Whiteness in research on men, trans/masculine and non-binary people and reproduction: two parallel stories

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Abstract

The chapter considers what it means to reflect on whiteness in a study of men, trans/masculine and non-binary people who were gestational parents. The chapter explores how consideration of whiteness played out in the study design, and then turns to consider some of the interviews with participants racialised as white, and how they both oriented toward and away from whiteness as a form of cultural capital. The chapter concludes by commenting on what it means to think about whiteness in the context of trans studies, signalling the importance of exploring both privilege and marginalisation in the lives of men, trans/masculine and non-binary people who are gestational parents.

Introduction

In this chapter, we share two parallel stories. Both stories speak to the operations of whiteness in academic research – specifically research on the pregnancy-related experiences of men, trans/masculine and non-binary people. It is arguably the case that the stories we share are likely endemic to a great majority of research undertaken by all-white research teams. As we elaborate further below, it is precisely our whiteness as a project team that underlines the very necessity of this chapter, as our primary focus on the topic led us to overlook, in many ways, the issue of whiteness in our planning of the research project. Thus, the stories we share in this chapter are useful examples of the operation of whiteness in academic research, due to their comment on the relationship between whiteness and the research topic.

To begin, we will provide a bit more information on our research project, which sought to explore the ways in which men, trans/masculine and non-binary people navigate pregnancy in European countries, as well as the settler colonies of Australia, Canada and the United States.[1] Specifically, the research aimed at highlighting the challenges faced by these populations when trying to become pregnant, as well as their experiences of pregnancy and birthing and the responses they received from healthcare professionals, family and society, more broadly. As such, the project focused on both challenges and joys. This dual focus was purposive: we wanted to highlight the operation of cisgenderism (i.e. the ideology that delegitimises an individual's own understanding of their body and identity) in the context of male, trans/masculine and non-binary reproduction, and to explore how, in the face of cisgenderism, men, trans/masculine and non-binary people create kinship and (potentially) happiness.

Given the above, in designing the project, we were very mindful of the need to collect a diversity of experiences of gender (and not, for example, solely those of trans men), reproduction and

embodiment, as well as relationships to cisgenderism. Our project team was comprised of people of a diversity of genders, complemented by an advisory committee that was also diverse in terms of gender. This focus on gender and diversity was understandable, given our awareness of the fraught nature of transgender studies as a distinct field of study that has historically been dominated by cisgender people. Additionally, we were conscious that the field has traditionally adopted a pathologising approach to gender diversity and, by dint of laws (i.e. those mandating the sterilisation of transgender people) and cisgenderism, has often failed to focus on reproductive justice for transgender and non-binary people.

The two parallel stories told in this chapter, however, speak to a gap in our thinking, in relation to the planning of the project interviews – a gap that pertains to whiteness. Following scholars such as Moreton-Robinson (2000) and Lipsitz (2006), we understand whiteness as a form of cultural capital that accrues privileges to those racialised as white. As such, whiteness is not simply a referent for white skin, but a systematised process of racialisation whereby those situated as approximating a norm of whiteness, according to histories of colonisation and scientific racism, benefit from those histories (Richards 1997). Such benefits are, of course, differentially distributed, according to gender, sexuality, ability, class and religion. Yet even such uneven distributions of privilege sit in a relationship to their corollary: the systematic disadvantage experienced by people not racialised as white.

One effect of the systematisation of whiteness as a form of cultural capital is that it is often unseen or unacknowledged by people racialised as white (Frankenburg 1993). In other words, people racialised as white are, in a sense, like fish in water. In many ways, as a project team, we were very much fish unable to see the water of whiteness. Certainly, we were conscious of the need to recruit participants who were not racialised as white, and we were successful in this to

some degree. Yet this focus really only served to address part of the legacy of whiteness (i.e. the ongoing marginalisation of people not racialised as white in academic research). When planning the project, we did not adequately respond to: (1) our theorisations of whiteness in the project and (2) our engagement with participants racialised as white, in terms of their (and our) whiteness. These two shortcomings constitute the two parallel stories that we share in this chapter. Further, our reflections on whiteness in our project (as explored in the conclusion to this chapter) have significant implications for the future study of the pregnancy experiences of men, trans/masculine and non-binary people, as well as the lived experiences of male, trans/masculine and non-binary gestational parents.

