the methodology chapter, describing



my fieldwork, which lasted approximately two years and left me with valuable data and new friendships along the way.

# Methodology

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## ***Introduction***

Given my interest in mixed families and their everyday family life, a qualitative, ethnographic approach was chosen for this study. The main reason for opting for this methodological approach was because the research questions include sensitive material, and I felt that a more personal approach would allow me more access, as well as active participation and more elaborate answers from participants. In addition, while the power hierarchy between myself as the researcher and the participant families was never completely eliminated, by opting for a feminist approach regarding the relationship between researcher-participant, I was able to put my own ideas and knowledge about mixedness aside and listen instead to the mixed families themselves because, as England (1994, p82) advocates, “the knowledge of the person being researched ... is greater than that of the researcher.”

## ***Research Questions***

While some of the original questions were partially refined during the study due to the nature of the project being very participant-led, in the end the following three research questions were addressed in this thesis.

1. What is the distribution of responsibility for cultural transmission in mixed families? Do the women tend to feel more obligated to transmit culture, as they are traditionally the *cultural carriers* (Song 2003), or are fathers equally involved?
2. How do mixed families *do family* (Morgan 1996) in their everyday lives, as they negotiate between cultures and establish their own mixed family culture (Katz 1996, Yabuki 2009)?
3. What aspirations do the mixed couples have for their children regarding the transmission of culture? What role do the mixed families' social network (i.e. friends and kin) play in supporting the mixed parents' aspirations?

## ***Sample***

### ***Overview***

Families participating in the study were required to meet the following criteria: 1) self-identify as a mixed family, with one parent being British and one Japanese, 2) have at least one mixed child living at home, and 3) be willing to speak openly about their experiences and thoughts surrounding their family. Although I did not require couples to be married, all were married at the time of the interviews. For three of the couples, pregnancy led to marriage, but for the remainder, the main reason to marry seems to have been linked to visa issues, as one respondent half-jokingly admitted: *"We did the paperwork to be married, just for visa reasons. <laughs> We did it quickly, I'm not joking, just to make sure there was no visa problem, you know?"* As a result, visa requirements may make marriage an almost practical necessity for international couples.

Because Japanese/British families living in Edinburgh are such a small population, no databases for this specific population exist. As such, interacting with and recruiting families directly from local Japanese playgroups was essential to my sampling method, which consisted of convenience and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling, the least rigorous technique, allowed me to choose participants who were readily accessible and willing to participate in my study. Once I had more than twelve families expressing interest in participating, I began to use purposive sampling, which allowed me to more discriminately choose families. Reasons for my choosing one family over another were 1) to encourage a diverse group of families to participate (e.g. families at different life stages), and 2) to identify potential interviewee's general enthusiasm for the topic, their availability, and, as Valentine (1997) stresses, the chemistry between myself and the participant, as this tends to increase participant commitment and stability.

The sample for the present study was twelve families. This number was chosen because it was large enough to allow for diversity, and small enough to make deep engagement feasible. The twelve families included twelve Japanese women and twelve British men. Two of the Japanese women came from Tokyo, Japan's capital; two from Osaka, Japan's second largest city; and the remainder hailed from smaller

Japanese towns. On the other hand, four men were from Edinburgh, five came from smaller towns throughout Scotland, and the remaining three were from non-major cities in England. The age distribution of the parents ranged from 31 to 63. This was the first and only marriage thus far for all couples. The families had anywhere from one to four children, with the children's ages ranging from nine months to 16 years old. Like the majority of families I encountered during my fieldwork, all twelve families had one breadwinner and one stay-at-home parent. For eleven of the families, the wives stayed home, and the husbands worked outside of the home; for one family, the husband identified himself as the househusband, and his wife worked outside the home.

Because I visited the families in their homes, I was able to acquire basic information regarding their type of housing and residential location, which generally seems to coincide with the general population, with younger families residing in more temporary housing (i.e. rented flats), and families with older children residing in more permanent housing (i.e. owned flats, semi-detached homes, and detached homes). Furthermore, during the interviews, the couples informed me of the occupation of the partner who worked outside the home. Using the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (2010), it appears that the twelve families offer diversity in their analytic classes, with each family's breadwinner ranging from class one "Higher Managerial and Professional" occupations (e.g. lawyer, scientist) to class six "Semi-Routine" occupations (e.g. bank clerk, nursing assistant). This may suggest that Japanese/British families, particularly those residing in Britain, are no longer confined to a specific socioeconomic class, but are becoming diverse in this regard. Further, although there was diversity within the families' socioeconomic class, none of the families lived in council estates (cf McKenzie 2013). Having said that, there still exist socioeconomic differences among the families which have inevitably influenced much of their family life, including residential location and children's schools. Further, regarding the families that did identify as working-class or as having working-class roots, it seems that, somewhat similarly to the white, working-class women in McKenzie's (2013) study, working-class Japanese women and working-class British men also found value and respectability through their

identity as a member of a mixed family, which tended to be synonymous with being “fashionable” and “progressive.”

### ***The Participants***

#### ***Parents***

Although scholarship surrounding fatherhood has increased, there is still a tendency to focus on mothers in parenting studies (Phoenix and Husain 2007). Most research on child-rearing in mixedness scholarship has also focused almost exclusively on either migrant mothers in the fields of psychology and counselling (e.g. Bornstein and Cote 2004, Lin and Fu 1990, Robinson-Wood 2011), or on white mothers in mixed families (e.g. McKenzie 2013, Twine 2010). In contrast, studies in the field of sociology, and on the perspectives of both parents in mixed families are isolated, although some important contributions have been made (e.g. Bauer 2010, Caballero, *et al.* 2008). Nonetheless, there remains a need to increase our understanding of parenting in mixed families because child-rearing is one way in which parents transmit culture to their children, and if all goes well, “a kind of hybridisation of child raising norms [occurs], with elements from both cultures incorporated relatively harmoniously; however, if this compromise cannot be reached, it may cause strife within the marriage and lead to, not only ... frustration between the couple, but to difficult behaviour among the children” (Yamamoto 2010, pp17, 19). Yet while Yamamoto (2010) seems to suggest that individual parents contribute distinct and homogenous cultures, we must also consider that parents’ culture, including beliefs, values, and practises is also fluid, as they individually and continually negotiate between their own cultural background, their partner’s cultural background, and for the migrant parent(s), the dominant culture. As a result, in order to gain a more thorough understanding of mixed families, in the present study, both parents and their respective experiences and opinions regarding the socialisation process and their childrearing experiences of their mixed children are examined.

#### ***Extended Family Members***

The birth of a child is an intergenerational act that affects, not only the new parents but also the extended family (Kehily and Thomson 2011). As such, kin from both the

paternal and maternal sides, both locally and overseas, were included in the study because they offer valuable semi-outsider/semi-insider insight into and opinions on the mixed family and how they compare to other families including perhaps their own. Further, in order to understand their relationship with the children and their role in the transmission of culture, I asked kin to reflect on their experiences with the mixed families, what traditions and holidays they observe with the children, whether or not transmitting culture is an important aspect of their relationship with their children, and recalling instances where, in retrospect, they have intentionally or unintentionally transmitted culture to the mixed children.

### *Children*

In a study on families, children are obviously integral, especially regarding the intergenerational transmission of culture, as they are ultimately the ones who choose which aspects (if any) of their parents' cultural heritages to accept or reject. Yet because this is a sociological endeavour focusing on the socialisation process of children in mixed families, an emphasis was placed on the adults surrounding the mixed children: their mothers, fathers, and extended family members. This seemed appropriate for this study on the transmission of culture because, as Caballero (2004) found, mixed people are often defined *by* and *through* their parents. However, I do realise that it certainly have been worthwhile to speak to the children directly; nonetheless, because I initially recruited families from playgroups, most of the children were too young to be interviewed. As such, while I did not officially interview any of the children, the children did play a large role in the study, particularly during the observations. Further, as I became more acquainted with the families, opportunities arose that allowed me to interact with the children on a more informal basis, which helped me recognise the children's agency in the transmission of culture.

### **Research Sites**

#### ***Edinburgh, UK***

Edinburgh, Scotland was chosen as the site for my research for a combination of practical and methodological reasons. First, Edinburgh was where I resided during my PhD studies, thus basing the study in Edinburgh allowed me to conduct an

ethnographic study over a longer period of time without having to travel and leave my young son at home. Second, studies on diversity continue to be based in major cities across England (e.g. London and Birmingham), primarily because, as Edwards (2008) found, mixed families are mostly found in “multicultural metropolitan” areas, with the top 50 “hotspot” wards for mixed couples being mainly found in Outer London. Smith *et al.* (2011) however, notes that today’s mixed families are not restricted to the “multicultural metropolitan,” and the present study is an excellent example of this, as my fieldwork showed a strong, vibrant Japanese community in Edinburgh.

### ***The Playgroups***

Because of my intent to immerse myself in the lives of the mixed families, I decided to conduct participant observation at playgroups, as this tends to be attended almost exclusively by Japanese women and their mixed children, and is considered an important social space for the migrant mothers to interact with one another. One interesting detail about the Japanese playgroups that should be noted is that two out of three take place in Christian churches<sup>6</sup>, with one group directly associated with the church. This suggests that churches may be using playgroups as a recruiting tactic, but at the same time, playgroups may also simply be utilising the space that the churches provide to accommodate the playgroups.

#### 1) Kohitsuji Japanese Mums and Toddlers

This group meets at Temple Church in Headington<sup>7</sup>. This neighbourhood has a small-town feel to it, with various specialty shops, cafes, and restaurants lining the major streets. Because of its central yet somewhat detached location, it is an area of Edinburgh that tends to attract those of a higher socioeconomic background. According to the founder of the group, because a large percentage of Japanese tend to reside in Headington, this neighbourhood was chosen as the location for the playgroup. This playgroup recently underwent leadership changes, and is now run by a small subcommittee made up of mothers and other local Japanese.

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<sup>6</sup> The topic of religion will be discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>7</sup> See Ethics section in this chapter regarding pseudonyms.

This playgroup meets on the second and fourth Friday of every month, from 2:30pm-4:30pm. Currently, the group has an email list of approximately 50, but on average, 20 families attend regularly, and the majority also attend the playgroup mentioned next. While some Japanese women at this playgroup are temporary migrants living in Edinburgh with their Japanese husbands and children for an average of 1-2 years, the majority of the participants are Japanese women married to British men attending with their mixed children.

This group does not follow a formal structure when they meet; instead, their goal is to create a relaxed atmosphere, emphasising the opportunity to socialise, sing traditional songs, do arts and crafts, listen to stories, play with Japanese toys, and chat in Japanese. In addition, Japanese lessons are provided for older children.

There is a £1 fee per family, and about halfway through the playgroup, snack-time happens. The snack consists of black tea for the mothers, and juice and snacks (e.g. biscuits) for the children.

## 2) Crows Nest Resource Centre Japanese Mums and Toddlers

This playgroup began around the same time as the previous playgroup. The founders of both groups were originally developing one unified Japanese playgroup; however, a fallout between the leaders resulted in two separate playgroups meeting on alternate Fridays. This playgroup is located in the city centre and is also run by mothers who send out reminder emails, organise the arts and crafts, and purchase snacks for the children.

This playgroup meets on the first and third Friday of every month, from 2pm-4pm. Currently, the group has an email list of approximately 50, but on average, 35 families attend regularly, and more than half also attend the above-mentioned playgroup. This playgroup is also made up of mostly Japanese women married to British men attending with their mixed children.

This group adheres to a loose structure when they meet, emphasising social time, but also designating a specific time for singing traditional Japanese nursery songs



together. There is also a “traveling library,” with Japanese books for both adults and children available for families at the playgroup to borrow freely.

There is a £1 fee per family, and about halfway through the playgroup, snack-time happens. The snack consists of biscuits or bread sticks for the children.

### 3) Japanese Playgroup

This group meets on the east side of town, at Trinity Church in Abingdon, a suburb of Edinburgh. Because it is only a few miles from the city centre, it tends to attract families and others wanting both the convenience of the city as well as a serene small-town atmosphere.

This playgroup meets on the third Saturday of every month, from 2pm-4pm. This group held its first meeting in November 2011 and thus far approximately 20 families are on their email list, with 10 families, on average, attending regularly. This group is run by the minister of the Japanese Christian Fellowship and his wife.

Because this group meets on Saturdays, participants tend to include entire families. At this playgroup, Japanese traditions and customs, as well as language, are often being transmitted to both the children and the foreign partners, as they participate in the organised activities together. Because of the family-oriented nature of the group, the families in attendance seem to enjoy socialising with and meeting other mixed families.

This group follows a semi-formal structure when they meet, with specific time designated for games, Bible stories, praying, singing, and socialising.

There is a £1 fee per family, and at the end of the playgroup, snack-time happens. The snack consists of homemade Japanese-style cakes for the adults and children, and green tea or coffee for the adults.

The majority of the playgroup participants are mixed Japanese/British families, but there are also Japanese/Japanese families, Chinese families, and other Japanese mixed families, with only one family actually attending the Japanese church. Most

of the families here only attend this playgroup, perhaps because weekends are reserved for family outings, because fathers are not keen on participating in playgroups, or because of the strong link with the Christian church.

### ***Data Collection***

The participants' contributions during the data collection was found to be invaluable (England 1994), particularly because of the ethnographic approach taken which allowed for learning from the participants rather than merely studying them (Spradley 1979). Further, because of the focus on doing family; during data collection, dynamic approaches that demonstrate everyday processes were sought (Gabb 2008), including home observations of the twelve families, interviews with parents and extended family members, and participant observation at three local playgroups. The participant observation in particular yielded much helpful data because, as Hendry (1999 p ix) explains, there are differences between what people say they do, what they do, and what they say they ought to do. By observing and interacting with the the parents in the playgroups frequently and informally, I was able to overhear, as well as participate, in many informal conversations which allowed me to, not only compare formal answers to real-life answers, but to also speak to non-participants and get their take on issues surrounding mixedness.

My fieldwork lasted from October 2011 to December 2013. Because of my immersion into the Japanese/British mixed community for an extended period of time, I was able to meet the mixed families on several occasions and form strong connections with them; yet, this was not always so, as we shall see in the following section.

### ***Research Access***

As with most ethnographic studies, gaining access to the population being studied and finding participants can be challenging. At the same time, it is one of the most important aspects of an ethnography because, as feminist ethnographers (e.g. Craven 2010, England 1994, McNamara 2009, Pillow and Mayo 2012, Reinharz 1992) stress, participants are not merely guinea pigs, they are more like *co-researchers* (McNamara 2009), living the research topic on a daily basis and then guiding researchers through their experiences.

### *The Road to the 12 Families*

It can be particularly difficult to gain access to a population when the research topic is sensitive and personal in nature, when working with minority populations, and when coordinating with busy families. In particular, accessing participants who want to share their experiences in mixed families can be difficult, as Britain has a history of pathologising mixedness (Caballero 2009). Thus potential mixed race participants often look for researchers who are ready to “prove their credentials as ‘good’ social scientists who are not looking to pathologise families further, but to portray them realistically and fairly” (Caballero 2009, p27). One way I tried to help potential participants understand my motivation and earn their trust was by identifying as a mother and as mixed myself, “with the implication that [I am] less likely to denigrate a group to which I belong” (Caballero 2009, p28). The first step I took was to become involved with the Headington Japanese Mums and Toddlers playgroup (now the Kohitsuji Japanese Mums and Toddlers). I came across this group while searching online for local markets that sold Japanese food. I contacted the group leader through the webpage which was hosted by the Japanese Christian Fellowship’s website, and then decided to attend the group (together with my son), as a participant and observer. My personal involvement with this playgroup allowed me immediate access to many Japanese women married to British men, and it was through these women that I discovered two more local Japanese playgroups.

### *Playgroup Participant Observation*

I conducted a pilot-participant observation from October to December 2011 at two Japanese playgroups. From this, I realised that my research was indeed feasible since there were sufficient numbers of Japanese / British families in Edinburgh, and because the Japanese women had welcomed me into their groups, both as a researcher and as a mother. From March 2012 to December 2013, I officially conducted participant observation at three playgroups, attending all meetings, whether bi-weekly or monthly. Once at the playgroups, my son and I stayed for the entire session, which usually lasted two hours. Because it was difficult to take notes while also participating in the playgroups, I chose to be in complete participant observation mode during the playgroups. I jotted down key happenings

immediately after the playgroups and then typed up detailed field notes at night, after processing and reflecting on the happenings. I conducted my participant observation at the playgroups together with my son to emphasise the ethnographic nature of the study. This proved extremely helpful because it allowed me to easily blend into the groups and identify with the other mothers. This is in line with Jamieson's (2011) study, which found that immersing oneself and staying close to participants can produce a better representation of their world. Nevertheless, conducting participant observation with my young son proved challenging, as I had to learn to be both a mother taking my son to the playgroups (wearing my participant hat) and a researcher observing the playgroups (wearing my observer hat) (Pillow and Mayo 2012, p195).

Furthermore, it was during my fieldwork that I came to understand that ethnographic research is a two-way street, and participants "want to know who the researcher is and to understand what has brought her into the field. They need to experience trust and safety in the participant-researcher relationship" (McNamara 2009, pp165-166). I therefore realised I could not simply expect to observe the participants and listen to them share their stories, I also had to actively participate in the groups and share with them because, as England (1994, p85) found, fieldwork in and of itself is personal. As a result, when opportunities arose and time allowed, I answered questions and spoke frankly about my own mixed childhood, as well as the challenges that I am now facing as a mother and trying to decide what aspects of my cultures I want to pass on to my son and how best to do so. In this way, as both the participants and myself became more open with each other, our relationships, as well as the data, were enhanced (Hume and Mulcock 2004). My personal status of growing up in a mixed family and of now choosing to raise my son multiculturally allowed me to find common ground with the women; yet our differences, the fact that I was not a Japanese woman married to a British man also allowed sufficient distance to encourage the women to explain things instead of using the cop-out answer, "You know how it is." Consequently, during my two year ethnography, I was given the rare opportunity of intimately listening to and observing a season of the mixed families' lives by attending their playgroups, their children's birthday

parties, seeing their families grow, witnessing their struggles with visa applications, and watching our children play and grow.

### *Recruitment*

The responses I received from the families that I approached about participating in the study varied from feeling honoured that they were being asked to participate in this study, to being offended that I had dared to ask them to waste their time speaking to me about their private lives. The majority either agreed to participate or declined politely. There were, however, some misunderstandings, particularly with the Japanese women. For example, one Japanese woman who was asked to participate in the study initially agreed to do so. Upon further contact via email, although she continually agreed to participate, she began expressing concern about her in-laws living in England and the consequent difficulty in interviewing them in person. When I reassured her that this would not be a problem, as most of my interviews with kin were being conducted online, I received no response. When I sent her a final email asking her whether or not she would like to participate in the study, she replied in the following way: *“When you sent me the information about your research, I replied and said “NO” politely, but maybe you didn’t understand it!!!”* While this incident was initially somewhat of a shock, causing me to feel both puzzled and a bit frustrated, as Naumann (2011) writes, reflexivity during research is both an intellectual endeavour as well as an emotional one, so this actually became an important lesson for me: even if one is fluent in a language, so much is lost in the subtleties of nonverbal communication, which may in turn be influenced by one’s cultural background (cf Nisbett 2003).

I eventually recruited half of the families from the playgroups, and the remainder through my immersion into the Japanese/British families’ circles and by attending special Japanese events, Japanese church services, and snowball sampling. Snowball sampling was ideal for this study because it allowed me to skip over the challenge of gaining participants’ trust, as someone they already trusted was encouraging them to participate. This variation in recruitment efforts created a diverse sample regarding several factors including number and ages of the children, whether the couple met in Britain or Japan, and their residential location in Edinburgh. Further,

while the playgroups do serve as a major point of connection for the Japanese community, there still exist a number of families outside the playgroups, mostly those whose children are past the playgroup age. During the initial stages of the study, there was some concern that all twelve participant families would be restricted to new parents with young children, since the playgroups were a central part of the study. However, the study eventually diversified through snowball sampling and ended up including a diverse group of families.

### ***Observations***

Ethnographic research tends to develop out of a desire to better understand the world around us, “ways of life of actual people from the ‘inside’, in the contexts of their everyday, lived experiences” (Cook 1997, p128). This study relies heavily on observations of the families in their everyday lives, conducted at three locations: 1) playgroups, where much socialising occurs for the children as well as the mothers; 2) cultural events, where families publicly celebrate holidays; and 3) home, where families interact with one another in a more intimate, private setting.

### ***Playgroup Observations***

I conducted participant observation at three local Japanese playgroups, where I observed and participated as a fellow mother, together with my son, while also using this setting as an opportunity to both immerse myself in this community of mixed families and observe the organic, everyday interactions and conversations between the Japanese mothers and their children, between the Japanese mothers, and between the children themselves. The observations at the playgroups lasted, on average, two hours, and two of the playgroups met biweekly while one of the playgroups met once a month, so in all, I observed approximately ten hours of playgroup sessions a month, for twenty-six months.

My participant observation became an opportunity for me to move between *participating* “deliberately immersing [myself] in its everyday rhythms and routines, developing relationships with people who [showed and told me] what [was] ‘going on’ there” and *observing*, “sitting back and watching activities which unfold[ed] in front of [my] eyes, recording [my] impressions of these activities in field notes,

tallies, drawings, photographs and other forms of material evidence” (Cook 1997, p128). The playgroups were an ideal location for my participant observation because, not only did they allow me to participate with my son, but they also allowed me to interact with mixed families from the “inside.” Nonetheless, there were challenges involved, particularly as my first concern was my son’s safety and care; but in retrospect, these challenges actually further aided me in building rapport with the other mothers, as they saw me struggling alongside them, feeding my baby, changing dirty nappies, and every so often, trying to handle the inevitable tantrums. Finally, by observing both the children and the mothers socialising at the playgroups, I gained further insight into the important role that language and social networks play in the lives of the mixed families.

### *Events Observations*

In an ethnographic study, researchers learn about the people they are studying by immersing themselves in the lives of the participants (e.g. Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, Hume and Mulcock 2004). As such, the participant observation conducted at the local events became an extension of the participant observation at the playgroups, allowing me to become better acquainted with the participant families by attending these special events, including Japanese cultural celebrations, both as a participant, together with my own family, and as a researcher observing the other families.

These events were an ideal opportunity for me to observe, not only the participant families, but also other mixed families in the public sphere. These observations further allowed me to see how and if participant families choose to utilise local cultural public events to celebrate cultural holidays, particularly the Japanese ones, and as mother-children or as a family. Unlike the playgroup observations, I was actually able to take written notes while participating in the events, as my husband usually assisted me with our son. The majority of my notes, however, were based on memory as well as debriefing sessions with my husband that were conducted after each event, in order to produce more thorough, accurate field notes.

The cultural events were much less intensive simply because not many events took place during my two-year fieldwork. As such, three main events are focused on: the annual Tanabata celebration that the local Japanese Consulate organises with the National Museum, which I attended in 2012 and 2013; the annual Easter service that the Japanese Christian Fellowship organises, which I attended in 2012 and 2014; and a special Spring Festival that one of the playgroups organised in 2012. During such events, there were generally no long speeches; instead, the events seemed to focus on cultural exchange, encouraging socialising between the Japanese and the Scottish communities, and for the migrant and mixed families, providing opportunities for the Japanese parent(s) to transmit their culture to their children, extended family, and friends.

### *Home Observations*

Finally, I conducted between one and four home observations per family, with a total of twenty-six observations during my twenty-six month fieldwork. The home observations generally lasted one hour. I realise that home observations are not ideal, since having someone observing a family in and of itself creates an unnatural, artificial setting which could potentially result in the Hawthorne effect, with participants somewhat altering their speech and behaviour because they are being watched (Curry, *et al.* 2009, p1446). Gabb (2008) further explains that this alteration may actually be participants' attempt to 'act up' or 'perform' for the benefit of the researcher or the camera. As such, while home observations may not have allowed me to become a "fly on the wall," the observations did allow me to familiarise myself with the "verbal and non-verbal expressions of intimacy", the family's everyday interactions with one another, and the "mediation of lived experience" (Gabb 2008, p144), which gave me a deeper understanding of the subtle, unintentional ways in which culture is transmitted.

I initially attempted to drive out the unnaturalness of observations by proposing playdates with the families, bringing my son along to their homes and conducting the home observations during that time. Nevertheless, realising that fieldwork is the "purposeful disruption of other people's lives" (England 1994, p85), and because I wanted to include the working parent as well, I decided to conduct the home



observations in the evenings and on weekends. In this way, I was able to, not only observe the whole family together, but also to listen to the family in their natural environment, interacting and communicating with one another. Because one aspect of culture that I focus on is food, and because the dining table is a symbolic and practical part of a family's culture, my home observations centred around the families' sharing anywhere between one and four meals.

Finally, from spending time at the families' homes during the home observations, I was better able to see how the parents' intentions and aspirations are put into practise in the home, amidst their busy, everyday lives. While the families themselves may see these daily, subtle occurrences of cultural transmission as something ordinary and commonplace, it is these very moments that can be most revealing and helpful because, as Murthy (2008, p838) suggests, ethnography is all about telling these everyday social stories. Furthermore, while the adults may have "performed" for me and/or the camera during the home observations, children are perhaps not as capable of "staying in character" so to speak. As a result, while conducted under somewhat controlled environments, the home observations did allow me to observe the "everyday dynamic of family life [leaking] out around the edges of the portrait" (Gabb 2008, p146).

The home observations were made using two distinct methods:

1. in-person observations

For the in-person observations, I would visit the families and sit to the side of their dining table, quietly observing their mealtime and simultaneously taking notes. While this was a bit awkward and unnatural at first, as I made more visits and as the children became more comfortable with me, the observations also become more natural. However, simply by being in their homes, I created a different dynamic, and as such, I was obviously never able to completely become a transparent observer. On a few occasions, in order to make the observations more natural, I was asked by the families to join them on my own (once), with my own son and husband (three times), with my son and husband as well as the family's extended family (once). These experiences allowed me to observe a more relaxed, and in turn

natural atmosphere, where the children were not worried about a researcher watching them, and could instead just focus on sharing a meal with a family friend.

## 2. virtual observations

While the majority of the home observations (17) were conducted in person, nine were conducted virtually, using Skype<sup>8</sup>. The families and I would both log on to our Skype accounts, and after a quick face-to-face greeting, I would turn my camera off (so as to create a less intrusive atmosphere) and observe the family having dinner through the webcam. The virtual observations, like the in-person observations, generally lasted one hour, and I took notes during the observations. Initially, I gave families the option of virtual observations in order to encourage them to allow me to observe more of their mealtimes, as well as encourage the “fly no the wall” mentality; yet this was not so. Instead, in some ways, it seems that the webcam may have actually further distracted the family, particularly the younger children, who wanted to see themselves on camera. Having said this, no observation can truly be uncensored, and as Gabb (2008, p146) points out, observations, even with all of their limitations, can still depict a “conscious crafting of family and relationships ... reveal[ing] a lot about how individuals operated within the context of family.” A final challenge with virtual observations was that my perspective of the mealtimes was controlled by the participants, since they set the camera angle that I viewed them from. Nonetheless, all of the observations were valuable to my data collection because they allowed me to see the different family members interacting with one another in a somewhat natural setting, around the dining table, sharing a meal.

The observations of both parents and children at the playgroups, events, and in the home, were conducted for the purpose of observing the families in a more natural way. While this did indeed seem to serve its purpose in regard to the playgroups and events, as I was able to conduct participant observation; in regard to the home observations, this issue of naturalness was more challenging, as the families were more able to “perform” in regard to their choice of food, language used among the

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<sup>8</sup> A video-calling software program that allows individuals to connect via voice and image through the Internet.

family members, etc. Regardless, all of the observations conducted allowed me to better understand how mixed families *do family*, and assisted me in better understanding, not only *why* and *how* parents choose to raise their children in mixed households, but also in how children *can* and *do* exercise their own agency and respond to their parents' attempts at transmitting culture. Finally, while I arranged my observations around three locations, I also had the opportunity to participate in several birthday parties, farewell parties, playdates, and small, intimate gatherings with the Japanese women, all of which helped me to immerse myself more deeply into the lives of the mixed families.

### ***Interviews***

While observations are critical to gaining an understanding of the families; to gain further insight, I conducted face-to-face, semi-structured, in-depth interviews, which allowed for the "exploration of individual experiences and perceptions in great detail" (Curry, *et al.* 2009). Through the interviews, I was able to supplement my observations and give both mothers and fathers, as well as extended family members, the opportunity to discuss mixedness, and in particular, the choices they make regarding *how* and *why* they transmit or withhold different aspects of their cultural heritages from the mixed children.

### ***In-Depth Interviewing***

I used in-depth interviewing, which Valentine (1997) finds helpful in exploring issues more freely and deeply. At the same time, I also utilised the four steps that McCracken (1988) references in his Long Interview Method.

1. The first step that I took, as McCracken (1988) advises, involves an exhaustive, critical **review of the literature**. This gave me a firm foundation on the current arguments and theories in the field. Because of the exploratory nature of my research topic, it was during this step that I also began to realise that the literature found in the field of sociology would not suffice, and I began to interact with scholarship from other fields, including but not limited to anthropology, cultural studies, migration studies, and psychology.

2. The second step that I took was a **self-examination** of the intersection between *personal experience* and *research topic*. In my case, this meant examining my own experience with mixedness along with my study of mixed families. The self-examination step coincided with the feminist ethnographic approach, which Craven (2010, p x) describes as having the feminist researcher “situate their own background, experience, and commitments with reference to those who participate in their research...” This is also the step where I, in the same vein as McKay (2002), decided to include autobiographical information in my research, with the hope that it would allow both the participants as well as the reader to be aware of my background and how this influenced, not only my decision to conduct such research, but also my data collection, and to some extent, even the analysis and writing-up processes.
  
3. The third step is where I began to carefully consider the actual **interview process and develop questions** for the interviews. To prepare for the interview Valentine (1997, pp118-122) advises researchers to devise a sort of roadmap, a guide with bullet points and themes/questions (see Appendix II). This roadmap provided space for me to stay on topic, but also to delve into the conversation, thus allowing the interviews to become more fluid, transitioning naturally according to different interests, experiences, and views of the interviewee (Valentine 1997, p111). The interview guides were also helpful when interviewees were somewhat unsure of what to say, as I could prompt them with specific questions. Further, when developing the actual interview questions, research questions were consulted, and an attempt was made to create an open space where interviewees were encouraged to “share as much information as possible, unselfconsciously and in [their] own words” (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006, pp316-317), particularly regarding their thoughts and experiences on mixedness. Finally, while asking questions is necessary, I tried to focus on listening to the interviewees because often they bring up new topics and themes that require follow-up questions, thus making interviews a “stimulating process” indeed (Valentine 1997, p121).

4. The fourth and final step I took involved the **analysis of the data**. It is in this final step that everything seemed to come together: how the participants and their families' first-hand experiences and stories are similar to and/or differentiate from previous studies and theories, how my own experiences and biases may have influenced the data collection, and of course, how patterns and themes surfaced from reviewing and analysing interview transcripts. A more detailed discussion on the analysis follows in this chapter.

### ***Interviewees***

In order to paint a more complete picture of the mixed families, I decided to interview three members per family. This included the mother, the father, and an extended family member.

Regarding the interviews with the parents, I secured interviews with both parents in all families, resulting in 24 interviews. The interviews took place between May 2012 and January 2013, and were conducted face-to-face, in the participants' homes. I conducted separate interviews with the couples because of the sensitive, personal information discussed during the interviews. This method was used successfully in research with mixed families by Okita (2002) and Jackson (2009), both of whom demonstrate that individual interviews create more relaxed environments where participants feel more comfortable sharing. Another reason why I chose to conduct separate interviews is because many times, even in ethnographic research, "there remains a strong allegiance to traditionally gendered role definitions ... a tendency of the father (when present) to dominate the responses in research interviews" (McNamara 2009, p171). Even with separate interviews though, I did encounter some challenges when both partners were home and there would be some hesitancy and long, awkward silences when the partner not being interviewed was in hearing distance of the partner being interviewed.

For the extended family members' interviews, one of the biggest challenges I anticipated was geographic because, while the families in the study reside in Edinburgh, the extended family members live anywhere from a few miles to several thousands of miles away. As such, I was prepared for a low response rate. In the

end, only two families were unable to provide an extended family member for me to interview, and three families offered two extended family members for me to interview, so in total, I was able to conduct thirteen interviews with kin. Because of geographic distances, the extended family members were given three interview options: in person, through video (Skype), or through email. While I preferred face-to-face interviews, in order to gather as many interviews as possible, I remained flexible and realistic, with the opinion that a “balanced combination of physical and digital ethnography [i.e. email interviews] ... gives researchers a larger and more exciting array of methods to tell stories...” (Murthy 2008, p839). These additional options were especially helpful in gaining access to the Japanese kin. In the end, six interviews were conducted via Skype, five in person, and two through email. Additionally, while I had initially worried about geographic distance being a challenge to overcome when interviewing kin, the challenge had more to do with estranged relationships and extended family members simply being nonexistent.

### ***Interview Locations***

To create a relaxed, safe atmosphere for the participants, where possible, I conducted the interviews in their homes. This was true for all of the interviews with parents, and regarding the five kin interviews that took place in person, two were conducted in their homes, two in the mixed families’ home, and one in a neutral location. Interviews in participant’s own home were strongly encouraged, as they provide a safe and familiar ‘territory’ (Valentine 1997, p117), where participants feel relaxed and comfortable sharing their experiences while allowing me to “grasp ‘reality’ in its daily accomplishment” (Silverman 2005). An added benefit to conducting the interviews at the participant’s home is that it allowed me to spend more time in their private sphere, observing daily occurrences, including customs such as being asked to take my shoes off when entering the home (a Japanese tradition), as well as offering me a *cuppa* and biscuits (a British tradition). These observations contributed to making “good ethnography [which] effectively communicates a social story, drawing the audience into the daily lives of the respondents” (Murthy 2008, p838). This is particularly true for a study on the intergenerational transmission of culture because it is usually the “humdrum of

everyday lived culture..." (Brah 1996, p192) that form habits which are rarely identified as cultural, but nonetheless, tend to be passed down to the next generation. Finally, I did encounter some challenges while conducting interviews in the homes of the participants, and these included interruptions by other family members as well as the constant background noise of a busy home. Yet upon reflection, this also proved to be valuable data on the families' everyday home life.

### ***Interview Content***

The interviews covered several topics and themes, but focused mainly on the following points:

- background narratives
  - stories from their own childhood, meeting their partners, and their own children
  - childrearing/parenting experiences
  - cultural differences, division of labour regarding the transmission of culture
- home life
  - décor, food choices, cultural/traditional/religious festivals, media preferences
- language
  - language usage within the family, linguistic goals, communication challenges
- social networks
  - personal friends, children's friends, family friends
- extended family
  - relationship with own kin, with in-laws, children's relationship with extended family
- religion
  - religion in home and in culture

### ***Interview Structure***

All interviews began with, as Valentine (1997, p118-119) suggests, a general descriptive question: "Tell me about yourself." This, in turn, signalled to the

interviewees that this was a conversation, and that I wanted them to feel relaxed and able to speak freely. The rest of the interview was semi-structured with open-ended questions, allowing participants to interpret the questions themselves and voice their opinions freely, instead of being restricted to typical survey questions with binary responses of “yes” or “no” and/or filling in the blanks with short answers. As we began to develop rapport, I was also able to begin asking more sensitive, difficult questions. Finally, to conclude the interviews, I tried to end on the following open-ended question: “Is there anything else you’d like to add?” This was especially important, as it signalled to the interviewees that, had we not touched on a certain topic, or had they forgotten to mention something, they were being given a final opportunity to bring it up.

Two different interview guides were used during the interviews, one for the parents and one for the extended family members (see Appendix II). In the end, as envisioned, my interviews were laid-back and relaxed, resembling more of a conversation between friends, instead of a formal interview between researcher and participant. I found the interview guides to be very helpful as they aided me in staying on track and remembering key themes and questions that needed to be addressed. The interviews ran for approximately 60-120 minutes. Notes were taken during the interviews, and the interviews were also audio-recorded (with consent of the interviewee) to guarantee accuracy during transcribing, not only regarding accuracy in words, but also in capturing other sounds that sometimes hint at the interviewee’s hesitancy, sarcasm, and humour. Furthermore, an additional advantage of audio-recording the interviews was that it allowed me to focus more on the interviews, in having a conversation, since I did not have to constantly be trying to capture their quotes verbatim, by hand.

### ***Languages Used in Interviews***

The interviews with the British fathers and their extended family were conducted in English; the interviews with the Japanese mothers were conducted predominantly in English (with exceptions for words/phrases that could not be literally translated); and the interviews with the Japanese extended family were conducted in Japanese. I am a native speaker of English and fluent in Japanese; therefore, I conducted all the



interviews myself and later transcribed them verbatim. However, because I am a heritage language learner of Japanese and my knowledge of the culture (e.g. idioms/phrases) is not quite at the native level, when necessary, I sought assistance from personal contacts who are bicultural and bilingual. Nonetheless, the interviews themselves were all conducted by myself, in order to ensure confidentiality and consistency in the data collection.

## **Analysis**

### ***Fieldwork***

Notes from my fieldwork (participant observation at the playgroups, event observations, and home observations) were typed up on the same day as the observations and were kept in a folder with date, time, location (i.e. playgroup, home, or event), and type of observation (i.e. in-person or virtual) clearly marked. Following the conclusion of my fieldwork, I re-visited my field notes and highlighted various items that stood out, including themes and patterns and the corresponding chapters that I wanted to reference them in. Analysing my field notes gave me an opportunity to search for meaning behind what the participants said and did, as well as patterns and structures within those meanings. The field notes were especially valuable because they provided glimpses of the families' everyday lives, as well as quotes from different family members that I could later directly transfer to the chapters.

I did not use any software programmes for the analysis of the observational notes; instead, I printed the notes out and scrutinised them with colour pencils and highlighters. In addition, the field notes were again referenced when I needed further evidence for certain topics. For example, while a parent may have claimed to be raising their children bilingually, notes from home observations of their communicating with their children around the dinner table gave me a better picture of how language is actually used. While my field notes were indeed valuable data, the interviews provided the bulk of the data, as described below.

### ***Interviews***

The interviews were all transcribed (and translated, if necessary) by myself, soon after the actual interviews took place. Following the conclusion of my fieldwork, I revisited all of my interviews and listened to the audio-recordings while following along with the transcripts. This exercise allowed me to, not only check for discrepancies, but to also begin to locate patterns and themes that stood out.

The twenty-four interviews with the parents and the thirteen interviews with the extended family members were then imported into the NVivo software program to assist me with the organisation and management of the large amount of data. All interview transcripts were then analysed and coded appropriately. The initial coding process was very basic, emerging mostly from the interview guides. Following this, I further reviewed the interviews manually, as I did with my field notes and began to organise them according to different themes and topics, while simultaneously matching them with the appropriate chapters. The coding process was tedious, yet exciting, as I began to see the common threads and patterns that brought together the different families' experiences.

### ***Ethics***

While ethics were clearly discussed with the twelve families, I did not discuss ethics at great length with each individual that I came into contact with during my fieldwork. However, I did inform everyone I spoke with that I was conducting fieldwork for a study on mixed families. Jamieson and colleagues (2011, p8) find that ethics surrounding research on the 'private sphere' and family issues are particularly crucial because data can contain details about family 'troubles.' Thus, I sought to reassure participant families about what would happen during the research, how the interviews and observations would later be used, and how everything would remain confidential and later anonymised. As such, particularly because this is a qualitative research project and I was working directly with individuals regarding private topics, I carefully considered and outlined the following procedure regarding ethics for the twelve participant families:

- 1) I notified all potential participants that I met at the playgroups of my research intentions.
- 2) Once families agreed to participate in my research project, I provided them with an Information Sheet (see Appendix I) that contained necessary information regarding the research project.
- 3) I then asked each participant to sign a Consent Form (See Appendix I), acknowledging that their participation was completely voluntary, confidential, and anonymous; and that they were free to withdraw from the project at any time, for whatever reason.
- 4) Given the small sample size as well as the small, close-knit Japanese community in Edinburgh, protecting anonymity was a major challenge. Thus, every attempt to anonymise was made by giving pseudonyms to everything, including the playgroups, geographic locations, and individuals. Nonetheless, some playgroups and geographic locations may still be identifiable, but because they are not particularly sensitive, I did not foresee any ethical problems. Further, whilst some of the playgroups and geographical locations may still be identifiable to knowledgeable insiders, the foreseeable ethical risks of such identification are not deemed to be significant enough to remove all possible identifiers from the thesis. Finally, regarding the pseudonyms, the playgroup pseudonyms came from names of Japanese groups that I had attended as a child in California. The geographic locations, although actually based in and around Edinburgh, were changed to neighbourhoods surrounding Oxford, as I was familiar with this area. And finally, participants were all given pseudonyms: all the Japanese women (including maternal grandmothers) were given the names of my Japanese female relatives. Pseudonyms for the men and the British kin, as well as the twelve participant families' surnames came from a collaborative effort by a participant child and myself, with the child providing me with the most popular male names and surnames from

their schools and Facebook. The children did not have pseudonyms since they were not interviewed, and when they do make an appearance in my thesis, they are referred to by their place in the family (e.g. older son).

### ***Non-Native English Speakers***

Because English was a second language for many of the participants, an attempt was made to write all documents at approximately the reading level of Year 7 (11-12 years of age), in non-patronising language. Offers to translate documents were made, though none were accepted. Furthermore, the idea of writing to a wider audience, of refusing to make use of “unnecessary convoluted and pretentious language in the name of theory” (Jamieson 2011, p135) extended beyond the documents and into my general thesis-writing style, as I hope that these findings will help future mixed families, regardless of their command of the English language.

### ***Children***

Research involving children tends to be a complicated matter, as they constitute a vulnerable population (cf Hood, *et al.* 1996, Thomas and O’Kane 1998). In the field of sociology specifically, ethics surrounding research involving children is extensive (e.g. Christensen 2004, Punch 2002). In the present study, although I did not focus exclusively on children, they do play a significant part, particularly the older ones. However, because my interaction with the children always included their parent(s), and because most of the children were quite young and were pre-literate, I did not obtain consent from the children directly. Instead, one parent, on behalf of their family, signed one consent form. Having said this, when I first came into contact with the children, many of the parents had not informed their children of their part in my study; consequently, I was often greeted by the children with “Oh, it’s her again. Who is she?” These forms of enquiry, as Christensen (2004, p166) suggests, actually capture a key process of research, the wider notions of who we are to each other. In my case, such innocent questions allowed me to introduce, not only myself, but also, with the permission of their parents, to briefly explain my study to the children directly and help them understand the situation. These brief interactions with the children, which were somewhat inevitable, as this was an ethnographic

study, resulted in opportunities for me to interact with the children. In particular, the home observations were valuable as I was often able to interact with the children in their own spaces, where they were relaxed and eager to converse with me. In retrospect, as I consider which children I was able to interact with the most, it seems that this was a mirror of my relationship with their parents, especially the mothers. In other words, the more rapport I was able to build with the adult gatekeeper in each family, the more opportunities I had to interact with their children (cf Punch 2002). Finally, because I did not formally set out to speak to the children directly, it was somewhat difficult to, as Valentine (1999, p146) put it, “carve out a ‘private’ niche” to talk to the children alone, without being interrupted or overheard by adults,” yet at the same time, perhaps because of my insider-status into their experience as mixed children, or because the children saw their parents interacting with me, or because I communicated with them in an egalitarian way, as opposed to “child-friendly” methods (Punch 2002), the children often wanted to speak to me about various issues, including aspects of mixedness. This is in line with Mauthner (1997) and Thomas and O’Kane’s (1998) findings, where they suggests that if space is made for the children to express themselves, children are indeed able to express themselves, their views, and their experiences articulately and clearly. Finally, any observations or conversations involving the children remained confidential and were not discussed with anyone, including the parents, and were later anonymised.

### **Anonymity**

All data, including interview transcripts and home observation notes were identified by a unique number, to ensure anonymity, and were not made available to anyone except my supervisors. Further, maintaining anonymity between husbands and wives was particularly difficult, because as Jamieson and colleagues (2011, p5) put it, “... family members often have to give explanations to each other about what they are doing and not all research topics make for comfortable accounts.” However, because I wanted all participants to feel safe in sharing their stories and experiences with me, I declined to discuss any interviews (besides their own) with participants, including those of their partners.

## **Conclusions**

### ***Challenges***

In the present study, one major challenge encountered was undertaking research in the area of families with an objective lens, particularly because all individuals are influenced by their direct, personal experience with their own families. For this reason, emotions are easily provoked and researchers may become “too prone to argue about what is right, rather than coolly to demonstrate what is” (Goode, 1964, p3). By using an ethnographic, qualitative, feminist approach, I acknowledged this challenge early on, put aside my preconceived notions of what a mixed family should look like, and focused instead on each individual family.

Another challenge that I encountered was an emotional attachment to the participants, as described by Bellas (1999, p104-105): “Despite the emphasis on emotional detachment and neutrality, researchers can become deeply involved in their subjects’ lives...” Again, the qualitative, feminist ethnographic approach assisted me with this challenge because I was able to examine myself before the interviews, acknowledge my prejudices and biases, and then “listen deeply to and/or to observe as closely as possible the beliefs, the values ... and structural forces that underwrite the socially patterned behaviours [of participants]” (Forsey 2010, p567). Furthermore, although emotional detachment and neutrality are traditionally considered necessary in social science research, I believe that, as many other researchers involved in qualitative research are finding (e.g. Larner 1990), emotional connections with participants do not hinder research, they actually aid in creating a trusting environment where participants are more willing to speak because they are sharing their thoughts and experiences with someone like them.

One of the most common challenges in qualitative research comes from the small sample size and the consequent difficulty in generalising knowledge gained from the research. In other words, explicit generalisations that are common among quantitative studies with large sample sizes are difficult to reach with a small sample size because the interviews and observations are fluid and individual in nature, which means that, although similar studies may be conducted and yield similar results, replication is impossible (Valentine 1997, p111). Regardless, Payne

and Williams (2005, p296) emphasise that qualitative studies do produce *moderatum generalisations*, which “resemble the modest, pragmatic generalisations drawn from personal experience which, by bringing a semblance of order and consistency to social interaction, make everyday life possible.” I was particularly keen on emphasising a qualitative approach because it allowed me to “enter the subjective world of other people and groups through interviews and rich descriptions [from participant observation], which is not achieved through quantitative methods” (Jourdan 2006, p330). Finally, having a small sample allowed me to “work longer, and with greater care, with a few people than more superficially with many of them” (McCracken 1988, p17), causing valuable data to be collected as a result of strong relationships with the families as individuals and, to some extent, as “co-researchers” (McNamara 2009) since I lived among them while analysing the data and often casually discussed literature and issues surrounding mixedness with the participants. Finally, because research in the field of mixed families, particularly studies that focus on both parents’ perspective of childrearing and the socialisation of mixed children are still quite isolated, this exploratory study, which drew an intimate portrait of Japanese/British mixed families, will contribute to the better understanding of mixed families specifically, and because the intergenerational transmission of culture is not unique to mixed families, perhaps to family studies in general.

Tisdall (2011, p46) describes the complicated negotiations that surround fieldwork with people, including initiating, sustaining, and leaving research relationships. In my experience, I encountered perhaps the most challenging part of my fieldwork at the conclusion, when frequent communication ceased. I have, however, made an effort to stay in touch with most of the families, somewhat naturally transitioning from research relationships to normal relationships. Furthermore, as an attempt to keep the participant families informed and involved in the present study, I distributed a briefing that summarised the main findings from the study and presented it to both the mixed families and, if applicable, their extended family who also contributed and were interested in the study.

### ***Limitations***

An initial limitation regarding the methodology used in the present study was the lack of diversity in the participant couples (i.e. only heterosexual couples made up of Japanese women and British men participated, as opposed to British women/Japanese men couples and homosexual couples). While this happened due to practical reasons (i.e. I could not find such couples), it also mirrors the greater society, as it is generally still rare for Japanese men to marry Western women, and even more rare to find Japanese/British homosexual couples.

A second limitation in the present study was the language barrier that sometimes arose during interviews with the Japanese women. While all participants were given the choice of doing the interviews in either Japanese or English, the majority opted to speak in English for the most part, using Japanese when necessary, particularly with certain untranslatable words. While the women may thus have experienced some difficulty in expressing themselves, it was a good opportunity for me to see how the women communicate daily, as they live in an English-dominant society and tend to converse with their British kin and husbands in English.

A third limitation, but one that is perhaps inevitable, is regarding the home observations because, as previously mentioned, having someone observing in and of itself creates an unnatural, artificial setting. However, because children do tend to have tantrums and speak their mind regardless of who is present, I believe I was able to get somewhat of a realistic glimpse of the families' everyday lives.

A final limitation is my naivety regarding the power dynamics that persisted between myself as the researcher and the participant families. Initially somewhat idealistic, I believed that, through a feminist, ethnographic approach, I would be able to somehow eliminate the power dynamics between myself and the participants. Yet as Jamieson and colleagues (2011) describe, sometimes it is only after we leave the research field that we are able to see how, regardless of our efforts, issues of power remain throughout the research process. For myself, the power distance seemed most significant during the write-up process, in the re-telling of the participants' stories because, as McKay (2002, p193) reflects, "Writing up the



research seems to be the key act of exclusion that recreates the visitor / friends divide into researcher / subjects." In the end, I accepted my responsibility as the storyteller, learning to sensitively and carefully weave appropriate data together while telling other people's stories; and at the same time, to be sensitive and exclude possible quotes or observations that could potentially be harmful to any of the participants; and finally, in the midst of the rich set of data, find my own narrative because this study was as much a personal journey as it was a sociological investigation.

# Chapter One

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## *Doing Family: Exploring the Everyday Lived Culture*

### **Overview**

Throughout Europe, the family is undergoing social, demographic, and ideological change (Stafford and Asquith 1995, p2). This, in turn, has led social scientists to study family using a wide variety of research, theorising, and criticism (Lull 1990, p146). In sociology of the family specifically, the definition of family has slowly transitioned from focusing on biological links and being family to focusing on actively doing family (e.g. Davidoff, *et al.* 1999, Gubrium and Holstein 2006, Marsh and Arber 1992, Morgan 1996), on “the ordinary, everyday actions that people do, insofar as they are intended to have some effect on another family member” (Cheal 2002, p12). As an analytical tool, the concept of family practises (Morgan 1996, 2011) has been popularised, emphasising the active and doing, the everyday, the regular, the fluidity and fuzziness, and the linking between history and biography.

This chapter focuses on mixed families’ everyday lives, “from the ‘inside,’ in the contexts of their ... lived experiences” (Cook 1997, p128). Families’ everyday experiences are important to examine because, as Becker and Charles (2006, p103) state, it is here, amidst the bustle of family life, where meaning is found. Further, families’ everyday lives, as Morgan (1996) finds, also tend to be the key site for the reproduction of structural relations (e.g. class, gender, ethnicity). More specifically, it has been found that within everyday family experiences, the parents play a major role in children’s socialisation (Bisin and Verdier 2000, 2001, Grusec 2011, Rinaldi and Howe 2012), which emphasises that early experiences in the family, particularly with parents, shape and influence the future values and beliefs of children (Min, *et al.* 2012). Further, the family home is the “place where children learn to live in and

contribute to society” (Burt 1995, p15), and particularly for mixed children, it is the place where they learn different aspects of their cultural heritages including norms, values, and practises. In addition, the mixed family’s everyday lives can become an important space for the identity development of mixed children, as it is where mothers and fathers negotiate a sense of belonging for them while also “dealing with society’s reactions to difference” (Caballero, *et al.* 2008, p53). At the same time, the mixed families’ everyday experiences can also highlight the complexities that Japanese/British mixed families face in negotiating different “cultural and relational identities and ... boundaries because each parent may have different cultural backgrounds and expectations” (Moriizumi 2011, p91). In order to better understand such complexities, this first chapter explores the mixed families’ family practices, how they are actively doing family in their everyday lives, with specific sections in the chapter devoted to home life, religion, leisure, and rituals.