Whiteness, the project and the project team

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the primary focus of our project on male, trans/masculine and/or non-binary gestational parents was their narratives of conception, pregnancy and childbirth, especially in relation to aspects of gendered embodiment and navigation in the social world. Changing understandings of gender have led to the increased possibility for – and indeed the intelligibility of – people who are not women becoming gestational parents. Accordingly, we focused on the ways in which people in these diverse groups negotiate, come up against and persist in the face of social norms about gender and reproduction, as shaped by cisgenderism. Specifically, we were interested in understanding what it means to be a gestational parent who is male, trans/masculine and/or non-binary in interpersonal, societal and healthcare contexts in which gestational parents are presumed to be women.

In developing our interview schedule, we were acutely aware of the complexities of current understandings of gender. Thus, we sought to make our interview schedule inclusive of a

diversity of genders, just as we wanted our pool of participants to reflect a diversity of populations (even if our central focus was on experiences of reproduction amongst men, trans/masculine and non-binary people). We spent significant time talking about the terminology we would employ, given our awareness of the shifting terrain of language. Even the project language, itself, shifted from an initial focus on 'pregnant men' to a subsequent focus on 'trans pregnancy', followed by a revised focus on 'trans/masculine individuals and pregnancy' and, finally, a focus on 'men, trans/masculine and non-binary people and pregnancy'.

In contrast to the close and concerted attention we paid to gender, we did not actively orient ourselves with respect to whiteness in our preparation of the interview schedules, our definition of the project language and our recruitment of the project's advisory committee. Certainly, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, we did implicitly orient to whiteness in our focus on ensuring racial diversity in the research sample. However, we failed to uphold Ahmed's (2004) 'double turn', which requires people racialised as white to first critically engage with their own whiteness before turning towards those who are disenfranchised by whiteness. In contrast, our actions turned towards the racialised 'other' without first turning towards ourselves as a research team racialised as white. Our focus on gendered embodiment meant that we did not engage with the literature on race, including the literature on whiteness in interviewing (which would have been important, given that the majority of our participants were racialised as white within European nations and predominantly white settler colonies).

Engaging with the literature on whiteness in interviewing would have pointed us to the need to situate ourselves as racialised subjects within our interview process, and indeed to acknowledge that gender diversity does not sit outside of processes of racialisation (Haggis, Schech and Fitzgerald 1999). As suggested by Haggis and Schech (2000), engagement with the literature on

whiteness in interviewing would have not only reminded us to acknowledge our situatedness as gendered, classed and racialised (which we certainly did in our team conversations), but it would have also underlined our need to analyse ourselves as racialised subjects and ensure that whiteness (as well as gender) was a salient topic in our interviews with participants racialised as white.

This is not to say that, on the fly, we did not try to discuss whiteness in the interviews. In the interviews we conducted in Germany, for example, questions pertaining to race and ethnicity were at times less (or not) intelligible to our interview participants racialised as white. This may indicate a translation failure for the words 'race' and 'ethnicity' outside of English-speaking contexts, which again highlights the need to recognise a diversity of understandings of how whiteness operates in differing contexts. In the German cases, the second author attempted to use her own racialisation as white British as a reference point through which to explain the interview question. While at times this approach *did* function to generate a response to the interview question (and thus helped us to generate demographic data about the sample), it potentially did little to destabilise the whiteness of the interaction. By contrast, an interview schedule with a framework for speaking about racialisation – including with regard to whiteness – would have supported interviewers in their work of exploring participants' responses to, and queries about, ethnicity. More broadly, it would have allowed processes of racialisation to be a point of reference *throughout* the interview, facilitating the collection of a more explicitly intersectional corpus of data.

This point about intersectionality is important (Crenshaw 1990), as intersectionality does not pertain solely to people who are not racialised as white (or who are not cisgender, not heterosexual, not middle class and so forth). Rather, intersectional analyses are applicable to all