## **Studying the Family**

### ***The Home***

The first aspect of everyday life that I will focus on is the mixed families’ home. Qian (2004) found that parents in mixed families tend to have a strong influence on their children’s identities by choosing where they live<sup>9</sup>. While factors, obviously including socioeconomic class, influence residential location, for mixed families in particular, choice of residential location often has to do with the parents’ desire to see their children grow up in racially and ethnically diverse areas, as opposed to predominantly homogenous neighbourhoods (Caballero, *et al.* 2008, p57-58). This was true even for white mothers of mixed children, who chose deliberately chose neighbourhoods where other families like theirs were present (Caballero 2010), even when this meant prioritising diversity over other negative neighbourhood elements. As such, the choice of neighbourhood can play a significant role in the upbringing of mixed children, yet the actual home may be equally, or perhaps even more important because it is more than a “backdrop to family relationships; it is part of an interconnected network of people, places, and things” (Stevenson and Prout 2013, p151).

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<sup>9</sup> Discussion surrounding residential location continues in Chapter 5.

Family homes are typically considered the “structural properties of dwellings [that] provide the affordance for the complex set of activities related to ‘homemaking’”... (Giorgi and Fasulo 2013, p129); yet for migrants, the new homes they create abroad can also come to represent a haven from their new surroundings, as well as a reminder of their origin culture (Giorgi and Fasulo 2013, p129). As a result, while most people may see moving houses as a common, everyday experience; for migrants, moving and recreating *home* in a foreign land can be a much more significant experience:

*Moving homes involves an active engagement with its material cultures — photographs, memorabilia, furniture, and so on. Moving home also involves building and inhabiting a built form that reflects one’s journey — of movement and settlement across borders, territories and spaces ... Home, both in its material and metaphorical forms thus becomes fundamental to migrants’ experiences of belonging, negotiating, and adapting to new spaces and places (Datta 2009, p4).*

The way in which migrants create new homes, through the pictures they hang on the wall or the cultural customs they continue to follow, can become part of the intergenerational transmission of culture. For the mixed families, the situation may be somewhat more complicated. Twine (2010, p125-126), in her study of black/white families, found that parents tended to purposefully design black-centred home interiors with the intent of “respond to the social isolation and impoverished visual representations of blacks ... [which was] important for their children’s self-esteem...” In this section, we will explore whether or not the Japanese/British families also purposefully create Japanese-centred home interiors as a form of “racial literacy” (Twine 2010) or whether they remain more concerned with their differences (both cultural and personal) as they create a home for their mixed family. Finally, because the domestic sphere has traditionally been “the woman’s space,” we will examine whether “reproductive labour”<sup>10</sup> (Moser 1989) extends to responsibilities associated with the transmission of culture within homemaking.

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<sup>10</sup> Defined as the sexual division of labour which gives women primary responsibility “not only for domestic work involving childcare, family health and food provision, but also, for the community managing of housing and basic services, along with the capacity to earn an income through productive work” (Moser 1989, p1803).

## **Religion**

The second aspect of everyday experiences that I would like to discuss is religion. The parents in the study come from different religious backgrounds; thus, they must learn to negotiate which aspects of their religions, if any, they want to pass on to their children. In literature surrounding mixed-faith families, it seems that the intergenerational transmission of religion is determined by the intensity of the parents' religious practises, their investment in the children's "religious capital," and their desire to transmit religion to their children (Patacchini and Zenou 2011, p2). Much scholarship surrounding the transmission of religion has thus emphasised the role that family in general plays in the transmission of religion. More specifically, Voas and Storm (2012) have found that both parents sharing a religion significantly increases their ability to pass their religion on to their children. Yet in mixed-faith families, Caballero and colleagues (2008, p39) found that mothers generally "assume the task of overseeing faith instruction or knowledge, even where this was not their own or their original religious background." As such, perhaps this idea of the "reproductive labour" (Moser 1989) of women mentioned in the previous section can be extended to the area of religion as well.

Further, Voas and Storm (2012, p378) suggest that family is the most important source of influence on religion and religiosity, more so than peers, schools, places of worship, and other institutions. In mixed-faith families, it seems that the situation is somewhat different, with school being the most significant source of religious influence on children's faith (Arweck and Nesbitt 2010, p41), encouraging them to carry a more pluralistic and tolerant view of different religious beliefs and practises. It is therefore somewhat ironic that, as Caballero and colleagues (2008) point out, their study found parents encouraging a single approach when it comes to religion, although they encourage pluralism in other aspects of life. In the present study, because Japanese culture tends to be Buddhist, while British culture has traditionally been Christian, it will be interesting to see how the parents have negotiated their different religious upbringings and how this has affected the role of religion in their children's lives.

## **Leisure**

The third aspect of everyday lived culture that I will be examining is leisure:

**television**, which Castells (1996, p333-334) describes as almost a constant background presence in our lives, and **enrichment activities**, which are considered an important aspect of family life (e.g. Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014, Vincent and Ball 2007).

Studies surrounding couples' television watching habits have emphasised a gender divide: "The data reveal that men have power over women in heterosexual relationships ... [making] joint television watching ... hardly an egalitarian experience" (Walker 1996, p820). Further, Gershuny (2000) found that men spend more time in passive leisure activities (e.g. watching television), yet the most significant factor influencing children's television viewing time seems to be maternal television viewing time (Kourlaba, *et al.* 2009, p222). In the case of the mixed families, while I did not specifically look at children's television viewing time, it will be interesting to see whether they tend to join either and/or both of their parents in front of the television, whether television viewing is more of a solitary activity, and whether or not television is used as a form of cultural transmission. This idea of television programmes used as a tool for the transmission of culture comes from McCullagh's (2002, p149) suggestion that television can promote and reinforce, as well as play down values, lifestyles, and modes of behaviour. As such, we will explore if parents in mixed families also use British and/or Japanese television programming to share and transmit their cultures and preferences to their children.

Regarding enrichment activities, we refer to Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson's (2014) description:

*diverse sports opportunities (from archery, to football, martial arts, swimming, etc.), uniformed organisations (e.g., Brownies/Cubs), and cultural activities (including chess, dance, drama, languages, and music classes) [offering] children the opportunity to learn new skills beyond the standard education curriculum (pp614-615).*

Further, enrichment activities have been found to positively affect children in several aspects, by providing a space for their development, building their human and social capital while also improving their educational outcomes (Mahoney, *et al.* 2009), and encouraging new friendships (Schaefer, *et al.* 2011, p1151). At the same time, peer homophily (Kandel 1978) seems to strongly influence children's choice of activity, with friends tending to participate in similar activities (Simpkins, *et al.* 2012). Another factor affecting participation in enrichment activities is the socioeconomic status of the family (cf Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014, p624), with Vincent and Ball (2007) suggesting that enrichment activities may be part of the middle-class parents' strategy for class reproduction. In a similar way, we will explore if mixed parents, particularly those with older children, encourage specific enrichment activities strategically to transmit culture, or if enrichment activities are simply seen as fun activities that children themselves choose.

### ***Rituals***

While homemaking, religion, television habits, and enrichment activities are all important aspects of everyday family life, in the final section, the focus shifts somewhat to more infrequent activities: rituals. Rosenthal and Marshall (1988, p671) defined *ritual* as "a pattern of prescribed formal behaviour, pertaining to some specific event, occasion, or situation, which tends to be repeated over again." Rituals are an important aspect of doing family because, particularly when children are born, couples must negotiate (and often re-negotiate) with one another "what family practise or set of practises to adopt, which traditions [are] better or nicer" (Mason and Muir 2013, p616). For Japanese/British families, the situation becomes more complicated because, not only do their home countries have different holidays on the calendar, but they also have different traditions and ways of celebrating special days.

In Britain, there are two types of holidays: bank holidays, which tend to be associated with time off from work and school, and public holidays, such as Easter and Boxing Day, which tend to be associated more with custom and tradition. On the other hand, in Japan, according to Ashby (2013, p264), the traditional Japanese holidays, with their special meanings and purposes, could not meet certain new

needs and values of modern Japanese people post-war. For this reason, imported holidays, such as Christmas, as well as the observance and/or celebration of special days, including Mother's Day and Valentine's Day, were introduced. In addition to holidays highlighted on the calendars, there are also more personal, private celebrations, such as weddings and funerals, and more specific cultural and religious celebrations, including christenings in Britain, and somewhat of the equivalent *shichi go san* in Japan. Traditional celebrations within families can play an important role in how families stay connected and do family, yet it may also be the other way around, with family actually being the "refuge of stability and continuity in a world where change seems otherwise inevitable" (Mason and Muir 2013, 617). Regardless, the celebration of holidays as a family can influence the lives of children and their familial identity:

*Families are the most critical site in this process of inclusion and exclusion where loyalties are shaped through habits and rituals. Ceremonies attached to rites of passage such as christenings, weddings or funerals join people together and heighten their awareness of themselves as a group (Davidoff, et al. 1999, p91).*

Rituals can thus be an important tool for the intergenerational transmission of culture. However, it seems that the burden surrounding rituals remains largely on the woman, the traditional *kinkeeper* who takes it upon herself to maintain contact with, and then organise and host family gatherings (Rosenthal 1985, p969). More recently, Friedman and Weissbrod (2004, p283) found that, although women are still more likely to take primary responsibility for maintaining family rituals, both men and women report similar levels regarding ritual meaningfulness. Mirroring this involvement, Mason and Muir (2013, p615) found that, although men are still not taking primary responsibility surrounding rituals, they were becoming more actively involved in different aspects of kinkeeping, perhaps realising that maintaining familial and cultural traditions and rituals should not be the responsibility of a single person.

### **The Home**

In this section, the mixed family's homes are explored, with particular emphasis on the inside of their homes because, as Carsten (2004, p37) suggests, it is often here



that kinship is made. It is also here that the gender divide remains strong, particularly in Japan, where women became housewives in the process of modernisation (Ochiai 2014, p216), taking on the responsibility of, not only housekeeping, but also homemaking. Further, for the women in mixed families, there may be an additional burden of expectations to transmit culture through how they choose to decorate their homes, as well as how they manage the natural home environment with individual family members' contributions.

### ***Home Décor***

#### ***Women's Space***

Interviews with the couples regarding the domestic sphere hinted at a subtle perpetuation of the Japanese familial model and the equivalent western male-breadwinner ideology, both of which emphasise and perpetuate the division of labour according to traditional gender stereotypes (e.g. Sanchez and Thomson 1997, Beagan, *et al.* 2008, van Hooff 2011). When asked about the interior of his home, for example, David McGregor immediately credits his wife Risa<sup>11</sup>:

*I think, you know — it's very much Risa's! I mean, I'm a very tidy person, very orderly, but ... I think she just makes the house look so nice ... Aesthetics. Wherever we've lived, she's always made the home look really nice, and there is probably a bit of a conscious blend of — well, I'm not sure if it's conscious or not, but obviously she likes Japanese things ... We've got some nice antique Japanese chests and things in the other rooms as well. So yeah, I think it just reflects her, her personality really. Very little input from me, I'm afraid! ... I don't really — I don't really do too much there!*

Women thus become responsible for making their homes “look so nice,” while also incorporating their personal preferences, which often coincide with their cultural background. While some women assume sole responsibility for this task, in other families, neither partner seems concerned about how their home looks, as Colin Hamilton succinctly put it:

*We pay no attention to the décor at all, in this house! Uh, so Christ knows what it reflects, uh — yeah, it's a rented house, and neither my wife nor me*

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<sup>11</sup> Pseudonyms were used for all participants. See Ethics section in Introduction chapter for more details.

*have never, ever been kind of interested in ornaments or décor or making the house look good. It's lived in, it's functional, so décor's definitely a no.*

As such, while there were families who considered home décor the woman's responsibility, and families where it was no one's responsibility; in most families, both partners contributed.

### *Contributions from Men*

In particular, British men were often found actively participating in creating visual "landscape representations" of Japan inside their homes (cf Tolia-Kelly 2004), not always to transmit the Japanese culture to their children, but more so to make their migrants wives feel at home. Junko McLeod, who shares a home with her husband Adam and son elaborates:

*I think yeah, people can feel a bit of Japanese taste here as well. I'm not that bothered about bringing in Japanese things, but Adam likes it so. Like this chair in kind of Japanese-ish pattern [points to flower pattern on couch] ... it's a bit more like Adam, who insists having them. Yeah, but I don't — I — yeah, I mean, after we decided to put that, I feel quite home. Yeah, so it's really working well.*

Junko's comment that she is "not that bothered about bringing in Japanese things" is noteworthy because it emphasises a different experience from that of black/white families for whom the home interior was seen as an opportunity to teach the mixed children "racial literacy" (Twine 2010) and build their self-esteem in their minority identity. Further, while Adam has never lived in Japan and therefore may have simply chosen stereotypically Oriental looking items with which to decorate their home, when British men actually spend time in Japan, like Cameron Walker who lived in Japan for a decade, they often become able to contribute "material cultures" (Datta 2009) to their home. Cameron's wife Hiroko elaborates:

*Um, yeah, I think it just happened ... The house was supposed to be the house of people living in it, it's quite normal that people coming from Japan, they bring more Japanese stuff, so yeah. But I'm quite surprised that — [well], we've got kakejiku — that's not belong to me, but my husband. My husband collected those things, so we've got those things and yeah, lots of things from Japan. In a way, that's good for our son as well — he can see and touch Japanese things.*

In this case, it is the British man who brought aspects of Japanese culture into the mixed family's home. This challenges our notion of culture being national, of each parent contributing to the family home items from their own cultures. Instead, we see that parents actually transmit and share their own preferences which, in the case of Cameron, a British man, happen to be traditionally Japanese, like the *kakejiku*. At the same time, Cameron bringing his collection of Japanese items into the family home was not done primarily to transmit culture to their son; instead, Cameron seems to have brought Japanese "stuff" into their home simply because he appreciates Japanese culture personally and collected many Japanese items while living in Japan. While this may seem ideal in regard to sharing the responsibility of homemaking and transmitting culture, it can also mean that, in the case of Hiroko, for example, she does not have the opportunity to live in a more "British" home, although she is living in Britain. In other words, why the Walker home has a Japanese feel to it may not be based on Hiroko's desire as a migrant to recreate a Japanese home or even the couple's desire to create a Japanese atmosphere for their son; instead, it may be largely due to Cameron's preference for "Japanese stuff."

### *Creating Shared Spaces*

Home décor may be more reflective of an individual's own preferences, often culturally-influenced, but not always, as we saw with the Walkers. At the same time, incorporating culture into the home décor also seems to be occurring, perhaps not so much in an effort to transmit culture to their children, but more so to make the couples' cultures and preferences visible in their shared living space. In the following quote, Stuart MacFarlane shares how he and his wife have attempted to incorporate both of their cultures into the décor:

*... looking around the house ... yes, yes ... the idea — there was a, because we bought a Georgian house, an 18th century — sorry, 19th century Georgian house, um, there was a kind of an attempt to make it look like — to make the décor fit a 19th century Georgian house, which is why we've got the bureau and why we've got the kitchen done out in the way it is and so forth, and that was um — uh — I suppose that was a conscious choice, but I mean, the thing that I also wanted to have in the house was stuff that would fit in with that, but that was deliberately Japanese, like some of the Japanese ornaments and the [famous Japanese photographer's] pictures and so forth.*

In this way, while the mixed families may be somewhat restricted in the style of their home since they reside in Britain, many are still attempting to decorate their homes with little pieces of Japan. Yet generally speaking, it seems that the families are bringing with them their own preferences when decorating their homes, but at the same time, they are focusing on the ordinary concerns (Caballero, *et al.* 2008) and on creating practical and safe environments in their homes for their growing children.

### ***Shoes: On or Off?***

Across the twelve families, one custom observed in all the homes was the Japanese custom of taking one's shoes off at the door. While some British men admitted that this custom seemed unnatural to them at first, they have all now grown accustomed to it over the years, and most have come to prefer this over wearing shoes in the house. Here, Jim McLeod explains his experience with Japanese stereotypes and customs inside the home:

*Other things like hygiene as well. You see, Japanese are well known for their — cleanliness is quite important: just things like taking their shoes off when they come into the house, they wash quite frequently, probably more often than British people do. I think that's very important, so taking the best of Japanese culture...*

Although the transmission of culture is generally thought of as the result of “interactions between purposeful socialisation decisions inside the family (direct vertical socialisation)” (Bisin and Verdier 2000, 959), from parent to child, it seems culture can also be transmitted *horizontally* as well, from parent to parent, as Jim above adopting a more cleanly, “Japanese” lifestyle. This sense of transmitting culture horizontally extends beyond the family, into the local community. For example, the mixed families asking guests to take their shoes off when they visit can be seen as an instance of the mixed family sharing their culture with the local community (cf Yabuki 2009). While some Japanese women mentioned negative responses when asking guests to remove their shoes before entering their homes, Setsuko Potter was able to influence others from the dominant society to follow suit:

*I suppose starts with shoes: taking off shoes, usually ask people to take off, so maybe that's the one things, and people come regularly — they know they have to take shoes off, and actually, one of my daughter's friend and mum — they never did before, but since they noticed we are taking off the shoes, actually, they started doing their house as well! So thought that's quite nice and keep it clean.*

Ultimately, the mixed families see their homes as normal living spaces, backdrops for doing family, as Jim McLeod put it: “*I suppose there are some symbols of Japanese culture, and Japan itself, but most of it is just kind of pictures and bits and pieces that you could find in any home...*”

### **Final Thoughts**

Because of the ethnographic nature of this study, I was able to explore the mixed families' homes, and as someone familiar with Japanese homes, in general, there does not seem to be a strong Japanese flavour in the mixed families' homes, as I reflect in my field notes:

*I have now stepped inside the homes of all twelve participant families and a few others from the playgroups. Because the majority of my first contacts in the families have been the women, I tend to think of it as their home, so somewhat unintentionally (and unfairly), I expect to walk into a “Japanese” home — whatever that means. I have spent quite a bit of time thinking about this... what makes a home “cultural”? I think of my Mexican great-uncle's home in Los Angeles. Whenever I step into his home, I immediately feel transported to Mexico. But when I step into the homes of the Japanese/British families in Edinburgh, I don't feel transported back to Japan. I don't smell the burning incense from the Buddhist altars, and what I see, the furniture, the set-up of the homes resembles a modern, Western-style home. There are no obvious Japanese décor, only one kotatsu, no noren hung on doorways, no tatami mats in any of the rooms; instead, I find beds, dining tables, pictures of English cathedrals on the wall, welcome mats at the doorway, and rugs with the design of the Union Jack on them. But then I get a glimpse of the kitchen, and I smile. I've found the “Japanese” element of the house. In the kitchen, I see cooking chopsticks, I see the soy sauce next to the salt and pepper, I see the rice cooker alongside the toaster. It is in this space, in the kitchen, where the Japanese presence is felt.*

Having said this, with the rise of globalisation and the consequent increase in international travel and trade, as well as the complexity associated with ‘national culture,’ it is difficult to define a “Japanese” home. Further, while I initially wondered if the Japanese migrant's length of stay in Britain would affect the interior

of their home, this did not seem to be the case in most families. Instead, it seems that the aesthetics inside the homes are more affected by personal preferences and practicalities, as opposed to a conscious decision to transmit culture to the mixed children or to teach them “racial literacy” (Twine 2010).

### ***Transforming a House into a Home***

While parents are mostly responsible for the décor of the house, the smells of the home, it seems to be that the sounds of the children, with their shrieks of delight and laughter, as well as pounding feet and even upset cries are what tend to make houses homes. As such, while the previous section focused on how the parents negotiate aesthetics in the home, this section focuses on how the children negotiate their cultural heritages in their own spaces. It is important to focus on the children's spaces because the migrant parent in particular may attempt to create a home that reflects their journey thus far (Datta 2009), a journey often accompanied by alienation. For the mixed children, however, their personal spaces at home may be one of the first places where they begin to feel the sense of marginality, as opposed to alienation, experiencing a “pull of both cultures” (Tizard and Phoenix 1993, p28). Finally, it is important to study the mixed children's personal spaces because such early choices made in their childhood homes may be a subtle reflection of their evolving identity.

### ***Exploring Children's Spaces***

In order to explore the spaces of the mixed children, we examine the two bedrooms of children in two families: the Potters and the Patersons. These two bedrooms were selected because these three children provide us with bedrooms that belong to children of different ages and genders, as well as a single-occupant and a shared bedroom. We begin with the Potter children's bedroom. This bedroom is shared by a sister and brother, ages thirteen and seven, respectively. Following are field notes from one of my visits to their home:

*The Potter Family is made up of Dad, Mum, Daughter, and Son. They live in Botley<sup>12</sup>, in a second-story flat. I arrive for a home observation at 12:55pm, climb one flight of stairs, and knock on their door. Dad greets me and welcomes me inside. Mum and children are behind Dad. I notice everyone is shoe-less and see several shoes lined up neatly, so I ask if I should take my shoes off, and Mum says, "Yes, if you don't mind." The flat has wooden floors, somewhat reminiscent of Japanese homes, yet that seems to be the extent of the home's Japanese-ness. The family lead me to the living room/dining room, and offer me a seat on the sofa... On the wall are several pictures of the family, particularly school photos. As Mum and Dad finish preparing lunch, the children show me their room... It is very spacious, with two single beds on either corner, a star light in their ceiling, and a bookcase and wardrobe on the side. It has a very comfortable, relaxing feel to it. There are also lots of toys in a corner, including a whole drawer full of cars. There are also some posters on the wall, including one of the GB Olympic Team. There are also some Japanese picture books on the bookshelf, along with several English books for older children...*

While the Potter children have visited Japan three times, this has been the only home for both children, a home that most would probably consider a "normal" Western-style home. Further, when the children were younger, their mother Setsuko and their maternal grandfather in Japan made an effort to supply the children with toys and books from Japan. Years later though, the Potter children's room mirrors the dominant, popular society, with English books, posters and videos games. This is somewhat expected, as peers do tend to heavily influence children, particularly as they become adolescents. However, the fact that the Potter children have held on to several Japanese toys and books from their preschool years is noteworthy because this may be a reflection of the sense of marginality previously mentioned (Tizard and Phoenix 1993). In other words, although the mixed children's bedrooms may reflect this need to belong and fit into the dominant society, the fact that they are holding on to pieces of their Japanese belongings, even though they are no longer age appropriate may be because they feel the "pull of both cultures." Additionally, as was the case with Tizard and Phoenix's (1993, p164) participants, perhaps the Potter children also feel that by maintaining a bedroom solely of their British belongings, they may distance themselves from their mothers. In this way, perhaps holding on to their preschool Japanese toys and books may be their way of rejecting

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<sup>12</sup> All geographic locations have been given pseudonyms. See Ethics section in Introduction chapter for more details.

a sole British identity, which is often seen by mixed children as a “form of betrayal, or at least rejection ... [preferring] to think of themselves as ‘half and half’” (Tizard and Phoenix 1993, p164).

Now we examine how parents negotiate the living spaces of younger children as we explore the Paterson’s baby girl’s living space.

*The Paterson family live in a large building with about 100 flats in Cowley, a more diverse neighbourhood in Edinburgh. Their building reminds me of an old motel from American films. It’s quite a lonely building, and they are on the second floor. Right outside of their building is a park and some shops. Their home is a two-bedroom furnished, rented flat, and it is quite spacious, with a hall that easily fits three buggies. Their living room is made up of the typical couch/TV set-up and is connected to their dining room, where a table that seats up to six people is placed. Their kitchen is directly behind the dining table, and is separated by doors that they keep open, to hang the baby’s bouncer on. Their daughter’s bedroom has her cot, a double-bed for Mum to lie on during the night feedings, and a large humidifier. The room is decorated in a stereotypically baby girl fashion: with lots of pink and princesses and toys and picture books, all in English, with the exception of one interactive baby book in Japanese. This book, as Dad proudly showed me, is meant to teach the little girl Japanese words.*

While several of the families with older children, including the Potters, made an effort to give their younger children (almost exclusively) Japanese toys and books, the Patersons do not seem as concerned with providing their daughter with such items, perhaps because they see this home as temporary or perhaps because their idea of culture is not tied to the décor of their daughter’s room, to her toys and books. In this way, the home space becomes a place to simply do family, instead of doing mixed family. This provides another interesting comparison to Twine’s (2010, p127) study of mixed black and white families, where parents viewed black art, material objects, music, toys, and symbols as important for their mixed children. In the case of the Japanese/British families, however, neither parent seems to see the importance of representing the Japanese culture (or even the British culture) in their homes. This may be due to the fact that Japanese, when compared to the black population, are not depicted as negatively in mainstream society; however, because Japanese people are still considered non-white in Britain, the mixed parents may



want to consider how they can use their home to better encourage a positive identity for their mixed children.

### ***A Mixed Family Home***

Although I am always asked to take my shoes off at the entrance to the mixed families' homes, I am not offered slippers, as is customarily done in Japan. Also, several aspects of Japanese ingredients and utensils are found in the kitchen, yet items that many Japanese in Japan find essential, such as *kamidana*, are, for the most part, nonexistent. Finally, while Japanese people tend to spend much time on the floor, particularly when greeting and entertaining guests, most of the mixed families, like their counterparts in the West, only seem to sit on the floor when playing with their young children. When it comes to eating or conversing among adults, they naturally rise and sit at the table or sofa. Therefore, as Adam McLeod describes, perhaps the homes of the mixed families are just a *"bit of a mess at the moment ..."* trying to put up flags and decorations from Japan in an attempt to give their homes a bicultural feel, *"to remind you that there's a Japanese culture here."*

In conclusion, while the interior and aesthetics of the mixed families' homes was not found to be a major space for the transmission of culture, it seems that it is a space for the individual members of the mixed families to negotiate their different preferences and find their own sense of identity, belonging, negotiating, and adapting inside their homes (Datta 2009, p4). While such aesthetic choices in the home can indeed help the mixed children feel bicultural, religion can also be an important aspect of cultural transmission, particularly for the Japanese culture, which is often interconnected with Buddhism.

### ***Religion***

#### ***Christianity, Buddhism, or "No Religion"***

Scotland's 2011 Census (2013) identified the two largest religions as Christianity (54%) and "no religion" (37%). In Japan, Buddhism and Shintoism co-exist and continue to be the two largest religions (Statistics Bureau of Japan 2014). While the majority of the Japanese women in the present study were brought up Buddhist and

Shintoist, most are now not practicing Buddhists, and some have dabbled in Christianity, but most of the women now describe themselves as not strongly religious, and none have ancestral altars in their homes, a widely spread custom in Japan. For the majority of the women, this does not seem to be a major concern, but because the Japanese culture tends to hold religion and family close together, in particular the passing on of the *butsudan* may be a lost opportunity for passing on an important aspect of Japanese culture: ancestral worship. Taeko Clark, for example, who grew up in a traditional Japanese home, believes Buddhism is important to the Japanese culture, but because her children are being raised abroad, she has accepted that she will probably not be able to pass this on to her children:

*For my family, religion is — all Japanese are like this, but we treasure our deceased relatives. So for us, our grandparents' graveyards are close to our home in Japan, so throughout the year, we visit them and bring them flowers and water quite often... I would like to sometimes remember our deceased ancestors and, if possible, visit their graveyards, at least that's my opinion. But my husband's family doesn't have a graveyard, they say, so I honestly — if there was a graveyard, I would like to visit his grandparents, his Aunt, from whom our daughter received her name, and other relatives, but they are people who don't have graveyards. At first, I was very shocked and disappointed. When they die, that's it. Our children also — that's why while we're here in the UK, I realise I won't be able to pass this on to them, and I think that's a shame.*

Traditions that surround ancestors and graveyards are indeed an important aspect of the Japanese culture; yet for various reasons, including not being able to find temples or shrines locally, religion is an aspect of Japanese culture that is proving to be difficult to transmit to the mixed children. Nonetheless, this also may be seen as an opportunity for mixed families to receive support from extended family during visits back to Japan, as Jim Miller suggests:

*Well, Fumi's parents... I'm quite pleased with the way that they do it, so when we go out to Japan, they teach my sons Japanese stuff, and they go out of their way to do it, but it's not over the top. What's the shrine, Fumi, in the house? <Fumi replies: butsudan>. So zuzudan [sic] in the house, which they briefly pray at every morning, Fumi's parents, and so the boys have started to do the same thing, Fumi's dad has been showing them what to do and how to ring the bell and clapping and what-have-you, and so yeah, they're learning that and it's fun and I don't understand what it means, but they're learning it, and Fumi's parents are teaching them that stuff, and that's cool. So we can't do that here, so easily, um, so I think*

*certainly Fumi's parents have a quite large role to play in the boys' understanding of being raised Japanese.*

While Jim equates Buddhism with Japanese culture and appreciates his Japanese in-laws teaching his sons about Buddhism, he does not, in any way, equate Britishness with Christianity, and actually discourages his mother from sharing her Christian faith with his children. In this way, it is interesting to note that, while several of the British men identified as non-religious, did not want to marry in a church, and are adamantly against their parents sharing their Christian religion with their children, the same men appreciate their wives teaching their children the Buddhist and Shinto approach to life, did not oppose being married in a Shinto shrine, and encourage their Japanese in-laws to share their religion with their children. As such, perhaps Buddhism is seen as more interlinked with the Japanese culture, practised as part of a familial and cultural tradition (cf Reader 1991), as opposed to a practicing a religion, as Christianity is in Britain.

### ***Negotiating Religions***

While Japanese are able to be adherents to both Buddhism and Shintoism, a co-existence of a third religion, Christianity, seems rather challenging, as Setsuko Potter explains:

*In Japan, because my, both parents died, and we more like care for after-life, you know, to do, so it's quite different way. And when it comes to gods things, we have — for me, it's just, all the religions is the same, for me — whatever you're believing and all the things you're taught is actually the same way in the Buddhist house, all the morals and things, so that's fine, but how can I say? I find it difficult to see like, when, because I pray sometimes, for my father or my mum, you know, that's in Japan we do, after they die. So that case, that's a Buddhism things, I believe, so I always wondered, if I become to the Christian, how, what's going to happen to this?*

The individual dilemma of desiring to acknowledge both Christianity and Buddhism in their homes seems unique to the women. This is in line with Caballero and colleagues' (2008) finding, that mothers tend to be responsible for the transmission of religion. The fathers, on the other hand, seem to be more inclined to prioritise Buddhism in their homes. In the present study, several of the British men

admitted to being fascinated with Buddhism both as an indirect result of living in Japan, as well as being attracted to Japanese culture as a result of their interest in Buddhism. We thus revisit the idea of the horizontal transmission of culture, with the British men wanting to learn more about their Japanese wives' religious heritage, and their wives, for the most part, sharing this aspect of their culture with their partners, as Miyuki Ramsey comments:

*Um, he was interested in zen, so even I met, he was — he had like zen books for meditation and things like that, and so, and then I said, “My father’s family is zen believers,” and then “Oh! You knew about Eiheiiji [Buddhist Temple] in Japan?” And “Yes.” And I took him to the Eiheiiji [Buddhist Temple] as well, but eh, he’s quite good to accept the Japanese culture, and he’s much more [interested] than me and, because for me, that Buddhism is like, like air to living in Japan, you know, everything — just feeling it, it surrounds it, and yes ... if you did a bad thing, it will be returning back to you or something, and you have to behave, and you have to be polite...*

In the couples where the British partner came to the relationship with a fascination for Buddhism, perhaps there was not so much a “religious clash” so to speak, but rather a convenient acceptance and interest from the British partner. However, this was not found to be the case once the couple had children. Instead, it seems that, while some of the men, like Ryan Ramsey, may have once been fascinated by Buddhism, this fascination ends once children are born, and the couples tend to choose the dominant religion for their children:

*I don’t hear — Miyuki doesn’t mention anything about Japanese religion, oddly enough. It’s me that answers the questions about religion, it’s a from a Christian point of view ... there was no uh, no resistance [to raise the children Christian]! <laughs> It wasn’t a question that we sort of asked each other, “What are we going to do about this?” It was not a question we asked. I’m still not sure — because it’s not a subject she talks about, there’s no way I can engage...*

Other couples in the study also admitted that they did not know where their partners stood regarding religion. This suggests that having different religions is not a major obstacle for the couples in the Japanese/British families, and that perhaps religion in general is not a significant part of their lives. Thus, religion may no longer be an aspect of culture that is passed on at home; instead, as Arweck and

Nesbitt (2011) find, children may learn more about religion at school, among their peers. Setsuko Potter agrees:

*I think for the children, probably more Christian is the more, the knowledge-wise, from schools and nativities and everything, yes. Yeah, so I find it difficult, hard to explain, but can't pick one. Yeah, I did definitely teach my daughter to pray [for ancestors], but I don't know if she's taking that as Buddhism or just, pray for at the graveyard, those, you know, something like that. So, I don't know — I can't explain. I don't know if that's religion or not, difficult. But my daughter, one of the best friends, not from school, but from local, best friend — their family is very Christian, and so she's been to church quite often with the friend, and involved lots of things, so she knows lots of Bible things, so probably in her knowledge is definitely Christian is more...*

While Setsuko, like other parents in the study, attempts to pass on her religious heritages to her children, it seems the children are influenced more by their peers and religious education at school. In this way, perhaps the negotiation that takes place in the mixed families' homes regarding religion is not so much Buddhism/Shintoism vs Christianity, but how they will deal with religion in general. Finally, all the parents seem to conclude with wanting their children to choose for themselves, as Junko McLeod puts it:

*I want my son to take bit of everything, and when he grown up, at certain age, I want him to make a choice by himself, rather than us deciding, "You're going to be Christian" or "You're going to be Buddhist." Because I feel like it's not fair for him for us to decide, it's not our things to decide.*

While Junko realises the importance of her son having the freedom to choose what religion to follow, if any; as children transition into adulthood, they experience a "greater divergence from the values of their parents" (Min, *et al.* 2012, p113), and perhaps a divergence from their religions as well. While the mixed children will ultimately choose what aspects of their parents' cultures they will hold on to, it seems that, at least in the area of religion, the mixed children will continue to be influenced by both their parents' religions (or lack thereof) at home, and religious education and their peers outside the home.

## **Leisure Time**

As with religion, another aspect of everyday lived culture that tends to be influenced by peers and the dominant culture is **television habits** and **enrichment activities**, as will be discussed in this section. The way the mixed families, particularly the children, choose to spend their leisure time is revealing because these are activities that occupy much of a child's time outside school, and are not mandated, but chosen.

## **Television**

The first aspect of leisure that we consider is television viewing in the home, "a family activity that involves an inter-meshing of the constantly changing personal agendas, moods, and emotional priorities of each family member with the fluctuating agenda of programmes that emanates from TV sets" (Lull 1990, p148). Further, it is important to look at this issue given the finding that television can influence the "attitudes, behaviours, and values of viewers" (Boyland and Halford 2013, p236). While other forms of media, including music and films were mentioned by some participants, they were somewhat brief and general. An exception to this was that nearly all of the families, at one time another, mentioned Hayao Miyazaki's films (e.g. *My Neighbor Totoro*), which tend to focus on traditional Japan in the 1940s and 1950s (Mayumi, *et al.* 2005). Watching these films seems to be almost a rite of passage for mixed children. In this section, however, the focus is on television because, not only was it frequently mentioned, but many times, it was also in the background, during interviews and home observations.

To begin this section, we explore the parents' television preferences. Most of the couples admit that they mostly watch British television programmes, although whether or not the Japanese women enjoy this remains doubtful. Miyuki Ramsey describes watching British programmes, quietly chuckling to herself and lowering her head, somewhat embarrassed, "*I just watch together and [shout out] 'Ooh...!'"* Chiyoki Hamilton also admits "*... for me — it's quite difficult to understand English jokes, jokes in English, and... yeah, so we can't share the fun, the delight.*" While the Japanese women are attempting to watch British television with their partners, even

when they may not fully understand the programmes, most of the British men have no interest in watching Japanese television (accessed through the Internet), identifying it as “nonsense” or “weird.” Here, Ewan Ross explains why he does not watch Japanese television with his wife:

*My wife watches some Japanese TV online. I think it's nonsense, so I don't watch any of it. These like — panel shows where there's like ten comedians or celebrities and they show little snippets of stories, and then they sit and comment on them, and it just seems to go on forever. I try to avoid all that.*

Although one British man seems to enjoy Japanese *dramas* because they aid in his Japanese language learning, the rest of the British men seem to be either turned off or disinterested in Japanese television. As a result, most couples admit that they 1) do not spend much time watching television, and when they do, 2) they tend to watch television separately. One exception to this seems to be when television is used as white noise, in the background, while the family are relaxing at home together and/or sharing a meal. Further, while there were several mentions of Japanese television programming; during interviews and home observations, the only television I heard in the background was English, including the news, *In the Night Garden*, and *EastEnders*.

#### *Programming Choices for Older Children*

How then do the children react to a preference for English-language television programming when the television is used as white noise, and additionally, each parent prefers television from their own countries? Lull (1990, p93) found that fathers controlled the majority of the family's selection of television programming, and mothers were the “least influential family member in this regard.” However, Kourlaba, *et al.* (2009) found that the mother's television habits were most influential for the children's television viewing time. In the Japanese/British families, it seems that the mother's choice of programming is particularly influential. As Miyuki Ramsey, who often finds herself watching Japanese *dramas* with her two sons, ages sixteen and eight, shares:

*... And then I was watching sometimes the Japanese drama by the Internet [plugged into the television], and then one of my children came around and then, "What you're watching?" And "That one and that one." "Oh, that's very interesting," especially for the older one, some of the programmes was, "Mum! Do not watch that by yourself," and "Is that coming up yet?" And we just watching together and then he just sometimes asking, "Why they do like that?" and "Because in Japan like that." And he quite understands the Japanese culture and the eh, and the systems and things, you know. And the younger one was also eh, he quite likes to watch the Japanese dramas as well, and I was showing some of the old dramas and also like uh, more comedy things, and when he was eh, start to learn swimming ... he wasn't good at all, and he scared of water and he didn't like to put the face under the water, but and then I showed some of the boys are doing synchronised swimming, that's called Water Boys, in the Japanese dramas, like high school boys are doing synchronised swimming, and it's quite fun to watch it, and then I just showed him, and then he was so amazed and then, "I want to do that!" ... "Well then you must work very hard!" And you know ... I was just using like Japanese drama to encourage them!*

While Miyuki uses Japanese dramas to encourage her children, she is also subtly transmitting the Japanese language and culture to her children, as she carefully explains to her sons aspects of the Japanese culture that they are unfamiliar with. Further, perhaps Miyuki's children will one day look back and realise that the Japanese dramas they watched as children indirectly instilled in them stereotypical Japanese gender characteristics, from facial expressions to tone of voice to hand gestures (cf Choi 2012). Another possibility that Miyuki may perhaps not even realise is that by watching Japanese dramas, she is teaching "racial literacy", providing her children opportunities to see characters with Japanese phenotypes in different types of media (Twine 2010, p126). Finally, while mixed children may indeed watch some Japanese dramas alongside their mothers, ultimately, their main television preferences are in line with their British peers and fathers, and consist of English-language programmes.

### *Programming Choices for Younger Viewers*

Regarding the families with younger children, their choice of television seems to be CBBC<sup>13</sup>. This is interesting because, while families with older children emphasise the effort they made to introduce their young children to Japanese children's programmes by purchasing DVDs when they were in Japan and then relying on

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<sup>13</sup> Children's BBC



extended family to record and send additional, newer television programmes; the families with younger children in the study, even with the convenience of being able to watch Japanese television programmes online, do not seem eager to have their children watch Japanese television programmes. While this may suggest that the younger Japanese mothers are more integrated into British society and thus encourage their children to watch mostly English television programmes, it may also suggest that the importance of teaching their children language and culture through Japanese television programmes has diminished and has perhaps been replaced by their participation in the Japanese playgroups. Regardless, television, whether in English or in Japanese, continues to hold a dominant presence in the homes of the mixed families, whether the children are throwing a tantrum because they want to continue watching CBBC, or casually glancing over at *EastEnders* as the television plays in the background of a family meal, or watching Japanese dramas with their mothers before bedtime.

### ***Enrichment Activities***

The transmission of culture through television thus tends to be more unintentional, as parents are not choosing television programmes specifically to transmit their cultures to the mixed children; however, in exploring choice of enrichment activities, we see parents taking a more strategic approach and choosing enrichment activities that are representative of their cultural heritages. Having said this, while there seems to be a growing urgency, particularly in middle-class families, to enrol children under five in enrichment activities (Vincent and Ball 2007), in the present study, none of the parents mentioned such activities for their younger children. We will therefore focus on families with older children.

To begin with, the Potter and Ramsey children (four in total) are all avid Scottish harp players, a very traditional instrument. While both of the younger children (seven and eight years of age) are just beginning, the two older children (sixteen and thirteen years of age) have already experienced much success, both locally and nationally. The reasons why the four children began their journey with the Celtic harp are because 1) their mothers were fans of Scottish music and thus they

themselves were students of Scottish music (fiddle and harp), and 2) the children are all enrolled in Gaelic School and were exposed to the instrument at school. In a somewhat similar way to our discussion on British men being more interested in Buddhism than the Japanese women, we encounter this complexity of 'national culture,' with the Japanese women being more interested in Scottish music than their Scottish husbands. Thus we find the Japanese mother not "transmitting" her culture, but instead transmitting her interests, to her children, as Setsuko Potter explains:

*I love Scottish culture, like music and things! I love Scottish music. Myself and — before, or when I had my daughter, or just before I had my daughter, after I lost my job, I went to start learning fiddle lessons. So that's all the Scottish music, and actually, my daughter was with me at that time, and maybe that's why she start learning — she wanted to learn the violin lessons, so that she took as well [as harp lessons]...*

While Setsuko beams when she speaks of her daughter's success playing the Celtic harp, she takes little credit for this, explaining that, before her first competition, Setsuko did not even know how well her daughter played the harp, as she practised only at school. As such, the Potter daughter has quite independently pursued her harp playing. On the other hand, for the Ramsey boys, it seems that mother Miyuki has played a stronger role in pushing the Scottish harp on her sons or, perhaps as she herself describes, she's simply had more a Japanese parenting style, with "a lot of scolding." Here, Miyuki shares both her own as well as her older son's journey with the harp:

*I was [initially] interested to do some Scottish step-dance, and I did for around 10 years, but there is some break because of I had two boys <laughs> ... I'm learning harp, classic harp, with my elder son because he had uh, a class offered at primary school, primary 5, and then he was uh, at first he didn't do so much because we didn't have a [harp] in the house, and we just borrowed the [harp] from the school, and then in uh, we decide to buy a [harp] for him and then after that, I'm from Japan, and especially my hometown, and quite mean! And then, "We bought the instrument, you must use it!" <laughs> And then so, I sent him to the Classical Harp Society, and every month they have some practise to do and like big ensemble, orchestra things and then while I was sitting watching he was playing and I thought, it's very fun to do it ... eventually, the next springtime, there is another Harp Festival, every time in the spring time, and then lots of suppliers coming, and*

*then I thought I should buy a smaller harp, to carry for myself! <laughs> And also I can join to the [Harp] Society myself, with my son, and then I got the little one for myself, and now I'm now in the [Harp] Society, like every month, my son and me go to play the [harp] together at [Harp] Society.*

This is indeed a very interesting situation because, not only is the Japanese mother encouraging her son to play the Scottish harp, but she herself has also become part of the Harp Society. While both the Potters and Ramseys have encouraged their children to pursue a Scottish instrument, the McGregors have encouraged their son to explore more traditionally Japanese activities, in particular, martial arts. However, because such activities are now routinely offered in Scotland, whether or not it can be considered part of "Japanese" culture is questionable. Further, whether the children are from mixed families or not, they may be involved in martial arts for the same reasons, including their parents' interest in the activity. During one of my home observations in the McGregor home, I was able to see how enrichment activities are shaping Risa and David's son's preferences:

*After dinner, Mum says that son's got to practise his guitar more. He's been playing for about six months now, and likes it. Dad says young McGregor wants to be a rock guitar player. Son looks at him and says, there's no way I'm going to be a professional musician. But he plays for fun. Mum says he doesn't practise enough... they then begin talking about his kendo classes. His kendo teacher was at his school today, doing a judo demonstration. Mum says there are two kendo teachers, one is very traditional and does seiza and mokusou. The other one doesn't, so Mum prefers the traditional one. Dad says he practises every Friday evening, and Mum says that in Japan, they practise a lot more, some kids practise every day. Son says there are about 10 kids, and everyone meets together at first, very egalitarian, adds Dad. Son's friends also used to practise kendo, but they now do aikido. Son wonders what will happen if he continues kendo... Dad says he's probably ready to be tested, but son seems a bit hesitant. The family wonders how that will work, they believe someone will come and examine him fighting, and that they'll then have to go to Glasgow...*

Somewhat similarly to Miyuki Ramsey, Risa also emphasises practise regarding both the guitar and *kendo*. Further, yet again, like the Japanese women who encourage their children to play Scottish music, this idea of a 'national culture' is complicated with David more interested in kendo than his Japanese wife. While the other children mentioned in this section seem to be in agreement with their

parent(s) regarding choice of enrichment activity, in the McGregor home, it seems that there is more negotiation between the parents and the son, with the son agreeing to practise kendo, but also wanting to play the guitar “for fun.” In this way, although we see a strong influence of parents in the choice of enrichment activities, ultimately, the children decide what activities to continue. We also see that, while enrichment activities can indeed be a vehicle for the transmission of culture, most of the time, it is simply parents attempting to share and pass their interests on to their children, and sometimes even join them in such endeavours, as the Japanese women who have learned to play the Scottish harp alongside their children, emphasising that the transmission of culture need not be national, but can instead surround personal preferences and interests.

### ***Rituals***

The final aspect of everyday lived culture that will be discussed in this chapter surrounds aspects that are not entirely everyday occurrences, but according to Rosenthal and Marshall’s (1988, p670) definition, are an important part of the transmission of culture because holidays and celebrations are “a pattern of prescribed formal behaviour, pertaining to some specific event, occasion, or situation, which tends to be repeated over again.” In particular, observing public holidays and celebrating more intimate moments such as birthdays can be important in the mixed families’ homes because often, it is through rituals at home, participation in public events, and at times, simply the acknowledgement of special days such as birthdays, that culture is transmitted from one generation to the next.

### ***Holidays***

During interviews with parents, I asked them to speak about holidays and how their families negotiate such occasions between their two cultures. The holiday most frequently mentioned was Christmas, with particular emphasis on Christmas dinner, Christmas cards, and Christmas Eve. While literature on *kinkeeping* (e.g. Rosenthal 1985, Friedman and Weissbrod 2004) stress the woman’s dominance in this area, in the present study, most of the women claimed that they were “too lazy”

to celebrate holidays from either country. On the other hand, the men seemed to be more enthusiastic about holidays in general, as we see with Tim Paterson:

*I think, from the Japanese culture, kind of some of the celebrations and things like that are really interesting and they are in a bit of a contrast to British traditions, where, for example like Easter and things like that, it doesn't really mean anything anymore. And people just have a holiday, whereas in Japan, they kind of still respect the traditions and celebrate it with the right spirit, so I think that's something that we want to maintain in our daughter's upbringing, and celebrate as well. And um, British celebrations and things like that, obviously Christmas is one of the most important ones, and I think I was very — more important than birthdays in my childhood, and I think it probably will be in my daughter's as well. We make quite a big deal out of Christmas as a family time, everybody's together and food and drinks and lots of presents and things like that, and I think maybe in Japan it's not such a big deal, I know I used to work at Christmas, so it wasn't a big deal <smirks>, but no, I think combining both of those things — so you celebrate the extra holidays from Japan, but you also celebrate the British holidays in combination. It's fine, I think, it's good for my daughter.*

Tim, along with other fathers in the study, seem quite optimistic about the idea of celebrating both Japanese and British holidays; this may be because they tend to place the responsibility of preparing for such celebrations in the hands of women, including their wives, mothers, and sisters. Further, while Tim is somewhat familiar with Japanese holidays, others, like Adam McLeod, who have never lived in Japan, also seem to want to learn about Japanese holidays, as well as becoming more informed and involved about celebrations from their own country. This is in line with what Waters (1990) and Katz (1996) found, that parents often begin to identify more closely with their cultural background when they become parents, as seems to be the case with Adam:

*Probably the Children's Day. We'd celebrate an event like that, to some extent, just by displaying flags and we talked to my wife's parents in the webcam, but uh, nothing big, but we keep an eye out for any events that are coming up in the area, you know, like the supermarket in the neighbourhood and there's a gala coming up in a couple of weeks time, just at a local school there, and there are a lot of activities going on, and we can take our son there and see what's going on and try to engage with the community and go to local events. But national events, like Burns Day or St Andrews Night, I mean, practicality, it's difficult for us to go to an event like that because we'd need a babysitter. But yeah, sometimes we go to things like — but we take our son with us. There's no sort of national events that I can think of that we've been to. Oh right, and obviously we celebrate Christmas — I didn't think of that, but*

*yeah, we do celebrate Christmas. Uh, we had our first Christmas sort of a few months ago, and yeah, that was good. We had the Christmas tree up and got some presents for our son and we do like normal families do — I don't know, Christmas dinner, enjoy our time, watch a movie, put some music on, but it was just a small Christmas gathering. We didn't have a big family Christmas sort of thing.*

This idea of the fathers being interested in embracing their Japanese wives' cultural celebrations as well as trying to find new celebrations and rituals within their local community is encouraging, as it suggests men find ritual meaningful (cf Friedman and Weissbrod 2004), and that they are becoming more actively involved in kinkeeping activities (cf Mason and Muir 2013). However, such men may also simply be idealistic, not realising how much work is involved in celebrating holidays. Here, Taeko Clark shares how difficult it has become for her to continue celebrating Japanese holidays with her children since moving to Edinburgh two years ago:

*Well, when we were in Japan, on New Years Day, we always made traditional Japanese, New Years Day food, and in February, we celebrated a special holiday to mark the end of winter — on the day that the Devil comes, we throw beans at him. In March, we celebrated Girls' Day and brought out the dolls, and then there's Grandmother and Grandfather's Day or the Day for Respecting the Aged, when we would go visit the grandparents. We were celebrating everything, but since coming to Scotland, on Girls' Day, to celebrate, we — we weren't able to bring out big dolls, but we brought little substitute dolls, so we took those out of the boxes and set them out, with flowers surrounding them. And also had chirashi-zushi, a special dish that we have in March... Since coming to the UK, we haven't been able to eat this as well, so the kids haven't even been able to enjoy eating this, neither have they been able to celebrate New Years properly. It's become very difficult...*

Taeko's husband Andrew, who lived in Japan for nearly a decade feels that, in addition to the challenge of celebrating Japanese holidays in Britain, there also seems to be a larger cultural difference in the general celebration of holidays. He feels that the Japanese celebrate holidays differently than the more laid-back British, which in turn has demanded negotiation between himself and Taeko, particularly after they relocated to Britain:

*... whereas [holidays such as Girls Day] would be an annual thing and quite important in Japan, um, I tend to sort of pick up on British traditions and festivals just — not every year, so maybe we have things like Pancake Day, so this year, I did nothing for Pancake Day, but last year, I made some pancakes... much more sort of*

*laid-back ... I think Taeko gets a bit upset that I'm not sort of paying attention to the fact that it's Girl's Day or — but I mean, some of the festivals don't sort of translate. You know, if you have something like Marine Day, I remember we used to always try to get to the beach in Japan on Marine Day. Marine Day here ... we probably won't end up at the beach! ... between a Scottish person and a Japanese person, there's a big inconsistency about New Year because New Year's Day for a Scottish person is a day to be hungover and sick on; whereas for Japanese people, it's a day for family to have a meal. So I haven't been hungover and sick for a long time... But it ... caused a bit of friction in Japan, occasionally, because I'd want to go out and get very drunk on Hogmanay, the last day of the year, and then be invited to struggle with eating mochi the next day, so. Yeah, it's a bit difficult...*

The Clarks, like other mixed couples, must therefore negotiate both their personal preferences as well as cultural differences surrounding holidays. Yet even when couples are united in their commitment to introduce their children to holidays from both Japan and Britain, challenges remain, as David McGregor explains:

*[Regarding Scottish holidays] No, not really. Burns Night — I've never attended a Burns Supper or anything like that ... no... We don't really um — not Japanese [holidays either]. Uh, although um, when my son was going to the Japanese school on Saturdays, I think they — if he'd continued going there we would have done it more, there was a setsubun festival, so he did that at the school, but apart from that, not really Japanese um, festivals, you know, it's difficult, like how do you do obon or something like that when you're here, you know? <laughs> We did it in Japan all the time, of course, but here — might be a bit different if we're in London, a bit more plugged into the Japanese community, but here, it's really just not on the radar screen, you know? Um, Christmas is a big — we had Christmas — this Christmas, last Christmas was our first one back in Scotland, so we had a big Christmas dinner here, um, so my mum, Mum, my sister, my brother, and his partner all came along for that, so we had a big Christmas, a big Christmas dinner here. When my dad was alive, um, we'd go to their house for Christmas, Christmas a big, you know, big, central um, festival, I suppose, that we would participate in...*

It's interesting to note here that David, a Scottish man, has never attended a Burns Supper, a traditional dinner celebrated throughout Scotland. The McGregor son, however, was introduced to this holiday at school, and when he returned home from school one day to ask his mother how their family would be celebrating Burns Night, his mother was somewhat at a loss. Risa recalls: *"I remember Burns' Night day, but that was, you know, I've been here about 12 months, we didn't have Burns' Night in London, so I had no idea what was it, what is it? But my Japanese friend told me about haggis, and [stab] haggis and read poem or something..."* Risa thus managed to prepare a

traditional Burns Supper for her family, with the aid of her Japanese friend, who instructed her in this traditional Scottish ritual. This is another example of the horizontal transmission of culture, from migrant to migrant. Finally, another interesting point made by David is that he mentions the Japanese community when referring to Japanese holidays. As such, perhaps this is also an area of cultural transmission where mixed families can rely on the wider Japanese community, to celebrate Japanese holidays together, in hopes of introducing their children to rituals from the homeland.