people (Levine-Rasky 2011). As we have argued elsewhere (Riggs 2010, 2018), in order to recognise intersectionality in the lives of people racialised as white who are otherwise marginalised on the basis of gender, sexuality, class or ability, one must ask appropriate questions. In planning this project, we acknowledged the imagined whiteness of the majority of our sample. However, we failed to ensure a focus on whiteness, opting instead for a focus on gender. As an alternative, we could have complicated that focus by acknowledging the privilege of our participants racialised as white (following the work of Frankenburg 1993). Doing so would have potentially engendered more complex data that, for example, may have better enabled us to consider the intersections of gender and race (alongside other identity categories) in shaping the experiences of male, trans/masculine and non-binary gestational parents. Certainly, as we note in the conclusion to this chapter, our planned analyses of the interview data adopted an intersectional approach. However, this analysis would have been greatly facilitated if we had included an explicitly intersectional focus in our interviews. Further, an explicit focus on intersectionality would have helped to ensure that our post hoc analyses were not disingenuous (i.e. by explicitly asking intersectional interview questions, rather than retrospectively examining our participants' whiteness without their direct input).

Moreover, we could – and should – have better addressed the aforementioned imagined whiteness of our research sample. While there was a (largely implicit) assumption amongst the research team that the majority of participants would be racialised as white, given the geographical locations of the research, our active attempts to recruit participants not racialised as white were not sufficient to overturn the wider phenomenon of the underrepresentation of Black and Indigenous peoples and people of colour in Western transgender (and feminist and LGBTIQ+) research (cárdenas 2016). Potentially, our efforts could have been supported by

closer attention to the racialisation of our research team and advisory committee in the project planning stages. As an all-white research team, advised by an overwhelmingly white advisory committee, it is not surprising that we found it difficult to recruit research participants not racialised as white. Not only did we lack good access to racially diverse communities of men, trans/masculine and non-binary people, but potential research participants may have looked at the all-white faces of the researchers on our website and anticipated an unthinking of racism in the research design and interview schedule.

Unfortunately, data collection for the project was completed prior to the drafting of this chapter and our reflection on these points. While we acknowledge that there is more we could – and should – have done to account for our own whiteness in our planning of the research, we have attempted to make up some ground for this shortcoming by adopting a more reflexive attitude in our analysis of the data. In particular, we have engaged in a critical analysis of racialisation processes with regard to whiteness in the interview data originating from participants racialised as white. The second story in this chapter provides a snapshot of this work, through an analysis of whiteness in discussions of race and ethnicity in a sub-sample of our interviews.

Whiteness and the participants

When it came to writing this chapter, we were again troubled by whiteness. Particularly, we were aware that the failure to orient to whiteness in the interviews was primarily our own. At the same time, we were aware that our research was undertaken with a marginalised group of people, and we had no wish to contribute further to their marginalisation. Yet, as we noted in the previous section, this perhaps represented an incorrect framing of the issue; indeed, while our participants

were marginalised by cisgenderism, most were also racialised as white and, on that basis, accorded considerable privilege.

The above points frame the materials that are presented in this section, which focus on the responses of participants racialised as white to an interview question about race and ethnicity. As it happens, this very question highlights the problem of whiteness associated with our interview schedule. Historically, the term 'race' has pertained to discrete groupings of people, as determined by practices of scientific racism (Richards 1997) for the purposes of regulation and control. Ethnicity, by contrast, refers to cultural groupings determined by a shared set of cultural practices or beliefs (in other words, it is self- or interpersonally-defined, rather than necessarily externally imposed). Yet as Gunew (1997) argues, the terms are increasingly treated as interchangeable, as is evident in the proliferation of academic work using the phrase 'race/ethnicity'. Treating the two as interchangeable is problematic, as it potentially exchanges ethnicity – a more 'polite' marker of difference – for a term ('race') with a highly problematic and contested history. Accordingly, such misuse of the terms is a problem of whiteness, as the simple substitution fails to acknowledge the ways in which ongoing histories of racialisation are components of broader histories of colonisation and scientific racism, and hence not reduceable to ethnicity.

As we shall see in the conclusion to this chapter, the insights gained from our focus on participants racialised as white and their answers to an interview question about race (or, in some cases, also ethnicity) has implications for our sample, more widely, and for male, trans/masculine and non-binary parents, in general. In this chapter, we focus solely on participants racialised as white who were interviewed in the United Kingdom. There are a number of reasons for this. First, in Australia, participants completed a demographic form that included a question about

ethnicity, and this was not then repeated as an interview question. This was an unfortunate decision made by the first author, which meant that potential conversations about racial or ethnic identity were largely foreclosed. In the United States and Canada, interviewees were asked about their ethnicity, and every single participant racialised as white described themselves simply as 'white'. We do not mean to imply that this response, in and of itself, is not interesting. Indeed, it is an exceptionally powerful statement that speaks to the operations of whiteness. When a group of people (i.e. our sample of men, trans/masculine and non-binary people from the United States and Canada) has 15 ways to talk about their gender and only one word to speak about race, that is telling. However, as noted above, it would appear that our participants often oriented to the category of race, rather than ethnicity; this suggests that a more complex interview schedule might have helped to unpack this issue. It also suggests the need for a deeper look at racialisation processes in the comprehensive coding and analysis of the interview data, which is our current focus.