### **Public Celebrations**

During my fieldwork, I attended special events in the Japanese community, such as the annual *Tanabata Celebration*, an astronomically-based holiday in Japan, celebrated on the seventh of July (cf Renshaw 2011). What follows are notes from my journal:

*Today, at the Tanabata Celebration at the Museum, they had an Arts & Crafts corner, so the children could experience the custom of writing their wishes down on colourful pieces of paper and hanging them on trees... Many of the children were dressed up in traditional Japanese dress... I recognised some people from the playgroups and the study and said hello to them. But I also noticed that there were hardly any British/Scottish husbands. Since it was on a Saturday, I had expected to see more dads... but maybe only the Japanese mums and children attend this type of event? Many of the parents, both mothers and fathers that I've talked to so far have emphasised the importance of raising bicultural children, of sharing and introducing both cultures and celebration to their children, but how can they do that if they're not here with their children? Hmm.*

This observation is somewhat in line with Beagan and colleagues' (2008, p659) finding that, even on weekends, when men are home, women continue to do the majority of food preparation and clean-up. In a similar way, it seems that, even on weekends, when the British men could be attending public celebrations of Japanese holidays and supporting the transmission of the minority culture to their children, the fathers are absent. Raising bicultural children was a self-identified goal for all the families in the present study; yet, as my field notes here have shown, sometimes the burden of kinkeeping and actually transmitting culture is felt more by one parent, in particular the migrant mother. In this way, while the children may become familiar with Japanese rituals and traditions through their mother and with the



greater Japanese community, because the children reside in Britain, the holidays they see celebrate on television, with their British kin, and at school with their peers may soon overshadow their mother's cultural influences.

### ***Birthday Parties***

Birthday parties seem to be an important aspect of doing family for the mixed families, as the parents enthusiastically recounted their children's latest birthday parties for me during interviews. There does, as somewhat expected, seem to be a discrepancy between parties for younger children and those for older children, as we will see in the following examples. The first two birthday parties that we discuss are the milestone first birthdays. For Kikuko Paterson, this was an intimate occasion, with lots of food:

*Um, eh, there were, I think 10 people came, around this house. We held the party here, and my husband, mother-in-law, my — and father-in-law, and my husband's grandmother came, and few of my friends, and few of my friends' kids as well, so around ten people came to celebrate my daughter's birthday. And I made a birthday cake, and I cannot use the egg and milk products, so I just made a — uh, bread and pancake — just piled and put around it sweet potato puree, my husband said disgusting: sweet potato, but she loves that. Everything that she loves sweet potato, pancake, bread, and top of the cake, I put the blueberry, strawberry, raspberry, and she ate mostly all, like this size, big! She ate everything <laughs>. I cooked karaage it's called karaage, Japanese food, and sushi, and like chirashi-zushi, it's kind of like sushi, with rice and seafood, and salad, and my mother-in-law cooked salmon, smoked salmon and quiche. She cooked the, she baked the cupcake.*

The Paterson's daughter's first birthday party became quite a production, an effort to include both cultures, at least in regard to food, with Kikuko preparing Japanese dishes, and her mother-in-law preparing more Western-type dishes. The guest list also seemed somewhat bicultural, with the Paterson's British relatives and Kikuko's Japanese friends in attendance. On the other hand, at another party, for the Walker's son, the atmosphere was somewhat less elaborate, with food, for instance, simply consisting of cake. My field notes follow:

*Today, my husband, my son, and I were invited to the Walker boy's 1st birthday party. The birthday party was held at their detached home. As soon as we arrived, we were welcomed by the birthday boy and his parents and asked to take our shoes off. We were then guided to the living room and offered coffee or tea. Besides our family,*

*there was another Japanese lady and her daughter (2 years old), and the paternal uncle and grandfather. The conversation naturally centred around the children, about teething and potty training, playgroups, etc. ... The music playing in the background was reggae. My son and the Walker son danced around together, and Mum sang "Wind the Bobbin' Up" — first in Japanese, then in English. We then had some courgette cake ... and gingerbread cookies with our names iced on them... my son and the birthday boy continued playing together for a little while longer, mostly with balls and trains and cars, as well as some Japanese blocks (with the Japanese alphabet) and some Japanese picture books. We then decided to leave, and the Walker family walked us to the door and thanked us for coming.*

While there were no distinctly Japanese aspects to it (i.e. food or activities), the Walkers did, like the Patersons, have Japanese friends present, in addition to their British relatives. Perhaps the Japanese women's Japanese friends are considered substitute kin? We will return to this topic of social networks and kin in subsequent chapters; for now, we continue with our discussion of the mixed children's birthday parties.

While the Potters and Walkers were celebrating their children's first birthdays and may thus have been able to be more in control of the parties, including the food and the guest list, for families with older children, the children themselves seem to dominate the party details, including guests, food, and activities, as the following two eight-year-old birthday parties illustrate. First, we examine Miyuki Ramsey's younger son's birthday, which she retold in a very animated way, taking pride in having created a memorable day for her son and his friends:

*For my younger son's birthday party, um, it was uh, a kind of a little bit disaster, but we took to eh — gather them up here to meet, and then try find the, some of the — I made some of the origami animal, animals, and then left them in the backyard, and then children have to find the things, in the origami bags or something. And then, it's got a numbers in, behind, and then, but then I tried organise for my husband to wait in the Botanic Gardens, and then go over there to look for the Daddy to — he got some surprise in there, but he was run away, and then it's disaster, and I have to catch them! But anyway, after that, while he's looking after the children — supposed to be — I come in here and then prepare for the foods and then served it, but eh, I wasn't fussy to make a Japanese food because it's too much work for — just pizza and sausage rolls and things like that. But next — after that, the other children was doing for the birthday party at laser quest and things like that, and that's the age now, so — <laughs>. And then my son said, "I want to have a laser quest in next year!" But — and this summer, I bought, in Japan, like*

*kingyo-sukui kitto, and youyou-tsukuri kitto, but I was planning for next year, like kingyo-sukui kitto, and youyou-tsukuri kitto, but he said, "I want laser quest!"*

While parents may be able to set the agenda for first birthday parties, as children get older, this becomes more difficult, as Miyuki's son helps to illustrate. Further, it was also interesting to note that, quite differently from Kikuko in the above example, Miyuki chose not to make Japanese food "*because it's too much work,*" and her son, it seems, was not bothered by this decision. Yet at the same time, how do we interpret this in regard to the transmission of culture? Do the parents sometimes choose not to transmit their cultural heritage (e.g. food) because it's "too much work" for them? This is particularly interesting because Miyuki's decision to prepare more "Western" party food was not an effort to be more "British," or because her son would be embarrassed about her serving Japanese foods to his friends. On the contrary, as Miyuki mentioned earlier in her interview, her sons' friends and their parents love Japanese food<sup>14</sup>:

*And he got ... five boys — they are the most close ones, and then one of his friend's mum and another mums been to Japan, and so eh, and parents is quite ... one boy loves the onigiri and Japanese food, and then the sometimes my son going to stay over the night, and I give him some onigiri, and then make extra as well, and then they just heat up for everybody, and then the mum and dad asked, when I went to collect up there, and said, "Miyuki, you should make more because I couldn't eat it!"*

Miyuki is very animated as she recounts how all of her son's friends and their parents love Japanese food, yet at the same time, Miyuki does not consider her son's friend's parents as her own friends. Further, while having people love one's national cuisine can be considered a positive aspect of integration, it may further emphasise Miyuki's *difference* (Edwards, *et al.* 2012, p2), and in effect, her son may also be influenced by such labelling of his mother.

Returning to the theme of birthday parties, another birthday party that will be discussed here is the McGregors' son. In a similar manner to Miyuki, Risa McGregor also took great care in planning her son's birthday party, particularly with activities

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<sup>14</sup> Further discussion surrounding food will follow in Chapter 3.

inspired by Japanese television programmes, and like the Ramseys, there is no mention of the fathers' contributions. In the end though, it seems that children were the ones who set the agenda for their birthday parties:

*Ok, we had a big birthday party right here, and then I and my son invited all of his classmates, ten boys. I think eight came, and then all of them became quite wild, and you know, I puts the tent in the garden, but um, he just — they went, most of them went to my son's room, and then there are some swords and weapons, and they just took them! <laughs> Took them, and boys love weapons, even though they're plastic, metal plastic. And you know, yeah, I made uh some experimental stuff, you know, for them. Do you know the — one of NHK<sup>15</sup> programme called Pitagora Switch? That's very popular one, you know? But they just running around and you know, fighting with swords and running to the tent and try to hide and seek and they just became very wild! I'll show you something! <brings in a science experiment she made for the boys on a wooden board, using pins and balls.> But you know, I made it, but unfortunately, the experiment was not succeeded, you know? <laughs> All right, but yes, I think he was happy.*

This case illustrates that, at the end of the day, all of the parents want the same thing: to make their children's day special. As such, while birthday parties may be an opportunity for the sharing of the Japanese culture, particularly with the children's friends, not many parents seem to be concerned with this aspect of cultural exchange. Yet, inevitably, culture is being transmitted from parent to the child and their friends during birthday parties, whether it be through the foods they serve or activities they prepare, there seems to be a subtle Japanese influence, at least until the children are old enough to demand laser quest.

### **Conclusions**

Brah (1996, p192) describes the home as the "lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, sombre grey skies in the middle of the day ... the varying experience of the pains and pleasures, the terrors and contentments, or the highs and humdrum of everyday lived culture." While Brah (1996) may have been referring to the migrant's memories of home, it is somewhat

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<sup>15</sup> "Nippon Hosou Kyoukai," Japan's national public broadcasting organization.

similar to the mixed families' everyday lived culture, and how such everyday aspects of home create memories and a place of belonging for the mixed children.

In this chapter, four areas of the mixed family's everyday culture were observed: the homemaking, religion, leisure, and rituals. Specifically, I explored the mixed families' homes because, as the Japanese woman is both the migrant and the mother, I assumed that there may have been a desire for her to create a "home away from home," a haven from her new, foreign surroundings (cf Giorgi and Fasulo 2013). Instead, what I observed was both partners, like most couples, continually negotiating their differences and trying to decide which aspects of their culture and traditions are "better or nicer" (Mason and Muir 2013, p616). As a result, on one hand, the mixed family are just "normal" families, and "mixedness is just one part of these family's everyday lives" (Caballero 2007, p23); on the other hand, as we have seen in this chapter, mixedness is still a dominant part of the everyday lives of the mixed families, particularly as families decide whether or not to sit at a table or *kotatsu*; to christen their newborn or take them to the Shinto shrine for *shichi go san*, or both; to encourage the children to pursue Scottish music or martial arts; and at birthday celebrations, to cook typical "party food" (i.e. Western food) or to opt for cooking traditional Japanese dishes, or do a bit of both.

While this is all somewhat straightforward and suggests a sort of expected clash between "Japanese" and "British" cultures, there is actually much more happening in the mixed families because culture is not equated to nationality. In other words, while we assume that the Japanese woman wants to sit at the *kotatsu* and the British man wants to enjoy his meal at the dining table, this is not always the case. Often, it is the British man who prefers Japanese furniture and décor in his home, and as was discussed regarding enrichment activities, we find the Japanese women passing on to their children their personal interests, opposed to their activities more in line with their cultural heritage. This is particularly important to emphasise because, as Yamamoto (2010) found, individuals who enter cross-cultural relationships tend to be "internationally-minded" prior to meeting their future spouses, with many individuals entering mixed marriages for the purpose of exploring difference (Katz

1996, 161). As such, it may be that, far from being a burden on the Japanese woman to pass on the Scottish music to her children, it is something that she does more than willingly, as it matches her personal preference.

In this way, we see that the transmission of culture need not be tied to nationality, and parents need not feel restricted to passing on only their native cultures. Instead, the transmission of culture becomes fluid, with both parents contributing to the transmission of both the Japanese and British cultures. At the same time, there is a limit to how much a non-native parent can “transmit” to their children. Regarding religion, for example Caballero and colleagues (2008) found mothers overseeing their children’s faith lives, regardless of their original religious background. In this study, however, we see the British man encouraging his children to become more familiar with Buddhist practises. While this may initially be seen as easing the burden of the mother, it may actually be placing more responsibilities on her and her kin in the end, because the Japanese family members remain the ones more familiar with the religion.

Imamura (1990, p180) found that the migrant mother in an international union carries a two-fold challenge, “She must both equip her child(ren) to live as members of their father's society and inform them about her own society.” In this chapter, we have seen that both parents are involved in preparing and informing their children surrounding two societies. In particular, because we saw that either parent can transmit either culture to the mixed children, this may suggest that the distribution of responsibility for cultural transmission has become more equalised. Yet while the British men are indeed more involved in family life, contributing their opinions regarding how their home is decorated, how religion is incorporated into their family, what enrichment activities are pursued, and what special celebrations take place in their home, ultimately, mothers still continue to carry a heavier burden and tend to be more responsible for everyday matters (cf Caballero, *et al.* 2008, Wilson 1987).

In conclusion, this chapter focused on the everyday aspects of doing mixed family, and there was little mention of friends and extended family. This, in turn, seems to

suggest that the responsibility of raising mixed children is primarily that of the parents, as they negotiate their differences and find opportunities to transmit their cultural heritages to their mixed children. One of the most frequently mentioned aspects of culture that parents seem determined to share with their children is language, which we will explore in the following chapter.

## Chapter Two

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### *Bilingualism: A Gift or a Burden?*

#### **Overview**

As we have seen in the previous chapter, everyday experiences surrounding the family home can be a significant aspect of a child's upbringing. Another important aspect is found in the communication that takes place among family:

*[Families] talk as they go about their family routines in the household. They talk when they visit or phone distant family members who want to be informed about what is going on within the family. By communicating the meanings they give to experiences, family members construct a shared knowledge of each other's lives and their relationships with one another (Cheal 2002, p12).*

In interlingual families, communicating with one another can be more complicated. Further, in the Japanese/British families, we find parents negotiating languages in their home and making important decisions, including whether or not the children are raised bilingually (or trilingually); what language(s) are spoken in the home and by whom; how (and if) they will share the responsibility of teaching the children the different languages; who will assist with their English homework, whether or not the children will attend external Japanese language lessons; and finally, how parents find a compromise between their linguistic ambitions for the children and the children's own wishes. As such, in this chapter, the use of language within the mixed families is explored.

Exploring the use of language in mixed families allows us to better understand the negotiations that take place between the couples as they raise bilingual children, as well as the children's own decisions regarding language use in different situations,



particularly after becoming familiar with the dominant language (cf Pearson 2007). Both participant parents in each family are determined to raise bilingual children, yet do the mothers, the “cultural carriers” (Song 2003) feel more responsible than the fathers for teaching and supporting the mixed children and preparing them linguistically for two societies (Imamura 1990). Further, because transmitting language can be a labour-intensive responsibility, we will explore what forms of support the families are accessing (i.e. external language lessons and support from kin and friends). It will also be interesting to compare families with younger children and those with older children to see how linguistic aspirations are sometimes re-adjusted depending on the children themselves and other circumstances. Language is an interesting phenomenon because it is one of the most frequently mentioned challenges in international marriages, yet bilingualism is an aspect of culture that parents strongly want to pass on to their mixed children.

### **Bilingualism**

When referring to bilingualism, I am using Saunders’ (1988, p8) definition:

*Bilingualism, therefore, simply means having two languages ... Bilinguals can be ranged along a continuum from the rare equilingual who is indistinguishable from a native speaker in both languages at one end to the person who has just begun to acquire a second language at the other end. They are all bilinguals, but possessing different degrees of bilingualism.*

According to Pearson (2007, p399), more than half of the world’s population is said to be bilingual, so “learning and speaking more than one language is clearly within the bounds of the human language capacity.” This is well-observed in Europe, where more than half of the citizens (54%) are said to be able to hold a conversation in at least two languages (European Commission 2012, p5), with the percentage increasing among the younger generation. The majority of people in Britain and Japan, however, remain monolingual, and as a result, bilingualism continues to be seen as “an unusual and mysterious skill” (Ballard 1994, p31).

In past generations, interlingual parents were discouraged from speaking to their children in more than one language because it was believed that bilingual children suffered from a delay in linguistic development and lagged behind in vocabulary

when compared to monolinguals (Arnberg 1984, Diamond 2010, Piller 2008). Ballard (1994) sees things differently:

*... the capacity to switch from one linguistic and conceptual code to another is not a recipe for psychological confusion. Quite the contrary: the ability to express oneself with equal fluency in two or more languages is a wholly normal human capacity, with which our brains can cope with ease (pp30-31).*

For bilingual infants in particular, Kovacs and Mehler (2009) found that they are later able to learn twice as much as monolinguals because they are exposed to both languages during early infancy, thus becoming “flexible learners”, allowing for competence in two different languages simultaneously. As a result, Crippen and Brew (2013, p269) argue that bilingual children may be better off than monolingual children because being in a bilingual environment allows them to develop the ability to “codeswitch and navigate between cultures.” Further, Arnberg (1984) in her study of bilingual children in Sweden, found that a second language is easier to learn within a natural situation, as opposed to a formal school setting, as it provides children a stronger feeling for the language since they learned it more organically, and directly, as opposed to more formally and via another language or later in life, when even with intensive study it is unlikely that the adult language learner will reach the level of a native speaker (Sundberg, *et al.* 1996, p21).

With such positive aspects of bilingualism highlighted, it seems understandable that interlingual mixed families be expected to raise their children bilingually, with the common belief mixed children “naturally and spontaneously acquire both of the parents’ native languages, just as monolingual children acquire their parents’ shared native language as their own native language” (Yamamoto 2001, p1). However, this is not so. Children do not always become bilingual as naturally and effortlessly as supposed: “... not all people in potentially bilingual environments become bilingual [but] ... In every culture, children learn the majority language, even when their parents do not (Pearson 2007, p399). In the present study, the father’s language (English) is also the dominant societal language, and the mother’s language (Japanese) is the minority language; as such, because children are highly influenced by the mainstream society, the transmission of the minority language becomes more

difficult to transmit and thus must be “actively cultivated” (Yamamoto 2001, p127). Passing on a parent’s native language, particularly the non-dominant language, can thus be a labour-intensive and emotionally-demanding pursuit (Jackson 2009), and one that requires a strong commitment (Fought 2006) and continual monitoring, making sure that the children are receiving adequate exposure to both languages (Grosjean 2010, p211). Consequently, parents with younger children may be more hopeful of their children’s bilingualism, as opposed to parents of older children, who are often characterised by a tangible sense of “linguistic failure” (Piller 2008). Fries (1998), in her first-person case study poignantly describes her sense of grief:

*As time passed I felt a deep sense of grief. I realised that throughout the years I had always considered my daughter’s bilingualism as the most precious gift that I was giving her ... One of our conversations a few days before her departure concerned ... my disappointment, and her sadness at the thought that she might not be able to “transmit” English to her own children, because, she said, hers was not “good enough” ... I was sorry to see that my strong desire to speak English to my children has been replaced in my daughter’s case by a feeling of obligation; the gift has become a burden (pp136-137)*

### ***Heritage Language Speakers***

While some parents whose children do not become fluent in two languages may feel a sense of grief or disappointment, this may be more related to their unrealistic expectations because, as previously stated, there are different degrees of bilingualism: passive, active, and absolute (Arnberg 1984). In the passive state, there is comprehension of the second language, but the child may not actively use it. In the active state, comprehension of the second language exists, and the child is somewhat proficient in its production. Finally, in the absolute state, the child exhibits native-like or near native-like proficiency in both languages. Many ambitious parents in bilingual households, including some in the present study, desire for their children to possess native-like proficiency in two languages, to become “native speakers twice over” (Piller 2008, p63); yet experts agree that there are actually very few individuals like this, since the “contexts in which people acquire and use their languages will always be different” (Piller 2001, p76). More realistically, children in mixed families usually become heritage language speakers.

In 2000, the Steering Committee at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) made a clear distinction between heritage language and foreign language acquisition:

*A defining distinction ... is that heritage language acquisition begins in the home, as opposed to foreign language acquisition which, at least initially, usually begins in a classroom setting (Kondo-Brown 2003, p2).*

In addition, like bilingual individuals and their different degrees of fluency, there is also a range among heritage language learners' levels of fluency, from fluent speakers to non-speakers. Thus, even non-speakers may be considered heritage language learners because of their cultural connection to the language (Van Deusen-Scholl 2003, p221). While this cultural connection to a heritage language is crucial, Pearson (2007, p402) argues that "the natural attraction of the majority language for the child is very powerful." In other words, children are extremely vulnerable to the pressures that surround them, both internally and externally, and those being brought up in a minority heritage language realise they are different because they have not mastered the societal, dominant language which is heard, not only outside the home, but inside the home as well (Fillmore 1991, p342). Minority-language children in an English-speaking country thus conclude that they must learn English to belong and feel accepted. Yet when children, particularly second-generation migrants, acquire the dominant language, they risk losing their minority, heritage language. Further, parents who are not fluent in the dominant language also risk losing "the means for socialising and influencing their children, causing rifts [to] develop and families [to] lose the intimacy that comes from shared beliefs and understandings" (Fillmore 1991, p343).

### **Languages and Mixed Families**

Languages play a major role in how migrant families communicate, as the parents' native language is different from that spoken in the dominant society. In mixed, migrant families, the situation can become more complicated because the native languages of the two parents often differ. As a result, as Yabuki (2009, p83) observes, re-socialisation happens at the macro-level of the framework of the family culture. Additionally, residential location becomes an important factor, since at least one

parent is a migrant, and the other parent is usually part of the dominant society where the family resides. Many parents thus make a conscious effort to raise their children bilingually, or sometimes even multilingually. Yet when one language, usually the dominant language of the society, begins to overpower the minority language, the minority language parent can be significantly affected, as this monolingual father in a bilingual Japanese/English family in Japan conveys:

*It's frustrating, knowing that my son is still not comfortable speaking to me. He has much more meaningful conversations with his mum in Japanese ... And I feel like I am missing out a bit ... He tells me certain things, but I know there are certain things he doesn't, because it is just not worth the trouble to explain. Or he can't explain, so he doesn't or just stops... (Jackson 2009, p66).*

Furthermore, while one parent may be somewhat bilingual, they may never reach a level in which they feel free to express themselves completely (Takeda 2012). Yet as Okita (2002, p230) concluded, in addition to not being able to express themselves completely, Japanese mothers carry a double burden: coping in a new land and shouldering the burden of raising bilingual children with little support from their husbands, leading them to feel "disempowerment, intensified pressure, guilt, and personal trauma." In order to ease the burden of the Japanese migrant mothers, the mixed families may need to rely on external support, including friends, schools, and playgroups (cf Caballero 2010), in order to ensure that their children become bilingual. Additionally, when available, support from their extended family should not be overlooked:

*There is every indication that when parents and grandparents pay attention and do what is well within their power to ensure activities for their children in the minority language, the children respond by learning it. When they do not pay attention, the invisible hand of the majority language takes charge (Pearson 2007, p409).*

The extended family's role in the transmission of language is further stressed by Grosjean (2010, p174), who suggests that interactions with family and friends in the minority language is important because it makes the language seem natural<sup>16</sup>. Another factor that influences the language acquisition of children in mixed families is the child's own agency. In other words, language acquisition is a two-way street,

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<sup>16</sup> The discussion on extended family will be continued in Chapter 4.

“an interactive process involving both the child and a sensitive adult” (Gleason 1975, p289). Parents can attempt to teach and support their child’s acquisition of a second language, but the involvement and desire of the child to become bilingual is necessary, as language can be seen as a “voluntary part of ethnic identity” (Waters 1990, p118). Thus, language, grounded in family and identity, becomes an important aspect of doing mixed family because cultural values and traditions are generally transmitted with the help of language (Bankston and Zhou 1995, p14), and heritage languages tend to “evoke memories of family” (Waters 1990, p118).

While parents were once discouraged from speaking to their children in more than one language, linguistic pluralism is now a popular term, and parents are now encouraged, and almost expected, to introduce their children to more than one language. As a result, the idea that mixed children be raised in more than one language is not extraordinary, but it does come with its own challenges. As the analysis of interviews and observations in the following sections will show, for the the Japanese/British families, negotiating and juggling between two languages is a challenge, but the families persist because they see language as a tool for communicating and sharing what Murphy-Shigematsu (1997, p15) describes as “the most basic cultural skill that enables a person to say with confidence that they belong to a group.” As such, becoming bilingual may represent an important element of becoming bicultural.

### **Learning a Language**

One’s native language is often referred to as one’s mother tongue. We thus begin by examining the role of mothers in language acquisition. The mothers in the Japanese/British families are of particular interest because, like migrant mothers, they face a difficult decision: whether to speak to their newborn in the language of the country in which they reside, or in their native language. While I did encounter one Japanese woman who did not see the point of teaching her mixed children Japanese since they are planning to live in Britain permanently; all the other Japanese women that I encountered during my fieldwork, as well as the twelve women in the study, have chosen to speak to their children in Japanese, at least initially. Reasons for this include being able to confidently and freely express

themselves by speaking their native language (cf Takeda 2012), as well as a fear of teaching their children errors if they use a language other than their own (cf Piller 2008). Here, Hiroko Walker, who is actually fluent in English, explains why she has decided to speak to her newborn son only in Japanese:

*I think I will [speak Japanese], that is normal, I think, yeah. And my parents-in-law — not my parents, my husband's family also encourage me to speak Japanese to [my son] because that's the most important, and especially mother — if she is struggling to, you know, their son, their child speak language, that's not good. And also my friend said that, for kids, for babies, it's difficult to understand lots of variations or dialects of English, not English-English, but Japanese-English or Scottish-English or whatever, you know, it's — just my friend said it's not so good to building up language, so it's — I shouldn't speak lots of English in front of him because he will be confused.*

Hiroko seems a bit hesitant and unsure of her decision to speak to her son in Japanese, justifying this decision by stating that it is “normal”, and that her British-in-laws advised her to do so. Further, we also see how linguistic stereotypes (i.e. speaking English with an accent confuses a child) are passed on via social networks<sup>17</sup>. As such, while it once may have been frowned upon for migrant mothers to speak to their children in their native languages, in today's society, which encourages linguistic pluralism, it seems to be the opposite.

Most of the children in the present study were/are being exposed to a significant amount of the Japanese language, particularly during their preschool years, when they are predominantly in the care of their Japanese mother who, in addition to caring for the child in Japanese, also attend Japanese playgroups and tend to socialise mostly with other Japanese women and their children. Yet because the mixed children are living in Britain, going to local nurseries and schools, as well as living with their British fathers and for the most part near their British kin, the English language also inevitably comes to play an active part in their early lives. The first years of life are influential for the language acquisition of children (Kuhl 2010), yet, even with this initial, Japanese-dominant environment, as most Japanese mothers observe, their children are still attracted to the societal language around

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<sup>17</sup> Social networks will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

them (cf Pearson 2007), and most of the children's first words are in English. For example, although Kikuko Paterson's daughter, is with her all day long, her daughter's first words were *good girl* and *please* because, as Kikuko matter-of-factly explains, "*These words are part of Daddy's nighttime routine.*" As such, the British fathers in the present study also play an important role in the language acquisition (e.g. Pancsofar and Vernon-Feagans 2010, Tomasello, *et al.* 1990) of the mixed children, teaching them words from the societal language which surrounds them.

### ***Two Languages***

While choosing to raise children bilingually has many benefits, including the opportunity to learn a language more naturally (Arnberg 1984) and make children "flexible learners" (Kovacs and Mehler 2009), raising bilingual children is difficult work. In the present study, there are twenty-two children across twelve families. Eight of the children are under the age of three and are therefore not included in this section, as they have not reached the vocabulary spurt that typically occurs later in the toddler years (Ayoub and Fischer 2006, p69) and because the Census also excludes children under the age of three in language-related questions. The remaining fourteen children, ages three to sixteen, are all in nursery or school, and are included in this section. According to their parents' interviews and my home observations, ten seem to be *active bilinguals*, while four could be described as *passive bilinguals* (cf Arnberg 1984), with low literacy levels for all children. One of the reasons for this may be that, as the mixed children's choice of language becomes more English-dominant, "transference from English increasingly affects not only their lexicon, but also their grammar and morphology, undermining further development of Japanese..." (Oriyama 2011, p676). Nonetheless, in the present study, the parents of the mixed children continue aspiring to raise bilingual children who can, speak, read, and write in Japanese.

### ***Young and Ambitious***

When asked what their linguistic aspirations were for their children, most parents in the present study emphasised bilingualism. Consistent with Piller's (2008) findings, this optimism seemed especially strong among parents of younger children. As an



example, we look more closely at the Patersons and the McLeods, both of whom have one-year-olds. While both couples intend to raise their children bilingually, we see their specific aspirations, both individually and as a couple, differ somewhat.

To begin with, we examine the Patersons. Tim and Kikuko met in Japan, while Tim was teaching English near Kikuko's hometown in Hokkaido. Although Tim lived in Japan for three years, he only acquired basic Japanese and thus communicates with Kikuko and their daughter in English, although he expects Kikuko to speak to their daughter in Japanese, to ensure that she becomes bilingual:

*[I want my daughter] to be as close as possible to learning both languages... I'd say near-fluency in Japanese, especially speaking, and ... intermediate level in terms of reading and writing by the time she goes, leaves school.*

Although Kikuko personally understands the difficulty in acquiring a second language, as she still struggles with her command of English, her linguistic goal for her daughter is in line with that of her husband's, and seems somewhat ideal:

*Oh, I want to teaching the character, the kanji as well. Um, so I want — she — I want her to read the book and speaking and listening and everything, yeah. Hopefully everything.*

In a similar way, Junko McLeod, who also experienced difficulty in learning English, claiming to have "not that good English talking skill," and who was once actually scared to interact with people in English, is now determined that her son be fluent in both Japanese and English, perhaps as a result of her own linguistic struggle:

*... I don't want my son to pick up any bad English, because I have a very strong Japanese accent, because I find it very difficult to make people to listen to or take me seriously, especially as I got a strong dialect, so I sometimes felt like a wee bit second citizen. I am treated like that sometimes, and I never want my son to have it, so I think same thing apply to Japanese, if he goes to Japanese — Japan, and if he's got kind of strange, wee bit silly accent, it's a bit difficult for him...*

Unlike the Patersons, the McLeods met in Britain, while Junko was studying English. Therefore, Junko was Adam's first introduction to the Japanese language, and Adam has never lived in Japan. Since their son was born, Adam has resolved to

learn some basic Japanese, to better understand his wife and grasp at least a few words of the conversations that take place between Junko and their son. Junko admits that she is quite happy with her husband's eagerness to learn Japanese:

*Um, well, Adam's taking — he's learning Japanese quite seriously, because, because, I think understanding language means understanding me, and understanding Japan. Unless you master the language, you never really kind of get really, you fit into understanding the culture, is it? ... he's got Rosetta Stone [language learning software program] things, which he used twice this year. He goes to the Japanese church's Japanese lesson every Wednesday... so I can see he's very willing to and eager to learn Japanese, which makes me feel yeah, kind of very happy about that ... I used to feel kind of, it's always me who has to make effort to make him understand, because it's not totally fair.*

In this way, even though Adam does not speak Japanese, by making an effort to learn Japanese, he is subtly raising the status of the minority language in his home and perhaps also influencing his son's acquisition and acceptance of the Japanese language. Furthermore, although Adam is monolingual, he was actually able to set a very realistic linguistic goal for his son:

*Yes, I hope he'll be bilingual, but it's not our number one priority or anything like that. I mean, it would be great if he did, but it's not the end of the world if he didn't. He could get by with just English, but it would be great — I would prefer if he could speak Japanese. Yeah, we'll see what comes.... I try to get some kind of bond between my son and I, we try to get on as best we can and communicate, you know, it's what I want, for him to be able to communicate with his parents in due course...*

While others parents in the study mentioned raising their children bilingually for future work-related benefits; ultimately, perhaps parents in mixed families should strive for bilingualism simply for the reason that Adam states, to be able to communicate with one another. For many mixed, interlingual families, simply being able to communicate with one another in and of itself may present challenges, as we examine in the following section.

### **Communication Challenges**

In the present study, the Japanese women are the migrant spouses and are thus expected to learn the English language; on the other hand, the British men are, for the most part, exempt from learning the Japanese language. Moriizumi (2011), in his

study of intercultural families in the United States, suggests that this language inequality may be a reflection of the power distribution in the mixed marriages. Yet another possibility may simply be that the families live in an English-dominant society and the Japanese woman therefore needs to speak English in her everyday life. Nonetheless, two different languages in one household inevitably creates communication challenges, particularly when the family is together, and the wife and children are bilingual, but the father is not. During a home observation at the Ramsey home, I observed such a situation. In the Ramsey home, the mother and the sons speak to one another in Japanese, the father speaks to everyone in English, and the boys speak to one another in English. My notes from observing their dinner table reflect this:

*Mum talks about a story she read online today, about an Olympic torch being sold on eBay. She recounts this story for the boys in Japanese, and then interprets everything for Dad in English... The older son comments on the eBay story, in Japanese, to Mum. Dinner is winding down... Older son finishes his dinner and takes his plates to the sink. He then makes some comments to Mum, in Japanese, complaining that the kettle is hot enough already, but Dad is asking him to heat up the water some more. Mum chimes in, in Japanese, and says, "You know how your father is... he likes his water very hot." All this conversation takes place in Japanese, right in front of Dad, who seems somewhat oblivious to everything... Dad suddenly asks about all the flies flying around... Mum says it's after she started recycling. Older son says, in English, that it's because of the Chip Shop nearby, and that they should put a recycle point in front of all chip shops. Mum adds, in English, that there's also so much trash especially from the local high school kids, who stop at the chip shop after school. Younger son says they should make a law against throwing trash on the ground. Dad says such a law exists in Glasgow... Older son and Dad continue discussing the garbage situation ... Mum quiets down for a while while the boys and Dad speak in English.*

This is an excellent example of how mixed families negotiate language as part of their everyday lives, including at the dinner table. While they do try to interpret much of the Japanese conversations for the father and the mothers also make an effort to understand the English conversations, there are also times when conversations are simply reserved for parent-child, in their native languages. Although this may sound somewhat divisive, participants tend to generally look at linguistic challenges in a positive manner. Keiko Ross, who has been married to her husband Ewan for three and a half years elaborates:

*Yeah. It's kind of like — to some extent, up to like 70%, I can express myself, but the small things — I can't explain things like I can in Japanese. So like when we fight, it's just too much trouble, so I can only express myself up to a certain point, but on the other hand, this doesn't lead to bigger fights. Because if you can express yourself 100%, the fights gets bigger, so maybe it's actually better this way. Because you can't express yourself, you're forced to endure, so you just say, "Oh well," and maybe that's why we've had good results.*

Not being able to completely express oneself with their partner may be a compromise that some individuals, like Keiko, are willing to make. However, when it involves the children, things may become more complicated, as I later observed in Keiko's home:

*Mum and son speak in Japanese, and Mum and Dad speak in English. Annoyed, Mum says, asonderu! [He's playing!] Dad is clueless and asks, "What? Is he eating it?" ... Son says, owari [finished!], and Mum says, "Zenbu tabete!" [Eat it all!]. She also adds that, if he doesn't finish everything, he won't be getting any dessert. Dad continues feeding the little boy while Mum continues eating her meal. The son then stands on his highchair and attempts to speak, but neither understand... was it English or Japanese? He drinks his water, and then babbles on and on. The little boy then spits up some of his food, and is scolded twice, in two languages. Once by Mum: "Nande souyuukotosuruno?" [Why do you do things like that?] and then by Dad: "Don't do that, son!"*

As such, negotiating between two languages can be a challenge, particularly when Dad cannot understand what his wife and child are speaking. In a similar way, Jim Miller claims to enjoy "voluntarily" excluding himself from family conversations in Japanese, yet during more heated moments, such as when his wife Fumiko is scolding the children, Jim does admit to feeling frustrated:

*I mean, I think the one time it does get slightly frustrating is when something happens and I don't know what the context is, and I see it's quite an emotional service and quite a bit going on between the kids or between Fumi and the kids and she's telling them off or something, and I can't understand it, that's sometimes frustrating and a bit difficult, because I can't back her up or if — I might know something about it or an issue going on, but I can't really understand what it is, so I can't contribute...*

While mixed families with a monolingual father not understanding what is happening between his own wife and children can be frustrating, the Japanese women also experience frustration when, due to their limited command of English,

they are not able to completely be involved in conversations between their husbands and children. Here, for example we observe the Clarks and how, because of her limited English, mother Taeko is somewhat excluded from her daughter's English homework:

*Today, at the dinner table, Dad makes up maths problems for older daughter... because it is Homework Deadline Day for Father and Daughter, as all of it is due tomorrow (Monday). Older daughter doesn't seem to like maths very much... her favourite subject is art... Dad continues trying to work on maths problems with her. He asks her what 35-5 is. She struggles and resists ... She continues resisting, so Dad moves on to her storybook homework. He asks her to give him a summary of the story. She asks if they can talk about something else. Dad says no, he's only got homework on his mind. They've got to work on, not only her maths homework today, but also her reading assignment. She needs to finish reading a book and answering the question "What happened?" Dad continues to quiz her on her book in great detail. Dad seems to have also read the book. He's obviously the primary caretaker of the daughter's school work. Because the new school year has just begun, Dad is still trying to figure out how the new teacher will administer the spelling tests. Dad then suggests that she go to her room and finish reading her book, carefully. After she is gone for a couple of minutes, Mum asks, "Where is she?" Dad says she's in her room finishing up the book. Mum thought she was coming back to the table. Dad says he thought it would be better for her to go read, Mum says that's fine. Then she suddenly looks up and says, "Did she say gochisousama?" So daughter runs back to the kitchen and says it, then runs back to her room to read... Dad says he's working late on Wednesday and Thursday this week, so he won't be able to help with homework. Daughter says she can try to do it herself... Mum remains silent. This week in particular is busy for the Clarks because Dad has to write a report regarding daughter's maths homework. Mum is completely oblivious to this and a bit surprised.*

This home observation shows that, similar to Taeko, sometimes women whose first language is not English tend to tune out when their children are speaking to their fathers in English. Further, there also seems to be a division of labour regarding homework, with the British fathers having to take on this responsibility, mostly due to practical reasons: the Japanese mothers do not seem capable and/or confident enough to assist the children with their English homework.

Having a monolingual parent can thus bring additional challenges to the everyday lives of the mixed families; however, in families with two bilingual parents, there are different types of challenges. For example, Hiroko Walker shares that for her,

having a husband who is fluent in Japanese means that she loses the opportunity to improve her English:

*Yeah, my husband's Japanese is quite well... Hmm, yeah, getting better and better, because he speaks in Japanese in house, with me, quite a lot, because — well, that's good thing because he wants to maintain his Japanese because he doesn't use Japanese in his office, in his work... [At home] Mostly Japanese, 90% we speak Japanese in our house, and then my husband sometimes speak English to our son, but um, yeah.*

As a result, sometimes, in order to raise bilingual children and teach them Japanese, the Japanese women, like Hiroko, must sacrifice their own advancement in the English language. Among the twelve families in the present study, only two men (Cameron Walker and Colin Hamilton) have made a commitment to speak Japanese at home with their wives. For the Hamiltons, as Colin explains, he and his wife chose to converse in Japanese because they wanted to give the Japanese language *status* in their home:

*The common language between myself and Chiyoki is Japanese, so the kids know that, uh, so I think that raises the language as — in importance. If I were to compare my family with some other families ... where English is the family language, and one of the partners doesn't speak Japanese, I think that uh, that it makes it much harder for the kids to maintain their Japanese. Well, the only cases that I know are cases where the female speaks both English and Japanese fluently, the man doesn't speak Japanese at all, and the kids are not as fluent in Japanese because they're brought up here, and the family language is English. So in that case, it's the mother that's doing any sort of interpreting and struggling to get the kids to speak Japanese to her, um, so that's — yeah, I can see that as being difficult. Um, and also, because they're here, it must be a real struggle to raise the status of Japanese. With us, there's a struggle there, too, but it's less of a struggle because, no matter what happens, myself and Chiyoki are speaking in Japanese, so it's always got that status. The kids will want to understand that, you know, they want to understand, "What are they talking about?" So they'll want to learn, too.*

Besides communication challenges between the couples, communication challenges between the Japanese mother and her children also exist. While the Japanese mother and her child may initially be able to communicate in Japanese, as the children grow older, particularly because of the strong attraction to the dominant language (Pearson 2007), many of them soon refuse to, or become unable to express

themselves in Japanese, choosing instead to communicate with both their British father and their Japanese mother in English. This hesitancy or refusal to speak Japanese was observed in several of the families, particularly after the children began school. For example, Yuzuki Barclay's daughter, although only three years old, is already starting to resist speaking Japanese to her mother:

*[I speak in] Japanese, and my daughter replies me in English ... [In Japan], my daughter is always speaking English, so people come and ask us, "Why is she speaking English? Why can't she, you know, speak Japanese?" ... [Even at the Japanese playgroup] ... some of the Japanese kids, they're from both Japanese family, and one girl ... was speaking Japanese all the time to my daughter, but she doesn't reply her back in Japanese, she always replies in English, so the little girl [now] speaks English, and they were speaking English together, and I was quite surprised.*

While the attraction to the dominant language can be strong, in the case of the Barclays, we see that, not only in the home, but when visiting Japan and when participating in the Japanese playgroup, where the dominant language is Japanese, the little girl is refusing to speak Japanese. As such, children refusing to speak Japanese seems to be the result of 1) the attraction of the dominant language, 2) the fact that English has now become the natural way of expression for them and they thus prefer to use English, and/or 3) an active rebellion.

During the course of the study, I often witnessed children who understand and speak Japanese consciously pausing for a moment after having been spoken to in Japanese to think, and then replying in English, or sometimes beginning to respond in Japanese and then catching themselves "slipping up." This may thus be seen, as James (2011, p136) explains, a victory: "from a child's point of view ... any negotiations within the family start from this imbalance of power, [making] any small victory the more pleasurable." Children refusing to speak the minority language is not unique; on the contrary, it is in line with Arnberg (1984) and Pearson's (2007) studies, which found children in minority-language contexts continuing to use the dominant language among their peers, even when they were more competent in the minority language. My fieldwork observations further

support this both in playgroups as well as during a playdate with a handful of Japanese mothers and their children:

*As I was talking to a mum, my son began tugging at Fumiko Miller's son's arm — the little boy said, "itai" [it hurts!]). Oops. As I released him from my baby boy's grasp and watched him return to his conversation with the boy sitting next to him, I noticed that, interestingly enough, they conversed in English. As I watched the children run around later, again, I also noticed that while the children speak to all the adults in Japanese, they revert to English with one another.*

*Soon after lunch, the children had had enough food and were ready to run around the house again. The five children were all three and under, with only one attending nursery. The girl attending nursery soon took charge, grabbed the other little girl, and began speaking to her in English, saying that they weren't going to play with the boys. The boys, however, while sometimes speaking to one another in English, seemed content just playing on their own with cars and trains.*

As a result, while the parents in mixed families are attempting to raise their children bilingually, take them to Japanese playgroups, interact with other Japanese people, and speak to them in Japanese at home, raising bilingual children is proving to be anything but a natural occurrence, but instead, an uphill battle, and one that requires strong, continual commitment (Fought 2006) from both the parents and the children, and perhaps additional support along the way because as Yamamoto (2001, p18) suggests, sociocultural and familial factors can significantly affect children's bilingual development.

### **Bilingualism: An Uphill Battle**

#### ***External Support***

Raising children with two languages can be labour-intensive, especially regarding the minority language. As such, it seems that, in addition to teaching their children Japanese at home, the mixed families require additional support to create a "need" for the Japanese language (Grosjean 2010). This is in line with what Pearson (2007, p406) suggests: "A cohesive community of heritage language speakers can make a difference in the vigour of that language and its ability to motivate and create opportunities for young speakers..." In the present study, the families are accessing external Japanese language support in the form of language lessons, once a week, at



three different locations: the Japanese Church (Wednesdays), the Japanese Playgroups (Fridays), and the Japanese Language School (Saturdays). Out of the fourteen children in the present study in nursery or school, two attend no Japanese lessons, five attend the Japanese playgroup lessons, three attend the Japanese language school, three attend the Japanese church lessons, and one attends both the playgroup lessons and the language school. Although the Japanese women speak to their children in Japanese, they rely heavily on the support of external Japanese lessons, particularly when it comes to teaching literacy. This is in line with Noguchi's (1996, p10) findings: Although it is common to teach one's children to speak, teaching them to read and write is another matter, usually reserved for trained professionals in a school setting. Miyuki Ramsey describes her experiences in teaching her son how to read and write in Japanese:

*I tried like uh, more than 10 years ago, before my younger son was born, between me and Setsuko Potter, like every Friday, or sometimes coming you know, Setsuko's daughter coming here and my son stay here and try to teach them to the hiragana and katakana. But from mum to children isn't — you know, wasn't good. And then, at that time, they mostly want to play together, you know, so that's it, it's finished, they just go — so doesn't work...*

Fortunately for Miyuki and Setsuko, around five years ago, the local Japanese church began offering Japanese lessons every Wednesday evening, as Miyuki elaborates:

*At first, I heard from a Japanese missionary, there is the Japanese language class for the, you know, people who want to learn Japanese... in my child's case, especially for my older son, he understands Japanese and he can speak Japanese, just he can't read, and then he can't write. So eh, then I was talking to the missionary, and she said, "Oh, just come around to see," you know? And then we went to there, and at that time, there are plenty of volunteers, workers, so she offered like, one versus one lessons, so it was quite good, and [my son] was quite catch it, all hiraganas in like, just couple of weeks ... and also she tried to teach some of the kanji, but and then she had to move to Japan, so...*

The teachers at the Japanese church are all volunteers, and thus many are missionaries or Japanese students at the university. As a result, there is little consistency in the curriculum, and that is why this year, Miyuki herself has stepped up to organise the lessons. This seems to be ideal for her as it allows her to stay

involved in her children's Japanese language acquisition, but with some distance as well, as she does not teach her children directly. Another place where Japanese lessons are offered is at the Japanese playgroups, which, as Taeko Clark explains, is where her daughters are learning Japanese literacy:

*Regarding Japanese, I don't want them to forget it, to be able to speak it. And if possible, if they can write. In Japanese, there are three forms of writing: hiragana, katakana, and kanji. I definitely want them to be able to write and read hiragana and katakana, and kanjis, I realise they can't learn all of them, but at least if they are able to write a few, that's my hope ... I just hope they never forget Japanese, and that's why I'm going to push them to learn Japanese. They attend — not the Japanese language school, but the Japanese playgroup, and that's where my older daughter is learning Japanese, for 45 minutes, once a week.*

While external Japanese language lessons can be of assistance to the mixed families as they raise bilingual children; attendance at the lessons does not guarantee the production of native Japanese speakers. Having said that, the Japanese language school that runs on Saturdays most likely comes closest to guaranteeing at least basic knowledge of the Japanese language and culture. This is somewhat similar to the Saturday schools that Twine (2010, p132) references, which actively seeks to “foster black children's self-esteem and racial and cultural pride.” The Japanese Saturday school, on the other hand, tends to emphasise language skills. However, as Colin Hamilton explains, the Japanese language school does also attempt to teach the children some cultural aspects of Japan as well:

*The school, the Japanese school is — I'm sure you're aware — they follow the same curriculum as the, any school in Japan. They [also] have the undoukai and the happyoukai, and nyuugaku-shiki, all of that, yeah.*

Nonetheless, as Oriyama's (2011, p676) study found, teaching heritage learners from the same textbooks as their monolingual peers in Japan can be problematic since these books are “not suitable for heritage learners' age or actual levels of Japanese literacy.” As a result, finding external Japanese language support, particularly in regard to literacy, specific to heritage language speakers can be difficult, and many times, this means that those around the children, particularly the mothers, may have to take on this responsibility.

### ***A Labour of Whose Love?***

While external language lessons can offer parents assistance in raising bilingual children, another form of support and assistance can be found in social networks, particularly, as we have seen, through playgroups, Japanese friends, and Japanese kin. Here, Andrew Clark explains the role he hopes his Japanese in-laws will fulfil, in order to ensure his daughter's bilingualism:

*Um, what I'd like my children to be ... bilingual and comfortable in both languages. I mean, I hope they can achieve that, which I think is very important, that my daughter has the Japanese part, and I hope that in the future, maybe she can go to Japan to stay with her Japanese relatives for an extended period, so she can get, get um, the language ... If she only stays here, and only uses Skype, you know, once a week, to talk to her relatives, I think her Japanese will start to, level will start to go down as English level increases. So hopefully once she gets a little older, she can go for extended stays, um, with them, to brush up on her Japanese.*

As is evident from Andrew's comments, the Japanese extended family can play an important part in the mixed children's acquisition of the Japanese language. On the other hand, the British extended family do not seem to be as involved in passing down the English language, as it is the dominant language and thus, the children interact with it naturally, on a daily basis, particularly when they begin school. Further, while none of the British kin blatantly oppose the mixed children learning Japanese, there was some hesitancy, particularly for kin who were brought up monolingually and bilingualism remains somewhat novel, as the Hamilton's paternal grandmother Scarlett shares:

*The only thing I would say that sometimes I feel a little bit left out if they're speaking in Japanese, and of course you don't understand, but then I think, "Well, we speak in English all the time, and maybe our daughter-in-law doesn't understand." And maybe she feels more comfortable speaking in her own, her first language, you know?*

In addition to feeling somewhat left out of conversations that take place between their daughters-in-law and grandchildren, Ewan Ross' mother Julie explains how she and her husband are simply trying to understand their grandson's situation better:

*As far as I know, all the studies that I've read about say that children who are bilingual cope better in later life. My husband, on the other hand, thinks that maybe our grandson's speech is a bit delayed because of that. But uh, I have no qualms about it, I think it's a good thing... my husband and I were talking about that today, and he was sort of saying, you know, two names for everything, a Japanese name and an English name for everything, so it's bound to be a bit confusing!*

While having two names for everything may seem somewhat confusing for those observing from the outside, for the mixed children themselves, it is the norm, and switching between languages is nothing out of the ordinary. Yet, as Ayaka MacFarlane's mother Chifumi Yonemura shares, she is amazed at her grandsons' ability to switch between languages:

*We speak in Japanese, and what's funny is this year, when they arrived in Japan, in the morning — we had slept through the night, and in the morning, I pretended I was sleeping, and the boys began chattering away in English. They were jet-lagged and were up very early in the morning, talking in English. And then, they looked under the covers, calling me, "Baa-chan, Obaa-chan" — are you ok? It's already morning! They just switched languages — they were able to just change languages like that. To us, they always speak to us in Japanese, and when their father comes to visit as well, they speak to him in English. So they can look forward and speak English to one person, and backwards and speak Japanese to another person. Everyone is amazed at that, the way they're able to switch languages depending on the person to whom they're speaking.*

During my fieldwork, when I observed siblings communicating with each other, it always seemed to be in English, as Chifumi above observed with her grandsons. However, as Colin Hamilton's mother shares, sometimes children use their knowledge of Japanese to be cheeky:

*The little devils! Even from an early age — I remember we were babysitting once, and they purposefully spoke Japanese — <laughs>! That's just what children would do!*

Scarlett brings up a very interesting point. Most scholarship surrounding transnational kin has focused on language as a barrier (cf Ackers and Stalford 2004); yet as we see here, bilingual children can also purposefully create a language barrier in jest. While the Hamilton children thus purposefully created a language barrier, for many Japanese kin, the likelihood of a real language barrier worries them.

Hiroko Walker's sister, Tomoko Suzuki, for example, fears, perhaps not so much a language barrier, but a barrier of not being able to converse naturally:

*When we're on Skype, it makes me happy to see my nephew laugh. I don't know why, but even though my younger brother and older brother have children, for some reason, I feel closest to my younger sister's son. He's very cute. Right now, he can't communicate with words yet, but I play with him, and when he laughs, it makes me very happy. Pretty soon, he will start speaking, and will be bilingual, so we won't have a language barrier, and we will be able to communicate, but it might be that we won't be able to converse so naturally, like a normal Japanese aunt and nephew, and when I think of that, it makes me sad.*

While the parents in the mixed families seem to have high aspirations of their children communicating freely with their extended family members in both Japanese and English, the extended family members themselves seem to be more realistic. While Tomoko's nephew is still young; for the Potters, whose children are thirteen and seven, Setsuko recalls, a communication barrier that did surface between her children and her brother. In their case, because Setsuko's brother speaks English quite well, he is able to communicate with his niece and nephew in English. As a result, while language can be a hurdle for the Japanese kin to overcome, at the same time, it also provides the children with the "need" (Grosjean 2010) to learn Japanese, so as to be able to communicate with their Japanese family<sup>18</sup>. In this way, while extended family can play an important role in the transmission of language, ultimately, the responsibility seems to fall on the parents, and more particularly, the minority parent, in this case, the Japanese mother. We see this in the case of the Paterson family where, even though Tim speaks basic Japanese, Kikuko has given herself the responsibility of teaching their daughter Japanese:

*I speak Japanese [with my daughter], because I want her to speak Japanese in the future. I live in Britain, and because I live here, for her, it's might be difficult to learn Japanese, only I can teach her, I think, so.*

Kikuko does not specify how she views this responsibility. On one hand, she may see this responsibility positively, since teaching her daughter Japanese can be a

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<sup>18</sup> Extended family will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

bonding opportunity, she will be able to use her native language, and potentially, her daughter may grow up to be her Japanese communication partner (Brahic 2013). Another aspect to consider when discussing this strong desire for the Japanese women to teach their children their native tongue may be that she does not want to raise fully British children because that would deny her own motherhood and alienate herself from her husband and children (Wilson 1987, p189). This is somewhat in line with what one mother half-jokingly mentioned during my fieldwork, *"I keep telling my daughter I want her to be around when I get old because lots of older foreigners in Britain with dementia forget English and only start being able to communicate in their native languages!"* At the same time, this responsibility on the parent can also be seen as a burden, particularly because, as Yamamoto (2001, p130) found, placing the responsibility of teaching a child one's native language can be "painstaking," particularly literacy training, which is "time-consuming and requires extensive efforts and patience on the part of both parent and child." On the other hand, for the child, the benefits of learning a second language can include, in addition to the more general advantages of developing more cognitive benefits, learning a language more naturally (Arnberg 1984), and making them flexible learners (Kovacs and Mehler 2009), they are also given the opportunity to spend time with their mothers, learn a language one-on-one from a native speaker, be able to understand more of the conversations that take place in Japanese, and to belong (cf Murphy-Shigematsu 1997). However, there are also some negative aspects of learning a language, including the extra work that will pile up in addition to school homework as well as becoming more distinctly "different" at a time when most children desperately want to fit in.

Kikuko's husband Tim does not seem to realise this "painstaking" process of becoming a heritage language learner or of teaching one's child their native language. Instead, he assumes that their daughter will almost effortlessly grow up bilingually, with his wife naturally taking the bulk of the responsibility, as he explains here:

*In order [for our daughter to become bilingual] ... I think speaking Japanese at home, she'll pick up quite quickly, and I don't think spoken Japanese will be a problem, and then hopefully Japanese classes for her as well, or just doing Japanese environment, where she speaks Japanese, uh, reading and writing, Kikuko's determined to teach her how to read and write in Japanese, and she's getting material to help her do that as well...*

This finding is in line with Okita's (2002) work, which highlights the Japanese migrant mother's struggle with both coping in a new land and shouldering the burden of raising bilingual children with little support from her husband. In the present study, regarding language responsibilities, we find the British men being involved fathers, and sometimes even more determined than their Japanese wives to produce bilingual children; yet the bulk of the responsibility for raising bilingual children remains the woman's burden, even when both partners are bilingual. As such, in a similar manner to how mothers bear the majority of the responsibility associated with enrichment activities<sup>19</sup>, the Japanese mothers are also responsible for all aspects of the children's Japanese language acquisition, including finding, signing up for, and transporting the children to and from their lessons. Further, although Japanese school, for example, is held on Saturdays, in most of the families I spoke with, the mothers take the children to school by car, train, or bus, even though the fathers have cars and do not work on Saturdays. One such case was a mother who shared with me that she and her son leave their home at 6am on Saturday, walk to the bus stop, take a bus and train, and go to Japanese Saturday school. In the meantime, she adds, her husband stays home and relaxes, and their car remains parked outside their home. As such, while the responsibility for helping the children with their Japanese homework may naturally fall more heavily on the Japanese woman, this idea of invisible work, including transportation to and from lessons, which could be accomplished by either parent, further perpetuates this idea of "reproductive labor" (Moser 1989).

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<sup>19</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1.

### **One More Language, mas e do thoil e [please]?**

While raising bilingual children can be a laborious process that involves much *invisible work*, two of the families, the Ramseys and the Potters, have chosen to introduce their children to three languages: 1) the societal language of English, 2) their mother's native tongue of Japanese, and 3) Scottish Gaelic. According to the 2011 Scottish Census (National Records of Scotland 2013), just over 1% of the population (58,000) speak Gaelic. This was a slight fall from 2001, when 1.2% (59,000) reported speaking Gaelic. While the number of individuals able to speak Gaelic has fallen in general, the youngest group (under 20) actually showed a small (0.1%) increase, perhaps due to Gaelic schools like the ones attended by the Potter and Ramsey children. In the Ramsey home, Gaelic could be considered a heritage language since Ryan is a native Gaelic speaker. But because the children are learning it at school, rather than in the home, their experience may be somewhat different when compared to their acquisition of the Japanese language, which is directly being transmitted from their mothers. Further, for the Ramseys, although Ryan is fluent in Scottish Gaelic, he communicates with his two sons in English, as his wife Miyuki explains, "*... between my husband and childrens are English, and sometimes he tries and speak Gaelic, but it's not work.*" According to Ryan, "*... they speak more Japanese in the house than the Gaelic, because the mother is always talking, she's quite firm, 'They must speak Japanese.'*"

In the case of both the Ramsey and Potter families, the children are fluent in Gaelic, even without linguistic assistance from their Scottish fathers, because they attend Gaelic school. This emphasises the importance of formal schooling in acquiring a second or third language. However, as McPake (2006, p40) found in her study of Gaelic medium units, when parents are not literate, or even familiar with the community language that their children are learning, the extent of support they can offer their children does tend to diminish. Having said that, for the two families whose children are at Gaelic school, the children learning Gaelic actually had the domino affect on both of the Japanese women, causing them to take Gaelic lessons themselves. Lewis Potter himself cannot speak Gaelic, but his wife Setsuko, out of



personal interest as well as to better assist her children with their Gaelic homework, studied Gaelic, and Lewis is in awe:

*My wife's the best: so her first language is Japanese, then English, but she also — she also studied Gaelic, I don't know, maybe 10, 8 years ago. She was on a course, when our daughter was a toddler. So I find that amazing, that she could learn a foreign language through a foreign language! Yeah, so it's like me learning Chinese through Japanese, and I just — my brain can't handle that.*

Returning to the idea of culture being transmitted in various ways, we now see how, in a way, Scottish Gaelic has been shared (in)vertically, from bottom to top, from child to parent. This also emphasises the complexity of the idea of 'national culture' discussed in the previous chapter, with the Japanese mothers, instead of the Scottish fathers, helping the children with their Gaelic homework.

Ballard (1994) suggests that being able to express oneself in two or more languages is indeed possible; but even if minority language(s) are exclusively spoken in the home, or the children attend Gaelic school, the choice of accepting the minority language(s) remains the children's. Ewan Ross, whose parents' first language was Scottish Gaelic, speaks about his linguistic choices:

*Because my parents, their first language is Gaelic, and I couldn't see the point of learning that at all, um, so I didn't, and possibly they didn't try hard enough to get me to learn it, but they just left it up to me, um, I regret that now, but there's not too much I can do about it.*

In a somewhat similar way, Ewan is now also resolved to not push Gaelic upon his one-year-old son, unless his son expresses some interest:

*If he wants to, and there's a Gaelic — what do they call it — Gaelic Medium High School or school in Edinburgh, that could be an option for us, especially if our local catchment school is not very good, depending on where we're living. And if he does, well, he will be bilingual, to whatever degree, so it would make it easier for him to pick up other languages. But I think a European language would probably be more useful to him than Gaelic. So it depends how much of an interest he has in his heritage on my side of the family. If he wants to learn it, fine, if he doesn't, uh, I wouldn't force him to ...*

In this way, Ewan emphasises that having a cultural connection to a language is not as important as knowing a language that is more practical and useful, such as a European language. Nonetheless, many mixed children have the opportunity to be taught one or more heritage languages, but ultimately, they must make the decision to accept or reject these heritage language(s). The fact that some of the parents in the present study have pushed their children on to learn a third language, however, suggests that they see language as a gift, but whether or not the children share this view remains to be seen.

### **The Transmission of Language(s): A Gift or Burden?**

Parents are encouraged to introduce their children to a second language, and sometimes even more languages, as exposure to more than one language, particularly during childhood, allows them to develop more cognitive benefits (Diamond 2010). From the child's perspective though, receiving a parent's language and learning to communicate in more than one language can sometimes be more of a burden than a gift. In this section, we explore the idea of the transmission of language by looking more closely at the Potter family's eldest daughter (age 13) and the McGregor family's only son (age 8), as they are both older and have different linguistic and geographic histories, with one spending her entire life in Edinburgh and the other, spending half of his life in Japan and half in Britain.

Lewis and Setsuko Potter met via a pen-pal programmes in the late 1980s; they later met in person for the first time when Setsuko enrolled at an English-language school in Edinburgh. After they married, settled in Edinburgh, and had their first daughter, they moved to Japan for three months when their daughter was about two years old, on a "trial period." Setsuko explains: *"So we went to Japan and like uh, to see what [it is] like living for a long time, but basically, it's not easy for Lewis, too. He had to learn more Japanese..."* While Lewis struggled with the Japanese language, his daughter thrived, as Setsuko remembers, *"And at that time, her speaking, you know, her speech coming out — because we were in Japan, so that time, lots of words was Japanese, she was speaking Japanese, most of all."* Upon returning to Britain, their daughter's Japanese slowly began to be replaced with English (cf Fillmore 1991). One of the reasons for

this being the natural attraction of the dominant language (cf Pearson 2007), for both Sestuko and her daughter. In her interview, Setsuko recalls this period of linguistic transition:

*We start going to the toddlers group — Mothers and Toddlers around here, then she start making friends, and myself as well, started making other mums, you know become friends. Then, English is kind of introduced more to her, and also myself as well — I was try to learn the, you know, the English — Scottish nursery rhymes, nursery song, because we try to sing in the toddlers, altogether, so of course my daughter wanted to know, and myself — I had to learn as well. So I think — at that point, I kind of tried to learn English side of the, you know, childhood, you know, myself, how they do it. So you know, half, her friends started coming to our house, visiting, sometimes I find myself speaking English to my daughter, as well. So from that — from that point, she's kind of getting, kind of mixture: English and Japanese, starting, and when she start nursery, I think that time, English start taking over quite a lot. But she still understand what I'm saying, but come back by English. I think — I think before was because I was speaking Japanese and — to her, then when start having friends, I start speaking English sometimes to her, when the friends are there, so probably she knows I can speak English, and then, I think children is a very clever — they know the easy way to go.*

Although the Potters had originally envisioned their daughter speaking both English and Japanese fluently, the reality that, through their surroundings, through her friends, and through Setsuko's own desire to acculturate and her consequent switch to the dominant language, raising their daughter bilingually is slowly becoming an ambitious goal. Interestingly, around this time, the Potters decided to introduce their daughter to a third language, Scottish Gaelic, by enrolling her in the local Gaelic school. Setsuko elaborates:

*We decided to send our daughter to the Gaelic school in Edinburgh ... teachers speak only Gaelic, but sometimes they have to explain by English. But they speaks Gaelic all the time, and all the people who are there — because myself and my husband, we were not Gaelic speakers, but lots of parents was the same, and some of them are the native ... the reason I sent her there was one of the friends ... she recommended, they are quite good, and also they do lots of Scottish culture and Scottish music, which I love very much ... so we started going, then they had a Gaelic class for parents, they just started, the same year, so I started going twice a morning, so like four hours a week, I started taking Gaelic lessons there, just maybe want to understand what my daughter's doing as well.*

While introducing their daughter to yet another language may point to her parents being unfazed by languages, it also points to the fact that sometimes, for various reasons, including formal schooling, a child can be more successful in one language versus another. In the case of the Potter's, for example, while their daughter gained a stronger command of English through her friends and at home, and her Gaelic grew stronger through school, her Japanese suffered. Setsuko admits this freely, laughing nervously:

*So, but then, kind of — my daughter was Gaelic, Japanese, English; but now, suppose English comes, you know, top probably, then Gaelic, Japanese — maybe Gaelic because, properly she learned grammar and everything, so unfortunately, Japanese is the bottom.*

Although Setsuko spoke at great length regarding her daughter's language acquisition, regarding her son, she only says she "lost touch," after she started working and her husband Lewis became the stay-at-home parent; however, she does admit that her son's Japanese is "very, very bad." During observations of the dinner table at the Potter home, I was able to observe language being used between the different family members. What follows are my notes:

*The family all sit down and begin their meal by saying Itadakimasu! ... The younger son struggles with the word and must take it slowly, one syllable at a time... The language used at the dinner table is predominantly English, although Mum keeps attempting to speak Japanese to the children. Older daughter seems to understand Mum, but responds in English, and younger son doesn't seem to understand much Japanese, although he is sometimes helped by his sister, who tries to interpret Mum's questions sometimes. They talk about younger son's day at school. He mentions wall climbing in gym class... Mum asks, "PE nanisurono? [PE what are you doing?]" Younger son is clueless. Older daughter then subtly translates for him by answering the question herself: "You decide what you want to do on that day." Apparently, last time he chose to do Bingo for PE time. So Mum asks him, "Darega BINGO shiteruno? [Who's doing BINGO?] Blank stare --> "Dono teacher?" [What teacher?] He then exclaims, "Oh! What teacher?" Older sister prods and encourages him to share more, often acting as the family interpreter and explaining things in further detail, since she attended the same school... The older daughter is going to be learning how to start a fire tomorrow, and mum asks, "Jya fire start suruno?" A bit of Japanglish: instead of using the Japanese words for fire and start, she uses the English words ... As dinner progresses, Mum's language seems to become more English-based, perhaps to include Dad? No, it seems as if the children don't understand much Japanese either ... Mum keeps trying to speak*

*Japanese, a bit awkwardly, and everyone else continues to speak English ... She eventually switches over as well... All family members end the meal with gochisousamadeshita!*

Although the Potter household still begins and ends their meals with the traditional Japanese greetings, and Setsuko continues to attempt to speak to her children in Japanese at the dinner table, it seems that she has come to the realisation that she cannot communicate with her children in Japanese:

*When I'm trying to speak Japanese, and often, I notice that my son can't understand, and but try to explain by the other Japanese, but can't. So I have to speak English, to make them under- ... I think my daughter as well happens, occasionally happens, she doesn't know all the Japanese word, so then I have to explain by English as well...*

Setsuko seems to be somewhat easygoing about her children not being able to speak to her in Japanese, perhaps because she herself is comfortable in English, and also because, as the breadwinner of the family, she may simply not be able to dedicate as much time to her children's Japanese as she would like. Nonetheless, there is no "deep sense of grief" (Fries 1998). For the McGregor family, particularly Risa, who has invested so much time, effort, and money into her son's Japanese language acquisition, a sense of disappointment is observed, from the frequent times she mentions "Oh, we used to do ... but then our son quit Japanese school" to the way she lowers her head every time she says talks about her son quitting Japanese school.

Risa and David McGregor first met while David was working in Japan. They later married, had one son, and settled in Japan. Because David himself was fluent in Japanese, the only language spoken in their home was Japanese. When their son was four years old, after a twenty-year residence in Japan, David wanted to return to Britain, so the family relocated to London. However, because they had not raised their son bilingually, as Risa recalls, when their son arrived in Britain, he was faced with a new life, including a new language:

*When [we] came here, he was 4, and he couldn't English — he couldn't speak English at all, and his first friend was Polish — they could communicate own*

*language, you know? I don't know what's going on, but kids. So I was worried, but he was very, quickly absorbed, you know?*

In their study of black/white mixed students, Caballero and colleagues (2007 p348) found that teachers tended to have low expectations because of stereotypes that included the mixed students' 'confused' identities. For the Japanese/British families, there seemed to be a different type of stereotype that existed, having more to do with being seen as the "perpetual foreigner" (Tsuda 2014) and thus struggling with the English language. In the case of the McGregor's son, however, he soon became fluent in English, and after three years in London, due to David's mother's declining health, the McGregors decided to move to Edinburgh.

Once in Edinburgh, their son started attending Japanese language school on Saturdays. Yet as Risa explains, he soon quit "because he had so many homework and he was not happy..." This is not rare. Oriyama (2011, p676), in his study of Japanese heritage language learners in Australia also found many students having difficulty keeping up with the Japanese lessons, particularly past the third grade because this is the time when their counterparts in Japan are introduced to *kanji* literacy, while the majority of the children studying abroad are still struggling with basic *kana* literacy. In this way, Risa also seems to have realised that she cannot expect her son, who is being raised abroad to continue at the same pace in his Japanese studies as his counterparts in Japan. This, in turn, seems to have allowed her to come to terms with her son quitting Japanese school and his disinterest in the Japanese language in general:

*Well, it was shame, because I wanted to keep — I wanted him to carry on [with Japanese school], but um, because he had so many homework, and I have to look after his homework everyday, it's took half an hour to one hour, and he can't concentrate, and then sometimes he didn't want to do, so sometimes I argued with him. As Japanese mum, you know, "Do it, if you don't do it, you have to do more tomorrow!" And he started, you know, little bit crying, and then I was, "Don't cry!" And then, you know, argument gets worse, so that was not good to me, so it was — definitely stressful for him and then, you know, um, he had tantrum and then I thought, this is not totally good, not totally good. So maybe he should quit Japanese school ... he can start Japanese whenever he want to, you know, so Japanese school is not important for him anymore ... [Besides], I know some um, Japanese men who brought up in*

*United States, and they, their parents, both Japanese, and um, but they didn't speak Japanese at all, until they came to Japan, but when ... they started working with Japanese people, they could catch up, you know? And then my husband started Japanese when he came to Japan, and now he's a translator. So maybe I was, you know, still competitive about my son's Japanese ... Too competitive. There are a bunch of Japanese parents in his Japanese school, and then they always talk about how many homework he did and, you know, homework is very important, must be finished, all of them. You know, in here, Scottish mums don't push their children, but Japanese mums just push, push, to do it! That's not good, I realised, and you know, I talked with GP and his schoolteacher, and they just said, "Why don't you quit?" "Quit?! Not that easy!" But after he quit Japanese, everything changed, it's easier. No stress! Well, I stopped worrying about his Japanese situation, ability, but you know, now I don't have to. Maybe he can start when — anytime he wants to.*

Although Risa is concerned about her son's Japanese language skills for various reasons, she and her husband seem to have both come to the conclusion that bilingualism should be considered in a long-term perspective. At the moment, there is only so much they as parents can do regarding the transmission of language because language needs to be seen as a "voluntary part of ethnic identity" (Waters 1990, p118), a personal choice. Further, Grosjean (2010, p172) suggests that children can go in and out of bilingualism in a short time, and the main factor affecting this is a need for the language (e.g. a need to communicate with family members or friends, to watch television). The McGregor son, at this point, has stepped out of bilingualism and is not in a place where he readily accepts and maintains the Japanese language, particularly in the form of literacy; however this is not to say that he may later try to re-learn the lost language.

Fought (2006, p21) argues that a continual commitment to maintaining the ethnic, heritage language is crucial because, "just as identity can be fluid and changing throughout an individual's life, so can a person's relationship to the minority and dominant languages." As a result, while the McGregors have agreed to allow their son to quit Japanese language school, Risa continues to speak to him in Japanese, as my observation notes show:

*At the dinner table, Mum speaks Japanese to both Dad and their son. The son, however, speaks only English, and Dad speaks English to the son and Japanese to Mum. The conversations centre on the son's friends... Mum names all of them. She*

*continues to ask him questions about school in Japanese... son obviously comprehends the Japanese language, but refuses to speak, always answering her in English. While I've read about code-switching that happens among bilingual/bicultural children, I wonder what kind of work it must take on the child's part to constantly listen to Japanese, but always respond in English, never slipping up and uttering a word in Japanese.*

The linguistic dynamics in the McGregor family are interesting because, although the family are all bilingual in both English and Japanese, and actually once conversed only in Japanese, they have now almost completely switched over to the dominant language of their new home, English. As a result, it seems that Risa is beginning to feel both the exclusion that the English-speaking fathers in Japan felt (cf Jackson 2009) and a sense of disappointment as her son has, at least for the time being, has rejected the Japanese language: Risa's gift to her son become a burden. Yet she does not experience the "deep sense of grief" that Fries (1998) felt, perhaps because she has been able to accept that her son's happiness is most important, and that her work until now of teaching him Japanese has provided him with a grounding that will allow him to pick up the language at a later point, if he wants to.

Although both the Potters and McGregors had great expectations of their children growing up bilingually, the reality is that they are, at the moment, *passive bilinguals* (Arnberg 1984). While the first words of both the Potters' daughter and the McGregors' son were in Japanese; ironically, today, at the ages of thirteen and eight, both children answer their mothers only in English, even when their mothers speak to them in Japanese. While both Setsuko and Risa cannot have a conversation with their children in Japanese, their reactions were quite different, and this may be due to their initial expectations. In other words, Setsuko seems to have accepted, early on, that because she was raising her daughter in an English-dominant society, English would most likely become her daughter's native language. On the other hand, Risa and her son first began speaking in Japanese, and then migrated to Britain together. Once in Britain, Risa invested much time, energy, and money into her son's Japanese language acquisition, thus her expectations for her son's bilingualism may have been somewhat more ambitious and may not have taken



into account the heavy homework loads from Japanese school as well as the strong attraction to the dominant language (Pearson 2007). Thus, while some migrant parents may persist in making their children bilingual, both Setsuko and Risa seem to have come to terms with listening to their children expressing themselves in English, and then responding in either English or Japanese, or a bit of Japanglish.

### **Conclusions**

Individuals become multilingual for various reasons, including a desire to communicate in more than one language, to increase employment opportunities and social mobility (Grosjean 2010, p100), and perhaps even to signal a cosmopolitan persona. For the Japanese/British children, multilingualism is somewhat part of their identity, part of their cultural heritages, although as Pearson (2007) points out, not everyone who grows up in a bilingual environment becomes bilingual. Conversely, as we have seen in this chapter, the journey to multilingualism can be a challenging experience for both parent(s) and child.

In the study, all of the parents clearly stated that they desire to raise bilingual children. Yet regarding the transmission of minority language, there seems to be a heavier burden placed on the mother, even in cases where the British men are fluent in Japanese. While this is somewhat inevitable, since the Japanese women are native Japanese speakers, the “invisible work” (Okita 2002) of transmitting culture can extend to practical support as well, including driving the children to and from Japanese lessons, yet the British fathers generally remain uninvolved in this area as well. However, we do see the British men contributing to the children’s linguistic acquisition in the form of providing homework help for the children in English. In this case, conversely, the mothers tend to remain uninvolved. As a result, in regard to language acquisition, perhaps the parents have simply divided the labour into Japanese language and English language, with each parents being responsible for their respective language. Yet when considering the families who have introduced their children to a third language (i.e. Scottish Gaelic), we see that even though the Scottish fathers may be more culturally connected to the language, it is actually the Japanese women who are more interested in and willing to embrace this language.

This, in turn, may be yet another example of the complexity found in the idea of 'national culture.' Even though it is not part of their linguistic heritage, the Japanese women have a personal interest in Gaelic, thus encouraging and helping their children in the acquisition of the Gaelic language may not be a complete sacrifice.

Finally, for some participants, the labour involved in passing one's native language on to one's child is too great, and it does become a burden; yet for others who choose to persist, it becomes a gift, not only for the child, as it offers them more opportunities, but also for the parent, who, may one day be able to find in their mixed child alleviation for the loneliness and incommunicability they experience while living abroad (Brahic 2013, p712). While I did not observe any of the Japanese women alleviating their loneliness by speaking to their children, this may be because most of the children in the study were quite young, and because the women seem to alleviate their loneliness by speaking to other woman in similar situations<sup>20</sup>. Further, whatever the end result, parents must remember that, just as identity is fluid and dynamic (Wilson 1984, p42), bilingualism can also be, and children can go in and out of bilingualism in a short time (Grosjean 2010, p172). In other words, while some children may resist Japanese today, and use a variation of code switching — actively refusing to speak a language that they are fluent in — tomorrow, or a year from now, or ten years from now, the same child may suddenly choose to embrace bilingualism, and because of their experience with the Japanese language as children, they will have the grounding necessary to continue studying Japanese where they left off.

In the meantime, the British father will continue to speak to his children in the dominant language (English), the Japanese mother will continue to teach the children Japanese, and together, the family will negotiate and re-negotiate how languages are used among them. Further, as the different family members overcome communication barriers and learn to interact and communicate with one another without the convenience of a shared language, they find their own way of communicating in their new mixed family culture. In this way, through languages,

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<sup>20</sup> Discussion surrounding social networks will be included in Chapter 5.

the transmission of cultural values and traditions will be passed on (Bankston and Zhou 1995), and the mixed family will find its new linguistic identity which will allow the mixed children as well as the parents to confidently say they belong to a group (Murphy-Shigematsu 1997), to their mixed family. Thus, while an outsider may simply hear chaos at the dinner table, with not all members of the family understanding what is happening, with simultaneous interpretation becoming almost as natural as an echo, and with the continual mixing of languages, for the mixed family, this is the norm, and it is in the midst of doing mixed family that can see language as a gift. Another aspect of culture that is often considered a gift is food, as we will explore in the following chapter.

## Chapter Three

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### *Food Choices in Mixed Families*

#### **Overview**

Food choice is a major cultural symbol, a “central marker of ethnic boundaries and identities” (Twine 2010, p230). Verbeke and Lopez (2005, p824) suggest it is one of the cultural traits that humans first learn, and one that they are most reluctant to change when older. In mixed families, food is an important aspect of culture that parents seem eager to share with their children. This seems to be in line with Fox’s (2003, p1) suggestion, that a strong link exists between family and food, particularly because food is frequently a shared experience. Further, while food may sustain and nourish our bodies, cooking and mealtimes are also opportunities to gather together and promote family unity, as well as to transmit cultural dishes and stories to the next generation, yet at the same time, particularly for mixed families, food becomes another area of family life that requires negotiations (Bauer 2010, p173). In this chapter, we therefore focus on the mixed families’ food choices.

Scholarship surrounding mixed families and how they negotiate different culinary traditions is limited although there is a small body of work (e.g. Bauer 2010, Caballero 2010, Mckenzie 2013, Twine 2010). The literature reviewed in this chapter focuses mainly on food in general and how its role changes in accordance to life’s many transitional periods including marriage, motherhood, and the emergence of children. Literature surrounding gender inequity in *foodwork*<sup>21</sup>, as well as the influence of migration on food choices and habits is also reviewed. In the analysis of

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<sup>21</sup> Term used by Beagan, *et al.* (2008) to refer to responsibilities associated with feeding a family, which goes beyond simply preparing meals, and includes food shopping, menu planning, serving meals, and cleaning-up afterwards.

the data, themes such as food habits and mealtimes are explored. Further, the complexity surrounding the transmission of culture via food will be discussed, with a particular emphasis on 'national culture' and the horizontal transmission of culture from parent to parent, as well as the more traditional vertical transmission of culture from parent to child. Finally, the different food choices that the mixed families make at home, outside the home, with friends, and with extended family will be explored.

The sharing of meals is especially important to examine in mixed families because it is through these ritualised practises of everyday life, including the sharing of food around the table, that identities are constructed, culinary traditions are transmitted, food habits are formed, and palates are developed. Further, as Carsten (2000) argues, kinship is also produced and transformed through the process of sharing food and eating together, a process which strengthens blood, which can be traced back to relatedness. How the parents in mixed families then choose to negotiate between their different food preferences and habits becomes a significant factor in the mixed children's identities, their memories of home, food, the division of foodwork, and their parents' culinary heritages.

### ***Reading about Eating***

Although food is generally associated with being pleasing to the senses of *taste*, *smell*, and *sight*, it can also be appealing to the *mind*, as several researchers studying food habits have found, particularly when studying the relationship between food and marriage, motherhood, children and family, foodwork responsibilities, and migration. While food habits are seen by some as static and unchanging (e.g. Brown, *et al.* 2010, Siu 1952, Verbeke and Lopez 2005), Asp (1999) argues that food habits are continually evolving through travel, migration, and socio-economic environment. Yet even while somewhat fluid, "There are certain aspects of food habits that are difficult to change, such as the concept of meals, meal patterns, the number of meals eaten in a day, when to eat what during the day, how food is acquired and prepared, the etiquette of eating and what is considered edible as food" (Asp 1999, p288). We

therefore explore various aspects of literature on food and later discuss how mixed families negotiate between their different culinary traditions and preferences.

The topic of food may seem somewhat straightforward: humans eat in order to satisfy hunger needs and maintain life; however, because individuals choose what foods to consume, what people eat becomes a powerful symbol of who they are (Fox 2003). Furthermore, while food individualism allows partners to “consume food differently from each other, thus accommodating partners’ dietary differences” (Bove, *et al.* 2003, p34), in this chapter, the focus is on food as a social aspect (Douglas 1972, DeVault 1991), on food choices that families (generally mothers) make, not only for themselves, but for their partners and their children, under the influence of financial and time constraints, different food preferences, diets, and culinary traditions. To begin with, we discuss scholarship surrounding the influence of marriage on food habits.

### ***Marriage and Food***

Food choices between couples are important to consider because it is a “central part of marital relationships... [with] the capacity to create both conflict as well as pleasure...” (Bove, *et al.* 2003, p36). Although the word *marry* is generally used to refer to two individuals officially promising their lives to one other, it is also a term often overheard in the kitchen, when referring to blending or combining two or more foods. It is therefore fitting to consider that when two individuals marry, not only do their families and living spaces merge, but so too do their culinary traditions. In their study of food choices among newly married couples, Bove and colleagues (2003) found that each partner brought to the marriage gendered, ethnic, class-based, and other food preferences and intolerances, and while some individuals welcomed new, unfamiliar, or previously rejected foods, others resisted such foods. Yet eventually, both partners’ pre-existing personal foods systems merged in a “new joint family food system” (Bove, *et al.* 2003, p28). I was therefore keen to see what happened in the Japanese/British families, and whether a sort of fusion cuisine comes to dominate their tables.

While negotiating two different personal food systems requires an effort from both partners, the burden tends to fall more heavily on one partner, usually the woman. Marshall and Anderson (2000, p64) conducted a qualitative study of new Scottish couples and their food shopping habits as they learned to adjust to living together. What they found was that, although men seem to be more involved in food shopping by accompanying the women to the store and pushing the trolley or helping to carry the groceries, men maintain supporting roles instead of sharing equal responsibility with their partners. In a similar manner, Beagan and colleagues (2008) also found male partners to be largely in the helper role, rather than fulfilling a routine responsibility. As a result, gender inequity continues, and women assume most, if not all of the responsibilities associated with foodwork. In addition, women were also found to often deny their own food preferences in order to privilege the food preferences of others (Anving and Thorsted 2010, Bove, *et al.* 2003, Charles and Kerr 1986, DeVault 1991), “sacrific[ing] herself in order to provide the best items of food to her husband or to the growing children...” (Morgan 1996, p161). This mostly refers to households near the poverty line but it also points to the issue that, when negotiating between two different cultures, sometimes a compromise or “sacrifice” must be made.

### ***Mothers and Food***

While women may tend to carry a heavier burden in regard to food shopping and meal preparation when compared to their partners, when children are born women also become the “gatekeepers” of food, restricting what can and cannot be eaten (Anving and Thorsted 2010, p38), as well as the “health guardians” (Cairns, *et al.* 2010, p602) of their families. In addition, motherhood, according to Anving and Thorsted (2010, p30), also includes teaching children “cultural and social ideals of eating right and providing proper food form...” because in all homes, “children’s behaviour at the table must be monitored and controlled” (DeVault 1991, p50). Part of this monitoring may include what Morgan (1996) identifies as the link between food and morality:

*A whole host of expressions link food and morality in the exchanges between a parent and a child. “Waste not, want not”, “Willful waste makes woeful want”,*

*“Think of the starving millions”; these and many other phrases indicate that the business of eating is not simply a question of satisfying immediate needs but is enmeshed in issues of morality and social being (p162).*

In mixed families, although the Japanese mother may want to introduce her children to food from both societies (Imamura 1990), she may not be familiar with the proper etiquette associated with British table behaviour. Thus, the Japanese mother may seek help from her British female kin in order to achieve “respectability and acceptance” among her British family, as was the case in Twine’s (2010, p158, 162) study, which found white women attempting to find approval from their black family members and a sense of belonging to their transracial families by consuming and preparing ethnic food, as similar to their black relatives as possible. Another possibility is that the Japanese women may use memories of their own mothers as a reference point for their own dinner practises (Cairns, *et al.* 2010, p593), and choose to emphasise Japanese dishes and social ideals of table etiquette, including the custom of cleaning one’s plate. Yet as Morgan’s (1996) quote above states, the idea of cleaning one’s plate is somewhat transcultural, as are many other table manners. As a result, while the main foodwork responsibilities may be carried by women, perhaps responsibilities such as teaching table etiquette can be shared between both parents.

In her study, DeVault (1991) examined the foodwork involved in “feeding the family.” She found that much work goes into a mother’s preparation of daily meals, including solving the puzzle of finding a dish that takes into account her children and husband’s food preferences, their dietary needs, financial constraints, and presenting the meals as appealingly as possible. As a result, mothers tend to carry a burden that expects them to not only nourish their family’s bodies and provide them with healthy, delicious meals, but in the case of the mixed families, to also transmit culture, both vertically to their children, and horizontally to their partners, as they create a sense of belonging at the dinner table:

*The family is a place where people expect to be treated in a unique, personally specific way instead of anonymously, as they are often treated outside. Part of the work of feeding is to give this kind of individual attention, and doing so constitutes a*



*particular household group as the kind of place we expect a “family” to be* (DeVault 1991, p85).

This is an interesting point because, although people can expect to be treated in a unique way at the family table, often it is at home that people end up eating what everyone else is eating. On the other hand, it could be said that people are treated more uniquely outside the home, at a restaurant, as you are able to order a dish to specifically meet your preferences. As such, women at home are faced with the challenge of finding a dish that more or less uniquely meets each family member’s individual food preferences, along with the other responsibilities associated with feeding the family.

### ***Children and Food***

Issues of feeding dominate the relationship between mother and child (Morgan 1996). A mother’s influence on her children’s food choice is particularly strong during the newborn stage, where, for infants in many parts of the world, their first introduction to food is their mother’s milk. While there are five known tastes in the human palate (salty, sweet, sour, bitter, and *umami*<sup>22</sup>), a mother’s milk is identified as *umami*. When infants are about six months old, the process of weaning usually begins, and solids are first introduced into their diet. As a variety of solids are introduced, the infant becomes exposed to even more new flavours, with several factors influencing the acceptance of particular foods including repeated exposure to foods, the mother’s consumption of foods while breastfeeding, and the introduction of a variety of foods (Nicklaus 2009, p253).

Parents thus attempt to expose their children to a variety of foods at a young age, yet as Mouristen and Styrbaek (2014, p36) argue, taste preference during childhood is also dependent on country of residence and age. Evidence of this is found in the variation of sensitivity to bitter tastes, which is hypothesised to have co-evolved with the use of spices in cooking, which are unique to different cultural traditions (Krebs 2009). In the case of Japanese cuisine, although spices are rarely used, some foods may require an acquired taste. I therefore examine how the mixed families

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<sup>22</sup> “The fifth taste,” in addition to the classic four tastes. Literally means delicious and pleasant, as well as meaty and spicy (*umai*), and essence, essential nature, taste (*mi*) (Mouristen and Styrbaek 2014, p2).

negotiate their different food preferences when sharing a meal. In particular, because mothers tend to be responsible for most of the food shopping and meal preparations, their influence on their children's food habits is strong; yet as Anving and Thorsted (2010, p33) conclude, children also have a significant influence on food choices and should be seen as active social actors. Finally, as Fox (2003, p5) argues, the location of the meals also sends a message: "where we eat is as important as what we eat in getting the message across." In the case of the mixed families, this message may include whether they choose to eat at a table or *kotatsu*, and for the children specifically, whether their food choices differ if they are at home, out with friends, or at school, which in turn may be affected by their peers' perception of Japanese food.

### ***Foodwork and Gendered Work***

Meals shared at home with family may seem like an insignificant, routine part of everyday life, since we all eat in order to satisfy hunger needs and maintain life; yet DeVault (1991, p40) suggests that family meals can also satisfy emotional needs. Further, DeVault (1991, p49) suggests that women specifically tend to be the ones who are "continually creating one part of the reality of household life. At the same time, she (or much more rarely, he) is constructing her own place within the family, as one who provides for the needs of others..." As a result, it seems to follow that Mellor and colleagues' (2010, p116-117) study proposes foodwork as the site where gendered identity and social and emotional connections are found. Thus, women continue to do most of the foodwork in the family home (e.g. Beagan, *et al.* 2008, Charles and Kerr 1986, DeVault 1991, Mellor, *et al.* 2010), and accept this as "another inherent responsibility" (Anving and Thorsted 2010, p31).

In their research, Beagan and colleagues (2008, p667) interviewed multiple family members and found that none viewed the fact that women are the primary meal preparers as "unfair." On the contrary, the different family members suggested that women carry heavier burdens in regard to foodwork because they themselves chose to do so and because it was the rational choice for the family's particular situation (Beagan, *et al.* 2008, p666). Morgan (1996), however, found women taking responsibility of foodwork out of obligation, which is in line with DeVault's (1991,

p40) finding, that women tend to see responsibilities associated with foodwork “not [as] a personal favour, but a requirement of the work.” For the women in the present study, while they are negotiating new and different aspects of their identity, including their identities as mothers and wives, they are also negotiating their identity as migrants in a foreign land, all the while continuing to prepare meals for their families.

### ***Migration and Food***

Food preference is one of the first forms of cultural transmission that children receive from their parents, and it is also one of the most persistent (Verbeke and Lopez 2005). This seems to hold true, perhaps more so for migrants, who “struggle to break away from their habituated food choices...” (Brown, *et al.* 2010, p203). Furthermore, in their study of the Hispanic population in Belgium, Verbeke and Lopez (2005) found that the longer time migrants resided in Belgium the more acculturated they became, consuming more Belgian food and eating less foods from their homeland. While dietary acculturation may seem like a positive behavioural aspect on the part of the migrant to integrate into the host culture, this is not always the case. For example, Brown and colleagues (2010, p203) found that acclimating to a new culture can be extremely stressful. In the case of the Japanese/British families therefore, we will explore how and if the families, particularly the Japanese women have indeed experienced dietary acculturation, or if they continue preparing predominantly Japanese dishes for themselves and their families.

Migrants who continue to consume foods from their home countries may not do so purely to satisfy their hunger needs or for the promotion of their physical health. On the contrary, eating food from the homeland may symbolise a hesitancy to fully acculturate into the host country, with Carrus and colleagues (2009) finding that individuals who reported the most ethnic food purchases were also the highest ethnic identifiers. Still, for some, eating foods from their homelands satisfies emotional needs. In their study of international students, Brown and colleagues (2010, p204) found that eating food from the home country was associated with feelings of comfort and reassurance, soothing feelings of stress, grief, and loneliness while stimulating fond nostalgia and transporting the international student back

home. Brown and colleagues' (2010) study focused on students (temporary migrants) who tend to live abroad by themselves. This study, however, focuses on Japanese/British families, made up of long-term spousal migrants with partners from the dominant society and mixed children. We thus explore whether spousal migrants are more keen on eating foods from their home, experience dietary acculturation, or turn to fusion cuisine. Fusion cuisine originated as different groups interacted (Takaki 1983) through, for example, intermarriage, migration, or even, more recently, media and technologies (Duruz 2011, p56), fusion cuisines thus seems like an ideal solution for the mixed families, but whether or not it is will be explored.

Finally, in order to consume the comfort foods of their homelands while living in a foreign country, migrants need to search for "authentic," delicious, and affordable restaurants, or they learn to cook the dishes of their homelands themselves, with available ingredients. In addition, migrant mothers may also prepare dishes in order to introduce their children to dishes from their origin country. In their study of Puerto Rican women and the transmission of culture, Bowen and Devine (2011) found that an individual's transmission of food from her homeland was contingent upon three domains: 1) their mother; 2) her childhood household composition; and 3) the woman's characteristics. Furthermore, Verbeke and Lopez (2005) found that low availability of ingredients (particularly in non-major cities) and the fact that cooking dishes from the homeland is time-consuming were two determining factors for migrants preparing meals from their homelands. As such, taking into account the above factors, we explore the mixed families' food choices.

### ***Children's Evolving Food Preferences***

As we have seen in the previous section, scholarship surrounding food is plentiful and varied, tending to emphasise that food is not simply about sustaining life, but also about preferences and choices. In this section, we explore how the Japanese/British families negotiate food in their homes, and how the parents' different relationship with food, as well as their different culinary heritages and the children themselves influence the dishes the families consume.

The families in the present study all began introducing their children to solids around the middle of the first year. For most of the mixed families, even if their diet is generally more Western, the Japanese mothers had a strong desire to expose their children to Japanese dishes during the weaning process. Here, Hiroko Walker explains her experience in weaning her son:

*I'm actually trying to follow Japanese way, in terms of — when it comes to solids and weaning, yeah, started from rice porridge, lots of vegetables, and um. I got books about weaning [in Japanese].*

According to Hiroko, her described weaning process is “Japanese,” because she gained this information from Japanese books. This is an interesting point to consider, as it suggests that Hiroko is more comfortable reading books in Japanese, and because she prefers weaning her child according to “the Japanese way.” Yet again, we encounter the complexity of the ‘national culture’, with no definitive “Japanese” style of weaning, as the way she describes weaning her son is not dissimilar, for example, to the British way of weaning. There are, however, subtle differences that make weaning more “Japanese,” including the use of Japanese-style rice for rice porridge and adding soy sauce to the vegetables.

While Hiroko seems to be primarily responsible for the weaning process of her son, the MacFarlanes both participated in the weaning process of their sons, as they shared with me during a home observation:

*As Ayaka is cooking, she mentions that they started to wean the boys at 6 months, and that by like 9 months, because her husband insisted, they tried eating as many meals with the children as possible (baby-led weaning?)... Mum also mentioned that Dad would always give them big pieces and that she liked to cut the food up really small, and that this caused quite a bit of tension between them...*

The MacFarlanes thus began negotiating between their different food habits early on in their family life. Now, as will be discussed later in this chapter, the MacFarlane boys are six and four years old, and the negotiations between the parents’ different food choices and eating habits continue, particularly because both parents remain involved in preparing meals for their family.

Thus, while choice and size of food is an important part of the weaning process, so too is the feeding part, and the dialogue that frequently ensues between mothers and their children. For the Japanese women, their conversations make use of typical Japanese language usage of the inanimate as animate in a playful context (Yoshida and Smith 2003), and the use of feeling-related words (Nisbett 2003, p59). Here, for example, are my field notes from an observation of Kikuko Paterson feeding her one-year-old daughter:

*Mum feeds daughter more of her rice and then asks, "Ninjin-san oishii?" [Is Mr. carrot delicious?] ... Mum attempts to feed daughter some salmon, but daughter refuses, and Mum says, "Osakana kawai sou!" [Poor little fish!]. Dad doesn't get it, and asks Mum who she's feeling sorry for, and she explains that she's talking about Mr. Fish. He gives her a puzzled look and continues eating.*

As such, particularly during the early years, parents' cultural background can significantly influence the foods that children consume, as well as their views on food and eating in general. While food attitudes are heavily influenced at home during early childhood, as the children grow older, this sense of negotiating between their two culinary heritages, one of the dominant culture and one of a minority culture, becomes their own struggle. It is also during this time that children begin to be more influenced by the host culture and their peers, as opposed to their mothers and the foods consumed at home. For example, Miyuki Ramsey proudly shares the fact that her older son (sixteen) never had chips until very recently:

*He hated, he didn't like the chips at all, but it was very healthy option, but then, at that time, it wasn't like uh, people didn't talk about healthy options, and then he was suffer that he can't have, he doesn't want to have chips and then he only got the, like, he just have to have like soup or he even got something with chips and just eat something. And giving chips to — especially like school trip or something, have to give the chips to the friends or something like that. But then he went to the high school and then uh, one of the child, schoolfriend was buying chips beside the school, and he just pinching it and, "Oh, that's nice!" And he start to eat chips!*

Miyuki and some of the other Japanese women tend to shudder when they think of their children's diets potentially including greasy chips and deep-fried Mars bars. Yet, according to the parents' interviews, the children all seem to prefer Japanese foods. This is interesting to note because, in Caballero's (2010, p12) study, she found that lone white mothers attempted to impart the non-resident father's cultural and racial knowledge to their mixed children through food, "as a key means for their children not only to learn about their culture but also to identify and 'fit in' with it." Yet in the case of the Japanese/British families, we see a strong preference for Japanese foods, and no mention of the Japanese women using British foods to encourage their children's identity with the British culture. This is perhaps partly due to the general positive opinion towards Japanese foods (i.e. Japanese food being seen as healthy and sushi being stylish), and may thus be an aspect of their cultural background that mixed children can more fully embrace, especially because it tends to lift them up on the popularity rankings at school. Setsuko Potter shares her daughter's experience with eating Japanese food at school:

*Fortunately, my kids are ok — because especially my daughter, she's been taking lots of kind of Japanese lunch boxes when she was primary, and some of the friends, they always wanting her lunch box — "What do you have for lunch today? It's nice." So, so I think she's been very, very lucky — people who are quite accepting everything and quite keen to know and also, one day, in the school, we were asked to go to a multi-culture fair ... I was asked to demonstrate Japanese food: how to make. And I did for my daughter's class as well, so that was quite good to — quite open, so we're quite lucky.*

In this way, Setsuko has chosen to see the positive aspects of her daughter's classmates liking her Japanese lunch boxes, but as Caballero (2004) suggests, even such positive comments are emphasising that mixed people, and as a consequence their food habits, are different. Further, while Cervellon and Dubé (2005, p456) claim that individuals prefer foods from their culture of origin, for mixed children, defining their culture of origin is somewhat complicated because, although they are being raised in Britain, with a British father, their mother and primary food preparer is Japanese. This means that their most preferred foods may also be a mixture of sorts.

## ***Eating at Home***

In the present study, during individual interviews, I asked the parents in the mixed families about the types of foods they consume in their homes. Additionally, I observed the individual families sharing meals (breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner), anywhere from one to four times, either in person or virtually (via Skype)<sup>23</sup>. Among the twelve families, five families identified their diet as being predominantly Japanese, five families identified a mixed Japanese/Western/British diet, and two families identified their diet as predominantly Western/British. The reasons for this include personal choices between the parents, including the influence of their own diets growing up (i.e. vegetarianism), as well as their diets after cohabitation, health reasons, and now, the children's own dietary needs and preferences.

## ***The Horizontal Transmission of Food***

The perception of Japanese food as healthy was frequently cited. This is another example of the concept of the horizontal transmission of culture, where culture or preferences are transmitted from parent to parent. In the case of the mixed families, because the Japanese mothers are preparing Japanese meals for, not only their children, but also their husbands, and perhaps even their British kin and friends, Japanese cuisine may be reaching beyond the immediate family. Here, Junko McLeod speaks about the horizontal transmission of culture that happened between herself and her husband, when she took her husband on as a "food project" (Bove, *et al.* 2003, p37):

*We usually eat Japanese food. And Adam's very fond of Japanese food, find it very healthy. Um, since we started going out together, I taught him how to cook, on Internet, and he managed to lose about 10 kilos. Yeah! It's quite good, and now he mastered how to use chopsticks and quite like eating food and serving quite artistic way, in small plates. He feels more satisfaction, rather than dumping everything in one plate, which could be rather quite convenient for me.*

In such cases, it seems that, not only are the women transmitting their food preferences, which tend to be Japanese, to their partners, but because Japanese foods tend to be stereotypically healthy, they are also encouraging a healthy lifestyle. This

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<sup>23</sup> More information on data collection available in Methodology Chapter.



can be seen as a positive occurrence, especially because many migrants find themselves living a more unhealthy lifestyle abroad, which sometimes includes increased alcohol and BMI (cf Brown, *et al.* 2010). As such, while set on serving their families a healthy Japanese diet, sometimes the same women, because of various issues including stress surrounding migration, marriage, and childrearing, end up consuming an unhealthy diet and gaining weight themselves. This, for example, happened to one respondent who, soon after arriving in Edinburgh, found herself lonely, bored at home, pregnant, and thus she turned to food (cf Charles and Kerr 1986). In addition, several Japanese women also mentioned that an additional stress factor has been not being able to run to the grocery store and pick up their favourite comfort foods from home. This is a reminder of the stresses and difficulties associated with food practises in a foreign country. In addition to comfort foods, all twelve families, regardless of whether or not they normally eat Japanese dishes, enjoy a cup of *ocha* or *mugicha* at mealtimes. Nonetheless, when I visited the families in their homes, I was only offered black tea, yet when I visited with other Japanese women, we were offered green tea. As such, perhaps serving Japanese tea is a subtle sign of inclusion and exclusion (cf Douglas 1972), or it may be a sign of adaptation, assuming all non-Japanese guests prefer black tea.

### ***Japanese Foods Abroad***

While teas may be an important aspect of Japanese cuisine, so too is short-grain Japanese-style rice. In the mixed families' homes, I observed that all families had a Japanese-style rice cooker. Yet because of the parents' different culinary traditions and food preferences, not all of the British men like Japanese rice; as such, the families' rice consumption varies between daily to occasionally. Furthermore, finding authentic, quality Japanese rice can be difficult and expensive; thus, most families resort to eating Chinese or Korean-style rice or American-produced Japanese rice and/or directly transporting rice from Japan.

While some Japanese women mentioned the difficulty of finding Japanese-specific foods and ingredients, most eventually find Japanese foods and ingredients, or near substitutes necessary for making Japanese dishes after a thorough search and/or

through word of mouth. The next obstacle is the price of such specialty foods, as Keiko Ross states, *“Japanese foods are expensive, but nonetheless, we manage somehow...”* Because of high prices and lack of authenticity, many Japanese women import items themselves, like Miyuki Ramsey. During a home observation, I noted that the family was eating *somen*; when I asked Miyuki where she had found the noodles, she said she had brought them from Japan herself, since she is unable to find quality noodles locally.

Another way that the mixed families obtain necessary ingredients for cooking Japanese dishes and satisfying their cravings for Japanese foods is through extended family. Several families shared that the meals they had prepared during my observations were made possible by extended family in Japan who had sent them packets of necessary ingredients, as well as special treats for the children, as I observed at the Clarks:

*Mum and older daughter ate Pocky earlier, some Japanese sweets that the grandparents from Japan had sent them. Mum says that was the last box, so older daughter will now have to ask them to send some more... and older daughter excitedly replies that she'll save the box to show them when she asks them for more.*

Finally, because Japanese speciality foods or “treats” can be difficult to locate and quite expensive, the Japanese women tend to somewhat “ration” these foods for themselves and their children, often excluding the fathers. For example, because I had made a trip to Japan during the study, I brought each family a bag of *mochiko*. Apparently, this is a favourite of the oldest daughter in the Clark family who, as soon as she saw the *mochiko*, ran to her mother and asked, *“Can we make it tomorrow?”* Mum then said maybe after Christmas, since these are busy days, but then turned to her daughter and whispered in Japanese, *“Maybe we'll have it for lunch, while Daddy's at work?”* The older daughter smiled and nodded. In the Clark family, the father is not a big fan of Japanese-style rice, but there is no mention of his take on *mochi*. As such, Taeko may be rationing this special treat specifically for her daughter and herself, thus creating a special bonding space between themselves, through the sharing of Japanese food. During another home observation, I

witnessed a similar situation, where Miyuki Ramsey also seemed to be rationing or reserving special Japanese tea for her son and herself:

*The family has finished dinner, and Mum is putting away the dishes and trying to explain to Dad what their son is drinking: mugicha. She says it's made from barley, but he can't understand her pronunciation of barley. She then pulls out the flour, and says — they roast this. Dad still thinks it's fermented tea, which is the same thing as beer. But Mum persists, "No, it's not the same thing! It's **roasted** and there's no caffeine!" So Dad asks, "So it's a good thing then?" She replies, "No, just refreshing!" Younger son tells Dad to try some, from Mum's cup. She immediately jumps to the table to stop Dad: "No! It's too expensive!" Younger son jokes around and says Mum paid £100 for the tea. Mum tells him to stop lying...*

In literature surrounding food and mothers, there tends to be an emphasis on mothers sacrificing their own food preferences for the other members of the family (e.g. (Anving and Thorsted 2010, Bove, *et al.* 2003, Charles and Kerr 1986, DeVault 1991, Morgan 1996). In the present study, we see that obviously, the women are sacrificing by living in Britain because everyday Japanese foods have now become treats. Yet in many ways, the Japanese women are also refusing to sacrifice their Japanese foods by rationing and reserving them for themselves and their children, often covertly, because the British partner is not keen on certain Japanese foods, and/or because they simply want to share these foods with their children and thus create a special bonding space.

### ***Beyond Food***

While the Japanese women are introducing their children to Japanese foods, perhaps somewhat more unconsciously, they are also transmitting other aspects of their culture. In the following meal observation, the field notes offer a very candid picture of the Ramsey family. In particular, the notes show how Miyuki is transmitting, through different methods, unique aspects of the Japanese culture to her children, and to some extent, to her husband Ryan:

*As I walk through the door, Mum apologises and says Dad's not home yet... As I enter the living room/dining room/kitchen, I see an omamori right by the hob. I also find younger son at the table, hungry and waiting for Dad, with the TV on in the background... The table is set with chopsticks, and Mum continually catches and scolds younger son for picking at the food. The menu is somen. On a side plate,*

*there's thin, neatly cut slices of ham, cucumber, scrambled eggs, and Japanese pickles. There's also miso soup and cold tofu carefully decorated with ginger and green onions on the top... The older son soon joins us, greets me in Japanese, and then sits down on the couch in front of the TV to check his facebook page. Dad finally arrives home with the traditional Japanese greeting of tadaima. Mum quickly finishes setting the table, using glass bowls for the somen sauce and owan for miso soup. The family all sit down at the table and say "Itadakimasu." Mum and the children say this in unison, and Dad trails behind... Although everyone seems to be using chopsticks, I slowly notice that younger son is using a fork while watching TV and drinking mugicha ... Because they are eating noodles, I also hear slurping, a customary way of eating noodles in Japan. I look up from my notes and notice that the slurping sounds are coming from Mum and older son. Is this cultural? ... Older son helps himself to more noodles, and younger son follows, but Mum scolds him and tells him to wait until his older brother is done. Everyone is getting noodles from a shared bowl, but Dad continues to ask Mum to get him more noodles, perhaps because he's not as good with his chopsticks or because he prefers being served by Mum? ... Soon, only Dad and younger son are left at the table... Mum comes back and begins washing the dishes. Dad and younger son continue arguing about whether or not he's drinking beer or mugicha. Younger son says Dad once told him that in Ireland<sup>24</sup>, they say "have a wee taste!" Dad says well, of course — it's a custom to say, "Have a drink!" Younger son then says something about apple tea, he is in a very silly mood. Mum scolds him again in Japanese, telling him to quit playing with the food and just hurry up and eat quickly! He finally finishes his food and places the chawan in the sink, and Mum scolds him again, in Japanese, saying not to set it down so roughly because it will break! The family is now finished, and Dad gets up to prepares tea for Mum and him.*

Thus, while it may be an everyday part of life, through mealtimes, the foods served and conversations had, many aspects of the parents' culture and personal preferences are being transmitted, much of this unconsciously, including the younger brother having to give way to his older brother, the Japanese-style of eating noodles, the way in which Mum serves Dad his noodles, and the Irish custom of sharing drinks with one another (i.e. "Have a wee taste!").

Another custom that was observed with all the families was the Japanese mothers quite rigorously enforcing the usage of *Itadakimasu* and *Gochisousamadeshita*. Somewhat in line with this, the Japanese mothers were also seen as being quite strict and/or frugal regarding their children (and at times their husbands as well) cleaning their plates. This behaviour by the Japanese women may also be an attempt

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<sup>24</sup> Dad's mother is originally from Ireland.

at teaching their children the proper, ideal Japanese way of eating, which is closely linked to Buddhist philosophy<sup>25</sup>. Yet their British partners may very well be familiar with the universal link surrounding food and morality (Morgan 1996), with parents referencing the “starving millions” as they encourage their children to clean their plates. Therefore, this idea of cleaning one’s plate, for example, is not tied to any particular culture. What is important to stress here, however, is that only the mothers are concerned with the children cleaning their plates. Consequently, perhaps more than a cultural difference, this issue is more related to gender inequality and expanding the responsibilities associated with foodwork for mothers. At the Clark home, for example, Taeko asks that her eight-year-old daughter show Mum a completely bare apple core before she is allowed to throw it away, and at mealtimes, Taeko also examines her daughter’s plate, making sure it is clean enough. In the Ross home as well, Keiko goes a step further and asks that her husband also clean his plate before asking for seconds. By cleaning their plates, *Itadakimasu* comes to symbolise gratitude towards, not only giving thanks to the plants and animals who gave their lives for the meal, but also to the preparer of the food.

Finally, while the Japanese mothers may emphasise Japanese table etiquette, they are bringing up their children with both Eastern and Western eating utensils, using forks, spoons, and knives, as well as chopsticks at the table. Yet the individual family members often resort to the easiest choice. For example, at the Paterson’s dinner table, I observed Mum using chopsticks, Dad using a fork and knife, and baby daughter using a spoon. In addition, particularly when eating Japanese dishes, the families tend to use traditional plates and bowls, and many times, they eat from communal dishes. The tables of the mixed families though, generally tend to be set in an individualistic style, with separate plate mats and dishes for the individual family members. Finally, regarding the location of the meals (cf Fox 2003), the place where the mixed families consume their meals tends to be on Western-style tables and chairs, as opposed to the traditional *kotatsu*, which is not merely a source of heat and a place to gather together as a family, but also the family’s dining table. Thus,

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<sup>25</sup> For more discussion surrounding religion, refer back to Chapter 1.

while the mixed families do maintain many important aspects of traditional Japanese mealtimes, only one family, the Walkers, have their meals at the *kotatsu*. In his interview, Cameron Walker spoke passionately about their *kotatsu*:

*I think when we went to Japan though, it did really change my view on um, the environment we were providing for [our son]. Japan is, Japan is, uh, amazing, brilliant! That's why when we came back, we put the kotatsu out, because it's like — when we used to sit around the table — our son just wasn't comfortable in the seat, and then you take him out of the seat and put him on the floor, and he's kind of looking up at you, just going — <makes sad face>... Um, and in the meantime, I start seeing other things, like I think the environment we provide is quite, quite rigid, um, like bathrooms and kitchens and everything, it's just like — eeh.*

The Walker family thus provides another example of the problem with 'national culture,' as we observe the British man advocating for the Japanese *kotatsu*. As such, the Japanese culture is not tied to the Japanese parent, and the British father is thus able to share, perhaps not his culture per se, but his preference for the *kotatsu*.

### ***What's on the Menu?***

Regardless of whether they eat their meals at a *kotatsu* or a dining table, mothers were generally found to be the ones setting the menu and preparing the meals. When asked where they acquired such skills, most women credit their mothers and grandmothers (cf Cairns, *et al.* 2010, p593), while some spoke about using recipes from the Internet. In addition, one woman also shared that her mother-in-law had taught her some typical Scottish foods, such as soups and desserts. One might thus expect the mixed households to consume fusion cuisine, since it somewhat mirrors the mixed families themselves, with the emphasis on mixing. However, the meals that the mixed families consume are not fusion cuisine in the traditional sense (e.g. haggis sushi). Instead, the fusion seems to happen in other ways, such as in the preparation and presentation of the meals, with the women bringing with them their own culinary heritages, customs, and preferences, including their chopsticks, soy sauce, and rabbit-shaped sausages.

One family in which this type of fusion cuisine was observed in was the Clarks. The Clark family is discussed at great length because they were one of the families that I was able to observe on several occasions due to their willingness to allow me to continually enter their home. Taeko and Andrew Clark originally met in Japan and lived in Japan for the first six years of their older daughter's life. Two years ago, they moved to Edinburgh, and in their mixed home, Taeko, as the main food preparer, has had to negotiate between her and her daughters' wanting Japanese foods and her husband wanting more Scottish dishes. In the end, Taeko seems to have chosen to give preference to her husband's food preferences, perhaps in order to be able to eat together peacefully as a family (cf Anving and Thorsted 2010). Taeko explains how she came to terms with this decision:

*The children seem to like dishes like curry rice, so at those times, I buy Japanese rice and we eat it. And then, sometimes I crave Japanese food, so at those times, I make Japanese food, including rice, and miso soup — it's not often — but once in a while I do this, and eat it. But it's mainly Scottish food. My daughter likes rice. When I make rice, she becomes very happy and eats it. And I freeze the leftovers and save them, and then we sprinkle some furikake on it and just eat it like that.*

While Taeko could have perhaps pushed for more Japanese dishes to be included in her family's mealtimes, she decided instead to "sacrifice" (cf Morgan 1996) her own, as well as her daughters' preference for typical Japanese foods, including rice and miso soup. Now, as she explains, her family's diet has become more Western:

*Well, if I'm going to pick one, I'd have to say we eat mostly Scottish foods. [My husband] um, Japanese rice — he doesn't like sticky rice, so. That's how it is, so [we mostly eat] potatoes, pasta, bread. And soups. Because we don't have rice, I haven't even been able to make Japanese miso soup. So when we have soup, it usually becomes consommé or other Western-style soups.*

Yet while Taeko describes the meals she provides for her family as "Scottish" or "Western," the dishes she prepares for her family continue to be a type of fusion cuisine, with a strong Japanese-influence, both in how they are prepared as well as presented. During one dinner observation, for example, Taeko prepared Neapolitan Spaghetti. Although the Japanese claim it is an Italian dish, it is actually one of the oldest and most popular Japanese-style Italian dishes and is made with ketchup and

fresh vegetables. In this way, many stereotypically “Western” foods in Japan are actually quite distinctly Japanese. Here, Andrew explicates the phenomenon:

*We probably eat — mainly a Western diet, if you can call it that. We do have the [Japanese] rice cooker in the corner with its transformer ... Um, so yes, probably maybe once a week, we might have some sort of element of Japanese food, um, again, it could be rice, it might be instant miso soup, um, and then of course there's a strange thing where — maybe the things that Taeko liked to cook in Japan, which would be classed as Western, but they're kind of Japanese version of — so it's not — it's a mixed-up idea. To give an example of that, we've — we have this sort of Hokkaido white stew instant um, blocks of stock or curry, the curry ones — so although that's not traditionally Japanese, but uh, it would be difficult to find the sort of equivalent you know, here. I mean, particularly that kind of — particularly the curry, because it's made of apple and honey, which is quite unlike the British version of curry. So although we're not sort of — again, maybe not consciously sort of cooking Japanese food, there's quite a lot of uh, Japanese influences, I suppose, coming into the food.*

Although the curry that Andrew described and other Western-influenced dishes in Japan may also be considered fusion cuisine, they are typically considered part of the Japanese cuisine. In the case of the mixed families, similarly, many of their dishes, including some typical Scottish meals, also become fusion cuisine as the women bring with them their Japanese-influence. Again, we return to the Clark home through my field notes. On this occasion, Taeko has prepared a stereotypical Scottish lunch, but with a touch of Japanese-ness:

*Today's menu for the Clarks is Egg, Tuna, and Lettuce Sandwiches, oatcakes with cheese and jam, and sausages. The table is set with forks, but everyone just uses their hands to eat the sandwiches and oatcakes, and reserve their forks for the sausages. As the family sits down to eat, Dad comments on how Scottish their lunch seems today. Mum then says that the sausage is definitely Japanese, since she fried it and cut it up nicely. Dad then reminisces and says, “Oh yes, the Japanese do love their sausages nicely shaped into rabbit images!”*

While not exactly fusion cuisine, we see that, in mixed families, food is often negotiated by bringing one's cultural influences into dishes, both in preparation for the meal and when presenting the dishes. In this way, while food preference can be a persistent cultural trait (cf Verbeke and Lopez 2005), perhaps even more persistent



are the minor details found in food preparation, such as cutting up sausages into rabbit images.

### ***Foodwork Responsibilities***

As was the case in the Clark home, most of the meal preparation in all twelve families is done by the Japanese mothers, as is the norm for most couples in Western society as well (e.g. Cairns, *et al.* 2010, DeVault 1991, Morgan 1996). While the roles are straightforward for ten of the families, and the women are responsible for the bulk of foodwork, the MacFarlanes and the Potters are somewhat different because they are trying to balance the responsibilities more equally between the two partners. The MacFarlanes are doing so in order to diversify their children's palate, and the Potters because of practical reasons, as Setsuko works full-time and Lewis identifies as the house-husband.

Stuart and Ayaka MacFarlane first met in Japan, while Stuart was teaching English near Ayaka's hometown in Hiroshima. Because Stuart is a vegetarian, he encountered some challenges with Japanese cuisine and the many dishes which revolve around fish. Here, Ayaka recalls her husband's experience of being a vegetarian in Japan:

*Yes, it seems easy, it seemed easy, but actually, lots of — we visited lots of restaurants or some — yeah, lots of ingredients use bonito, katsuobushi, or yasai pasta — it's called yasai pasta but got bacon in it, but so — eating out wasn't — sometimes little bit tricky, but eh, he enjoyed going to mawaru sushi — that, he can choose which he likes, and he cooked ...*

As a result of Stuart being vegetarian, in the MacFarlane home, although Stuart is the self-identified breadwinner and Ayaka is the full-time parent, in order to diversify their children's palate and introduce them to a wide range of dishes, including vegetarian dishes with which Ayaka is not familiar, the couple have decided to take turns preparing meals. Stuart explains:

*Well, we take it in turns to cook, and we go on a week on, week off — although probably Ayaka ends up doing a little bit more than that because of me having late nights at work and things.*

Stuart is trying to contribute more to meal preparations, but reasons such as late nights at work make sharing foodwork responsibilities more difficult. As a result, Ayaka carries more of the burden and becomes the primary person in charge of meal preparations even, as I observed, on weekends, when Stuart is home. However, because Stuart and Ayaka are determined to raise their children with diverse palates, they persist in sharing the foodwork responsibilities. Here, Ayaka explains the set-up in more detail:

*Yes, for example, I'm in charge next week, so I'm trying to introduce, maybe two days Japanese, and maybe two European dish, or just two other, maybe Asian or Thai, Chinese, or whatever, and something left over, or sometimes can just go for pizza! So I'm trying to just mix any culture, about dish. [When Stuart's in charge]: Sometimes — yes, yesterday he cooked Japanese donburi, so he cooks various as well, using various carbohydrates, like rice, pasta, potatoes, so — and he also makes European dish, or sometimes Asian or — quite mixed.*

Although Ayaka and Stuart make an effort to share cooking responsibilities to diversify their children's palates, through my observations, it seems that in the end, not only does Ayaka tend to do more of the cooking, but even after the meal preparations are finished, it is Ayaka alone who tends to serve the meals and clean up afterwards. What follows are field notes from my dinner observation at the MacFarlane home, via Skype.

*Menu: nabemono... traditional Japanese food where a pot is set in the middle of the table and all sit around and eat together from the shared pot. The boys are very excited, as they all want konyaku. When mum finally joins them at the table, they all say "Itadakimasu." They are all using chopsticks and eating vegetables with Japanese rice. ... Mum serves everyone from the pot... then, after a few minutes, she gets up from the table and goes to the hob. She's working on the second course — more nabemono, this time, she's making some udon noodles. Dad remains at the table talking to the boys... Mum finally returns to the table and asks, "Udon taberu hito?" [Who wants udon?] They all answer "Hai!" [Yes!] ...She comes back to the table to grab the pot, fills it up, and then returns to the table. Once she puts the pot down, she begins to serve everyone udon... The boys giggle as they eat their noodles and tofu...*

For the MacFarlanes, who are determined to globalise their children's palates, dishes such as *nabemono* seem ideal, as it is a Japanese vegetarian dish. However,

because meats, and particularly fish, are somewhat of a staple food for Japanese cuisine, Ayaka struggles at times, going between wanting to follow her husband's vegetarian diet and wanting to feed their children fish. Her solution has been to eat fish, just with her sons, for lunch, while Stuart is away at work. The MacFarlanes thus find themselves negotiating Japanese cuisine and vegetarianism. This, in turn, further complicates the idea of 'national culture' because, while transmitting *sushi*, for example, Ayaka may assume she is passing on her Japanese culture, but is she more likely passing on her food preference? In the same way, when Stuart encourages his children to eat vegetarian dishes, could he also be said to be passing on both his food preference and an aspect of his culture?

The main food providers, usually the mothers, are in somewhat of a position of power (Morgan 1996) or what Anving and Thorsted (2010) define as *gatekeeper*. For example, unless the Japanese mothers deliberately choose to include typical British or Western dishes into their family's diet, the children will mostly be brought up with Japanese and Japanese-influenced dishes. In addition, the idea of the Japanese woman serving her family British or Western dishes also problematises the idea of 'national culture,' and further encourages the fluidity of the transmission of culture, allowing the Japanese mother to transmit the British "culture" to her mixed children through food. For example, when I visited the MacFarlanes one Saturday morning, I found that, although it was Ayaka's "week," she had chosen to prepare a typical British breakfast for her family:

*The table is set, with bowls of porridge, and milk and orange juice on the side... When they begin to eat, Mum says "Itadakimasu", and older son and Dad follow along... However, younger son refuses, and also says he doesn't want porridge. Mum says that he's got to eat what he's served, and if he doesn't like it, he can just not eat anything at all. He begins to throw a tantrum, and Dad takes him outside. He comes back with tears drying on his face, sits down, says "Itadakimasu", and begins to eat. He can't cut through the porridge, so Dad suggests he puts some milk in it, which he does, as well as adding quite a bit of strawberry jam. Older son is soon done with his porridge and goes back to his study/play area... At this time, Mom is up by the hob, making their next course... The next meal is soon ready: it's potato scones, scrambled eggs, toast, and baked beans, apparently a very traditional Scottish breakfast. As the family sits down to eat, younger son begins to say*

*“Itadakimasu” again, and everyone laughs, saying it’s ok to not say it before every course.*

In many ways, meals at the MacFarlane home may resemble other British families’ meals, particularly with porridge on the breakfast menu, laughter at the table, and in general, a predominantly mother-based cuisine. In many other ways though, the MacFarlane family also differ from the British norm, from the observation of traditional Japanese table greetings, the frequent appearance of Japanese dishes or Japanese-influenced Western dishes, and the use of two languages at the table, resulting in perhaps another aspect of fusion cuisine. In a similar way, the Potters are also attempting to transmit to their children both Japanese and Western foods and habits.

Unlike Ayaka and Stuart MacFarlane, Setsuko and Lewis Potter first met in person when Setsuko came to Edinburgh to study English. They later married and the couple has resided in Edinburgh, near Lewis’s family, for nearly twenty years. In the early years, because Setsuko was not familiar with Scottish cuisine, her mother-in-law stepped in and taught her how to prepare some Scottish dishes, thus expanding Setsuko’s culinary repertoire (Twine 2010). However, when Lewis was made redundant at work, Setsuko became the breadwinner in their home. As a result, the family now tend to consume more father-based cooking, which, as she explains, may not have been the healthiest move for the family. This is in line with what Cairns, *et al.* (2010) found, that the theme of family health is generally absent from men’s concerns:

*We have kind of a mixture [of foods]. I’m trying to now — when I wasn’t working, I usually — maybe four times a week like Japanese, and you know, like a twice, three times, pastas and things, you know. And for the Japanese food, mainly rice, we have rice and miso soup, mundane, like fish and meat or vegetables, those typical things, but since I’m working, Lewis taking over, at least half a week. And one time, I think he was cooking lots of eh, oven-ready meals, maybe he couldn’t do very much, then, actually, he found out he put so much weight! And he realised that we have to do something about it, so he start to kind of doing healthy food for himself, and that time, I was a little bit worried about — when Lewis put so much weight, I start to be a little bit worried about my kids as well, because they have a same meal when I’m working. So kind of, I guide him off from the like, those pies and chips and — still*

*they have pizza quite often, maybe once a week, probably, but try — instead of chips, try use potato or anything. So Lewis start cooking like frying sometimes fish, but he can't cook rice ...*

The Potter family's diet has been through some dramatic changes in the past few years, with Setsuko returning to the workforce and Lewis becoming the stay-at-home parent and taking over most of the foodwork responsibilities. Another factor to consider is that, like Lewis, men do not initially seem as concerned about healthy eating, confirming that women are the ones who monitor the family's health (cf Beagan, *et al.* 2008). In Lewis' case though, as he began to gain weight, his concern about the health of himself and his family began to rise and he himself began to seek Setsuko's help in making their family's meals healthier. Here, Lewis himself reflects on how he is now starting to think more carefully about his family's diet:

*Well, Setsuko does all the Japanese side of it, because I've not got a clue how to — I still don't know how to boil rice. Erm, so that's the healthy side. But with Setsuko working, in the last couple of years, maybe there's been less Japanese food. When I worked full-time, there was maybe more Japanese food. Yeah. Erm, I can't recall the names, but just your basic Japanese food. As for me, it's your sausage, beans, and chips, and — well, it was. I've been house-husband for now, over two years, so — it's developing. Erm, like it's not — it's sausage, beans and mash and peas and stuff like that, or breaded fish and always vegetables and something like that.*

During my home observations at the Potter home, I was able to observe meals that were prepared by Setsuko as well as by Lewis. This is another interesting observation because, while Setsuko is the breadwinner of the family, she still shares foodwork responsibilities when at home. This was not the case for any of the male breadwinners in the study, with the exception of Stuart MacFarlane. Further, while eating utensils and the cultural aspect of the meals served differs, as a whole, the Potter family meals remain consistent with beginning and ending each meal with the traditional Japanese table greetings and the usage of both the Japanese and English language at the table. In the following observation notes, we find the Potter family enjoying a meal cooked by Setsuko: *korrokke*. One initial comment is that, when I first conducted a home observation of the Potter family, Setsuko admitted that it was quite rare for all four of them to eat dinner together, due to their busy schedules. As a result, while perhaps not a part of their everyday lives, being able to

observe the different family members eating together and interacting with one another was extremely helpful in better understanding how food is negotiated in mixed families:

*When I arrive at their home, their dinner table is set very neatly ... and only the essentials left: black cork board place mats, chopsticks, tonkatsu sauce, and two furikake containers. Mum is busy in the kitchen, putting the finishing touches on the meal, the children are setting the table, and Dad sits on his armchair. He soon gets up and helps out as well. The menu: Mum's korokke with cabbage and rice on the side. The korokke and cabbage are served on a plain white plate while the rice is served in a traditional rice bowl. As they sit down, Dad gets right back up and goes to grab the mayonnaise from the fridge, for the cabbage<sup>26</sup>. They then all sit down and begin their meal by saying "Itadakimasu!" ... The son attempts to use chopsticks, but then resorts to using a fork. Dad also doesn't seem to be able to use chopsticks properly. Mum and older daughter are natural chopstick users. As they begin their meal and pour sauce on their korokke, Dad asks if the sauce is BBQ sauce. Mum and daughter laugh and explain that it's tonkatsu sauce, the sauce they always use with korokke. ... Dad then asks about korokke. Mum informs them that they include potatoes, carrots, onions, and mince meat. Dad continues to ask about this dish... what other types are there? Is there chicken korokke? Mum and daughter giggle again, no. But Mum explains that there is cream korokke ... Mum then asks son, "Oshimai?" [Done?] And Dad answers for him, "Yeah, I think so." ... It seems as if son doesn't like Japanese food that much... perhaps because he's used to Dad's cooking... All family members then end the meal with "gochisousamadeshita", with son requiring a bit of assistance from Mum.*

Although this home observation may have started off as a sort of performance, it ended up being quite revealing. In particular because, while Setsuko casually told me, "Oh, we're just having korokke." It actually seems like this dish is somewhat of a special treat for the family, particularly for the daughter, who looks especially excited as they wait to eat korokke. Further, although the table was set in a Japanese manner, they were using chopsticks, the dish was Japanese, and they even had mayonnaise for their cabbage, it seemed as if two Japanese people (Mum and Daughter) were eating a meal with two foreigners (Dad and Son). In addition, the mother and daughter not only seemed to be insiders and experts on korokke, but as they giggled, they almost seemed to be poking some fun at Lewis, who seemed clueless about the different sauces and types of korokke. Perhaps knowledge about

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<sup>26</sup> Could perhaps be considered the Japanese equivalent of coleslaw.

Japanese cuisine is another space for bonding and sharing of culture between the Japanese mother and her children.

While the Potters and MacFarlanes have both agreed on sharing the responsibility of meal preparations, during my observations of the MacFarlanes, I was only able to observe meals prepared by Ayaka. For the Potters, on the other hand, I was able to observe meals prepared by both Setsuko (above) and Lewis (below). This allowed me to see that, as my field notes below confirm, although the menu did tend to become more British or Western when Lewis was in charge, other aspects of the meal remain more or less consistent:

*Today, I visited the Potter family. The kids are on summer vacation from school, and Mum was on her annual leave from work, so everyone was home on a Tuesday afternoon, for lunch. Menu: Pasta (Pesto and Tomato) + Salad + Squash Juice = Dad's Meal. When I arrive, Mum lets me inside and I am greeted by both children who are in the living room awaiting lunch. Dad is busy in the kitchen, and Mum offers me some tea. Dad then pops his head in from the kitchen as he sets the table. He brings in the plates of pasta and salad, except for the younger son, who doesn't like salad. They are soon all sat at the table and Dad says, "Itadakimasu." Mum follows, and so does the older daughter, but younger son struggles with the word and must take it slowly, one syllable at a time. Older daughter asks if the pasta sauce is the same as what they had the other day, or if it's a different brand. Dad says it's a cheaper brand but, "What matters is, how does it taste? Do you like it?" She nods ... After everyone finishes, Mum makes son say Gochisousamadeshita. Dad and daughter follows along, and this ends the meal.*

While eating at home can be an important part of doing family, in mixed families, it can be even more important because it is often here that the intergenerational transmission of the parents' culinary heritage and personal food preferences happens. Further, while parents may in part be preparing meals that they are familiar with, and that they themselves enjoy eating, it also seems that the parents, particularly the mothers, go beyond the mantra of "eating to live," to using food to introduce the children to Japanese cuisine, as well as, to some extent, British/Western cuisine. While meals at home may tend to be dominated by the parents' different culinary heritages, when the family consumes meals outside the home, as we will explore in the following section, they are free to choose something familiar or something completely different from their norm.

## **Eating Out**

Although Edinburgh is a city littered with restaurants, most of the mixed families report that they very rarely eat out because, like many families, having young children and being under financial constraints makes such endeavours difficult. Regardless, because eating out is still an option for the families, it will be discussed in this section. Further, several couples mentioned that when they do go out to eat, they do so separately, because they tend to have different culinary preferences and friends. Nonetheless, in this section, the couples reflect on meals shared with friends and family. In addition, the chapter gives preference to food consumed in the home, as opposed to food consumed outside the home because, like most families, mixed families do not normally eat out very often, yet because choice of restaurant tends to be a decision that families make somewhat democratically, a section was devoted to eating out.

## ***To Eat at a Japanese Restaurant or Not***

While cooking at home may be restricted by the food preparer's culinary skills, knowledge, and the ability to find certain ingredients, when eating out, these restrictions are lifted. Stuart MacFarlane elaborates:

*Well, we don't tend to go out to eat very much! ... Um, but most of the time, I suppose Ayaka and myself choose restaurants where um — that serve stuff that we can't cook ourselves, that's the main thing, the kind of novelty of eating something that we don't know how to cook ourselves.*

Perhaps this sense of “novelty” is why, among the twelve families, it was found that the families who enjoy a mostly Western diet at home tend to go for Japanese food when eating out. For example, the Clarks, who claim to eat mostly Western-style dishes at home prefer to eat out at Japanese restaurants, as Taeko explains:

*Whatever's easy and convenient ... But if there's a Japanese restaurant in the area where we're headed, then Andrew — he likes Japanese food — not Japanese rice... it gives him a stomachache, so he doesn't really eat it much... but he does like Japanese food, and our daughter definitely loves to go to Japanese restaurants...*



By asking the mixed families about their preferences when eating out, different food choices were observed. One of the patterns found among many of the families, particularly those who normally consume Japanese was their reluctance to eat at Japanese restaurants. One of the most commonly mentioned reasons for this was, as several of the British men explained, their Japanese wives being able to provide more authentic, delicious dishes than the local Japanese restaurants. Here, Ewan Ross elaborates:

*We don't really eat out anymore. Um, Keiko won't eat Japanese food here, or she won't pay for it anyway, she thinks it's going to be crap. Um, and I don't really mind, because I get very nice Japanese food at home on a regular basis...*

Another point that was brought up by several participants was that Japanese restaurants can be somewhat expensive, as Junko McLeod explains:

*... eating out is quite expensive and sometimes you get a wee bit of food portion. Yeah, but I like going out for dinner ... kind of found [Japanese restaurants], but it's gonna cost like £70 for only two people, so it's kind of luxury.*

The final reason that several participants mentioned as a deterrent to eating at Japanese restaurants was that they are not believed to be authentic, or as one participant put it, “not Tokyo-standard.” Interestingly, more British men than Japanese women seemed frustrated at not being able to find “real” Japanese restaurants. This again points to the fact that mixed families complicate the idea of ‘national culture.’ Even though the British men are not Japanese, they are the ones looking to speak Japanese as they eat “authentic” Japanese foods. Andrew Clark elaborates:

*So, not that Japanese restaurants are really Japanese here, because they tend to be just Chinese people trying something different, to sort of expand the market, they think. I made that mistake in Glasgow once, I went to a Japanese restaurant in Glasgow and uh, tried to do a bit of the ordering in Japanese, and uh, the guy looked at me and said, “I’m Chinese. I don’t speak Japanese.” And I asked, “Is anybody Japanese here?” And he said, “Oh, no.” Just so completely — a teriyaki restaurant, but completely run by Chinese people!*

As a result of financial restraints, inability to find authentic Japanese foods, and the fact that the Japanese women are able to prepare delicious Japanese dishes at home, most of the mixed families do not seem to frequent Japanese restaurants when eating out, and when they do it's usually a special place that, as David McGregor describes, "*reminds me of Tokyo places, a real hole in the wall place, just a counter bar and two or three tables off the counter bar...*" However, as several parents mentioned, perhaps Japanese restaurants in general are not as family-friendly and affordable as other restaurants that the families tend to frequent more, including Thai, Malaysian, Chinese, French, Mexican, Spanish, Scottish, and British places. This is somewhat similar to the mixed children taking on a third language, it is a sign that the parents in mixed families are not nervous or uneasy about going beyond their own cultures (as is most evidenced in their international marriages), their own languages, and their own foods, and they are raising in their children in a similar way.

### ***Having Friends Over***

While eating out tends to be almost immediately associated with restaurants, eating out can also refer to eating at a friend's home. When I asked the parents in the mixed families about eating out, they only referred to restaurants, admitting that they rarely share meals with their friends at their homes. Regardless, there are smaller groups of Japanese women who often gather together outside the playgroups, in each other's homes. I was actually able to observe a few of these gatherings, and what follows are my notes from one such occasion:

*Today, my son and I were heading to a surprise farewell party... As is typical in Japanese homes, we took our shoes off and entered the home. Because the guest of honour is moving to another country, Sachiko, the host said she struggled as to what to cook for today's party. At first, she was going to cook something British, but she said most likely, the guest of honour was not going to miss any foods from Britain, so she decided to make ramen noodles, a typical Japanese dish, with Japanese pickles and sides. Sachiko had also prepared plain ramen noodles for the children. All of the Japanese women were ecstatic about the home-cooked meal while the children also seemed to enjoy it - except for my son, who is not as familiar with this type of noodle... As the children play in the background, the women and I continued sitting around Sachiko's kitchen and conservatory. With its tables and couches, it is a very typical British setting (except for the chopsticks!) but the women, it seems, at least for a couple of hours, were transported back to Japan through Sachiko's*

*re-creation of a well-loved Japanese dish and the companionship of Japanese friends. This, therefore, became a priceless sending off gift for Sachiko's dear friend.*

Within the social networks of the mixed families, food is definitely used, not only in the construction and maintenance of social relationships (cf Brown, *et al.* 2010), but perhaps also in an attempt to create a home away from home with their Japanese friends. It is also interesting to note that, while Sachiko's home is not obviously Japanese, once I stepped into her kitchen, I felt transported to Japan: with distinctly Japanese smells, foods, and kitchen items. Finally, while Sachiko could have chosen to organise a farewell party for her friend at a restaurant, she chose to invite her friends to her home and share a Japanese dish that was labour-intensive, but resulted in her being able to successfully entertain and send her friend off to a new country. In this way, food eaten at home, with friends, can also be an important aspect of the transmission of culture, as children are able to witness their Japanese mothers preparing, sharing, and enjoying foods from their homeland with fellow migrants.

Another opportunity that I had to share meals with the mixed families was when the McGregor family invited me, along with my family, to their home for dinner. This was a welcome opportunity for me, particularly because, as DeVault (1991, p48-49) found in her study of families, "most people's thoughts about meals reflect idealised versions of family life," but by actually being invited to participate in a meal, I was able to gain a more realistic view of the McGregor family. While I had become accustomed to observing the families from somewhat of a distance, it was quite surprising to find that, as my field notes below illustrate, even with the addition of my family and myself, there was no awkwardness. On the contrary, conversations flowed naturally around various topics including films, the weather, trips back to Japan, school, and baking, yet this may have also had to do with the fact that my family is also mixed.

*Today, my husband, my son, and I were invited to the McGregors' home for dinner. The main reason for this being that the first dinner observation was a bit awkward, particularly for their son, so Dad thought that maybe if my family and I just came over as guests, and actually participated in the meal, I might be able to capture them*

*in a more natural environment. As soon as we arrive, we are greeted by the family, and their son immediately became what Mum calls oniichan to my young son. He runs around the house, jumping over the sofas, pretending to be Spiderman ... After a few minutes, everything is ready, and Mum is busy passing things from the oven and the hob to the sink and to the table, while also warming up the plates in the oven. Dad comes in to help with the drinks and takes the plates to the table. The table is set with place mats and wine glasses, except for their son's place, which has a special spork<sup>27</sup> and a Spiderman cup. Their son is drinking milk and Mum and Dad are drinking white wine. Although the table looks like a typical British family's table, in the background, I see Mum using chopsticks to cook everything — from the potatoes to the salad to the salmon to the tender-stem broccoli and yelling out in Japanese that dinner is almost ready. Menu: Fillet of Scottish salmon, baked potatoes, tender-stem broccoli, and salad with parmesan cheese and balsamic vinegar. As Mum and Dad are putting the finishing touches on dinner, my family and I, along with their son, head over to the sitting room to have some of Mum's Japanese-style slow brewed coffee, "just the way my mother used to make it at her cafe in Aomori." At the same time, she offers us sugar from a container which, as she excitedly explains, "was actually handmade by a woman from my hometown in Aomori." We then sit down to eat dinner. The topic of conversation first centres around the weather... After that, their son brings out some of his favourite comic books. They were originally written in Japanese, but have since been translated into English... Mum reminisces about Aomori. She hasn't been back since the time she left many years ago... Then it is time for dessert: Mum had made apple crumble: she said it's a very traditional British dessert; but apparently hers hasn't turned out quite right, so she says to be sure to put lots of cream on it.*

There are obviously hints of Japanese influence at this meal, including Risa using chopsticks to cook, serving slow-brewed Japanese coffee, and reminiscing about her hometown; however, at the same time, there are also hints of a Western/British influence, including the photos of old cathedrals around the dining table, the cork-board place mats, and the way in which the table is set, in addition to the actual table in which they sit. As such, while the actual dishes may be Western, the Japanese women inevitably bring with them a Japanese influence which seeps through to the way they feed their mixed families.

### ***Eating with the Relatives***

While mealtimes at home seem to be the main method of transmitting food, their extended family also play an important role in the intergenerational transmission of food. This is particularly true when we consider that British kin can be a strong

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<sup>27</sup> A hybrid utensil mixing a spoon and a fork.

support system for the Japanese woman as she attempts to learn the foods of her husband and his family and thus locate herself in her extended mixed family (Caballero 2010, Twine 2010). Although this was not mentioned frequently, Setsuko Potter shared how food connected her to her husband's family, particularly her mother-in-law:

*And also, lots of soup, I really enjoy here: Scotch Broth or like, Leek and Potato, yes. And actually, my mother-in-law eh, when — before I had my daughter, between the time when I lost the job and before I had her, I think once, once a week, she came around to teach me some baking, so I learned a few Scottish baking stuff as well, yes. And also, we always -- I think once a week, at that time, we always went for the Sunday meals and things there. And after my daughter was born, apart from altogether going once a week, on the plus, myself and my daughter, we visited, I think Wednesday, every Wednesday in the lunchtime, we visited to have, you know, time together as well, yes. So I think they were quite supportive as well for everything.*

While this type of horizontal transmission of culture, from mother-in-law to daughter-in-law was rare, several families did share how food created opportunities for them to interact with extended family members, sometimes on a weekly basis. The Patersons, for example, have their paternal grandparents visit them for dinner every Monday, while the Hamiltons, go over to Granny's for Sunday dinner every week. The Hamiltons' Sunday dinners at Granny's were particularly interesting to hear about because, as paternal grandparents Scarlett and George explain, Sunday dinners were once very important for Scottish families. For the Hamiltons, they still are, and every Sunday, Scarlett prepares dinner for fourteen people, and according to son Colin: "she does love it, she really does." The children also seem to enjoy this special time with their grandparents and extended family, as their mother Chiyoki shares,

*And [we eat] not just them, my parents-in-law, it's uh, 14 of us, my sister-in-law and granny-in-law, aunt-in-law — everybody ... I can see my parents-in-law love my children a lot, and my children love my parents-in-law.*

The central part that food plays in families is observed in the ritual that the Hamiltons follow, with their Sunday dinners which are centred around food, stories, providing the mixed children with a sense of belonging and familial identity, as

granddad George explains, “*We discuss! <laughs> But it gets very loud! Oh, that’s something to remember, with our discussions — our granddaughter used to do that <covers ears>, so — but that’s us —.*” As such, extended family can become important transmitters of various aspects of culture in mixed families, including food. While scholarship surrounding the feeding of the family has tended to focus on the relationship between mothers and children (e.g. Morgan 1996, Nicklaus 2009), it seems that in mixed families, extended family are also influencing the food choices of the children. In the next chapter, a further discussion on extended family is provided.

### **Conclusions**

In his study of food and memory, Sutton (2008, p157) came across the following comment from one of his colleagues, “Food and memory? Why would anyone want to remember anything they had eaten?” Yet we do remember and in this chapter I asked participants to share their memories of food habits and mealtimes at home, restaurants they’ve visited, and friends they’ve shared and continue to share meals with. What was found was that foods people eat can indeed be powerful symbols of who they are, and that food is strongly linked to family (Fox 2003). Morgan (1996) further emphasises the important links between food and family, as well as national identity:

*Every time a French person buys a baguette or visits a charcuterie and every time an English person stops for fish and chips or prepares a Sunday lunch, they are also reproducing a sense of national distinction and national identity (p170).*

Yet in today’s globalised world, it is quite common to see a French person eating *fish and chips*, or an English person buying a *baguette*, thus problematising this sense of a “national identity.” As a result, when the British man chooses to take his family out to a Japanese restaurant or his Japanese wife chooses to serve porridge to her children for breakfast. It is, in one sense, a sign of globalisation, on the other hand, particularly in the mixed families, highlighting the complexity of ‘national culture’ and that the transmission of culture through food can be diverse and include

anything from passing on national dishes to sharing familial or individual food preferences.

One of the major findings from this chapter is that the women seem to be the ones responsible for foodwork (Beagan, *et al.* 2008). While reasons for this may include the fact that the majority are full-time stay-at-home mothers, as well as wanting to feed their families a healthy diet and share with them Japanese dishes, it could also be partly due to the burden the women feel of being the “culture carriers” (Song 2003) and of course, because of persisting societal gender inequalities in foodwork. While Beagan and colleagues (2008) and Marshall and Anderson (2000) both found men to be more involved in food preparation, at least in supporting or helping roles, in the present study, the men, for the most part, seem completely uninvolved in foodwork. Are there cultural backgrounds at play here that perpetuate such gender inequalities, or is this part of their new mixed family culture? According to Gershuny and colleagues (2005, p657), “We all have expectations and habits ... which are the outcome of socialisation,” as such, perhaps the couples in the mixed families are simply *behaving* instead of *choosing*.

While expectations and habits surrounding foodwork may be more difficult to change, Asp (1999) argues that one’s cultural background regarding food habits are constantly evolving through travel, migration, and socio-economic environment, and I would add, through having a partner from a different culinary heritage. This study, for example, found both the British men and the Japanese women changing their food choices in order to find what Bove and colleagues (2003, p28) refer to as a “new joint family food system.” This in turn may be considered fusion cuisine, but not as stereotypically considered, with the active mixing of two different cuisines. Instead, we find fusion cuisine when the Japanese women, often unintentionally, bring with them a Japanese-influence into their dishes, in both preparation and/or ingredients, as well as in presentation. Further, we find that parents in the mixed families, in general, remain focused more on ordinary concerns (Caballero, *et al.* 2008, Edwards 2008), such as their children’s diets and health, as opposed to the transmission of culture through food. Yet the mixed couples are also wanting to share foods from their homeland, and beyond, with their children, thus giving them

global palates. At the same time, while parents may be determined to influence their mixed children's food habits, we must also remember that children are active social actors and influence their own food choices and habits (Anving and Thorsted 2010), and sometimes even those of their parents.

Finally, in this chapter, we saw an important link for migrants between food and the homeland (e.g. Brown, *et al.* 2010, Siu 1952, Verbeke and Lopez 2005), as we observed Japanese women using Japanese foods, to deepen friendships, and often, as Brown and colleagues (2010) found, to transport themselves, even just for a couple of hours, back home. Another time when meals are shared beyond the immediate mixed family is with kin, particularly British kin, as they are geographically closer. This, in turn, provides the mixed children with opportunities to be introduced to more Western-style foods and socialise with their British kin. Ultimately however, the food choices that individuals, couples, and families make are never unintentional (Fox 2003), and it is through these ritualised practises of everyday life, such as sharing a meal, that intimate emotional ties are made (Falicov 2007, p159), cultural dishes and favourite foods are shared and transmitted, the mixed children develop a "mixed" palate, continually evolving, but one that is uniquely theirs, and the mixed families forge their new *mixed family culture* that may be described as a form of fusion cuisine, "careful to keep differences distinct even as the ingredients are tweaked into new combinations [because] only then will the result be genuinely new and exciting" (Goldstein 2005, p iv) and delicious.



# Chapter Four

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## *Kin: Intergenerational Transnational Relationships*

### **Overview**

Cheal (2002, p152) suggests that despite the many changes in our lives, family is “among the most enduring of our social experiences.” By family, we refer to Baldassar and Merla’s (2014, p12) definition which “includes both nuclear and extended types whose members are actively engaged [both in caring *for* and caring *about*] in family survival and maintenance.” Further, as families grow and include children, Howell’s (2003, p465) definition of *kinning* becomes more appropriate: “the process by which a foetus or new-born child (or a previously unconnected person) is brought into a significant and permanent relationship with a group of people.”

Early familial relationships with one’s family of orientation as well as in-laws are important to explore because it is in these relationships that two individuals begin to construct a new family culture (cf Yabuki 2009); in addition, these relationships tend to influence children’s future relationships with kin as well. While extended family members in general can play an important role in the lives of the next generation, they can play a particularly significant role in mixed families because, “it is assumed that the children’s ethnic socialisation will not be as strong as it would be if both parents were from the same group...” (Waters 1990, p102). In other words, because mixed families have parents that come from different cultural backgrounds, it may be more difficult to transfer both of their cultures to their children, when compared to parents from the same culture attempting to transmit one shared culture. As such, the support of kin becomes important.

Because only a small body of literature exists surrounding the kin of mixed families (e.g. Bauer 2010, Caballero, *et al.* 2008, Caballero 2010, Twine 2010, Tyler 2005), literature from various disciplines will also be included, from sociology to family studies to psychology to migration studies, all in an effort to better understand the relationships that mixed families have with their kin. Further, a specific exploration of the labour division in kinkeeping, which is defined as “keeping family members in touch with one another” (Rosenthal 1985, p966), as well as the contributions from kin to the mixed families will be discussed. Finally, the parents thus far have spoken about aspirations for their children to become bilingual, bicultural, and have global palates. What part then, if any, do extended family members play in supporting these aspirations? In the same vein: is cultural transmission as important to the mixed families’ kin as it is to the parents, or are they more interested in simply being grandparents, aunts, and uncles?

Through becoming familiar with the available literature, revisiting the research questions, and analysing the data from the present study, particularly the interviews with extended family members, a discussion on the relationships with extended family members is presented. The analysis will begin with a section on “Family: As Self,” with a focus on the parents’ relationships with their families of orientation, particularly their parents because the grandparent-grandchild relationship is strongly linked to the grandparents’ relationships with their adult children. The second section will focus on “Family: As a Couple,” with a specific exploration of in-law relationships between the Japanese women and their British in-laws, between the British men and their Japanese in-laws, and the challenges involved in such bilingual, transnational, intercultural relationships. Finally, the third section will be on “Family: With Children,” and will explore the evolving relationships of kin after the arrival of children, and how kin are involved in the lives of the mixed children.

### ***All About Family***

Parsons’ (1949, p243) classic diagram of the traditional family identifies individuals as being born into a family of orientation, which consists of a father, mother, and child(ren). The children then eventually move on to begin their own family of

procreation. Yet recent scholarship, including Cheal's (2002, p5) work, suggests that Parsons' type of idealisation of the 1950s family is restrictive, particularly in cross-cultural family studies. This is further emphasised by Naumann (2011, p36), who argues that, in every society, there exist cultural assumptions and norms of what family *should* look like. As a result, contemporary studies on family should reflect this evolution, including no longer focusing on the biological lineage of a family, but focusing instead on intimate relations with one another (Gabb 2008, p16), on family practises (Morgan 1996, 2011), and the everyday aspects of doing family.

One important aspect of doing family is taking into account the life-cycle of relationships (cf Sweetser 1963, Fischer 1981), particularly those with parents and other members of one's family of origin. This is because as Logan (2001, p368) argues, the nuclear family is a "lifelong and multigenerational event." Further, as Fingerman (2001) finds, such relationships continue evolving, until "distant intimacy" is reached:

*Intergenerational ties introduce the paradox of a distant intimacy. Parents and adult offspring report strong ties. Yet, this closeness involves psychological distance.... parents and children also report an increasing sense of the other party as a unique individual with flaws, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities... each party realises that the other party has different needs and limitations requiring a new degree of distance. Parents cease to try to direct their children's affairs, and children seek to protect their parents from worry. In this case, distance improves the relationship and can be said to serve as a bridge to a different kind of intimacy (p26).*

In line with this idea of distant intimacy, nuclear families realise that they are separate from their extended family, defined as people who have "relational connections", both biological and blood connections, as well as kinship established through marriage (McCarthy and Edwards 2011, p127, 129). At the same time though, nuclear families realise that do not exist in isolation, "they are connected to a number of groups, because they depend on them ... for support and for resources" (Cheal 2002, p13). In particular, this wider family can play an important role in the Japanese/British families because they allow the children to experience and participate in two family groups, on different continents, in different languages, each with their own set of traditions, preferences, values, and beliefs. Yet for most

couples, before the children arrived, they had to negotiate their relationships with one another's families.

### ***In-Laws***

In-laws are part of the outer-circle family, as Parsons (1949, p246) explains, "the only one of those [circles] linked to ego's inner circle to which he [sic] is bound not by descent and consanguinity but only by affinity...", only a code of conduct, so to speak. In the same vein, Finch (1989, p51) explains that in-law relationships are distinctive in that, sometimes "they are conducted through and in a sense for the sake of, a third party. There would be literally no relationship between a man and his son-in-law were it not for his daughter..." While the relationship with in-laws in general can be difficult for any couple, international couples tend to face additional challenges because of differences in linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Another challenge for international in-law relationships, particularly between Eastern/Western couples, is the mother-in-law / daughter-in-law relationship. In Confucian cultures, daughters-in-law play a central role in providing care for their families, with women's lives consisting of caring for their parents-in-law and their husbands, and then being cared for by their own daughter-in-law (Nishi, *et al.* 2010). Furthermore, because women tend to identify as part of their husband's family after marriage, daughters-in-law may not even have the choice of maintaining strong relationships with their side of the family (Lee 2010). In the present study however, several of the Japanese women continue to maintain connections to their families of orientation, particularly their mothers. This is similar to women from Western countries, as Marx and colleagues (2011) found in their study, with women, particularly when they become mothers, "re-establishing with their mothers (but not their mothers-in-law) a maternally oriented intimacy" (Fischer 1983, p191). Finch (1989, p49) came to similar conclusions, stating that, "for the most part a mother-in-law is not treated as equivalent to a mother, nor a sister-in-law to a sister, and so on..." Interestingly, preference for one's own family of orientation is far less common in men, who do not tend to give any relative preference (Marx, *et al.* 2011, p1216). For the mixed families, the situation becomes more complicated because of their proximity to the paternal kin and the paternal kin's knowledge of the British

customs and language, as opposed to the maternal kin who are far away, speak only Japanese, and are only familiar with Japanese customs.

### ***Kin***

Before continuing our discussion on kin, it is perhaps useful to put the term into context by referencing Finch's (1989, p46) description of kinship in Britain: while individuals may unhesitatingly identify their aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins as family, "part of their kin network," this did not automatically link two people together or make them responsible or obligated to care for or support one another, or even stay in contact. On the other hand, one of the key terms emphasised in Baldassar and Merla's (2014, p12) definition of family is being "actively engaged" in family survival and maintenance.

One often highlighted relationship in kin studies is the grandparent-grandchild relationship because of their "interesting and distinctive blend of closeness and distance" (Finch 1989, p41): on one end, the central parent-child bond, and on the other end, the great age gap. This is further emphasised by Oppelaar and Dykstra's (2004, p92) study, which found that societies tend to be organised and segregated by age enclaves; however, "families are one of the few environments in which people of different ages interact." Further, with today's technology, much of this intergenerational interaction happens regardless of geographic location, with children themselves identifying visual and phone contact as aspects of supportive kin relationships (Creasey and Koblewski 1991, p384). In addition, intergenerational relationships can be important to a child's identity, particularly a mixed child's identity: "Many [individuals] who did strongly identify with a particular ancestry in their family tree attributed it to a grandparent or other relative who ... communicated knowledge and interest in ethnicity to the young people in the family" (Waters 1990, p62). Extended family members can thus play an influential role in the lives of the mixed children, with factors that affect this relationship including the parents' own relationships with their parents (McCarthy and Edwards 2011, p107), migration, as well as whether or not their families remain intact:

*Families disrupted by divorce, death, or geographic mobility may lose access to both official documents and key informants. So, too, the continued involvement or close*

*link of a family with an aunt or grandparent who is actively interested or involved in his or her ethnic group would have a strong effect on the socialisation of the children (Waters 1990, p60).*

In the present study, the families have all been disrupted by geographic mobility. This is a concern that family studies have identified as one of the most important variables in the maintenance of intergenerational relationships (Baldassar and Baldock 2000). One reason for this may be because geographic distance caused by migration can limit practical methods of support such as household assistance and meal preparations (Ackers and Stalford 2004, p136). This thus becomes especially problematic for transnational families because, as Morgan (1996, p138) claims, the “specialness” of family is often found in caring and caring obligations. In Finch’s (1989) classic work, she identified such five types of caring or “support” given between family members: *economic* (usually from older to younger generations); *accommodation*; *personal* (e.g. nursing); *practical* (e.g. childcare); and *emotional and moral* (routine support and crisis support, especially between mother and daughter). Because many of the families in the present study have younger children, one of the most important forms of support becomes childcare assistance. A recent study in Scotland found that grandparents were a key source of informal support, providing around 95% of support, in the form of regular childcare, taking the child on outings, and providing financial or material support (Bradshaw, *et al.* 2008, p2). For kin separated by geographic distance though, alternative forms of support may be given, particularly from grandmothers who not only provide emotional and moral support from abroad, but who are also willing to travel to offer practical help:

*... grandmothers appear quite willing to spend substantial amounts of time in a foreign country to help their sons or daughters with childcare, cooking and housework, or just to visit... Grandmothers coming from abroad have to endure the long flight, language barrier, inclement weather and cultural differences to visit their offspring and their families (Lie 2010, p1436).*

Regardless of challenges involved in visiting grandchildren, grandmothers are thus willing to make such sacrifices in order to, not only offer practical support, but also strengthen connections and bonds with their children and grandchildren who live abroad.

Further, visits from grandparents have been identified not only as a “source of support in practical terms” but also in giving children a “sense of cultural heritage,” (Caballero, *et al.* 2008, p48). This is particularly true for minority ethnic grandparents who often see themselves as carrying the “responsibility for handing down religious and cultural traditions and rituals...” (McCarthy and Edwards 2011, p109). In the Japanese/British families, it will be thus be interesting to see if the minority ethnic grandparents feel more responsibility to be the “culture carriers” (Song 2003), or whether the British kin also feel this responsibility. Intergenerational kin relationships are particularly important in mixed families because it is in these relationships that culture is made “and remade, in the prayers, around the dining room table ... and in the midst of family arguments” (Sirin and Fine 2007, p161). Yet when geographic distance exists, relationships can become more complicated.

### ***Transnational Families***

There has recently been a rise in the usage of the term “transnational migration”, yet in reality, this is not a new phenomenon: “Interaction between individuals in home and host countries has generally always occurred, though distinctions can be made regarding pattern, frequency, consistency and type” (Baldassar 2007, p285). Furthermore, while there are several definitions for *transnational families*, in the present study Bryceson and Vuorela’s (2002, p3) definition will be used: “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders.” This sense of holding together across distance requires considerable investment from 1) those who stay in the homeland, whose “social relationships [are now] stretched across time and place” (Baldasar and Merla 2014, p6), even though they never migrated themselves; and 2) the migrants themselves who, as Ackers and Stalford (2004) observe, feel a greater expectation or obligation to visit the family back home. Visits back home, according to Mason (2004, p423), offer symbolic significance “in the continued recognition of kin ties when some kin have moved away.”

Upon returning abroad, migrants in transnational families search for ways to maintain contact and a sense of intimacy with their family back home. With technological advancements, including cheaper phone rates, the internet, and the convenience of air travel, it is now easier than ever to maintain contact with family who reside abroad. As a result, as Fingerman (2001, p30) suggests, that even transnational families who may not be actively involved in one another's day-to-day lives can still share a sense of intimacy. Further, while the British kin may be closer to the mixed families geographically, this can sometimes be a mixed blessing, with geographic closeness sometimes bordering intrusiveness (Mason 1999, p156). At the same time, the Japanese kin, because of the technological advancements that Fingerman (2001) identifies, may no longer feel significantly disadvantaged by living at a distance. Relationships with kin, both transnationally and locally, are thus important to explore because such relationships can have a significant effect on the mixed children's cultural, linguistic, and culinary acquisition.

Another aspect to consider in kin relationships is how migration influences transnational relationships. Ackers and Stalford (2004, p137) suggest that, somewhat ironically, migration can actually make individuals more keen on maintaining contact with their families of origin. It is then ideal that modern technology now allows transnational families to stay in constant contact using little effort or financial strain. However, as Svašek (2008, p216) argues, migrants' desire to be in two places at once, maintaining emotional connections with those back in their homeland while also trying to make their new surroundings feel more like home never disappears, even with technological advancements. Finally, another issue that is frequently discussed in literature surrounding transnational families is caring for ageing parents. In the present study, because most of the parents in both Japan and Britain tend to be younger and in good health, discussion surrounding this issue was mostly speculative and will be excluded, yet informal conversations with participants found that this will become more significant as an issue over time.

While the migrants' struggle with maintaining transnational ties is well documented, the stories of the children of migrants (and particularly mixed,



migrant children) is lacking. For example, do children of migrants inherit this notion of “distance thinking” (Mason 1999)? Ackers and Stalford's (2004, p138) study suggests otherwise, finding children of migrants struggling in “somewhat artificial” relationships with their transnational family, wishing they had more “normal,” relationships. Yet the reality of transnational families, including the Japanese/British families is that they must negotiate between, not only two “family cultures” (Fischer 1983), but also between their parents’ cultural heritages. Finally, while the paternal British kin may face challenges surrounding a natural matrilineal bias, as well as cultural differences, they have the benefit of being geographically close to the families, of living in the same country, of having “normal” relationships. On the other hand, the maternal Japanese kin face the challenge of overcoming the “artificial” nature of their relationships which are dominated by distance: geographically, culturally, and linguistically.

### ***Family: As Self***

#### ***Revisiting the Family of Orientation***

In this section, we briefly examine the parents’ childhood families since, as Bauer (2010, p64) found, mixed families cannot be understood without including their families of origin. In addition, it is important to examine families of origin because early childhood experiences tend to influence the way parents raise their own children, as we do not always *choose*; instead, we *behave*: “We all have expectations and habits ... which are the outcome of socialisation” (Gershuny, *et al.* 2005, p657). Further, (Bauer 2010, p54) explains that current relationships with family and kin are a reflection of the history between individuals (e.g. poor relationships between adult children and their parents is often traced back to childhood experiences). Similarly, as McCarthy and Edwards (2011, p107) suggest, the determining factor of the quality of grandparent-grandchild relationships is directly linked to the strength of the relationship between grandparents and their adult children. Thus, as Britton (2013, p1318) finds, kinship relationships in mixed families can be “potentially significant.” By beginning with an examination of the familial relationships in the parents’ childhood homes, and then later exploring the parents’ evolving relationships with their kin, as well as their partner and their children’s

relationships with their kin, we will explore how a new mixed family culture is forged (Yabuki 2009).

To begin our discussion on the family of orientation, we turn to Cameron Walker as he spoke quite extensively about the importance of intergenerational relationships:

*“I think it’s just a very important part of culture that we’ve lost here in the West, the involvement of grandparents and children, and the relationship between older people and children...”* Further, regarding his own experience with his grandparents, as Cameron here recalls, we find that it was influenced by his own parents’ relationship with his grandparents:

*I used to see my mum’s mum and dad once a year, maybe, um, and I just disliked going to their house — I just remember going like, “Oh, I really don’t want to go there!” And I really — I couldn’t understand what they were talking about it was just a little bit like — I remember we used to go and as soon as we got old enough, we would say, “Can we go outside now?” And we’d just go walking... They were both nice people, um, and interesting people, but I just didn’t — I don’t know — it didn’t feel like — I think it was probably because my parents were not able to be themselves in that environment... I kind of got this sense that when we’d go and see them, they would kind of be looking at us and saying — they’d kind of make judgements about my parents, and I just wasn’t comfortable with that...*

In this way, the parents’ own relationship with their family of origin, as well as the quality and frequency of contact with kin becomes crucial to the development of the child’s self-identity (Johnson 1992) and their consequent kin relationships.

Nonetheless, as an adult, Cameron has now chosen to maintain close ties with his parents and brothers and is determined that his wife and son also enjoy a close relationship with them, which includes frequent and regular visits between the family. In addition, Cameron, from the beginning of his relationship with Hiroko, has also advocated for Hiroko’s family in Japan to be involved in their lives, particularly during special moments, such as their wedding:

*I was absolutely delighted that Hiroko’s family were coming [to our wedding], and I think that was — I felt that was really, really important, to kind of get that initial start, that we had that commitment from both of our families to come. I don’t think I would have got married in the UK if Hiroko’s parents hadn’t of come, and her family — I don’t know, there’s hardly any point...I really felt that that was quite important,*

*that first step, because I think we're both aware you need to make — it's harder, the distance and the culture, you need something to uh, to get people to kind of associate with us, because we want both of our families to be involved in our lives.*

Cameron wants both his family of origin and his in-laws to be actively involved in his nuclear family's life. This suggests that Cameron is making an effort to maintain relationships with both sides of kin, which contradicts literature surrounding kinkeeping (e.g. Sweetser 1963, Marx, *et al.* 2011), which stresses the woman as the kinkeeper, responsible for maintaining contact with both sides of the family. Instead, in the present study, several men were found to be actively sharing the responsibilities of kinkeeping by assisting their wives, and sometimes even taking the lead in maintaining and encouraging relationships, particularly with their Japanese kin. For example, although the Walkers are more in contact with Cameron's parents, Hiroko admits that Cameron also encourages her to maintain contact with her parents:

*And we spoke — we speak to Cameron's parents on Skype, quite regularly, they sang songs for [my son] and yeah. [We speak to them] probably twice a week, twice or three times a week, maybe not all the time Skype, but. [With my family], maybe once a two weeks or yeah — I don't — I normally don't talk to my family quite often, but my husband encourage me to talk more, because they talk a lot inside family, so.*

In this way, we see that, because it is the norm for Cameron and his parents and brothers to maintain frequent contact with one another, he is trying to “transmit” this aspect of his culture to his wife and her family. Yet in a somewhat similar situation, Colin Hamilton wonders whether the fact that his wife Chiyoki and her family maintain a “cold relationship” is a cultural characteristic or an individual family characteristic:

*We tried to get Chiyoki's mum and dad to Skype, where they can see their grandchildren, they are not interested. They're really like, they don't want to know, and they're their only grandchildren. The only time they ever Skype is when I'm there on business, and I say look, I'm going to Skype, they're going to be on the screen, let's speak to your grandchildren. That's the only time they ever Skype, which, you know, is some evidence of what we said earlier, about the lack of closeness that was there with Chiyoki and her mum and dad, from my point of view, Chiyoki might argue with that, a lack of closeness that's there with my — was there between my mum and dad, but wasn't there between her mum and dad, that's continuing*

*with the grandchildren, so that's why I say, even if we lived in Japan, I don't think there would be the relationship that they have with their grandchildren here. I very much doubt it. I suppose it's the way they are as a couple, the way they brought up their child, that's then — that child's child is an extension of them, as it were, so it's a continuation of that relationship. I'm not sure that it's 100% cultural, although I have to admit, in my limited experience and understanding of how Japanese families work, um, they're not as, in each other's back-pockets sort of thing, you know, they're not as close as, well — I have to watch what I'm saying here, but they're not as close as typical working-class British families would be.*

In this way, we see several British men attempting to share and transmit the closeness that they value in their families to their Japanese wives, yet the closeness that the British men describe may simply hold a different meaning for the Japanese women and their families, whose relationships may be described as “silent intimacy” (Jamieson 1998). At the same time, several men also did seem to hint that perhaps their geographic distance is what has caused this distance between their wives and their families of origin, and may thus feel somewhat guilty. Yet as Colin explains, even when his family temporarily moved to Japan, it did not encourage a closer emotional relationship between his wife and her family, and consequently, between his children and their Japanese kin. In this way, factors that affect kin relationships for the mixed children seem to be heavily influenced by their parents' relationship with their family of origin.

### ***Family: As a Couple***

#### ***In-Law Relationships***

Finch (1989, p51) suggests that sometimes in-law relationships are conducted “through and in a sense for the sake of, a third party.” While that third party may initially be their partners, eventually, it also becomes the children. In this section, we therefore explore how the mixed couples negotiate their relationship with their in-laws, when possible, from both perspectives, and how these relationships influence the children's relationships with their kin.

#### ***Women and In-Laws***

In this section, we examine the Japanese women and their relationships with their British in-laws. What we find is that, like other relationships involving relatives by

marriage, various factors affect these relationships, including proximity and personalities. Yet for Japanese women, language barriers as well as cultural differences can further challenge the relationships. The reason why I have chosen to focus on the mother-in-law / daughter-in-law relationship is because this relationship was the most frequently mentioned in-law relationship during my fieldwork. Although most women did not directly say negative things regarding their mother-in-laws, it seems to be a complicated relationship nonetheless, as we see with Ayaka MacFarlane's explanation of her relationship with her mother-in-law: *"My mother-in-law — but I think she's a little bit older age, and little bit different generation, so I think uh, she hardly say, but I thought — of course she didn't hardly say to me, but I thought she — it was a bit, not wasn't surprise, but he — her son got married with Japanese."* Reasons for lack of blatantly negative mother-in-law / daughter-in-law relationships may stem from the Japanese women's upbringing in Confucian beliefs, which place daughters-in-law in a central role for providing care for their families, particularly their parents-in-law (Nishi, *et al.* 2010). On the other hand, I also examine the sisters-in-law relationship because as Finch (1989, p49) found, women do not tend to consider a sister-in-law the equivalent of a sister. However, in mixed families, the two women are considered "culture carriers" (Song 2003) for their respective "cultures"; as such, how they negotiate their differences, and how their relationships with one another influence the children will be explored.

We first examine the Paterson family, where Kikuko and Tim have been married for three years. According to mother-in-law Patricia, she and Kikuko enjoy a wonderful relationship, with Patricia stepping in as a "second mum" to Kikuko:

*I like to think that Kikuko thinks of me as her other mum because obviously her mum's in Japan, and especially when you're — I know how important my mother was, and has been to me, um, since I became a mother, and so I know that Kikuko obviously hasn't got her mother close by, and I hope that she thinks of me as her second mum, so therefore, all the way through the pregnancy, I went up to see her, each week, and then when they — she went into labour, I rushed up there and I took them to hospital. So I was there when the baby was born, I wasn't in the room because there was only two people could be in the room, and her mum had come over for the birth... [but] I saw the baby as soon as she was born. And um, I think it's important for Kikuko to know that I'm there, you know.*

One interesting finding in this study is the different way in which several mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law describe their relationships. For example, while most mothers-in-law see their relationships as warm and open, most daughters-in-law tend to describe their relationships as a mixed blessing (cf Mason 1999): on one hand, they provide much-needed practical help, yet this can sometimes infringe on the daughter-in-law and her family's independence. While this scenario may resemble most mother-in-law / daughter-in-law relationships, the Japanese women in this study must overcome not only such normal relational challenges, but also challenges related to their cultural upbringing. This sometimes results in a stressful experience for the Japanese women, as they tend to feel that they are constantly walking on eggshells because of the self-constraints they place on themselves, simply because "I'm Japanese!" What follows is a quote from a woman who shared her experience with her mother-in-law:

*I think in England<sup>28</sup>, I get along with my mother-in-law, but I think most of my other friends ... say that relationship is very different, in Japan, Japanese mother-in-laws. I think because mother-in-laws, in Japan, is very strict. I need to — my mother always says, to my mother-in-law, we cannot say no to my mother-in-law because we have to respect the older people in Japan, but here, I think we can say directly, if I don't want mother-in-law to do it, I can say no, but which I cannot say, because I'm Japanese!*

Further, because the British men realise the challenging relationship between the two women in their lives, their role can often become that of interpreters, so to speak, perhaps not of language, but of behaviours, as Liam Barclay, who finds the relationship between his wife and his parents extremely stressful, explains:

*And because generally Japanese are quite reserved about revealing their full emotion, you know, so [British in-laws] misunderstand that as almost rudeness or not warm and friendly. And then, [the Japanese daughter-in-law] interprets just their natural instinct for looking after grandkids as interference.*

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<sup>28</sup> For Japanese, the word *Igirisu* [England] is used to refer to the United Kingdom. They typically do not differentiate between England and Scotland.

In the same vein, Tim Paterson also realises that, while perhaps no mother-in-law / daughter-in-law relationship is free from trouble, “*cultural issues make it a little bit more difficult than normal...*”. Regardless, all of the British men are in close contact with their families, and as a result, so too, somewhat inevitably, are their Japanese wives. However, three women from the study who have been married for several years did admit that, with their husbands’ agreement, they no longer make an effort to accompany their husbands and children when visiting the paternal kin.

On the other hand, sisters-in-law Taeko and Emma Clark are attempting to build a closer relationship, yet cultural differences continue to stand in the way. Taeko and Andrew Clark have been married for nine years, and although they live in the same neighbourhood as Andrew’s parents, his sister Emma lives abroad. This entails an added hurdle of geographic distance in addition to linguistic barriers and cultural differences. While time constraints may seem like the biggest challenge for Taeko and Emma, Emma sees the largest hurdle to overcome in this relationship being the feeling of having to constantly walk on eggshells, so as not to offend Taeko:

*I think [our relationship] — um, it was quite difficult linguistically, for both of us, because I don't speak any Japanese ... our cultures are so different ... I find the Japanese culture is, you know — our European culture is so different, I think, to the Japanese culture — and what um, what's considered the right way of doing something and a wrong way of doing something — it's quite interesting. I, I find — for us — because I think Scottish people are quite informal — and I find um, Japanese politeness and formality go very much together, which is lovely, it's a beautiful thing, because we could do with more politeness. Um, but it, it takes longer to get to know somebody well, when it's such a different way of doing things, and you don't want to um, you know, give offence, and you don't want to — you know, it's harder to work out if you are intruding on somebody or helping somebody. I think you often make those judgements by very subliminal, unspoken understandings. Whereas when the culture's pretty different, you're not — those signals are projected differently.*

Perhaps quite fittingly, when Taeko spoke about Emma and her parents-in-laws, her only comment was, “*They're very nice people.*” As a result, the indirectness of the Japanese culture may be one of the factors that keep the Japanese women from forming more intimate ties with their British in-laws. This finding, in turn, seems to be in line with Nisbett's (2003, p61) findings: “*Westerners... are apt to find Asians*

hard to read because Asians are likely to assume that their point has been made indirectly and with finesse. Meanwhile, the Westerner is in fact very much in the dark." This idea of being in the dark about their Japanese in-laws was frequently mentioned in interviews with the British kin, as Margaret Barclay elaborates:

*I must say I do find it quite difficult because [my daughter-in-law] — I think she might be — she's perhaps very shy. And I don't know if she, if she doesn't understand what people say, I don't know whether she would not want them to know that she doesn't understand, so maybe um — so sometimes I think, if she doesn't answer, it's perhaps because she doesn't understand, but she doesn't want people to know she doesn't understand, so she's covering up, but maybe that's just — I don't know... Um, I don't see her an awful lot. Um, because I do find it difficult to know what to say, because she's not very chatty, and I talk a lot ...*

In this way, perhaps cultural differences are over-emphasised and as Margaret above describes, the challenges that the women face may be more due to personality differences rather than cultural differences.

Finally, while women in general tend to have a more difficult time integrating into their husband's families (Marx, *et al.* 2011), we find that, because the women are living in Britain, closer to their husband's families, they may have to rely more on their in-laws, particularly during important events in their life, including motherhood, as they do not have any of their female relatives (e.g. mother or sister) nearby. Rather, their closest women relatives become their in-laws, and as Hiroko Walker's sister Tomoko Suzuki put it, the Japanese women may need to rely on them more because of limitations to the practical support the Japanese kin can offer the Japanese women living abroad:

*And when my sister got pregnant, she also had to make decisions about things such as antenatal care and check-ups, and I found many differences between the two cultures. I shared my experiences with her. But as the proverb goes, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." So my advice to my sister was: go to your husband's mummy and let her encourage you, instead of me.*

In conclusion, we have discussed two Japanese women and their relationships with their in-laws in this section. These two cases show that, regardless of the type of relationship, while the Japanese women and their in-laws face some of the same



challenges as most in-law relationships, they also have to overcome challenges associated with linguistic and cultural differences.

### *Men and In-Laws*

The men, on the other hand, because of geographic distance, generally have less contact with their wives' families, and when they do, language remains a large barrier, as Ryan Ramsey explains, "I get my wife to translate what I'm trying to say! Hmm, although I don't know if that's what she tells them!" In this section, we examine two British men in particular and their evolving relationships with their Japanese in-laws. In particular, we examine men and their in-law relationships because these relationships can positively benefit marriages (cf Högnäs and Carlson 2010), and consequently, their children's relationships with their Japanese kin.

Two cases are looked at in detail because they represent both the type of British man that has lived in Japan and understands the language and to some degree the culture, as well as the British man who has never lived in Japan, knows no Japanese, and is not familiar with the Japanese culture whatsoever. To begin with, we examine Adam McLeod, whose future wife introduced him to the Japanese culture and language. He and Junko have now been married for two years. Like several other parents, when Junko's parents first heard about her Scottish boyfriend, they were somewhat surprised and not very enthusiastic, particularly because they realised that such a union would most likely equal her permanent migration as well as that of any future grandchildren. Nonetheless, Adam's relationship with his Japanese in-laws has developed over the years, especially after the birth of their first grandson, as he describes:

*While language is a problem, I think we seem to get on well, and it's certainly improved, particularly since my son's been born, and I think at the beginning, there was maybe a bit of tension. I think that's understandable. I think they were worried about Junko and obviously they would have particular concerns: their daughter, their only child is leaving Japan and coming over here, they'd obviously feel a bit, perhaps guarded at times and a bit suspicious of me, and that's perfectly understandable, but I think we've overcome those things and I think they trust me more than perhaps they did in the beginning.*

This situation is similar to what Bauer (2010, p220) describes, where disapproval regarding a mixed relationship exists among the parents, but the birth of a grandchildren becomes a “major factor contributing to family acceptance” of the mixed union. However, this sense of *trust* between parents and their sons-in-law can be even more difficult to establish, particularly across thousands of miles and when linguistic, cultural, and gender differences are present, as Junko’s mother, Mrs Tanaka elaborates:

*Yes, it’s very — well, we’ve got the language barrier, definitely. So I haven’t really figured him out. And also, I’ve only got one daughter, I don’t have any boys, so I can’t even imagine what it’s like to be a boy, so because of this, I still don’t feel like I understand him. That, the gender differences, plus the cultural differences. We also have a cultural barrier, so it’s even harder to grasp him, you know? But basically, I think he’s sincere, maybe? Honest ... he’s kind of a straight arrow — I’m not sure how to put it. You know, it’s like the old Samurai — I think he’s got that type of personality, including the stubbornness! But like I said, I don’t really think I’ve figured him out.*

It’s interesting to note here that, although Mrs Tanaka mentions cultural differences several times, she also describes Adam “like the old Samurai.” Again, this emphasises the complexity found in the idea of ‘national culture’ and culture being considered synonymous to a country instead of individual preferences and personalities. Regardless, even with minimal understanding of the language and culture, we see that it is possible for British men to communicate with their Japanese parents-in-law and slowly gain their trust. Another example that was frequently mentioned by the British men was the fateful moment when they made the trip to Japan to ask their future in-laws for their daughter’s hand in marriage, as Jim Miller shares:

*... I flew out and spent a week with her, and proposed. Anyway, she said yes, and that was fine, and then I had to — so I didn’t ask her father beforehand, but — so Fumi told her parents, and they said, “Well fine, as long as Jim comes to speak to me about it.” So six months later or so, I flew out to Japan, stayed four days, and spoke to her father. So I’d obviously discussed with Fumi what I should say to him, and then wrote it down in English, and Fumi translated it to Japanese and wrote it out in romaji and I memorised it, it was about a page of A4. And uh, and then so, flew out and sat down at the evening meal, and I was sitting opposite Fumi’s dad at the dinner table, and at the end of the meal, he was like, “Right, come on, I know why*

*you're here." He knew I had something to say, so I said it, and I imagine my pronunciation was horrific, but I remembered it all, so that was ok. And yeah, he sort of nodded, and that was approval.*

In this way, while linguistic barriers do indeed make communication between in-laws somewhat more challenging, with some effort on the British men's part as well as the assistance of the Japanese women, communication becomes possible. On the other hand, for some of the British men who are fluent in Japanese, this linguistic barrier is somewhat lifted; however, as Cameron Walker's case shows, such men still continue to face other challenges, including more common "in-law" challenges associated with finding acceptance in a new family.

While Cameron and Hiroko have also been married for two years, Cameron is fluent in Japanese and well acquainted with Japanese culture and traditions, particularly after working in Japan for several years. As such, there are no major barriers between Cameron and his Japanese in-laws, and he seems to enjoy a good relationship with them, as Hiroko explains:

*[Cameron] gets along with my family very well! I'm so lucky because I think the language is most important factor, he can talk with my parents, my family in Japanese quite well, and then also ... Cameron did master degree in Asian culture or something like that, so he knows a lot of Japanese culture, instruments and music and uh, maybe more than me! And my, my dad plays shakuhachi and he do lots of shougi, and my mother also likes haiku and tanka, so those culture things — he can keep talking with them, although he maybe not understand what they're really talking about! But anyway, my parents enjoy talking with him ...*

Perhaps because there is less of a linguistic and cultural barrier, Cameron has more smoothly been able to integrate into his wife's family. Further, he shares that there is no special treatment from his in-laws, particularly his siblings-in-law:

*So the first time I went to see them, I guess um, I got on well with them, and they didn't treat me — Hiroko's got a younger brother ... but he treats me very much — and judges me very much as who I am, which I do respect a lot, um, in that, he's not going to be like, "Oh yeah, that's really interesting." He's not interested in the UK, and he will tell me that, "That's rubbish, like. I just don't want to talk about that." Um, and — which is nice... I think he was treating me as an in-law, whereas I was kind of impressing him about what I could do and what I could not do, and stuff*

*like that ... And he was like, "You're my sister's — boyfriend, husband" basically, in his head, and I'll treat you as that. And — which, I was a little bit surprised by at first, actually, I think it's really good... I think Hiroko's sister, it's her big sister, so I'm always a bit worried that she's saying, "Are you treating her right?!" "Are you —" It's nice, but — the way relationships should be, right? So, I think that's probably — I feel more like, I think that's like a good family connection, they know who I am, but that's probably more to do with them, than me. I probably would have wanted to go down and impress them and make them all think I'm a brilliant person, and they were a little bit like, "You're Hiroko's husband, and I'm going to treat you like that" which is nice...*

Most Japanese families share that, while it was initially exciting to welcome a foreigner into their families, after a while, it simply became the norm. In this way, while not originally what Cameron, had expected, perhaps a sign of true acceptance and integration into a family is not having special treatment, particularly because you are a foreigner, and instead, just being accepted as, in Cameron's case, "Hiroko's husband." Consequently, such "normal" treatment may also encourage the Japanese kin to treat the mixed children simply as grandchildren/nephews/nieces, instead of seeing them as the "mixed" grandchildren/nephews/nieces.

Marx and colleagues (2011) find that men tend to integrate more into their wife's family, when compared to women integrating into their husband's families. The same general sense was found in the mixed families. This more natural integration on the part of the British men into their wife's family in Japan seems to occur even amidst linguistic, cultural, and geographic barriers. Further, it may be assumed that, since the British men have better connections with the Japanese kin, the mixed family would interact more with the Japanese kin. However, this was not the case, as the mixed families tend to spend more time with their British kin, regardless of the quality of relationship between the Japanese woman and her British in-laws. The fact that the mixed families live in Britain must be thus taken into account, and even though a matrilineal bias may exist (e.g. Marx, *et al.* 2011), geography seems to outweigh this bias. In addition, the finding in the present study that the majority of the British men have much closer ties to their own families of orientation than their wives seems contradictory to studies (e.g. Fischer 1983) that stress the women as kinkeeper. Yet it is somewhat similar to Bauer's (2010) findings, which stress that,

while women may traditionally be the kinkeepers, the ones forming and maintaining kinship ties, “children and fathers are also central in making kinship.” This new evolvement of the kinkeeper is also supported by Baldassar and colleagues (2007), who suggest, that men, particularly through the use of new technology, are becoming kinkeepers for their own side of the family, and as this study has found, men are also becoming kinkeepers for their wives’ families.

### ***Family: With Children***

Early familial relationships with one’s family of orientation as well as relationships with one’s in-laws soon after marriage are important to discuss as these relationships tend to influence children’s relationships with kin (cf McCarthy and Edwards 2011). In this section, we now examine the relationships between the children and their extended family, on both the British and Japanese side. One observation made regarding the children and their extended family is that their relationship tends to mirror that of their parents’ relationship with their family of origin (e.g. Davey, *et al.* 2009, McCarthy and Edwards 2011). In the case of the Hamilton family, for example, Chiyoki herself has somewhat of an estranged relationship with her family, while her husband Colin is very close to his family; the children’s relationships seem to mirror their parents’ relationships, as Chiyoki explains:

*With my brother and my children — erm, hasn’t got any connection. My parents and my children — my mum — it’s difficult to answer. I think my mum enjoys to spend time with my children, so does my children. My dad — he’s trying to be good granddad, but probably it’s sometimes stressful to him... they don’t speak to my parents a lot ... [but my in-laws], we see them every weekend... Even — if we don’t see them for like 5 days, 6 days, they phone us or we phone them or children phone them or — we speak to them quite regularly. And if my children gets reward from school or they did something good, something — they wants to tell their Granny and Granddad all the time!*

This idea that children’s relationships with kin are affected by their parents’ relationships with their families of origin is important to consider, particularly in mixed families. This is particularly true because, as Tyler (2005, p484) found, close relationship with kin can, not only create strong bonds with that side of their kin,

but can also facilitate the mixed child's "inheritance" of their racial or cultural identities. In the above example, because Chiyoki has a somewhat estranged relationship with her family in Japan, her children have become closer to their British kin, and on the other hand, have become more distant from the Japanese culture as they have fewer opportunities for the direct transmission of culture from kin. Kin relationships in the mixed families are influenced by many factors, including culture (Fingerman 2001), the parents' relationships with their families of origin as well as their in-laws, but perhaps most importantly, by *choice*, of parents initially and of the children eventually. In turn, one of the most important contributions that kin make to the mixed children's lives is found in how they choose to identify the mixed children.

### ***"What Are They?"***

Extended family members play a unique role in the lives of the mixed families, as semi-insiders and semi-outsiders; we thus examine their thoughts surrounding the identities of the mixed children. The MacFarlane children's maternal grandmother, Chifumi Yonemura, for example, identifies her mixed grandchildren as British because, not only do they live in Britain, but "*they are a British man's children.*" This statement by Chifumi is very interesting because, on one level, it may be evidence of complete acceptance of her daughter's mixed family. However, on another level, it can be interpreted in a problematic way because, by identifying her grandchildren as "British," she is distancing herself from her grandchildren, and at the same time, negating her daughter's maternal connection to her grandchildren (Tyler 2005, p484). On the other hand, extended family members on the British side tend to take a more balanced approach regarding the mixed children's identities, as Ewan Ross's mother Julie put it, "*I wouldn't like to see him identify more with one than the other. I would like to think that it would be a balance.*" Yet as Andrew Clark's sister Emma realises, living in Britain means that keeping the Japanese culture alive becomes more challenging, but essential, even if her niece has yet to realise this:

*Is my niece more British or Japanese? [Niece sitting by her side whispers, "British, Auntie Emma!"] I don't know! <to niece>: I don't know, because I've never spent time with you in Japan, so I don't know what the difference would be... most of the*

*differences that I notice are very positive things... politeness and respect... which I think would be a great shame if you lost.*

A great shame indeed, yet cultural familiarity and transmission requires dedication and perseverance, as Adam McLeod's cousin's wife Mary elaborates: *"I think my nephew will be more familiar with the British culture, but if his mother does her parenting skills correctly, he'll be very, very proud of his Japanese culture."* This is another statement that could be interpreted somewhat problematically because Mary places the responsibility of transmitting the Japanese culture entirely on Junko, the mother, instead of on both parents. Ultimately however, while embracing and identifying with both cultures is ideal, for many mixed children, their appearance may determine how they are identified. While most of the mixed children are able to "pass" as Japanese when they are in Japan; in Britain, they seem to attract attention, although never negatively, as Jim Miller's mother Beatrix shares:

*"Oh, aren't they gorgeous!" That's about it, really! Nothing negative at all, ever... we are such now, our generation's children are such a mixed bunch! And there's so much international intermarriage ... don't forget that I'm from an educated background, and an educated middle class, and therefore, um, this isn't always — I know that this would be more difficult... for some families...*

While Beatrix emphasises a changed world and a possible class difference, the acceptance of mixed children by their grandparents seems to transcend class, as self-proclaimed "working-class folk" Scarlett, mother of Colin Hamilton shares:

*Well, I don't notice anything; however, I will say that, once I did... The kids were here, and they were decorating the Christmas tree, and my trainer brought some dog food, and I says to him, "Oh, my grandchildren are half Japanese," and he says, "Oh, I wondered!" So obviously he would notice immediately, I suppose, people do... But I don't think, "They're half Japanese," you know? I mean, I suppose it crosses my mind, because they **are**, but you know — and I don't know what other people — most people, when I tell people my grandchildren are half Japanese, they say, "Oh, they'll be beautiful!"*

As such, extended family also seem to deal with outsiders and negotiate issues surrounding the mixed children's identity. This is important to note because how the kin themselves identify the mixed children becomes most important as it can

give mixed children a sense of belonging (Caballero, *et al.* 2008, p11). Further, while the extended family receive mostly positive comments from friends and strangers alike regarding the mixed children, as Caballero (2004) suggests, even “positive” comments, such as mixed people being more beautiful, arise from the premise that mixed people are different to monoracial people. Finally, sometimes the identity of the mixed child can also be a point of confusion between family members and how they see the mixed child. For example, George and Scarlett Hamilton share the following story about their daughter-in-law and her take on their granddaughter’s appearance:

*George: I can tell you something that surprised me, from Chiyoki, when her daughter was just a kid, uh, Chiyoki asked me, “Do you think she looks Asian?” And — I was quite surprised then.*

*Scarlett: He was like, “Of course she does.”*

*George: Yeah, I was pretty surprised that Chiyoki asked me that — why did she say it? I don’t know.*

*Scarlett: Why didn’t she see it?*

As a result, the identity of mixed children is something that, not only the mixed children themselves must learn to negotiate with individually, but also something that their parents, as well as their extended family, to some extent, must learn to negotiate, both within themselves, as well as with society. Within their homes, however, as Scarlett and George emphasise, while there may be some differential treatment between the different grandchildren, it’s “*not because [they’re] British and they’re half-Japanese, but because of their age difference.*” This sense of seeing the mixed children as “normal” and emphasising their familial connection instead of their differences is also what Hiroko Walker’s sister Tomoko highlights:

*My nephew is mixed, and how he will accept that, how he will live... I’m a little worried about that... For me, either one is fine. My nephew is my nephew. He’s the child that my dear sister birthed. He’s the child that was born between my sister and the man she loves. My cute nephew, that’s all. He can be Japanese or British, whatever he wants.*

Tomoko’s statement is revealing, as she freely admits that she is concerned that one day, her young nephew will have to negotiate his own identity. In many ways, her



statement is also ideal because ultimately, Tomoko identifies her nephew only as family, not by nationality. However, this idea that Tomoko's nephew will have the choice of being "whatever he wants" also seems naive because, as most of the other mixed children in this study, Tomoko's nephew also has strong Asian phenotypes, and as such, taking on a white identity would be very difficult. While there were infrequent mentions of racial comments received regarding the mixed children, Colin Hamilton remembers one such occasion:

*Uh, the earliest one I remember quite distinctly, was when I was living in, we were living in Gloucester, because we lived for two years in Gloucester after our first baby was born, and um, I went to a post office to pick up some stuff, so my daughter would've been one, and I remember, in a queue, and I don't know how some of these people talk — if you've got a baby, "Oh, isn't she cute? Blah blah blah." And you start a conversation, it's one of them. And the guy says, "Where is she from?" And I — I says, "She's from Gloucester." You know? Uh, she's — and he said, "Ah, but is she English?" ... Yeah, yeah, she's English, as in, she's born in Gloucester. But then, then it's like, ok. You know what he's getting at.*

One point that deserves attention here is that while there were indeed very few mentions of racial discrimination and/or prejudice in this study, the few mentions came from the British men. While this may be explained by "interracial intimacy", the site where white members of mixed families learn "racial literacy" (Twine 2010), it is somewhat problematic when we consider that the Japanese women, the minority parent, the ones who can "empathise" with their non-white children do not seem racially literate or even racially conscious. One reason for this may be because many of the Japanese women were marriage migrants, and as such, they themselves may not have fully experienced being a minority in a white-dominant society. Regardless, as Song and Aspinall (2012, p129) argue, one's physical appearance does tend to determine how one is perceived in terms of ethnicity and race, and this may become more evident as the children grow older, and the parents, together with their children will need to devise strategies to handle such situations. Returning to the extended family, it seems that the biggest support that kin can offer the mixed children is to maintain relationships in which the mixed children feel a sense of belonging and safety to express a fluid self-identify.

### **Support & Maintenance**

While both the Japanese and British kin support the mixed families, they tend to do so in different ways, largely due to their geographic location. For example, when British kin were asked how they support the mixed families, the most frequently mentioned form of support was practical, in particular, childcare. Tim Paterson's mother Patricia, for example, babysits her granddaughter regularly, so as to allow the couple some free time together and give her daughter-in-law a break "to go shopping or whatever she wants." Another form of practical help that British kin give the mixed families is during sudden emergencies, as Colin Hamilton's mother Scarlett shares:

*My daughter-in-law is at Citizen's Advice today, because they've been given two months to get out [of their flat]... obviously, well, George and I would say, "Don't worry about it, you're welcome to come here." But you know, to be truthful, it's not — it wouldn't be ideal, you know? ... Colin said to me, "You mean to say you'd want six people coming to live with you?" And I said, "Not really." I was, you know, honest, but certainly they wouldn't be out in the street, and we would just have to cope.*

When the Japanese kin were asked how they support the mixed families, they tended to mention financial support, emotional and moral support, and practical support (i.e. childcare and accommodation) during visits to Japan. Interestingly, none of the Japanese kin mentioned that several of the Japanese grandmothers also supported the families during childbirth by flying to Britain to assist their daughters (Lie 2010). Nonetheless, the Japanese / British families seem to receive various types of support from the Japanese kin, including care packages, as Fumiko Miller describes, "My mum, she sends me uh, kind of special box, almost every month, to cheer me up, with lots of Japanese goodies, like food and sometimes clothes and sometimes for children, like books and stuff, that's how she supports." Finally, while not directly stated, through observations and casual conversations with the parents, it seems that the Japanese kin also offer linguistic support to the mixed children, simply by being monolingual and speaking little to no English, which in turn, gives the children the "need" (cf Grosjean 2010) to speak Japanese<sup>29</sup>. Further, while the British kin may generally

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<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 3 for more regarding language.

offer more practical support to the mixed families, they can also face barriers including geographic distance, lack of transportation, and health concerns. In such cases, as Ewan Ross explains, his parents may also offer emotional support to substitute the practical support they are unable to give:

*Um, [they support us] in the attention that they show my son ... they obviously adore him, so that's really nice to see. And they're always asking how he is, um, he had ... a bad fever last weekend, lasted about three days... my parents were quite concerned about it, so they were calling to find out how he was, um, they were very pleased to hear that he was now better... so emotional support, I think, is the main thing.*

Becker and Charles (2006) find that individuals equate support and family, with support emphasising their sense of family, of belonging. Another aspect of doing family that gives family members a sense of belonging is by keeping in touch. This is particularly important as it can provide, among other things, opportunities for kin to impart cultural and familial knowledge to the mixed children (Caballero 2010, p6). In this next section, we will see what effort the Japanese women and/or the British men are making towards maintaining contact with their extended mixed family.

### ***Maintaining Contact***

When British kin were asked how they stay in touch with the mixed families, the most frequent responses were phone calls and visits. On the other hand, for the Japanese kin, visits are not always realistic, and Skype was most frequently referenced. This is in line with Fingerman's (2001) finding, that technological advancements help transnational families maintain frequent contact with their kin abroad, creating a shared sense of intimacy, regardless of geographic distance. Skype in particular seems to have revolutionised the way families, both near and far, stay in touch, with Skype being mentioned thirty-nine times during interviews with extended family members alone. However, for kin nearby, visits still remain the most frequently mentioned form of maintaining contact, and phone calls and Skype tend to be used in between visits, or when visits are not possible. For far-away kin though, Skype has become a way of life, as Junko McLeod's mother Mrs Tanaka shares:

*My relationship with my grandson is mostly just through a computer lens, unfortunately. So if he can learn to recognise me, using these props (points to hats and glasses and toys), then I'll be fine, that's what I've come to accept now. And then, when he comes to visit me here, I want to hold him with both arms wide open!*

While Skype can provide transnational families with voices and images, it cannot provide the “unique form of intimacy which is irreplaceable by communication at a distance” (Svašek 2008, p219). In order to, among other things, create that intimacy with their Japanese kin, most of the mixed families prioritise regular visits to Japan.

### **Visits to Japan**

While regular visits to Japan are now somewhat of a norm for mixed families, it was not always so, as Ayaka MacFarlane's mother Chifumi Yonemura explains,

*One time, I sat next to a woman [on the plane] ... she had married a French man and was on her way to Japan. That woman was about 70, and she was telling me that before, when you got married to someone in Europe, you never thought you'd be able to return to Japan, since you had to travel by sea, and it took about one month... So when I hear stories like that, I feel happy that, even though we're far away, we're ok.*

Today, visits to Japan are not just for the migrant spouse, they are also for her children to maintain relations with their Japanese kin, to be “co-present” (Mason 2004), and to establish links with the minority culture (Tizard and Phoenix 1993, p146). In addition, trips back to Japan offer the mixed children opportunities to improve and practise their Japanese, diversify their palate, and be exposed to Japanese traditions and customs, not always intentionally, but simply by living alongside their Japanese kin and being immersed in the Japanese culture, as David McGregor explains:

*When my son and wife Risa go visit her sister, the family there transmit culture... maybe not in any kind of conscious way, but you know, they are very — they're a pretty standard you know, kind of Japanese family. They speak a bit of English, but maybe not that much, so when he goes to stay with them, he'll be living in a pretty mainstream, ordinary Japanese house, so they've got — the bedrooms are all tatami mats, the food of course will be completely Japanese, language will be completely Japanese, so I think ... he gets a good dose of uh, you know, mainstream Japanese*

*culture when he stays with them, and also it's outside Tokyo, because Tokyo's great, but Tokyo's such a — it's a mega-city, isn't it, it's a global city. When he goes up to Hokkaido, he'll be getting a, a much more traditional kind of input.*

While ten of the Japanese women in the present study mentioned returning to their *jikka* for visits, for two of the families, the McGregors and the Potters, this is not possible as the maternal grandparents are both deceased. In their study, Baldassar and Baldock (2000) found that visits back to the homeland continued even after the death of parents because the migrants had developed strong ties with their kin. While this is the case for the McGregors (above), who still visit Risa's sister; for the Potters, there is no one left, and as a result, the family have not visited Japan for several years. As such, developing strong ties with kin, including ties between the mixed children and their cousins, can be an important factor in, not only long-term transnational kin relationships, but also in how the children integrate into the Japanese culture presently. For example, when Ayaka MacFarlane sent her oldest son on an "Admissions Experience" at the local primary school in Japan, having his cousin in the same class made this experience less scary, as Ayaka's mother Chifumi Yonemura elaborates:

*Well, this year, my grandson was in first grade ... He has a cousin that was born around the same time, and she's a girl, but both of them went to the same school ... And his other cousin let him use his old randoseru. It was almost during summer vacation, so he didn't get to go for that long, but he seemed to get used to it and liked it, especially because he had his cousin...*

In this way, extended family members, including cousins, can play a significant role in the visits to Japan by helping the children navigate and integrate into the Japanese way of life. While the Japanese kin may, on one level, be excited and happy for the mixed families to come and visit them in Japan, there are also challenges, as Chifumi Yonemura candidly shares:

*Ayaka's sons are the fifth and sixth grandchildren, so I was quite used [being a grandmother], but it's a bit — her boys come over every year, to Japan, but it's very different from the UK, and the children are bothered — I'm also bothered! For example, the toilet. The toilet seat — it's warm. And the older boy — he later got the hang of it, but at first, he was disgusted with the warm seat and couldn't go to the bathroom. When I asked him why, he said he couldn't go unless it was cold. So those*

*little differences are just too much... They come every year. Even this year, they came over for three weeks... but we only get to see them once in a while, so I'm very happy.*

This example thus provides us with a clear but embodied difference. Even though the MacFarlane boys are able to communicate with their Japanese kin, and their appearance allows them to blend in with the Japanese population, as their grandmother explains, there are still cultural differences that make the visits “a bother.” As such, while Ayaka and Stuart may be attempting to introduce their children to the Japanese language, cuisine, and culture in general, this example here shows that there are some aspects of culture, albeit minor, that cannot be taught, but must be experienced, such as a warm toilet seat. This, as many of the parents, including Ayaka and Stuart admit, is one of the main reasons why visits to Japan are a priority. Further, visits back to Japan can also provide the Japanese women with “reinforcement” of the parental role from her kin, as most friends do not provide such support for parenting, but instead contribute more to the parent’s personal needs (Cochran and Walker 2005, p247). Here, Ayaka shares how she particularly appreciates the *shitsuke* support that her parents, especially her mother provide:

*... when we visit [Japan], my — especially my mother helped about — how can I say? Not discipline, shitsuke give if — if they did something naughty or just tried to — I'm getting tired just to say, and my mother really help, letting them know what is good and what is bad. Also, not just about shitsuke, also give affection — how can I say? So it's nice to have different view from, yeah, look after children, she looks after lots, and have experience, so it's nice to see someone — because I think it's hard to — because yeah, I have friends, but friends hardly say, “Oh, you should do that,” or that kind of things, so it's nice to have that kind of people who let me know.*

This form of support that Ayaka is speaking about as she searches for the right English word for *shitsuke* has to do with the upbringing of her children. In other words, disciplining and giving affection to her boys is something that only she and her husband do on a regular basis. However, as Ayaka emphasises here, she very much appreciates that her mother steps in to ease her burden as she also teaches the MacFarlane boys right from wrong, scolds them when they do wrong, but also praises them when they do good. This is a special role that even the closest of

friends tend to shy away from, and thus a type of support that Ayaka appreciates greatly, yet only receives when she and her sons visit Japan.

While discussing visits to Japan, class differences do come into play, with several families admitting that financial constraints stood in the way of more regular visits as well as the fathers joining the mothers and the children. At the same time, for many British men, their wives and children traveling to Japan was welcome break for them and an opportunity get things done around the house, like Ryan Ramsey, who says: *"Usually it's an excuse for me to fix up the house when my wife's away! <laughs>."* Further, many Japanese women rationalise the decision to leave their husbands and consequently their "duties" as a housewife behind by emphasising their British partner's reluctance to travel to Japan, regardless of whether or not they are able to speak Japanese. Kikuko Paterson, for example, says, *"[My husband], he said he had enough [of Japan]!"* This is somewhat similar to the observation made regarding the Japanese mothers rationing special Japanese foods for themselves and their children, as they exclude the British men due to financial constraints to cover travel costs. Further, food and travel may also be a form of kinkeeping, an opportunity to expose the children to Japanese foods, values, culture, and way of life, as well as creating a bonding space between mother and child, and between the children and their maternal kin.

### ***Sharing Cultures***

#### ***The Responsibility of Transmitting Culture***

While maintaining contact and visiting kin is a deliberate and conscious act on the part of the mixed families and their kin, the transmission of culture tends to be more unconscious, often unintentional. In this section, we therefore discuss the role that relatives play in the lives of the mixed families, and in particular, the transmission of culture. While this chapter has focused on the role that extended family play in the lives of the mixed families, for some, including the McGregors, not many kin remain. As a result, the parents, and perhaps the fathers in particular, must step in and put more of an effort into raising bilingual, bicultural children. For the McGregors, for example, David seems to not be as concerned with the transmission

of the Scottish culture to his son; however, he does seem concerned about the transmission of the Japanese culture. As such, David makes a conscious effort to support his wife's efforts by putting a "positive spin" on all things Japanese (cf Twine 2010), and by calling on their few remaining Japanese kin to assist with the more unconscious transmissions of culture, particularly during visits to Japan, as discussed earlier.

This type of situation, where kin, along with parents, work together to contribute to the transmission of culture is ideal; however, most mixed families tend to divide the responsibilities between the two parents themselves, perhaps because so much of culture is transmitted in the everyday aspects of doing family. Nonetheless, as Junko McLeod shares, extended family members can also provide opportunities for the mixed children to become more familiar with their cultural heritages, but all of this requires negotiation between the adults:

*I mean, in this house, we've got a rule: British things, Adam's task, Adam's responsibility, and our son's Japanese is my responsibility... my mother-in-law is also aware and she feels that she's Scottish ambassador, to pass on Scottish things. So I think she likes tradition... I don't want to leave her behind, feel all alone, it's not fair, so I want to take things equally, to be fair, but it's a bit difficult.*

Like several other couples, Junko and Adam and their respective families each focus on their own "culture," hoping to give their son equal exposure to both cultures. Yet this again complicates the idea of 'national culture' because, for example, Junko and Adam's perceptions of Japanese and Scottish "culture" differ somewhat. While Junko wants her son to become familiar with "kilts and tartan," Adam tends to equate Scottish culture with his hometown of Oban, as well as his mother and the family *croft*<sup>30</sup>. In this sense, trips back to Oban for Adam and his son may be quite similar to visits back to Japan for the Japanese women and their children. Further, while the extended family, including Adam's mother in Oban and Junko's family in Japan, make such visits possible, it is ultimately the decision and responsibility of

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<sup>30</sup> A small farm unique to Scotland, made up of a house and animals (usually cattle and sheep).



the parents to initiate such visits and share aspects of their cultures with their children, as Adam's cousin's wife Mary elaborates:

*I mean, hopefully Adam will take him back to Oban and let him see [that] heritage, because even Oban culture is different from our culture, different from here in the city, do you know what I mean? It's uh, in some terms, prehistoric, but um, there's a different culture in Oban than there is here, you know, um, and the same for Junko. Their son can't hate it — he's half Japanese, you know what I mean? You know people just look at him and see, do you know what I mean? He looks more Japanese than he does um, British, you know? So um, he'll have that to, you know — I don't think it's a hindrance, I think it's a great help, you know, and the opportunity to bring up a child with two different cultures, it's a lot of responsibility.*

Although a great responsibility indeed, the parents in the present study have accepted it, and like Andrew Clark, are determined to not let their children become simply Scottish children, “for the main reason that [being bicultural] will give [them] a much wider range of opportunities in the future, if [they've] got the two cultural identities...” While the parents assume most of the responsibility for transmitting both of their cultures to their children, kin can also play a significant role in the transmission of culture, often unintentionally. However, there are several kin that intentionally make it a point to not share their culture with the mixed children, for fear of pushing their culture on them, as Ewan Ross' mother Julie shares:

*If my grandson does show an interest in anything Scottish or Highland, I will certainly talk to, encourage him in that, but I certainly wouldn't want to push it on him... So I certainly wouldn't want to — I wouldn't push any cultural things on him, but if he did show an interest, I would certainly help him along and help him understand a bit more of our culture.*

Another participant who was very hesitant when speaking about “passing on culture” because she did not want to “push” culture on her nephew was Hiroko Walker's sister, Tomoko Suzuki:

*I would like to teach my nephew about the ways of Japan. But of course, it will depend on whether or not he shows an interest. Even for Japanese, unless one has an interest, you don't become familiar with the traditional ways of Japan. Just because he is mixed doesn't mean he has the responsibility to learn the Japanese ways. I want him to live freely.*

As such, extended family members often hesitate about intentionally transmitting their culture to the mixed children, for fear that they will be pushing their culture on to the children. This is somewhat similar to the “individual approach” that Caballero and colleagues (2008) identified, which tends to emphasise choice when dealing with differences and belonging in mixed children. This is interesting to consider because, in some ways, the parents are more in line with the “mixed approach” (Caballero, *et al.* 2008), raising their children to be bicultural and bilingual. Yet for the extended family members, they seem much more reserved and hesitant about sharing their cultures, including interests and beliefs, with the mixed children.

This, in turn, suggests that mixed families may be somewhat distanced from the wider kin circle, as Chifumi Yonemura admits, “*Right now, I’ve got seven grandchildren... I’ve got very good relationships with all of them, but especially with the ones who are close by, we’re very close...*” thus suggesting that, because of cultural differences and geographic distance, she may not feel as close to her mixed grandchildren. Katz (1996) and Waters (1990) found that parenthood, and I would add grandparenthood, often encourages individuals to identify more closely with their cultural background. As such, we may have expected Chifumi and other kin to want to share more of their culture with the mixed children, yet it seems that somewhat of the opposite has happened, as Chifumi shares: “*I would be very glad if they inherited some of the Japanese culture, too. But because they’re in the UK, I also don’t mind if they’re just into the British culture.*” Thus, the degree of support that kin are able to offer to the parents in the mixed families may also be affected by the kin’s hesitancy to become involved in the mixed family, for fear that they may push their culture on the children and/or foreign partner, or simply because they have accepted that their mixed grandchildren/nephews/nieces are somewhat different. Regardless, because so much of culture is transmitted in the everyday aspects of doing family, the majority of the relatives, including those who hesitate pushing their culture on the children, may, whether they realise it or not, be playing an

important, active role in the transmission of culture, because Jim Miller described his mother: just by being herself, his mother is being “*extremely British!*”

### *Culture: What to Pass On?*

While there were some kin who hesitate passing on their culture to the mixed children, as well as kin who have no desire to pass on anything to the mixed children, most do want to pass on something of value. Several kin mentioned somewhat traditional, transcultural values (e.g. kindness, honesty), while others mentioned personal interests that they feel are closely connected to their cultures. Ultimately, the interviews and observations with kin confirm that, whether mixed or not, their grandchildren, nieces, and nephews are simply family, and passing on culture is secondary to simply spending quality time with family. This was particularly evident with the British kin, who may feel more able to express themselves freely, and feel less pressure and expectation to “transmit culture” to the mixed children, when compared to the Japanese kin. Jim Miller’s mother Beatrix explains:

*I don’t see it as my job to teach them about British culture, um, I leave that to Jim. Um, but I suppose just in modelling it — just in demonstrating it through being me, but I don’t try to um, influence them in any way, really... they’re living here, and so — if it was the other way around, perhaps if they were in Japan, I would feel like I wanted to do more teaching about British culture, but as they’re here, I don’t feel it’s necessary, really... I’d like — because I’m a reasonably political person — it’s not that I take part in any, in any major political party, but I’m interested in politics, I’m interested in how the country is run, and I’m interested in social aspects of life in this country. I would like them to be aware of that, because I think it’s quite different from, from the Japanese way of life...*

In a similar way, Liam Barclay’s mother Margaret also makes no mention of specific aspects of the British culture that she wishes to pass on to her grandchildren, emphasising instead the Scottish Highland culture:

*The landscape, I think... mountains, I like, and um, I like the Highland Dancing, and um — crumbs... I have a wee cottage up in the Highlands... I would like them to come up and enjoy the life there because I feel life in the Highlands is like a different country, people are more polite and um, they have time to do things, and you exist up there, and sometimes in the city, I have to pinch myself and think, “Am I a ghost? Do I really exist?” No one has time for anyone else, and it’s um, a very*

*cut-throat existence in the city, whereas in the Highlands, it's different because there are fewer people, people have more time for each other.*

Like Margaret, several Scottish kin spoke about hopes of sharing the Highland culture with their grandchildren. Furthermore, several Scottish kin also emphasised the importance of family, including Adam McLeod's cousin's wife Mary:

*Doesn't matter where you go in the world, Scottish people are always accepted. And being Scottish is different from being English! You know, although we speak the same language, we are more friendlier, more approachable ... caring, family-oriented... we've got big extended families... You know, and so-and-so's coming, and — say my mum phoned, but youse are coming down, and my sister says, "I'm going to come down in 10 minutes." I'd say, "Well, there's people down, but if you want to come, come." ... I would like that encouraged, for my nephew to know extended family and how important family is...*

While the British kin shared values that tend to transcend culture as well as specific aspects of their culture that they want to pass on to the mixed children, the importance of family was most frequently mentioned. On the other hand, the Japanese kin were somewhat more abstract in their answers. Junko McLeod's mother Mrs Tanaka, for example, says she would like to pass on to her grandson the *complexity* of the Japanese culture:

*... but what I'm aiming for — as a grandmother what I'm aiming for is "The soul of a three year old until one hundred." That's it. That feeling that, this seems really familiar, I wonder what it is, if he can think like that... In the Japanese culture, this idea of building upon — are you familiar with a Japanese bedroom? In a very simple space, you throw in a complex thing, that's what I want to pass on. It might seem like a simple space, but it's actually very complex, that's the kind of culture I want him to understand.*

The kind of culture Mrs Tanaka describes is difficult for non-natives to grasp, particularly because of linguistic and cultural barriers. Yet behind the linguistic and cultural differences, Mrs Tanaka is emphasising the aspect of Japanese culture that is "uniquely unique": fundamentally and qualitatively different" (Sugimoto 2014, p192). At the same time, ideas of maintaining a young soul, of creating complexity in simple spaces, can also be thought of as more universal ideas, as opposed to something specifically Japanese. Thus, we return to the complicated idea of

'national culture.' What is important in this case though is that Mrs Tanaka will teach her grandson these aspects of life, as part of the Japanese culture. Thus, her grandson will learn about such universal ideas through a Japanese perspective, through his grandmother, and in this way, the intergenerational transmission of culture will occur. However, even if the extended family members overcome cultural barriers, language will continue to stand in the way because, as discussed in chapter three, there are very few equilingual individuals (cf Saunders 1988). This, therefore, is what Hiroko Walker's sister Tomoko Suzuki worries about:

*"Sharing your culture" — that's a hard question... How can I explain sharing a culture...? Not only with words, but with the five senses, seeing, hearing, sensing, that's the way I think culture is shared and passed on. So if culture is shared through words, then it's going to be difficult...*

Language therefore can affect, not only communication, but also the transmission of culture, particularly in the mixed families, because of the geographic distance and the important role that language thus assumes.

### **Conclusions**

The focus of this chapter has been on the kin of mixed families, and what we find is that the relationships between the parents in the mixed families and their families of origin can indeed influence later relationships, including relationships between partners and in-laws, as well as children and grandparents (McCarthy and Edwards 2011). In addition, we find that relationships with kin can be particularly important for mixed children because, as Waters (1990, p102) suggests, children's cultural and ethnic socialisation is not as strong in mixed homes, since the parents are attempting to pass on two different cultures. As such, cultural and ethnic reinforcement and support from kin becomes important. Yet familial relationships with kin can be complicated, and there are no exceptions for mixed families.

While literature surrounding kin has tended to emphasise a matrilineal bias (e.g. Fischer 1983, Monserud 2008, Sweetser 1963), we find that, for the most part, the Japanese/British families contradict this idea of a matrilineal bias, and if anything,

there seems to be a patrilineal bias. This should, however, not be too surprising because, as Yamamoto (2010) found, Japanese men and women who marry internationally were *internationally-minded* prior to meeting their foreign partners. As a result, perhaps the Japanese women in the study were what Mason (1999) refers to as “distant thinkers”: migrants who are autonomous actors and do not need local connections, including kin. At the same time, we must also consider that, in Confucian cultures, women tend to identify as part of their husband’s family after marriage. If we thus consider who the Japanese women are and their cultural upbringing which places different expectations on married women, then perhaps it is not surprising that several of the women in the study do not maintain close ties to their families in Japan. At the same time, for the women who do have close relationships with their families in Japan, being part of a transnational family can be extremely difficult, and the British men may feel some responsibility for having “taken” their Japanese wives away from their home. This, in turn may cause some British men to become more involved in different aspects of kinkeeping and encourage their wives to stay in touch with their Japanese kin, for their sake as well as their children’s.

Regarding this sharing of culture, we find that in general, while the parents in mixed families do indeed enlist the help of both sides of kin, the parents are ultimately responsible for the upbringing of bicultural, bilingual children, and as such, for the transmission of culture. This is particularly true as several extended family members actually hesitate sharing their cultures with the mixed children, not wanting to “push” or “force” their cultures on the mixed children. As such, the degree of support that that kin offer the parents in mixed family, regarding the transmission of culture, may be limited, and seems dependent on the children actually choosing to ask their extended family to share their respective cultures with them. This is a very interesting point because it shows that the existence of a mixed grandchild/niece/nephew forces extended family members to examine their own behaviour. In other words, if the mixed children were not half Japanese, would the Scottish grandparents have thought twice about taking their Scottish grandchildren to the Highlands and introducing them to the culture there, or would they have

simply assumed that it was the “normal” thing to do as it was the grandchild’s cultural heritage? As such, in a similar way to Twine’s (2010, p216) argument, that relating to mixed children can somehow racialise the grandparents, we find that attending to “Japanese” or “British” grandchildren in turn can make the grandparents more Japanese and British. By definition, therefore, there is a different relationship here. Another complexity that surfaces in this discussion on the mixed families’ role in the transmission of culture is, as has been previously raised, the idea of ‘national culture’ and how culture cannot be neatly be equated to a country.

In this study, we find parents attempting to raise bicultural, bilingual children. In order to accomplish this, most parents realise that, although not essential, extended family members can be of great assistance and support in sharing their respective cultures with the mixed children. Interestingly, while the Japanese kin may play a more important role in the transmission of culture in the mixed children’s lives, the British kin, mostly due to proximity, will probably continue to play a more important role in the mixed children’s everyday lives, as they actively do mixed family. In conclusion, relationships between the mixed families and their kin are affected by various factors, including parents’ relationship with their family of orientation, their partners’ relationship with the in-laws, the arrival of the mixed children and their relationships with extended family members, as well as more practical factors such as geographic distance. In the midst of all these factors, however, another detail that influences intergenerational relationships is choice. Initially, the parents’ choices in regard to maintaining contact with their kin, and later on, the children’s own choice, and whether they choose to view having a transnational, intergenerational, interlingual mixed family and maintaining contact with them a *gift* or a *burden*.

## Chapter Five

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### *Forming a Mixed Family Culture: In Search of Home and Friends*

#### **Overview**

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the sharing and transmitting of “culture,” including values, interests, and preferences, occurs between parents and children, as well as between kin and children, through everyday lived culture, language choices, food habits, and simply by spending time with one another. Yet in a somewhat similar manner to the myth that children in interlingual families “naturally and spontaneously” become bilingual (Yamamoto 2001, p1), neither do children in mixed families “naturally and spontaneously” become bicultural. Instead, becoming bicultural is a consequence of much “invisible work” (Okita 2002) and negotiation on the part of the parents, along with the mixed children themselves, and often with the support of extended family. While such experiences may be stressful at times, Yabuki (2009) argues that difficulties within the marriage and in finding common ground as parents should be classified as a normal part of constructing a *new family culture*. In this chapter, we therefore continue exploring this forging of the mixed family culture, specifically looking at two areas that tend to influence a family: 1) the search for home, from the parents’ migration experiences to the family’s present residential location, and 2) the search for friends in their local community, both individually and as a family.

The chapter begins with an exploration of the migration journeys of the mixed couples, as this inevitably affects the mixed family, since each partner brings with them their own cultures, habits, and values into which they have been socialised (Yabuki 2009, p77). The migration section thus explores the Japanese women in Britain and, where applicable, the British men in Japan. Additionally, regarding the



family as a whole, we examine their journey to their present residential location. Following this section, we will focus on the mixed families' interaction with the wider community, their social networks, and in particular, the balancing act between *bridging* relationships, "ties to people who are unlike me in some important way" and *bonding* relationships "ties to people who are like me in some important way" (Putnam 2007, p143). In particular, we will see if the Japanese playgroups may be seen as an active resistance to integration, or if the women are simply choosing to associate with those similar to themselves (cf Blieszner and Adams 1992, Britton 2013), or if a third option exists: women seek out similar mothers in order to support them in the transfer of the Japanese language and culture to their mixed children. Finally, while Chambers (2006, p74) found that women "naturally" tend to take on the responsibility of cementing the domestic ties with both their kin and the wider community, in mixed families, we saw that this responsibility of kinkeeping was shared between the couples; we will now see how couples negotiate the responsibilities associated with a wider context of family, overlapping ties of family, kindred, friends, and neighbours, and creating a continuity between work and non-work, home and work, the public and the private (Morgan 1996).

### **Migrating in Search of "Home"**

Social scientists have long been fascinated with migration in general: the push/pull factors that motivate people to leave their home countries and migrate to foreign lands, as well as the degree to which migrants ultimately integrate into the host society. Classical assimilation theories, particularly in the United States, used the migrants' length of time in the host country as an indicator of their degree of assimilation: "Time, or generational status, denotes the processes of learning the English language, acquiring labour market skills, establishing contact with other social groups, especially the dominant group in society, adopting American ways, and ultimately becoming American" (Zhou 2005, p132). In Britain, research has tended to avoid speaking of assimilation (e.g. Anwar 1979, Song 2009), and particularly from the mid-1960s, there seems to have been an emphasis on a *multicultural society* or *ethnic pluralism*, "with different groups co-existing but retaining their independent cultural identities" (Ager and Strang 2008, p174).

Migration is particularly important to include in a study surrounding mixed families because, as Brahic (2013, p700) suggests, we find an intersection between migration studies and mixed families as we study how *intermarriage* can be used as a form of social integration on the part of the foreign partner initially, and consequently, the mixed children as well.

### ***Marriage Migrants***

Marriage with an individual from the host country, until recently, was one of the most obvious indications of fully integrated migrants (Alba and Nee 2003) because it indicated integration into all areas of the new country. More recently, marriage with an individual from the host country has been seen as a “‘good’ thing — an indicator of a minority group’s success and social acceptance” (Song 2009, p333). At the same time, ethnic competition theorists argue that the very idea that migrants become integrated by marrying someone from the dominant society does not mean that the minority spouse loses their ethnic identity; on the contrary, the minority spouse’s “racial awareness may be heightened because of their direct contact with members of the mainstream society” (Song 2009, p340). This is somewhat in line with what Jones and Shen (2008, p20) found, that while international marriages may provide new opportunities, they also create new inequalities, particularly in Asian societies, which still tend to be more homogenous when compared to more pluralistic societies such as Britain. This is especially true for migrant spouses who face prejudice in their partner’s home country, which tends to result in one of two types of reaction, as Branscombe and colleagues (1999) suggest: a direct, negative reaction, or an indirect, positive reaction that suppresses the discrimination by identifying more closely with the minority community.

While a migrant who marries an individual from the host society may be perceived as fully integrated; the experience of the *spousal migrant* is somewhat different because for them, instead of marriage being an outcome of integration, marriage often preceded migration, and often being “distant-thinking” (Mason 1999) and “internationally-minded” (Yamamoto 2010) further preceded marriage. In other words, such individuals may have ended up living abroad regardless of their partner’s nationality. It is therefore somewhat problematic to generalise a marriage

between a migrant and someone from the dominant society as a sign of integration. Furthermore, when a migrant woman gives birth to a child who is part of the host country, how much more does she become integrated into the fabric of the dominant society? Indeed, perhaps a better indicator of a migrant's complete integration into the host society is when they have a mixed child, because in this way, they may potentially become more integrated into all areas of the new country, including family life, although this is obviously not always the case.

Ogbu (1990) differentiates between *voluntary* and *involuntary* migrants, and how this, in turn, influences migrants' degree of integration into the host country. In the present study, although all the Japanese women chose to migrate to Britain, they are somewhat hesitant to fully adopt Britain as their new home. This is somewhat expected because, as Ali (2008, p11) found, acculturation is not a "one-time only" affair, but is continually negotiated, and may vary over the individual's lifetime." This means that, while the Japanese women may have initially been voluntary migrants, choosing to live abroad and experience life in Britain, they later become involuntary migrants, dealing with the challenges that accompany spousal migrants, including negotiating their relations with their spouses, in-laws, the host society, and their families and communities in their homeland (Jones and Shen 2008, p21), as well as trying to raise bilingual, bicultural children.

### **Searching for A Community of Friends**

In our study of mixed families, we have thus far seen the importance of the parents and the family home, as well as kin, in the transmission of culture, yet as McGoldrick, *et al.* (1982, p2) found, culture is also "reinforced by the surrounding community." As such, we explore the mixed families' social networks, defined as "sets of social relationships between people who understand themselves to share specific social ties ... usually involve friendship, advice and information exchange and practical and emotional support" (Britton 2013, p1318). In particular, we explore the migrant mothers' friendships because they do not have their mothers or other relatives nearby and must therefore learn to rely on local ties, including friends and in-laws, to support them and "[combat] loneliness and isolation as well as [provide] practical assistance" (Ryan 2007, p297). In addition, because the Japanese/British

families are part of the dominant society as well as the minority Japanese community, we will discuss what kind of relationships they have with the local community (Yabuki 2009) as well as if they have found a balance between *bridging* relationships and *bonding* relationships (Putnam 2007).

### ***Women's Social Networks***

Moser (1989, p1801) suggests that the neighbourhood is an extension of the domestic arena, of the woman's space. One such space could therefore be considered the playgroups: regular, informal, organised gatherings of parents (usually mothers) and their young children. Such groups are common throughout Britain and tend to be attached to community centres, churches, or other neighbourhood hubs, and as we see in this case, minority communities. Most playgroups meet weekly for a couple of hours, and are usually held in conjunction with the school calendar. According to Mize and Petit's (2010, p1271) study on relationship dynamics in playgroups, playgroups are organised "for the purposes of providing children with social experiences and for providing parents with child-rearing guidance and social support." Along the same lines, Bradshaw, *et al.* (2008, p13) add that such groups provide space and resources for children to play while mothers receive informal support through socialising with other mothers. In addition, playgroups can also be a type of "cultural colony", as Arnberg (1984) found in her study of migrants in Sweden. The migrant mothers there described attending the playgroups in order "to socialise, offer linguistic and psychological support to one another, provide a means of identification with the minority community, and to encourage each other in their child's language development" (Arnberg 1984, p69). Similarly, we will examine what role the playgroups have come to play in the lives of the mothers in the mixed families.

Chambers' (2006, p77) study, which examined friendship networks of women found that, within minority women's friendship networks, particularly the Chinese and South Asian diasporas in Britain, their networks are "influenced by extended kinship networks and ties, especially in urban areas where ethnic minority communities live in close proximity." In this study, the Japanese women do not have extended family close by, neither are they in areas heavily populated by Japanese; as

a result, where (and if) they form friendships and support networks outside the playgroups, particularly with people from the dominant society, will be explored. This is important to consider because mothers are typically more involved than fathers in their children's lives at school, in after-school clubs, and in sports activities, suggesting that mothers are the ones who have the opportunity to be part of influential women-dominated networks (Chambers 2006, p76). However, when considering that the mothers in the present study are somewhat removed from these networks due to linguistic barriers and/or self-segregation, the possible effect of this on their mixed children must be considered. At the same time, we should also consider that perhaps this is an attempt to, in some ways, challenge the Japanese women's maternal competency (cf Twine 2010) due to their lack of involvement in influential women-dominated networks because we must also take into account that such school-related participation by the mothers, although central during a child's school years, will most likely lose importance as the child grows older.

### ***Men's Social Networks***

In his research of "third places," Oldenburg (1989, p22) explains that places such as bars, coffeehouses, taverns, beer gardens, and other such neutral grounds where "individuals may come and go as they please, in which none are required to play host, and in which all feel at home and comfortable" are necessary for individuals to develop relationships with others. While *home* is the first place and *work* is the second place, this idea of the *third place* is crucial, particularly for men, because not only is it where they find their own space, but it is also where they are able to bond with other men. In this sense, although most of the women have no second place since the majority do not work outside the home, they have found a pseudo-third place in the playgroups. Men, however, particularly heterosexual married men, seem to rely on their female partners for emotional support. As such, while the Japanese women in this study openly share that they need their Japanese friends to empathise with them and support them, we will see if the men also seek friends for emotional support. In particular, we will see whether the British men, like their wives, value friendships with those in similar situations (cf Bauer 2010, Caballero 2010), specifically men in mixed marriages and families.

### ***The Mixed Family's Social Networks***

Within the childhood home, we find, among other things, future expectations being established: “what we — as men or women — might expect to do in our own homes stems to a considerable extent from our childhood” (Gershuny, *et al.* 2005, p657). As the mixed children grow older though, they naturally become more influenced by those outside the immediate family, particularly friends and peers. This seems to be a constant challenge for migrant parent(s) who are attempting to transmit their culture to their children while living in a foreign land, and this is precisely where ethnic communities can prove helpful:

*Immigrant families living in isolation may find it hard to instil proper values and expectations in children. However, when the ethnic community in which families are embedded also insists on consistent values, standards, and expectations and is organised in such a way that it offers support and control, these families are in a better position to guide their children (Zhou 2005, p152).*

This idea of transmitting culture with the support of others who belong to the same minority community, in the case of the migrant family, can positively affect the children since the minority community can assist parents in passing on their specific cultural values and traditions, particularly regarding academic achievement (e.g. Bankston and Zhou 1995) and language literacy (e.g. Oriyama 2011). The migrant, migrant family's ties with the migrant parent's minority community however is more complicated. It particularly becomes difficult when we consider that parents in mixed families often begin expressing pride in their cultural heritage and identifying more closely with their cultural group when they have children and begin considering the intergenerational transmission of culture (Katz 1996, Waters 1990). Nevertheless, as the mixed children will be exposed to the dominant culture simply by living in Britain, it may be more important for mixed families to emphasise being involved in the Japanese community, among people with a shared cultural background, as well as the Japanese/British mixed community, among families similar to their own, as it may protect them from rejection and give them the “opportunity to develop racial self-esteem through a sense of belonging to their own ethnic group” (Wilson 1987, p114). Regardless, the family's choice of friends requires negotiation and a joint decision between all members of the family.

As societies become more diverse and pluralistic, migrant families are “transforming the host societies even as those host societies transform the migrants and their children” (Sanders 2002, p334). The way in which this two-way street works between migrant families and individuals from the host society seems straightforward, but how this works when the dominant and minority cultures are represented within one family can be more complicated because essentially, it is happening on the micro level in the everyday lives of the mixed families. Yabuki (2009, p78), in her study of mixed families in Japan, a stereotypically homogenous society, explored mixed families’ relationships with their local community and identified three possibilities: 1) the first type have close relations with their local community, and their family culture is very similar to that of the dominant society; 2) the second type have close relations with their local community, but equally share their migrant/ minority family culture with the local community; and 3) the third type have high boundaries with the local community and hold a very different family culture to that of the dominant society. Yet there is no essentialism to how families relate to their local community, and the dominant society’s influence on the local community must also be noted. For this reason, we focus on individual agency as we explore how the individual mixed family members choose their friends within the local community.

### ***Finding “Home”***

In order to explore the formation of mixed families and their mixed family culture (Yabuki 2009), we begin by discussing the families’ search for a home. The first two sections focus on the parents’ migration stories, and then the third section explores how the parents decided on a place to call “home” for themselves and their children.

### ***Reasons Behind Migration***

In the present study, six of the British men have never migrated, while the other six have temporarily migrated to Japan: three to teach English, two (initially) to further their education, and one to work. The migration journeys of the Japanese women, on the other hand, differ somewhat with five migrating (initially) as students (three

enrolling in English language courses and two at universities), and the remaining seven as spousal migrants.

Although half of the British men have been migrants to Japan, none of the British men went to Japan specifically as a spousal migrant. On the contrary, the migration journeys of the British men to Japan highlight the push factors of migration, as Andrew Clark explains:

*I was doing several things: self-employed, working there, and I was also um, sort of producing artwork, but I kind of hit a dead-end with them, and I thought, I need to do something interesting, so I went to Japan to study...*

In a somewhat similar situation, Tim Paterson credits a need for change as his push factor for moving to Japan:

*I never really thought about what I wanted to do after I finished university, so I graduated and looked for a job, and I found a job... I worked there for a year, but I didn't like it... it was really tiring. So I changed jobs... And while I was working there, one of my trainees was a woman who had been teaching in Japan, and she recommended going to Japan, because I was looking for a change of career as well...*

In the stories of the men and their migration experiences, a frequent reason given for migrating to Japan was the desire to work in Japan and experience life overseas, while also escaping their everyday lives that seemed somewhat boring. While none of the men went to Japan as a spousal migrant, several met their future wives while living in Japan. This further problematises the idea of marriage with an individual from the dominant society indicating full integration (Alba and Nee 2003) because after marrying their Japanese brides, the British men, instead of making Japan their permanent home, actually chose to leave Japan and take their Japanese wives back "home" to Britain.

Thus, for the Japanese women, although some migrated as a result of pull factors, including the opportunity to live abroad, learn the English language, and be close to the British and Scottish music scene, most migrated because of their commitment to their British husbands. Hiroko Walker shares her migration pull factor:



*[My husband], by the time, he started a bit tired, or I don't know, started looking for another opportunities in his career, and then so he was looking for a job, I knew that. And then, also he's got a couple of interviews, oh maybe in [Japan] or — but anyway, he's got opportunities to — he's got job interview, which has, is very surprise for me, but uh, ok! And he came Edinburgh to interview and uh, still not sure whether he's going to get job or not, but anyway, he got job. By that time, I'm quite ready to go anywhere, with him — I'm not sure whether — how he felt, but uh, then, when he decided to go back to UK, it's uh — he'd been away for a while, so it made sense for me as well, um, and then, at the time, I was living in Tokyo. And Tokyo, I didn't feel Tokyo is my place either — I can go anywhere, and so I said, "Yeah, I'll come with you."*

Thus, while some of the Japanese women may have initially migrated for various reasons, ultimately, after the women entered into committed relationships with their British partners, the main migration pull factor became keeping their families intact. The Japanese women may thus be described as having transitioned from *voluntary* to *involuntary* migrants (Ogbu 1990), which in turn may have also influenced their experiences as migrants.

### ***Migration Experiences***

In the same way that the mixed couples' reasons for migrating are diverse, so too are their experiences of living in a foreign country. The migration experiences that parents in mixed, migrant families often experience are important to explore because this tends to influence where they choose to live as a mixed family, as well as their forging of a mixed family culture. According to the stories of the British men in the present study, it seems that their reception in Japan was somewhat unexpected. While seemingly positive on the surface level, some men describe their time in Japan as a period tainted with subtle discrimination, as Stuart MacFarlane describes:

*I only really encountered [discrimination] in Japan in a very kind of benign way of, you know, people being extraordinarily helpful and complimentary to you if you spoke Japanese and if you could um, use chopsticks and things like that.*

On the other hand, others seemed to enjoy the extra attention and compliments received in Japan, as Colin Hamilton explains:

*I find Japan, for me particularly, it's more interesting, more interesting things happen, there's more opportunities, maybe not if you're Japanese, but if you're a Japanese-speaking gaijin, it's much more interesting, your everyday is more interesting.*

While both Stuart and Colin seem to have had mostly positive experiences in Japan, their time in Japan, like the other British men, was always only temporary. As a result, their opinions may have changed had they lived there on a permanent basis, as their Japanese wives do in Britain.

One important struggle that many Japanese women shared from their migration journeys was a lack of acceptance into the dominant society, even though they are married to British men and have half-British children. For example, one Japanese woman shared that a delivery driver was very rude and curt with her, but when her British husband poked his head out the front door, the driver was shocked and suddenly became polite and respectful. It should be noted, however, that the Japanese women did not mention any concern regarding racism towards themselves or their children.

Finally, while the British men are not *migrants* in Britain, for those who have resided in Japan for several years, like Andrew Hamilton, there can be a bit of culture shock upon their return to Britain. Here, Andrew, who has lived in Japan for nearly a decade, and has been back in Britain for a couple of years elaborates:

*... in Japan, people are very, very conscious of giving you a good service and supplying what they say they will do. In this country, it's much more lax, this idea of service, this idea of standards is much more lax. For me to come back to it is actually quite difficult, you know, I get — on more than one occasion I've got quite annoyed with how I've been treated and thought, "Oh, well, this wouldn't happen in Japan."*

Andrew's comment regarding Japanese customer service is revealing because, on one level, having lived in Japan for so long, he is knowledgeable of the Japanese culture. On another level, his preference for aspects of Japanese culture, such as customer service, is somewhat problematic if we see each parent directly passing on

their own cultures to the mixed children. Thus, once again, we encounter the complexity of 'national culture' in the Japanese/British families, with the parent of the opposite culture transmitting and sharing aspects of their partner's cultural heritage with the mixed children

### ***There's No Place Like Home***

For the Japanese/British couples, whether they reside in Britain or Japan, one partner is always a migrant. Further, while husbands' earning power was indeed found to be a major factor in deciding where to live (Yamamoto 2010), other factors influencing the mixed families' decision to reside in Britain included their wives being somewhat bilingual, the superior British educational system, and the pluralistic, multicultural British society.

Among the twelve families, only two families have lived in Japan. While many have expressed a desire to experience living in Japan as a family, one of the most common obstacles that stood in the way of these families moving to Japan was the British man's lack of fluency in the Japanese language, which affected his earning potential. Adam McLeod shares how he and his wife decided to live in Britain soon after they decided to get married:

*I think we had briefly just talked about it, we did consider whether I could go over to Japan, and I thought about it, but I thought you know, it would probably be better if she came over here ... we talked about her job and my job, and my job was quite secure and there's potential for promotion and stuff like that. And because Junko speaks two languages, it might be easier for her to get a job here than for me in Japan. ... You know, the financial security, if we started a family, what would be better. Obviously, with my almost non-existent Japanese language skills, it would be more of a problem with me going over to Japan...*

Ironically, even though families can decide to live somewhere, sometimes factors such as immigration stand in the way of their plans. For example, after spending their first four years as a family in Britain, the McLeods are now in the process of moving away from Britain since Junko was denied an extension to her spousal visa because of an error in her application form. She was then asked to leave the country immediately or face deportation and a five-year ban from entering Britain. While the

McLeods attempted to fight this case, they were unsuccessful, and Junko returned to Japan with her two children while Adam continues trying to find a solution to staying in his homeland with his family. Having read through the lengthy application form (FLR(M) 2015) that migrant spouses must fill out in order to stay in the UK indefinitely, the challenges that mixed, migrant families face becomes apparent. In the application form, for example, among other things, are questions regarding the couples relationship (e.g. "What language(s) do you and your [spouse] use to communicate?", as well as required evidence of the couple sharing a residence by providing correspondence addressed to both partners). In addition, there are also financial and English language requirements, as well as having to pass the "Life in the UK" Test. The McGregors described their experience during one a dinner observation:

*We then begin talking about immigration issues, and I ask Mum about her experience when coming to this country. She says she has Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) status, but she's still a Japanese citizen. In order to get her ILR, however, she had to fill in lots of "detailed" — she looks to Dad and asks him how to say "detailed?" He thinks she means "deteriorated". She finally says it in Japanese: kuwashii. He says, "Oh, detailed." In order to be granted ILR, besides the high price, there is also the exam on British history and politics and the English language. She said it wasn't too hard, but you definitely have to study for the exam. Dad says it's quite discriminatory, because fortunately, Mum had strong English language skills and the time to study for the exam, but he argued that even he didn't know some of the answers to some of the questions, and that a lot of people from more disadvantaged situations wouldn't be able to pass because they don't have time to study, and/or their English language skills aren't that great.*

Nonetheless, dealing with immigration and visas is an inevitable part of the migrant, mixed family, and the McLeods' story is now notorious in the Japanese community in Edinburgh, emphasising that, even though the Japanese women are married to British men, there is no guarantee that they will be free of immigration troubles, and even when immigration is straightforward, there still remain the high fees that the couples must pay each time they attempt to lengthen the migrant spouse's stay in the UK.

There again, because all of the participants retain their own nationality they are able to, for the most part, live in either Japan or Britain. Four of the couples met and lived in Japan. Thus, the British men had already experienced living and working in Japan, and the men's job potential was less of a concern. Nonetheless, before their children were born, two couples decided that they wanted to live in Britain as a family, for various reasons. Here, Stuart MacFarlane explains why he believes Britain is the ideal place for his mixed family:

*... looking in the long run — the, the problem I always thought about in Japan and living there and raising children was that — at least here you had a multicultural society, and um, there — and I knew [my wife] would fit in better to that here, than I would ever fit into Japanese society. I'd always be something of an outsider — no matter how many years I lived there, it would always be, "That's amazing you can use chopsticks!" and "Oh, you can speak Japanese!" and things like that.*

The assumption that Stuart makes, that his wife will "fit in" to British society, seems somewhat naive because the MacFarlanes are a mixed couple, and at least one partner will most likely always be a migrant. Who takes on this role of spousal migrant and "sacrifices" living in their homeland is consequently what seems to determine where the mixed family will live, in addition to the more practical factor, which surrounds the husband's earning potential. Yet because of their strong sense of responsibility to fulfil familial obligations (cf Takeda 2012) back in their homeland, many of the Japanese women see their time in Britain as temporary and envision returning to Japan one day, as Ayaka MacFarlane explains:

*Yes, my husband used to say, maybe we can move back after 10 years or something like that, but at the moment, it's after 10 years, and it's getting — not yet easy — how can I say? My husband seems to have settled his work, just now, and um, so — but probably he's still saying, in the future, when my parents get old...*

As Ayaka's quote suggests, this is a contentious and difficult process that has no easy solution and instead further complicates the families' search for home. In the above case, while Ayaka and her husband Stuart may consider returning to Japan when Ayaka's parents are older and Stuart is closer to retirement, there is no mention of the children. While this sense of returning to Japan is somewhat similar to Anwar's (1979) "myth of return," it is also different because one of the partners is

from Britain. Thus there is no “Joint Myth”: the Japanese woman and the British man cannot both return to their “home” as long as they remain together because it is their commitment to one another that requires one or both of them to give up their homeland. At the same time, perhaps this is not always seen as a “sacrifice.” In other words, because individuals who enter international marriages tend to be “internationally-minded” (Yamamoto 2010) to begin with, the partner living in their homeland may actually desire to live abroad, as Risa McGregor put it,

*I don't want to go back to Aomori! ... I'm very lucky being here, being Scotland, Edinburgh, it's a beautiful place ... this house is 110 years old, and then we can still live here — it won't be happen in Japan. And you know, um, people know how to relax, you know? It's uh, that's Japanese people forgot... But yeah, I'm quite lucky and you know, I like here.*

This also seems to happen the other way around. For example, Lewis and Setsuko Potter have always resided in Britain, yet as Lewis explains below, he seems to hold on to what I shall refer to as a “Myth of Cosmopolitanism”:

*Certainly in the future, I see myself living in Japan, yeah. Maybe once the kids are grown up or — I have this great idea that I'll live 6 months in Japan, and 6 months in Scotland. I'm not good with heat, just — I've never really experienced a Japanese summer yet. I've been in Japan, I think the latest — well, the middle of June and the beginning of September, so I've never been in Japan in July or August, which is — that would be — I would be living in the shopping malls all the time, with the air conditioner, so we'd have to work on that one. It would be a case of being — living in Japan in the winter and Scotland in the summer. That's my dream.*

This Myth of Cosmopolitanism thus describes the parents in mixed families who want the apparently “glamorous” cosmopolitan lifestyle with frequent trips abroad and a transnational family, basically what their mixed children were born into. Interestingly, while Lewis shares his dream scenario of living in Japan in the winter, and Scotland in the summer, he, like Ayaka makes no mention of the children, assuming perhaps that they will remain in Britain. This further complicates the mixed families’ search for a “home” because, if the parents themselves do eventually “return” to Japan, where will the *jikka* of the mixed children become as their nuclear family transitions into a transnational family? Whether or not the couples or families are able to return to Japan is also dependent on immigration

laws, but the fact that all of the Japanese women still maintain their Japanese citizenship and refuse to renounce their Japanese citizenship in order to become British citizens may be further proof of this “Myth of Return,” or it may simply be their desire to maintain their identity, as Junko McLeod explains:

*I don't think I'm going to give [my Japanese citizenship] away or change to British one. Yeah, my mum thought when I'm getting to married to British, she thought I'm going to be British, so she actually could be, had really big tears. When I told my mum no, I'm going to be Japanese, and will die as Japanese. And it's kind of my originality and identity, that's what I am, who I am. It's a part of myself, so can't really give it away.*

It is interesting to note here that, although I did not specifically ask about citizenship, almost all of the women proudly informed me that they were still Japanese citizens, and there were also several mentions, particularly by the Japanese women and the Japanese kin, of the children's dual-nationality status. In Japan, children born to one Japanese parent are allowed to have dual citizenship if their Japanese parent registers their birth with the Japanese Consulate within three months. Then, when they turn 22 years old, the children decide whether or not they want to maintain their Japanese nationality<sup>31</sup>. While the majority of the mixed children in the study have both a Japanese and a British passport, Fumiko Miller shared that she chose not to give her children Japanese nationality:

*No Japanese citizenship ... they're recognised in Japan, under my name. But nothing, it just shows that they are mixed, nothing else. I don't know — as long as they've only got British passports. Not really, not really [important to me]. I thought it would bother me, but no. <laughs>*

While Fumiko does not seem to mind that her children are not Japanese nationals, for most of the parents and Japanese kin, this was extremely important, as Kikuko Paterson's mother Masako Ishihara shares:

*My granddaughter actually has Japanese citizenship, too, my granddaughter and my daughter both still have residency in Japan. So just in case something happens,*

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<sup>31</sup> All information regarding Japanese nationality was obtained by personal communication with the Consulate-General of Japan in Los Angeles.

*they can come back. If they moved everything over there, I would be a bit sad. So they still have their Japanese citizenship.*

This possibility of returning to Japan is yet again very different from the “myth of return” because this “possibility of return” is more about security. By maintaining their Japanese citizenship, the Japanese women know that “if something happens,” they can return to Japan with their children and live there as Japanese citizens. At the same time, this also means that, while they are living abroad in Britain, they do not enjoy certain rights that British citizens have, such as the ability to travel and live freely within the European Union and the right to vote in local and national elections. For example, Setsuko Potter shared with me that she would very much like to become more involved in her local community, particularly by having her voice heard in local elections. Yet she feels caught in the middle because her children are presently Japanese nationals; however, if she renounces her Japanese nationality, they would lose their Japanese nationality as well.

This is a very interesting dilemma because parents have a strong desire to give their children Japanese nationality by birth and some, like Setsuko are even sacrificing voting rights, an important form of integration into British society, in order to maintain their children’s nationality. Yet most likely, the mixed children, particularly if they continue living in Britain, will choose to renounce their Japanese citizenship anyway. Further, even if they choose to become Japanese nationals when they turn 22, if they are not fluent in the Japanese language, as one employee at the Consulate-General of Japan in Los Angeles [personal communication] honestly put it, *“There’s really no point in becoming a Japanese national because, even though there’s no language requirement, you can’t really do much in Japan if you don’t speak the language.”* In this way, we see that Japanese citizenship in and of itself does not guarantee that a child will be “Japanese”; yet neither does British citizenship guarantee that one will be “British”; instead, other aspects (e.g. language and food) also contribute to the mixed children’s identity.



Finally, regarding the families' present choice of residential location, it seems that, unlike language and food, this is a decision that does not seem to involve the children or the parents' desire to raise bicultural, bilingual children. Instead, this decision is more affected by the parents themselves, particularly the father as the breadwinner (Yamamoto 2010), the parents' language abilities, the educational systems, the society's multicultural feel, and perhaps most importantly, which parent is willing to "sacrifice" and migrate to a new home. As such, the migration experiences of the parents in the mixed families, as well as the negotiations surrounding choice of residential location, provide us with a backdrop for understanding the necessary role of migration in Japanese/British families and in turn, how such experiences form the foundation of the family's culture (Yabuki 2009, p77). Once somewhat settled in their new homes, the families now must venture outside the home and into the local community, through different outlets such as work, school, or playgroups, in search of friends.

### **Finding Friends in their New Home**

In this section, we focus on the mixed families' interaction with the wider community, their social networks, and how they, particularly the Japanese women, balance bridging relationships and bonding relationships (Putnam 2007). Further, using Yabuki's (2009) three types of relationships with the local community, we will see if the mixed families tend to have closer relationships with individuals from the dominant society, the minority community, or both. This, in turn, will allow us to better understand whether friends play a role in the transmission of culture in mixed families.

### **The Mother's Social Network**

During an individual's lifetime, social networks can shift, particularly when women become mothers (cf Maehara 2010), and perhaps more so for migrant mothers (cf Ryan 2007). One such network that many new mothers discover is playgroups. From my interviews and observations, it does not seem as if the Japanese mothers are attending playgroups primarily in order to help their children learn to socialise (Mize and Petit 2010); instead, Japanese mothers seem to be attending the Japanese

playgroups to socialise with other Japanese women, and to find support with other parents who are also attempting to raise bicultural, bilingual children (cf Arnberg 1984). Further, as (Caballero 2010, p36) found, networks such as playgroups, besides providing resources for parents and cultural knowledge for the children, can also provide mothers with a sense of identity and belonging.

During the interviews with the mixed couples, I asked the parents about playgroups that they attend/attended with their children. Two of the Japanese women attend non-Japanese playgroups. One of these women is Yuzuki Barclay, who has lived in Britain for about five years. She attends one local English-speaking playgroup, but only because another Japanese woman accompanies her:

*There's one Japanese lady, she's got two children, and she lives nearby, and we go to the same group and we're chatting in Japanese most of the time!*

Hiroko Walker, on the other hand, admits that she wants more opportunities to speak English, especially since her husband is fluent in Japanese. She thus attends a different English-speaking playgroup almost every day of the week apart from Fridays, which are reserved for the Japanese playgroups. Here, she talks about her desire for a more diverse group of friends, but also her continual need for Japanese friends:

*... maybe because I don't work outside, and just wherever I go is some playgroups, so [my friends are] Scottish and English and yeah ... I'd like to have more international friends because they you know, can understand our situation or what's the issue or — and also it's very interesting to talk to those international people ... [But my Japanese friends], yeah, probably makes me feel better or comfortable!*

The majority of the Japanese women in the present study, however, exclusively attend Japanese playgroups, perhaps as a way to deal with social racism (Bauer 2010, p224) or simply because they see such places as safe. Kikuko Paterson shares her thoughts regarding playgroups:

*I've never been to other like English playgroup. I've never been to. Actually, I don't know where they held, maybe I can research, but I'm lazy. Yeah. I don't know, but — if I go to English playgroup, my English is probably not well, and I think — I don't*

*know, like some of my friends, Japanese friends, went to English playgroup and then they — she need to speak in front of other people, like speech, so I'm a bit scared.*

Kikuko is not alone in being somewhat scared of attending English playgroups. As a result of this, as well as needing support in passing on Japanese cultural traditions to their mixed children, particularly regarding language literacy (Oriyama 2011), a handful of Japanese women in Edinburgh began organising playgroups in their own homes more than a decade ago. Setsuko Potter fondly recalls these days:

*We have — when [my son] was little, we didn't have so many Japanese here, just yet, not many. So like, myself and another about three mums, they were all married to Scots, and then they had children of similar age. So that time, we did, once a week — that time there was no Japanese toddlers, and no playgroups, so we were doing at the house. We started meeting at the house, and then going down the house once a week, different houses, and just play together, kind of try use Japanese and things ...*

There are now three formal Japanese playgroups in Edinburgh. They are attended by Japanese women married to British men, and by Japanese women married to Japanese men who are in Britain temporarily. While the Japanese playgroups do indeed offer support for the Japanese women in transmitting different aspects of the Japanese culture to their children, the playgroups are also a space for the Japanese women to socialise with other Japanese women.

Thus, while the Japanese women having predominantly Japanese friends may be seen as an active resistance to integration (cf Branscombe, *et al.* 1999); we see that the women may simply be choosing to associate with other Japanese women who, as Risa McGregor smiles and says, “*I can share, you know, when I was very frustrated with Scottish husband, they understand!*” In addition to issues of homophily and individuals choosing to associate with one another because of their similarities (e.g. Blieszner and Adams 1992, Britton 2013, Schaefer, *et al.* 2011, p1142), in this study, it seems that the Japanese women are choosing their friends in order to be understood, on both a linguistic and emotional level. This is in line with Bauer’s (2010, p226) finding, that people in mixed relationships and families tend to socialise with others who are accepting of their situations, who share common experiences, interests, and political views.

In this way, the Japanese playgroups become a place where similar women gather together, act as a supportive community, allow the women space where they can share the joys and challenges of life with one another, and support them as parents, particularly surrounding mixed parenting (Caballero 2010, p5-6). At the same time though, these relationships are also somewhat responsible for creating distance between themselves and the dominant culture because, as their social needs are being met by their Japanese friends, there is little reason to reach out and find friends in the dominant society (Sanders 2002). As I waited for the bus after one of the playgroups, I wrote the following in my notebook:

*A couple of women from the playgroup walked by me as I waited for the bus... I barely recognised them because they go from being lively and animated and smiling and laughing and loud and talkative in the playgroups to suddenly being uncertain, nervous, and quiet in the outside world, in the streets of Edinburgh. But somehow, they manage. They're thousands of miles away from their homes, but in these playgroups, they find friendship, support, and for at least two hours every other week, they feel normal, they feel confident, they feel at ease...*

While it is obvious that the Japanese women in the playgroups are a close-knit community, there is also a strange sense of *distance*, a lack of deep friendship or what Jamieson (1998) refers to as “disclosing intimacy.” For example, one woman was pregnant, and suddenly stopped attending the playgroups for about three months. Apparently, there had been complications and her new son ended up in a hospital in England. I asked her how she was managing everything, and whether she had help from friends or in-laws. She said she didn't, but had asked her parents in Japan to come and help her. Because the Japanese women are geographically separated from their families, it would seem that perhaps some of the Japanese women would have been more willing to offer practical assistance to this mother, but perhaps this is one type of help reserved for family, sometimes requiring, “at least temporarily, relatives' geographical relocation” (Ryan *et al.* 2008, p684).

Another such incident occurred when one mother emailed me, on the day of a dinner observation that we had scheduled in advance, saying that her son had a

fever and had been hospitalised, and she would thus have to cancel on me. She very clearly asked me to *not* tell any of the other Japanese mums about her son being hospitalised. When I offered to watch her younger child while she was in the hospital with her older son, she was extremely grateful and appreciative. This may also suggest that perhaps the “strength” of the relationships, defined by Granovetter (1973, p1361) as a “combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie,” between the Japanese women may be somewhat weak. Again, there may be cultural differences in the degree of intimacy in friendships, but as a participant observer, on several occasions, because several of these women had indeed become my friends, I made offers to help with childcare and other practical forms of support, including help when moving houses. In those cases, the reaction was always initial surprise but then genuine gratitude, with one woman’s eyes actually filling with tears as she said, “*You’re a real friend – thank you.*”

Because of the ethnographic nature of this study and my own participant observation, I hesitate to identify the playgroups as an intimate, supportive community. Even though the women are indeed close to one another, share many similarities, and regularly exchange information, advice and knowledge, they seem to lack “disclosing intimacy” (Jamieson 1998). However, this may be due to a cultural difference, and may simply be that Japanese women are somewhat hesitant when it comes to revealing their inner thoughts and feelings to each other and when offering and receiving support from their friends. During my fieldwork, I did come across smaller cliques outside the playgroups that gather more often, again, it seems that, for the most part, they are also organised mainly for the Japanese women to reminisce about Japan and to support each other in ways that do not overstep boundaries that they themselves have placed, boundaries between the “private” and the “public.” This is not surprising considering *honne* and *tatemae*, Japanese words that describe the dichotomy that permeates through Japanese society between true feelings that people withhold (*honne*) and “a cultural concern by which the Japanese feel forced to act according to what they feel the community expects

from them” (Ishii, *et al.* 2011, p86). In this way, although the women have formed friendships with one another, they may still adhere to *honne tatema*.

Harman’s (2013, p1336) study on the social networks of the mothers of mixed children found women valuing a diverse set of friendships, seeing such friends as another opportunity to bridge social capital, provide a different support from their extended family, while also forming relationships “where trust is developed between members of different social groups.” Britton’s (2013, p1319) study also supports this idea that mothers in mixed families tend to have a greater diversity in their social networks. In the present study however, the Japanese women, regardless of whether or not they migrated before or after marriage, seem somewhat socially disadvantaged as they appear to have some ties with the Japanese community, but practically no ties with the dominant society (with the exception of their husband and in-laws), regardless of how many years they have resided in Britain, attended antenatal classes with local women, and regardless of the fact that they come into contact with their children’s friends’ non-Japanese parents on an almost daily basis.

### ***The Father’s Social Network***

While the women were quick to reply when asked about their social networks, the fathers were somewhat more hesitant. During interviews, several men admitted that their wives (and children) have more active social lives and friends than they do.

Here, Ewan Ross elaborates:

*I would say my wife and son have a far better social life than I do, he’s always out at playgroups or going to the thing at the museum or going to the park and — yeah, Keiko gets to see her other mother friends and their kids quite a lot.*

Further, several men also mentioned their struggle in balancing work, family, and their social lives, as Adam McLeod put it,

*I don’t really have much of a social life, unfortunately, mainly because I myself am so tired when I come home from work, then you know, trying to help around the house and tend to my son...*

During interviews, the British men claimed that they have little time for socialising and maintaining personal ties, yet through triangulation (i.e. my observations of the family and continued conversations with the women at the playgroups), a different image surfaced, as I recounted in my field notes after some reflection:

*In recent conversations with five Japanese women, including three from the present study, I have found that, contrary to their interview responses, the British men do seem to have active social lives. The women have also shared, on different occasions, that their husbands regularly and often are at **nomikai** with their work colleagues. Several times, for example, I overheard conversations between couples, with the men calling to tell their wives that they would be home late. The Japanese women never complained and always simply responded, "Ok, thank you for letting me know. What time will you be home?" And tonight, when my family and another family had dinner together, the British man actually expected me to stay with his wife and children while he and my husband went out for a drink. Is this the norm for British men or are they getting away with shunning fatherly responsibilities because they are married to Japanese women? Do Japanese women put up with more because their expectations of the male fatherly role are different? Most of them admit they grew up with absent fathers who were always at work and at **nomikai**... do they expect the same from their husbands, even though many were attracted to Western men because they are stereotypically seen as more progressive and family-oriented when compared to Japanese men.*

While the Japanese women may have been seeking modern, family-oriented husbands, it could be that the Western men may have been seeking more traditional women, "wives who in exchange for being 'kept' economically will service their needs and that of any children in the domestic sphere in a way that could perhaps not be expected of their country women" (Yamamoto 2010, p8). Further evidence of this strong gender inequity in the mixed marriages is seen when returning to the fact that eleven out of twelve of the participant families have a male breadwinner and a housewife who stays home and fulfils her domestic duties, including cooking, cleaning, and childrearing. While it may be assumed that the Japanese women simply do not want to be in the workforce, only Fumiko Miller actually stated this: "I'm not a career person, uh, always wanted to have a family." For other women, particularly for those who were in work that they enjoyed before marrying and migrating to Britain, there seems to be a continued desire in working outside of the home, but at the same time, because of the consequences of migration and the language barrier, most remain hesitant to join the British workforce. Hiroko Walker,

for example, loved her job back in Japan, but since migrating to Britain, and particularly after having a baby, her prospect of returning to the workforce has become somewhat bleak:

*I really love to work, if I could get a job like which I used to in Japan, if I could get the job, that would be superb. But it's very difficult to get that job in Edinburgh not so many opportunities, and yeah, considering my English-level, it should be very hard to get a job in the UK or in everywhere anyway, so — and also my husband wants me to look after my son, our son, until maybe 5 years or until he goes to primary school, because it's very important time for him, so ... But yeah, sometimes — not sometimes, quite often, I feel like, "Oh! You know, I want to go back to work. I want to work in the office, I sometimes want to enjoy after-five!" But totally different life now ...*

To further complicate matters, while Hiroko's husband Cameron "dreams" of living in Japan once again and having Hiroko work, she does not see this happening as she is from a somewhat rural area and her kin would not approve of a woman-breadwinner household. Thus the employment of the Japanese women, because their mixed families are intertwined with familial ideologies of both Britain and Japan, becomes more complicated. In Britain, with decreasing job security for men and increasing work opportunities for women, as well as more participation from men in domestic tasks, there seems to be what MacInnes (1998, p55) refers to as attitudinal change which favours a move towards 'modern,' egalitarian gender ideologies as opposed to more 'traditional' ones. However, in Japan, there still remains a strong, traditional familial ideology based on the *soto/uchi* divide, yet as Cheal (2002, p25) suggests, change is occurring, but very slowly, particularly when compared to most western societies.

Nonetheless, while the British men's social networks may revolve around their work colleagues, it seems as if the men do rely on the networks of their wives when it comes to socialising as a family. Further, socialising with their wives' friends and their significant others and children is seen more as obligatory, and the men do not seem as receptive to these relationships as they would be to self-initiated friendships. Here, Liam Barclay politely explains how all the British spouses are "nice" and "interesting":



*They're very nice ... the hubbies, [they're] very nice guys. Um, and another girl ... her husband ... they're both a bit older than the other couple so, a bit more — yeah, different personalities, but it's interesting to meet them. Then [my wife] has another friend who is — well, she has some friends mixed and some where both parents are Japanese, so the full Japanese, I don't really know them so well. But yeah, a couple of girls are very, very nice to chat with, and the hubbies, yeah, it's nice, interesting... but yeah, they're nice.*

While this somewhat awkward relationship between Liam and his wife's friends may seem somewhat expected, what makes this situation somewhat more complicated is that, on one end, the Japanese women emphasise the importance of having friendships with other women in mixed marriages/families. As such, do the men not share this need to be able to relate to other men in similar situations, particularly in mixed marriages and families? This then begs the question of whether the situation would be different if the mixed families lived in Japan, and the British men were the migrant spouses: would they then feel the need for friendships with others in similar situations?

Literature surrounding families and their social networks tend to focus on the women's shift in friendships during milestones such as getting married and becoming a mother, yet it seems that such life milestones, particularly related to family formation can also influence the fathers' social ties. In conclusion, the British men's social networks generally seem to be dominated by weak ties with their British work colleagues, with only a few men mentioning friends from their childhood and university days. Further, in line with literature surrounding the maintenance of friends (e.g. Chambers 2006), the British men do not seem to stay in touch with friends from their past in the dominant society. Here, for example, Adam McLeod explains how his social life has transitioned somewhat, with his new role as husband and father:

*Um, I don't really have many close friends ... I probably keep in touch with my older friends who I grew up with or I knew them through work, who have seen me through my career or things like that. Um, we try — I guess we try to stay in touch through streams of social networking, but I don't sign into facebook and things like that — I'm offline — it's one of the things I'm trying to do, is trying to get in touch with my*

*friends more... I just don't have time for friends, which is unfortunate ... I should have a social life ... but there's just no time, and money as well, it makes it difficult. So it's been a bit — last couple of years have been a bit difficult to maintain friends ... keep in contact with friends...*

For both the Japanese women and the British men, it seems that, like most parents with busy schedules, they are not as concerned about maintaining their friendships from the past. Instead, both parents seem more concerned with their friendships in the present, particularly their relationships with kin, other mixed families, and other parents of young children (Bost, *et al.* 2002).

### **Children's Friends**

During the preschool years, the mixed children have little choice in regard to who they socialise with. This period tends to coincide with the time that their Japanese mothers seem to be exposing them almost exclusively to the Japanese community. This is relevant because, children's early friendships can provide children with glimpses of what to expect about inclusion and expectations regarding social groups in the future (Twine 2010, p129). How then are the mixed children, even at that young age, influenced by the Japanese playgroups? Because I did not interview the children directly, I can only rely on my observations and my interviews with their parents. When I asked the parents about their children's experiences at playgroups, most answered positively, but here, Fumiko wonders whether or not her children would choose to attend the Japanese playgroups, if it were not for her:

*I would say [my children] have a couple of Japanese friends, they quite like to socialise with, they recognise each other, obviously. Yeah, I'm quite interested in as well, how much they are aware that they are friends, or they just come, they just come with me because I want to see the mums. I never know.*

When children are able to choose their own friends, it does not seem that they deliberately choose to be friends with other mixed Japanese/British children, although most of their early friendships revolved around this group. Most likely though, as they get older, other Japanese/British mixed children become such a small minority and limit their potential for friends. Thus, the idea of homophily (Kandel 1978) may not directly apply here, but at the same time, the fact that the

mixed children, like most children, are choosing friends who are like them in an everyday sense (same age, in the same school and same location) also supports the argument of homophily because these peers may have more similarities with them than their parents' friends' kids who they only see occasionally and who do not necessarily share a "culture" (i.e. institutions, history, literature, music, heroes, or rituals) (cf Tizard and Phoenix 1993) distinctively "Japanese/British." At the same time, while the mixed children may indeed share more similarities with their local peers, they are still somehow different, as one respondent who is trying to make sense of mixedness shared with me:

*She talked about her son's schooling and how she and her husband are struggling with this. She thinks he can just go to the local state school. She thinks it's good enough, it's where all their neighbours's kids, go and besides, she thinks it will be nice for all the kids to grow up together. But Dad doesn't want this. He said, "Those kids are all just Scottish. Our son's not like them - he's half-Japanese, he's bilingual, he's special."*

This again emphasises that mixed families must make many important decisions, acknowledging that their children are not the norm (in Edinburgh at any rate), but at the same time, trying to create a space for them to feel a sense of *belonging* (Caballero, *et al.* 2008).

### **Family Friends**

As we have seen, finding a social network for the individual members of the mixed families can be a somewhat complicated matter. It would thus appear that the mixed families' friends would naturally be other mixed families, but it seems that these relationships are more complicated. In order to explore the mixed families' friends more closely, we take a look at the Millers and the Hamiltons. These two families and their social networks are focused on because, while they are both mixed Japanese/British families with mothers who maintain strong ties to the Japanese community, their backgrounds differ in that, one woman originally migrated to Britain as a student fifteen years ago and is fluent in English. The other woman migrated to Britain as a spousal migrant, and even after ten years, is still uncomfortable speaking English. Their partners also differ in that one speaks no

Japanese, while the other is fluent in Japanese. As such, we will explore whether or not migration experiences and linguistic abilities affect the families' social networks because this, in turn, may suggest why certain relationships (bridging vs bonding) are more observed than others, and what role, if any, friends can contribute to the forging mixed family culture.

Jim and Fumiko Miller first met at a university in southern England. Fumiko has lived in Britain for almost 20 years, nearly half of her life. The couple have been married for almost a decade and have been in Edinburgh for four years. Jim works full-time, and Fumiko stays home with their three children, ages six, four, and one.

Colin and Chiyoki Hamilton, on the other hand, met in Japan, while Colin was working in Osaka. Chiyoki became pregnant, the couple got married, and Chiyoki migrated to Britain before giving birth. The Hamiltons have now been in Edinburgh for nearly ten years. Colin works full-time and is away on business trips frequently, and Chiyoki stays home with their four children.

In the present study, the mixed couples spoke about their social networks and how different life stages have brought them different groups of friends. Colin, for example, explains that, because his life now centres around his family, it is becoming more difficult to juggle his responsibilities as a father and husband alongside those of maintaining old friendships:

*I'd say most of my friends from Edinburgh, I don't really see them anymore. You know, I find that, even like university friends, I haven't met with university friends in a decade ... and then there's the new employment that I've got. I've only been in this job for what, four years, so there's some friends that I see, pretty much every day, but to be honest, if I left the job, I probably wouldn't keep contact with them.*

Such comments seem universal to all fathers trying to juggle their work and families. Yet while most families have local friends from both parents, the mixed families have a mother who tends to only socialise with other Japanese; as a result, the family relies heavily on the father for links to the dominant society, at least until the children begin making their own friends in the local community. The Japanese

women, including Chiyoki and Fumiko, seem to have built strong social networks during their time in Britain; however, their social networks continue to give preference to Japanese people. In the present study, there were some recent migrants as well as some migrants, like Fumiko, who have spent almost half of their lives abroad. It is interesting to note that, while Ryan and colleagues (2008) found a difference between migrants who eventually develop wider social networks and those who remain in their ethnic communities, the twelve women in the present study continue to prefer their Japanese friends regardless of their time in Britain or whether or not migration preceded marriage.

After having her first child, Chiyoki attempted to participate in playgroups in English and proactively interact with other British mothers in the neighbourhood; yet, as her mother and father-in-law recount, she was somewhat disappointed at the reception she received from the British mothers:

*I don't know if she — I don't think she really felt at home ... in the community ... Something that Chiyoki didn't say to us at the time ... You see, she was taking the oldest, to a nursery, and the other women — I think Chiyoki was expecting to be invited into the Scots homes, due to them being a novelty, and she felt isolated, but she never told us, and I'm very surprised ... I think she found that a bit difficult. Making friends. Now, I — I personally don't think it was because Chiyoki was Japanese, I think it's just — I don't know whether — She felt a bit strange or awkward...*

After feeling isolated by other British mothers, whether they did this deliberately or not, Chiyoki began to gradually choose Japanese friends over British friends. Additionally, while Chiyoki and others migrated to Britain as spousal migrants, and Fumiko and others migrated as single adults to study and travel, the women's degree of integration does not seem to be influenced by this difference, thus further problematising the idea that marriage with an individual from the host society indicates full integration (Alba and Nee 2003).

Fumiko, like Chiyoki, also prefers non-British friends, and this has always been the case. This is in line with Harman (2013, p1338), who finds literature on family and friendship suggest that people tend to emphasise shared values, common interests,

and similarities when choosing what family and friendship relationships to nurture and maintain. One such similarity that Fumiko and Jim shared was their tendency to socialise with the international students at university, as Fumiko herself recounts *“I thought my husband was very — I thought he was very interesting because he was the first person, as a English person, to mix with other international students, it’s a good sign for me...”* Now it seems that Fumiko’s social network has become more exclusive, as she no longer maintains friendships with other foreigners, choosing instead to focus almost exclusively on her Japanese friends. This seems to have coincided with her taking a leadership role at one of the Japanese playgroups, as Fumiko explains:

*Yeah, obviously [I meet my Japanese friends] to, to have a good sort of chat, have a good chat in Japanese ... yeah, it’s good, and then it’s good for the children to listen to Japanese. Often sometimes we have like family friends, but normally just mums get together in the mornings, some mornings to have coffee together and then playgroup.*

Although the Japanese women do indeed come into contact with other mothers from the dominant society, such as the mothers of their children’s friends, they still prefer an almost exclusively Japanese circle of friends. This preference of the Japanese women to socialise more with others from Japan may affect their children, particularly during the early years, when the children are taken to Japanese playgroups and their mothers organise family “playdates” with other Japanese mixed family friends. Yet soon, the children begin to form their own friendships.

### **Shared Friends**

The individual members of the mixed family all have their own friends, their own social networks, yet as a family, they also share some family friends. For most homogenous families, when looking for other families to befriend, considerations of language barriers and cultural sensitivity are not the first things that come to mind. However, mixed, migrant families must often consider such issues, including, “Will everyone be able to communicate?” and “Will the parents and the children be culturally sensitive — but not to a point where it becomes awkward?” As a result, perhaps it is not surprising to find the Japanese women attempting to find other Japanese/British families with which to interact.

For the majority of the mixed families, it seems that the responsibility of finding suitable family friends has been placed on the women. Here, Colin talks about how Chiyoki is generally the one in charge of recruiting family friends and setting up family dates:

*I suppose it's because, in most cases, the man is working, so he's got his work friends, but then his outside of work, it tends to be the woman's relationships, so like with Chiyoki, she's got several female friends, and they'll have a partner, generally, so it might be, let's get together and meet up for a meal, so it's Chiyoki who has almost instigated that friendship between families, and that's why it tends to be Japanese women married to Scottish men, because it's Chiyoki's friendship...*

In the Miller's case, Jim talks about Fumiko being a filter for family friends, opening the door to more culturally-sensitive, open-minded people. This is somewhat reminiscent of Wilson's (1987, p181) discussion of mothers of mixed children being wary of attitudes regarding mixedness when befriending new people, all of which take time and can involve many "sharp disappointments." Thus, Jim does not seem to hesitate when relinquishing the lead of the family's social life to his wife Fumi:

*I mean, I always used to think Fumi was a really good kind of filter for people, in terms of moving to a place and making new friends, because almost certainly some people were — not comfortable with Fumi because she wasn't British, or she doesn't look British ... I think, people who might have a problem with it — don't come close, so it's a — if we're in a new place, obviously you don't want to uh, spend too much time, wasting time with people you're not eventually going to be quite good friends with, and so if you can get rid of all the people who've got a problem about your nationality, that's fine, we can get rid of those people and focus on the people that don't have a problem with it. So in that way, there's a kind of a rapid filter for a lot of idiots!*

While Jim attempts to describe discrimination against Fumi positively, this may be somewhat similar to what one participant in Tizard and Phoenix's study expressed, that mixed marriages can restrict the individual partners' social lives, and perhaps even their family's social network. Nonetheless, the family friends of both the Millers and Hamiltons thus seem to be heavily influenced by the Japanese women. This could be traced back to the fact that both women are homemakers and therefore perhaps have more time to socialise and make friends, as well as the fact

that the women are Japanese and may still conform to the Japanese *soto/uchi* familial model which places the responsibility of all domestic affairs, including social networking, on the women. Yet perhaps most significantly, the parents in the mixed families are all determined to raise bicultural, bilingual children; as a result, perhaps both parents are willing to invest in a more wide Japanese social network, so as to encourage their mixed children to socialise and interact with other Japanese. Finally, family friends are not only influenced by the Japanese women, they are also influenced by the children, developing a complex web of relationships (Schindler 2010, p318), in which individual family members exist together in bidirectional relationships. For example, while the mixed children may have their own social networks, the parents, at least when the children are younger, inevitably must also interact with one another. Colin Hamilton explains his relationship with his children's friend's parents:

*And it's — there isn't really anything that you would call a relationship, it's just a — we chat whenever there's a children's party or some sort of event, like tomorrow, for example, we're going to the Olympics, and I know Dorothy's father, I've spoken to him a few times, I know what he does, where he works, that he likes bicycles, um, but you know, there's a limit to the conversations that we've had, or could have, um, so I don't really have any relationship, to speak of.*

While such bidirectional relationships may not be as intimate as friends chosen directly, adult friendships can indeed be strengthened through their children's friendships (Mellor, *et al.* 2010, p131), and can also perhaps be seen as opportunities to build more bridging relationships with families from the dominant society. Regarding family friends though, while the mixed families attempt to interact with other families, specifically other Japanese/British mixed families, there is no strong sense of camaraderie, except between the Japanese women. As a result, it seems that individual family members create and maintain their own social networks with friends that meet their personal social needs. Nonetheless, the mixed families' lack of a large social network of local friends may have a somewhat negative impact on the children, particularly in the future, as my field notes show:



*The other day, I was at the park with my son and another family with two children. The older child is that point in life where you begin to seriously think about the future. Yet this young man, like many people, is still confused. He is somewhat interested in going to university, but he has no idea about the process, and neither do his parents. While most would quickly identify this situation as a class issue, I'm hesitant to do so. Yes, the parents didn't attend university, so it's not surprising that the son is somewhat clueless about the whole process, but is there is an additional complexity that comes from having a migrant mother, particularly considering that, first of all, she doesn't know where to turn to because she is not connected to the local social networks at school, and second of all, while she can attempt to help her son herself, she still struggles with English. Who can they turn to?*

As such, while it is important to maintain relationships with those from the Japanese community, it is also important to have a strong network of friends from the local community. However, although it is important to network with the local community, class is ultimately more pertinent because, even if the mixed families have many 'local' friends, if they are of a working-class background, they may be equally as clueless about the university system as their British father. In this way, a foreigner can be a much better resource than a 'local' person regarding the university system if the foreigner is, for example, educated themselves and employed in the university sector, with friends in professional careers. Thus, perhaps it is necessary to extend this idea of creating a diverse social network to include, not only *bridging* and *bonding* relationships (Putnam 2007) in regard to nationality, but also class.

### **Conclusions**

The previous chapters have focused on the transmission of culture in mixed families, in particular, the everyday aspects of culture, language and food, as well as the role of kin in the mixed family. Ultimately, it seems that, while negotiation of cultures is indeed a significant characteristic of mixed families, more than being preoccupied with transmitting their respective cultural heritages, the mixed families are challenging the boundaries of racial (and cultural) categories and forming their own *mixed family culture* and *identity* (Tyler 2005, Yabuki 2009). In this chapter, we specifically looked at two areas that tend to influence a family's culture: their search

for a place to call home, and once settled into their new home, their choice of friends.

Clearly, migration can become an inevitable aspect of life for mixed, migrant families such as the Japanese/British families in the present study because, wherever the families choose to live, at least one person will always be a migrant. As such, we explored the mixed couples' migration journeys. What we found was that the migration stories of the men and women tend to vary, with most British men migrating to Japan temporarily and in conjunction with work or study, and some Japanese women initially migrating to Britain for personal reasons, but eventually, all becoming permanent migrants, with their pull factor being their British partner and mixed children. While the parents' migration journeys may indeed have influenced where they ultimately chose to raise their children, we also see that, by choosing where their mixed children grow up, both parents hold a strong influence on the mixed child's future identity (Qian 2004). This seems to be in line with the fact that almost all of the participants, when asked about the mixed children's identity and their familiarity with their respective cultural heritages, mentioned *"it all depends on where they live."* Further, as Brah (1996, p191) describes *home* is *"intrinsically linked with the way in which processes of inclusion or exclusion operate ... about our political and personal struggles over the social regulation of 'belonging.'"* As such, where the families decide to settle down and call home becomes significant, not only in their everyday transmission of culture, but also in creating a place of belonging for the mixed children.

Regarding the mixed families' relationships with the local community, we find that the Japanese women have predominantly Japanese friends. Consequently, when the Japanese woman mostly exposes her children to the Japanese community, there is a concern that the children may not be adequately prepared for the dominant society which they must join as soon as they enter nursery. However, because she is not preparing her children for the dominant society alone, and because she has the support of her husband as well as their British kin, this may not be a significant concern. On the other hand though, perhaps it is more important for the migrant

mother to focus on immersing herself in the Japanese community, so as to create a link between her homeland and her children. Further, regarding family friends, in line with most families, the Japanese women are the ones who tend to be largely responsible for the social network of their families (e.g. Chambers 2006, Song 2003). Yet when they organise gatherings with different mixed Japanese/British families, on the whole, it seems as if there exists a strong sense of camaraderie only between the Japanese women, and not between the British men or the mixed children. This is not completely unexpected though, given that the women spend a lot of time together and the men and children, particularly after they start school, only meet up occasionally.

Yabuki (2009) identified three types of relationships that mixed families have with their local community, and for the Japanese/British families, it seems that different members have different types of relationships with those in the local community. The Japanese wives/mothers seem to occupy the third type and remain somewhat hesitant to reach out and form more bridging relationships with individuals from the dominant society, the British husbands/fathers and the mixed children seem to occupy the first type, with most of their social contacts and friends being from the dominant society. These relationships may be a reflection of each family members' degree of integration, or lack thereof, into the dominant society. However, Britain has tended to encourage a pluralistic society (Ager and Strang 2008), and in line with this, many of the parents in the present study mentioned that they want their children to have "the best of both worlds," the best of both the Japanese and British worlds. If this is the case, then ties with both cultures, a bicultural upbringing, may be ideal, but considering that the children are being brought up in Britain, a more dominant Japanese home and social life may become essential, not only for the intergenerational transmission of culture, but also for their children's future success, because in today's society, a diverse upbringing and social network are highly valued (Harman 2010, p185).

In conclusion, we find that, the individual mixed family members do not seem to have many bridging relationships in their local community, yet this may not be

unique to mixed families. Bost and colleagues (2002, p518), for example, found that parenthood can cause a couple's social networks to become "smaller and more homogenous after the birth of the child." However, this may continue to evolve and change after the children grow older. Further, we also found the women to be primarily responsible for the creation and maintenance of their family's social networks. Again, this is not unique to mixed families; however, from the viewpoint of the intergenerational transmission of culture, having the woman be in charge of the family's social lives may create an imbalance with the Japanese woman prioritising ties to the local Japanese community. Yet again, when we take into account the British kin and British father's role in the mixed children's lives, as well as the mixed children's upbringing in Britain, this concern becomes somewhat irrelevant. In Imamura's (1990) study of foreign wives in Japan, isolation and loneliness were their most difficult struggles, thus friends and support networks were among their primary needs. Considering this, perhaps the role of the Japanese playgroups is not so much about the intergenerational transmission of culture, but about creating a space for the Japanese women to come and find emotional support (Cochran 1990) and friendship. Yet at the same time, Mass (1992, p277) finds that "children need both parts of their racial heritage accepted and affirmed; maintaining positive connections with people from both cultures is a concrete way parents can provide [positive] experiences for their interracial children." This is especially important to consider because, as Tizard and Phoenix (1993, p164) argue, identifying with one of their parents' race often seems to the mixed children a form of betrayal or rejection of the other parent. Parents in mixed families should therefore strive to create and maintain positive connections with both cultural heritages through a mixture of their relationships with kin, as well as with friends in their neighbourhoods and local community, and through the Japanese community. This now concludes the findings chapters, and we will now review the study in the Conclusions chapter.

# Conclusions

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## ***Concluding Thoughts***

When Caballero and colleagues (2008, p15) asked parents about the most important thing they wanted to pass on to their children, *family history* and *cultural traditions or way of life* were most mentioned. In this study of parents of mixed children specifically, while parents also mentioned cultural traditions, they specifically emphasised wanting to pass on language and food to their mixed children. While such aspects of “culture” are indeed important to pass on, they require a conscious commitment and labour-intensive work, from both the parents and the children. Yet as we have seen in the previous chapters, cultural transmission also takes place unintentionally, in the midst of the families’ everyday lives. Therefore, in this study, an attempt was made to focus on different aspects of “culture” that the parents in mixed families negotiate, both inside and outside their home, as they attempt to raise bicultural, bilingual children while doing mixed family.

Through an ethnographic, qualitative study that used interviews, home observations, and participant observation to better understand this burgeoning population, we find that parents are indeed the obvious transmitters of culture to the mixed children; however because they are attempting to transmit two cultures, often the children’s cultural socialisation in general can be weak (Waters 1990, p102). Mixed families, therefore, seek support and cultural reinforcement from their social networks, particularly their kin. Kin can play an especially significant role in the lives of the mixed children because, among other things, they help mixed children understand where they come from, their family history (Caballero, *et al.* 2008). Further, while the mixed families’ friends, particularly the women’s Japanese friends, may not be able to offer direct assistance in raising bicultural, bilingual children, they do offer invaluable support to the women by providing listening ears and the ability to empathise with the struggles found while doing mixed family. Thus, as mixed families face challenges and struggles while attempting to raise bicultural, bilingual children and prepare them for, or at least introduce them to two

societies (Imamura 1990), they also experience joys and successes. In the following section, I discuss some of these as well as the major findings from the study.

### **Contributions from the Study**

Scholarship in the field of mixed families that focus specifically on the parents' perspective remain scarce, despite the significant increase of mixed families. Yet there have been crucial pioneering studies that focus specifically on mixed parentage, including Phoenix and Husain's (2007), which highlighted the lack of studies surrounding mixed parentage, particularly those that included the voice of the father. As a result, in this study, I made an effort to include both parents, and as we saw in the findings chapters, the fathers do indeed play an important role in the forging of a new mixed family culture and have much to say about their experiences of being in a mixed marriage and family. Another significant study that influenced my own research was Caballero and colleagues' (2008) work, which focused on dealing with difference and creating a sense of belonging for mixed children. They identified three typical parenting approaches surrounding the upbringing of mixed children: 1) an individual approach, where parents stress their children's *cosmopolitan* identity and children *choose* their own identities; 2) a mixed approach, where parents stress a *mixed* identity and attempt to instil pride in their children's specific heritages; and 3) a single approach, where parents emphasise one aspect of the child's background and let it take priority over other differences. While I did consider these three approaches when speaking to the parents in this study, it was difficult to assign parents to a specific type of parenting approach because of the parents' and children's evolving sense of *difference* and *belonging* and its effect on the parent-child relationship. As a result, as Caballero and colleagues (2008) themselves found, I also encountered the three approaches overlapping, particularly the first two (i.e. individual and mixed). For example, several parents emphasised the positive aspects of the notion of their children being cosmopolitan "citizens of the world"; but at the same time, the same parents wanted to firmly instil in their mixed children "mixedness as an identity in and of itself," a sense of being distinctly Japanese/British. Interestingly, there was a strong sense of the "individual approach" when speaking to kin, with the majority of kin emphasising the

cosmopolitan identify of the mixed children and the importance of the child's choice in cultural acquisition. This suggests that grandparents and aunts and uncles see their role in the upbringing of mixed children very differently than the parents, perhaps feeling that they can simply emphasise the positive aspects of being "mixed," without dealing with the effects of difference that often make being mixed challenging.

Further, while Wilson (1987) and later Caballero and colleagues (2008) found, mothers tend to be the parent primarily responsible for the everyday aspects of parenting. My study found that, while the mothers are indeed more responsible for more traditional aspects in the domestic sphere (e.g. foodwork, childcare, home décor), the men are also actively contributing in several everyday activities, including helping with homework and accompanying the children to doctor's visits. One of the main reasons for this is because the Japanese women are migrants and are non-native English speakers. As a result, mixed families in which the mother is a migrant may increase the father's involvement in some everyday aspects of childrearing. Nevertheless, I did find women in this study carrying a heavier burden in many areas of the family's home life, but at the same time, I observed mixed parentage as more of a joint effort, with the fathers tending to be family men who are the breadwinners of their families, but also present and involved in the home (Brannen and Nilsen, 2006). The mixed families thus seem to hold on to the Japanese familial model of *soto/uchi*, and while fathers may be more involved in everyday aspects of parenting, those responsibilities tend to surround the public sphere (i.e. school and doctors) (*soto*), and the mothers remain primarily responsible for activities in the domestic sphere (i.e. feeding the family and housekeeping duties) (*uchi*). By focusing on the family home, I was also able to better understand how the parents divide the labour associated with the transmission of culture. Initially, I had assumed that women might feel more obligated to take responsibility regarding the transmission of culture since they are traditionally seen as the "cultural carriers" (Song 2003). Yet as discussed above, the fathers are indeed becoming more involved in responsibilities associated with the transmission of culture, including kinkeeping. Further, not only are they transmitting their own

culture, but they are also often transmitting the Japanese culture by, for example, reading Japanese comic books translated into English for their children, encouraging them to pursue kendo, and even simply by speaking highly about the customer service “back in Japan.” In conclusion, we find that the responsibility of the intergenerational transmission of culture in mixed families does not rest solely on the mother, it is shared willingly by the fathers.

A second area that I sought to better understand was the *everyday* aspects of family life because, as Morgan (1996) emphasises, often it is in the mundane, regular aspects of daily life that we can best observe family practises. Further, socialisation theory finds the family home, in particular the parents, playing a major role in children’s socialisation (Bisin and Verdier 2000, Grusec 2011, Rinaldi and Howe 2012). Thus, the mixed families’ everyday family lives were explored. This highlighted that, while some aspects of culture, including home décor, television programming choices, and table etiquette may be more of an everyday, natural form of cultural transmission; others aspects of culture, including bilingualism and food habits require negotiation between the parents and a conscious, intentional commitment from both the parents as well as the children. Thus, experiences with both the everyday aspects of culture as well as the more consciously transmitted aspects of culture can be stressful at times, yet as Yabuki (2009) argues, difficulties within the marriage and in finding common ground as parents should be classified as a normal part of constructing a new family culture. While I did encounter parents and children negotiating different aspects of their cultures while constructing their new family culture, there were no cases where differences caused the couples or families to become especially heated or fraught. Additionally, this study problematised the idea of two parents passing on their own respective ‘national cultures’ and found that mixed families and the transmission of culture complicate this idea. For example, while it may be expected for the Scottish man to “transmit” and encourage his child to play the Scottish harp, it is actually the Japanese woman pushing her child to play the instrument and “transmitting” her personal interest in Scottish music to her mixed child. In conclusion, through observing the mixed families’ everyday lives, we see that negotiations between the different cultural



heritages are a normal part of doing mixed families. In addition, we also find that the transmission of culture need not necessarily be national, but can instead be found in one parent transmitting or sharing their preferences and interests with their children, amidst everyday family life.

The third area of mixed family life that I sought to better understand was regarding the aspirations that the couples have for their mixed children, particularly regarding the transmission of culture. In this area, what I found was that parents seem to have low expectations regarding aspects of culture that tend to be transmitted more unintentionally, often while doing family, such as saying "Itadakimasu" before meals and taking ones shoes off before entering the home. This is perhaps because such customs are so ingrained into the mixed family culture that children just naturally tend to pick this up. Yet the same parents tend to have high aspirations (often unrealistic) for their children regarding aspects of culture that are conscious and often labour-intensive, particularly regarding language. As such, continually negotiating and re-negotiating goals and definitions of bicultural and bilingual become necessary, not only between the parents, but also with the children. Further, because raising bicultural, bilingual children is an uphill battle, parents must also learn to rely on support from kin and friends. While not specifically supporting the parents in raising bicultural, bilingual children, kin can help transmit everyday aspects of their culture while also providing the mixed children with a sense of belonging. In a similar way, while friends, particularly those from the minority community, cannot be expected to be directly involved in transmission of culture, they can offer the parents, particularly the migrant parent, emotional support and friendship, encouraging them as they face the challenges associated with living abroad and doing mixed family. Finally, generally speaking, parents tend to view the transmission of their respective cultures as a gift, thus they are determined to pass this gift on to their children. However, in line with Katz (1996), this study also found that while parents can pass their cultures on to the mixed children, and while residential locations and personal experiences will influence their identity, ultimately, the mixed children themselves, through their own experiences, will

choose what aspects of their cultural heritages to accept and maintain as *gifts* and what aspects to reject as *burdens*.

### **Reflections from the Field**

These days, it seems as if almost every other day, I run into a member of a Japanese/British mixed family. Sometimes it is a family who participated in my study, other times it is a family from one of the playgroups that has heard about my study and somehow, eerily, knows everything about my mixed background. Sometimes I run into Japanese mothers with their children, other times it is the British fathers, on their way to/from work, and sometimes it is even just the children, out with their friends, waving shyly at me and my young son. Looking at this, I suppose I should be proud of my ethnographic fieldwork. I have truly immersed myself in the small community of mixed Japanese/British families in Edinburgh. Yet this was not always the case.

I remember the first times I went to the playgroups with my son. Not only was I a new mother, but I was also a new researcher, trying to balance my role as participant observer, between being a mother and a researcher (Pillow and Mayo 2012).

Knowing the Japanese family culture somewhat and their strong emphasis on the *soto/uchi* divide (cf Yamamoto 2010), I was also feeling doubtful that I would be able to convince one family, let alone twelve, to let me into their homes and share their time, their stories, and even their dinner tables with me, a complete stranger. The first playgroup sessions were particularly stressful, as everyone seemed a bit hesitant to have me in their midst. I typically encountered two kinds of Japanese women: the ones that assumed I was a fellow Japanese mother in a mixed family and were therefore genuinely interested in connecting with me and setting up playdates, and the ones who, having heard that there was a researcher among them, were simply curious and either wanted to make suggestions or could not quite understand what was so interesting about families such as theirs that would merit a sociological investigation. Yet, in both types of conversations, the first questions were always questions of legitimacy: first of all, was I qualified to be at a Japanese mother and toddler playgroup? Was I Japanese? Did I speak Japanese? Was I

teaching my son Japanese? And second of all, was I qualified to undertake research on mixed families? Was I “safe”? Could I be trusted to represent the mixed families fairly and accurately? For the ones that assumed I was a Japanese mother in a mixed family, there was some surprise upon hearing that I was actually only half Japanese, and for those who were interested in my study, there was a sense of relief when they heard that I was *haafu* myself. My own mixed background, as well as my ability to converse with them in Japanese allowed me to be accepted by the Japanese mothers, perhaps not as their equal, but as someone who represented who their mixed children may become in the future. And when I did have the opportunity to speak to the mixed children directly, I felt most at ease, as my field notes from one of my conversations with a young boy convey:

*Today, I got to speak at great length with one of the children from my participant families. He's 9 years old, almost 10... and he was asking me about my son's favourite foods. When I asked him what his favourite food was, he got very shy. He didn't say anything for a while and then finally said, "Something my mum cooks." I persisted, and he finally whispered, Do you know what yakisoba is?" I said yes, of course. "And do you know what yakiudon is?" "Yes," I said. He smiled and said, "Well, my mum mixed both of them the other day and it was great — that's my favourite food." ... What a great conversation! Just two mixed kids. For at least a while, we both didn't have to worry about cultural or linguistic interpretation — I knew exactly what he meant, and he found that unbelievable and he talked and talked...*

While the parents in the mixed families did indeed welcome me into the Japanese / British mixed community, into their playgroups, and some, even into their homes, there always remained a distance between us because, as Kich (1992, p313) explains, “being interracial is different from being in an interracial relationship.” In retrospect, however, perhaps it was exactly my “semi-insider” status as being an mixed yet not in an international relationship that complicated my insider status but at the same time allowed me to gain valuable insight into mixed families. Nevertheless, I do acknowledge that my being mixed may have also made me less observant and aware of minor details observed within the mixed families that I took to be “normal,” simply because of my semi-insider status.

## **Limitations**

As with most doctoral theses, one of the major limitations was regarding the practicalities of the study. First of all, regarding the timeframe; although I conducted fieldwork for a little over two years, this was not, by any means, a longitudinal study. However, a longitudinal study would be beneficial for, not only better understanding the mixed families, but for specifically observing how children assume more agency as they get older, and what comes to influence their food choices, language usage, friends, and enrichment activities. Another limitation regarding practicalities associated with research was that this study was based on a single site (Edinburgh), as opposed to multiple locations, which may have provided a more detailed picture of the situation of Japanese/British families. However, as Smith and colleagues (2011) found, today's mixed families are not restricted to the "multicultural metropolitan"; instead, they are scattered across cities and towns in Britain, and because Edinburgh does not have any obvious unique features, there is actually little reason to question the generalisability of the findings from this study.

Further limitations were found regarding the small sample size, which results in such generalisations being more difficult to reach. However, a large sample was not realistic because I was dealing with a visibly rare category of family (i.e. Japanese/British). A large sample also would not have allowed for the level of deep engagement that my small sample produced, particularly since the small sample allowed for methodological triangulation, with data coming from multiple sources, including participant observation, home and playgroup observations, and interviews with the couples as well as extended family members. This, in turn, allowed me, as the researcher, to "enter the subjective world of other people and groups through interviews and rich descriptions [from participant observations], which is not achieved through quantitative methods" (Jourdan 2006, p330), and come out of the ethnographic experience having gained further insight into mixed families.

Another limitation regarding the sample was the lack of diversity in the participant couples (i.e. only couples made up of Japanese women and British men participated, as opposed to British women and Japanese men). In order to see how gender affects

the negotiations that take place in mixed families regarding their different cultures, I attempted to include both Japanese men/British women couples as well as Japanese women/British men couples. However, I was unable to find any Japanese men/British women couples because of the very limited number of such couples in Edinburgh. While I was able to locate two such couples, one couple chose not to participate, and the other did not have children. This, however, emphasises that the Japanese man/British woman couple is still quite rare among international unions.

A final limitation regarding the sample was that, due to the playgroups being a central part of the study, there may have been a bias towards new parents with babies and toddlers. In the end, however there were twelve children under the age of five, eight children between the ages of six and ten, and two teenagers. As such, there may have been a slight bias towards younger children; yet because Japanese/British couples are increasing, there may simply be more families with younger children. Regardless, through immersion into the Japanese community and snowball sampling, at least a few older children, along with their families, were able to participate in the study and diversify the sample.

An additional limitation was encountered during home observations, as having someone observing a family in and of itself creates an unnatural, artificial setting, frequently resulting in the Hawthorne effect, "the degree to which participants may alter their talk or behaviour because they are being watched" (Curry, *et al.* 2009, p1446). Further, in the case of the meal observations, it seems that even their choice of dishes may have been influenced by my presence, as many women later admitted that they had struggled to think of dishes that would impress me. However, my home observations, particularly of the family around the dinner table did allow me to depict a "conscious crafting of family and relationships ... reveal[ing] a lot about how individuals operated within the context of family" (Gabb 2008, p146). Further, the families, particularly the children, did eventually become more accustomed to my observing them, and even joining them at the table occasionally, which allowed them to relax more, and for me to observe them in something that resembled their everyday lives.

Finally, one of the biggest limitations of this study was the fact that no children were interviewed directly. In a study on families, children are obviously integral; however, because this study is a sociological endeavour examining the socialisation of the children in mixed families, I focused on the voices of the adults that surround them: their mothers, fathers, and various extended family members. In addition, although it would have certainly been worthwhile to interview the children, because I was initially recruiting families from playgroups, most of the children were too young to be interviewed. However, while I did not interview any of the children, the children did indeed play a crucial role in both the home and playgroup observations. By observing their conversations at the playgroups and at their dinner tables, as well as by chatting with them informally, I was able to gain a better sense of the importance of the children's role in the transmission of culture.

### **Further Research**

This study addressed many issues included under the umbrella of "mixed families," such as how heritage languages learn a language, how responsibilities surrounding foodwork are divided, how the Japanese women choose friends in their local community, how the parents, who come from different cultures, not only raise their children, but also transmit their respective cultures and interests to the mixed children; and how relationships with transnational families are maintained. While the present study was thus able to shed light on these issues as well as several others, there is still much further research needed among this growing population:

- One of the areas where further research is required is among the mixed children themselves. While there are various studies focusing on identity issues among mixed people, there need to be more studies that focus on their perception of the intergenerational transmission of culture in their childhood homes because this will, in turn, allow us to better understand how parenting styles and attitudes are interpreted by mixed children.
- Somewhat in line with this, another interesting area for further research is found regarding the transmission of culture. While I discussed the complexities involved in the transmission of culture, particularly regarding passing culture

horizontally and vertically, more studies surrounding the horizontal transmission of culture (couple to couple) as well as how the vertical transmission of culture happens, particularly that from bottom to top, child to parent, seems like a natural progression of this present study.

- Studies on mixed couples (e.g. Bratter and King 2008, Kalmijn 1998, Zhang and Van Hook 2009) claim high divorce rates among such unions; however, these studies have mostly been conducted in the United States. As such, how divorce affects mixed families, and in particular the children and their racial identity, in a British context, would be a valuable contribution to the study of mixededness.
- In addition, the families that participated in this study all had Japanese mothers and British fathers; however, in order to see how and if gender roles influence the transmission of culture, further research should include both types of couples. Additionally, the mixed families in this study resided in the father's country (i.e. Britain); as such, further research should also attempt to include mixed families that reside in the mother's origin country (i.e. Japan).
- Finally, one important aspect of mixed families that I was unable to discuss due to space limitations was appearance because, as Caballero and colleagues (2008, p50) found, parents tend to tailor their approaches to negotiating a sense of belonging according to their child's physical appearance. In the present study, it is clear that all of the mixed children have inherited Asian phenotypes from their mothers with most parents stating that their children are seen as Asian (i.e. Japanese or Chinese), particularly in Britain. As such, further research in line with Tsuda's (2014) research (which focused on Japanese Americans and their state of being "perpetual foreigners" in the United States, simply because of their Asian appearance) is needed. While Tsuda's interviewees agreed that they are never accepted as American because they are not white, what about mixed individuals, like the children in the present study? Will they always be seen as foreigners in Britain, even though they were brought up in this country and are half British, or will they someday be accepted as "British"?

In her study of mixed children, Mass (1992, p277) suggests that, rather than ask, “What will happen to the children?” A more appropriate question is, “What is the best way to facilitate a positive growing-up experience for interracial children?” While several studies have focused on the plight of the mixed child and their identity struggles, in this study, I focused instead on the family home, and in particular, the parents, because, as Grusec (2011, p244) argues, “families — more specifically, parent-child relationships — are the major context in which early socialisation occurs.” In this study, I have also explored several aspects of the mixed family home, and although burdens for both the parents and the mixed children are found along the road to becoming bicultural and bilingual, we also find the gifts of *mixedness* and the transmission of culture, from parent to child, from parent to parent, and sometimes even from child to parent. Further, while Waters (1990, p102) suggests that intermarriage tends to lead to a possible dilution of the mixed children’s identity, the mixed families in this study have shown that, rather than fearing the negotiations surrounding culture and difference, by actively embracing them and even emphasising them, new mixed family identities and cultures are being forged, giving their children and themselves a sense of belonging amidst their differences. It is these cultures and the process of doing mixed families that I have tried to illustrate in this thesis.



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# Appendix I: Information Sheet and Consent Form

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## *Negotiating Two Cultures in One Household: Japanese/British Families in Edinburgh*

You and your family are being invited to take part in an exciting research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important that you understand *why* the research is being done and *what* the research will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully, and please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything further.

### **What is the purpose of this research project?**

The purpose of this study is to better understand how international couples balance two cultures when raising their children. I am especially interested in learning how parents' different cultures influence their children's language and food choices, as well as the role that friends, acquaintances, and extended family has on the mixed family, particularly the children.

### **Why have you been invited to participate in this study?**

You and your family (there will be twelve families in total) have been invited because you have a mixed family, with one parent from Britain, one parent from Japan, and at least one child. Although I hope you will agree to participate in this study, the decision to participate is completely up to you and your family.

### **What will happen if your family decides to participate?**

- Face-to-face **interviews** with both parents, lasting approximately 60 minutes. Follow-up interviews via email and/or phone may also be scheduled. The interview will focus on topics such as how you met your partner, what kinds of foods you eat at the dinner table, what traditions you celebrate, etc.
- **Home visits** with me, the principal investigator, for as many visits as agreed upon, in order to observe your family in your natural environment. I will bring my young son, so the visits will be relaxed and informal, similar to "play dates."
- You will be asked to provide contact information for one **extended family member** (your child(ren)'s grandparent, aunt, or uncle) who is willing to be interviewed (either in person or via phone/email/Skype) about their experience of being an

extended member of your mixed family.  
All interviews and observations will be scheduled around you and your family's convenience.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Mixed families are increasing, but research on this population is rare. That is why your participation in this study is important. With your help, by sharing your experiences, we can begin to better understand the struggles and rewards of raising multicultural, multilingual children, and help mixed families in the future.

**Will what you say in this study be kept confidential?**

All information collected will be kept confidential (in accordance with UK laws) and anonymous. In order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, you and your family will be given pseudonyms and unique code numbers. With your permission, interviews will be audio-recorded so that your words are recorded accurately. Items in your home (e.g. food, toys) may also be photographed; however, any image used will be anonymised and used for research purposes only. Only the principal investigator and her supervisors will have access to the audio recordings and the full transcripts of the interview. The information collected during this study will be kept until the completion of my doctoral dissertation and will then be disposed of permanently.

**What's next?**

If you would like to participate in this study, please fill out the enclosed Consent Form and email, text, or phone to let me know your decision. I will then schedule a time to meet with you and discuss any questions you may have.

**Who is behind this research?**

As the principal investigator, I am organising the research. I am a postgraduate student, under the supervision of Ross Bond and Hugo Gorringer, at the University of Edinburgh, Department of Sociology. This project is part of my studies as a research student, and the data collected will be used in my dissertation.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This research has received ethics clearance through the University of Edinburgh's School of Social and Political Science.

**Contact Information:**

- Megumi Nakamura, Primary Investigator

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- Ross Bond, Supervisor

**Email:** [R.J.Bond@ed.ac.uk](mailto:R.J.Bond@ed.ac.uk) / **Tel.:** 0131 650 3919

- Hugo Gorringer, Supervisor

**Email:** [Hugo.Gorringer@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Hugo.Gorringer@ed.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.  
5 March 2012





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**Negotiating Two Cultures in One Household:  
Japanese/British Families in Edinburgh**

I confirm that I have read and understand the **Information Sheet** for this research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.  
I understand that my participation, as well as my family's, is **voluntary** and that we are free to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason.  
I agree to the audio-recording of interviews (for transcription purposes only) and to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.  
I grant permission to photograph images of inanimate objects in my home.

By signing this document, I agree to the following statement:  
I have read and understood all the information given to me about participating in this study. I have been given enough time and the opportunity to discuss it and ask questions. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I, along with my family, voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

---

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

---

Name of Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix II: Interview Guides

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## For Interview with Parents:

### 1) Opening Question/Ice Breaker:

- Tell me about yourself...
  - Name / Nationality / Age / Occupation

### 2) Background Narrative:

- **Childhood**... what was it like growing up in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - childhood memories (you vs. your children)
  - parenting styles (your parents vs. you)
- **Spouse**... tell me about your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - How did you meet?
  - Reactions from Family/Friends
  - Wedding Day
  - Residence as a Married Couple
- **Children**... tell me about your children
  - Names & Surnames
  - Peoples' responses/reactions to their mixed background

### 3) Childrearing/Parenting:

- What kind of things come to your mind when you think of the Japanese culture? How about the British/Scottish culture?
- How do you and your spouse negotiate what aspect of the two cultures will be passed on to your child(ren)? Can you tell me a little bit about those aspects of culture?
  - addressing family members
  - traditions
  - Japanese parenting: *amae*, *wakaraseru*, child-centredness/dependency (co-sleeping, *okeigoto*), *kosodate mama*, *kyoiku mama*, *seken*, *skinship*...
- What culture is your child more familiar with and which does your child tend to identify with more? Why do you think that is?

### 4) Home Life:

- How does your **home** reflect the **two cultures**? (conscious decision?)
- Can you tell me about what you and your family **eat** (Scottish/British or Japanese).
- What kind of **restaurants** do you go to when you go out to eat?
- What **cultural/traditional/religious festivals** do you still celebrate (*oshougatsu*, *obon*, *hinamatsuri*, *kodomonohi/koinobori*, *shichi-go-san*, *seijinshiki* / Hogmanay, Burns' Night, St Andrews Day, Christmas/Boxing Day), to what extent, and in what ways?
- **Media Preferences** (books, movies, television, and news)

#### 5) **Language:**

- How are **languages** used in your family?
  - Monolingual vs. Multilingual?
  - Ultimate linguistic goal for children?
  - Communicating Challenges between spouses/ children?

#### 6) **Social Networks:**

- Can you tell me about your **friends**...
  - Scottish/British, Japanese, other nationalities, mixed families?
  - how/ where you met them / where/how often you all meet up
  - conversation topics
  - playgroups
- Can you tell me about your **children's friends**...
  - playdates? sleepovers? **birthday parties**? What happens and why?
  - friends' nationality
  - your relationship with your children's friends' parents

#### 7) **Extended Family:**

- Tell me about your current relationship with your parents, siblings, and other relatives. How has it evolved over the years? What about your relationships with your in-laws?
  - support received (child care, money, care packages, etc...)
  - staying connected
- Can you talk about your children's relationship with the extended family...
  - how have they (or not) been influential and involved in sharing you and your spouse's cultures with your children?
  - how were these decisions reached?

#### 8) **Religion:**

- How significant is religion in your family's life?
  - childhood religion / current religion
  - children's religious upbringing
  - religion/culture (*butsudan, kamidana, hatsumoude*)
  - superstitions (the number 4 "*shi*", *yakudoshi*: 42 for men and 33 for women and subsequent *yakubarai*, the one-month seclusion period guaranteeing the safety of a newborn child, etc...)
- Anything you wish to add?

## For Interview with Kin:

### Opening Question/Ice Breaker:

- Tell me about yourself...
  - Name / Nationality / Age / Occupation (if retired, previous occupation)

### Background Narrative:

#### - Participant (Parent)...

- Tell me about your relationship with your son/daughter/brother/sister. How has it evolved over the years?
  - staying connected
  - support given (child care, money, care packages, etc...)
- Can you talk about your relationship with your in-law (his/her country).
- Comments on your son's/son-in-law's and daughter's/daughter-in-law's/brother's/brother-in-law's and sister's/sister-in-law's parenting.
- [for those with children] Compare the way you brought up/are bringing up your children with the way your son/daughter/sibling is bringing up their child(ren).

#### - Participant (Children)... tell me about your grandchild/nephew/niece.

- Can you talk about your grandchild's/niece's/nephew's relationship with you and the rest of your extended family...
  - What do you see your role as in \_\_\_\_'s life?
  - How have you and your family been (or not been) influential and involved in sharing your culture with the child(ren)? (if the child is young, how do you plan to?)
- Is your grandchild/niece/nephew more familiar with the Japanese culture or the British/Scottish culture (e.g. food, language, social networks, extended family, media preference), and which do they tend to identify with more? Why do you think that is?
- What language(s) are used to **communicate** with your grandchild/niece/nephew. Have you encountered any communication challenges due to language barriers? How have you overcome these challenges? What kind of methods do you use to communicate (e.g. Skype, telephone, visits?), and how satisfactory are these means of communication?
- What kind of relationship do you have with the other side of the family (i.e. your son/daughter/brother/sister's in-laws)?
- What kind of responses/reactions do you get to their mixed background?
- What aspects of your culture do you think are most important to pass on? How do you plan to do this?

- Anything you wish to add?

## Appendix III: Chart of Participant Families

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| Family   | Residence  | Husband: Age / Occupation/ Language Skills                   | Wife: Age / Occupation/ Language Skills | Child(ren): Sex / Age / Place of Birth          |
|----------|------------|--|---|---|
| McLeod   | Cowley     | 34, Civil Servant, no Japanese                               | 33, Housewife, Intermediate English     | 1) Boy, 1, Edinburgh                            |
| Ramsey   | Summertown | 63, Technician, no Japanese                                  | 45, Housewife, Beginner English         | 1) Boy, 16, Edinburgh,<br>2) Boy, 8, Edinburgh  |
| Potter   | Botley     | 44, Househusband, no Japanese                                | 42, Nursing assistant, Fluent English   | 1) Girl, 13, Edinburgh,<br>2) Boy, 7, Edinburgh |
| Paterson | Cowley     | 31, English Teacher, Beginner Japanese                       | 32, Housewife, Beginner English         | 1) Girl, 1, Edinburgh                           |
| McGregor | Summertown | 52, Japanese/ English Translator, Intermediate Japanese      | 49, Housewife, Intermediate English     | 1) Boy, 8, Tokyo                                |
| Clark    | Summertown | 47, English as a Foreign Language Teacher, Beginner Japanese | 44, Housewife, Beginner English         | 1) Girl, 8, Yamagata<br>2) Girl, 2, Edinburgh   |

| Family     | Residence | Husband: Age / Occupation / Language Skills | Wife: Age / Occupation / Language Skills | Child(ren): Sex / Age / Place of Birth   |
|------------|-----------|---|--|--|
| Hamilton   | Jericho   | 43, Sales, Advanced Japanese                | 35, Housewife, Beginner English          | 1) Girl, 9, Newcastle,<br>2) Boy, 7, Edinburgh,<br>3) Girl, 5, Edinburgh,<br>4) Girl, 1, Edinburgh |
| Walker     | Abingdon  | 35, Journalist, Advanced Japanese           | 36, Housewife, Fluent English            | 1) Boy, 0, Edinburgh   |
| Miller     | Botley    | 37, Scientist, no Japanese                  | 35, Housewife, Fluent English            | 1) Boy, 6, Plymouth,<br>2) Boy, 4, Edinburgh,<br>3) Girl, 1, Edinburgh                             |
| Barclay    | Marston   | 39, bank office clerk, no Japanese          | 35, Housewife, Beginner English          | 1) Girl, 3, Edinburgh,<br>2) Boy, 1, Edinburgh   |
| Ross       | Iffley    | 32, IT technician, no Japanese              | 35, Housewife, Beginner English          | 1) Boy, 1, Edinburgh   |
| MacFarlane | Cowley    | 41, Lawyer, Beginner Japanese               | 39, Housewife, Beginner English          | 1) Boy, 6, Edinburgh,<br>2) Boy, 4, Edinburgh  |