Importantly, not all participants racialised as white living in the United Kingdom gave extended responses to our question about ethnicity, beyond: 'I am white'. However, five participants (out of a total of 14) provided more detail, and it is these five participants whom we focus on in this section. In doing so, our aim is to be illustrative, rather than accusatory. That is, we do not seek to 'excuse' these participants for their location within whiteness. Rather, we acknowledge that their comments form but one part of a larger whole with respect to the operations of whiteness in our project, which we were entirely too complicit in, as elaborated above.

In the first extract, we examine the participant Charlie. Charlie used the term 'human' to describe his ethnicity, while acknowledging that other people called him 'white':

RUTH: How would you describe your ethnicity?

CHARLIE: Again, human.

RUTH: Yeah?

CHARLIE: I guess, people call me white but I don't really.

As Gunew (2007) argues, whiteness operates in part through the universalisation of the views and values of people racialised as white. Accordingly, whiteness becomes the basis of what constitutes humanity, and people who are not racialised as white are positioned as less than human, or not human at all. Thus, Charlie's description of his ethnicity as 'human' evokes not only the universalising effects of whiteness, but also a logic of 'colour-blindness' (Bonilla-Silva 2006). As Frankenburg (1993) has explored extensively in her work on white women, claims to colour-blindness function as a form of anti-racist praxis, suggesting that individual people racialised as white do not 'see' race. Charlie acknowledged that other people called him white; but perhaps this claim was meant to imply that other people 'see' race, whereas Charlie viewed race (or ethnicity) as a moot point, and instead drew recourse to the universal position of 'human'. The following extract shows that Rowen, too, made a universalising claim about ethnicity:

RUTH: Okay. What about your ethnicity?

ROWEN: I usually say 'Terran' 'cause I'm from Earth.

RUTH: Yeah?

ROWEN: But, yeah. As I said, born in [city], and then lived here all my life so I'm definitely white British.

RUTH: Yeah.

ROWEN: English if you want to get specific. But I've got Welsh ancestry.

When asked to describe xir[2] ethnicity, Rowen stated that xie was 'Terran'. This is an interesting claim, and, while similar to the claim made by Charlie, offers a slightly different take on the universal. While 'human' evokes a sense of categorisation (perhaps in contrast to the category of 'animal'), 'Terran' resists comparative categorisation. To be Terran is to be of the Earth, which potentially encompasses all living beings on the planet. As such, the category 'Terran' is potentially even more universalising than the category 'human'.

Importantly, however, Rowen did not just sit with the category 'Terran'. After receiving only a minimally encouraging response from Ruth ('Yeah?'), xie elaborated a place-based understanding of ethnicity, starting with the city in which xie was born, then claiming a life-long relationship to that city, then claiming an identity as 'white British' and finally claiming English ethnicity with Welsh ancestry. This chain of claims is important. While the universal 'Terran' potentially positioned Rowen within a logic of whiteness, the minimal response from Ruth appears to have elicited a further claim to whiteness: that having lived in a particular English city for xir's entire life made Rowen 'definitely' white British, evoking a logic in which birth and length of residency defined ethnicity. Rowen then amplified this by reference to ancestry, incorporating genetics and history into xie's previous logic of birthplace and length of habitation. Whiteness as thus worked up in multiple ways in response to the interview question.

Similar to Rowen, Moddy appealed to ancestry to respond to the interview question about ethnicity:

RUTH: How would you describe your ethnicity?

MODDY: White Scottish. Or I'd go as far as to say white British because where I have some of my blood genetic family who was born in England. I like to distance myself from the UK government as much as I possibly can.

RUTH: I think that's reasonable.

MODDY: And yeah, so I'm white Scots.

In their response, and different to Charlie and Rowen, Moddy oriented immediately to a racialised category (rather than a category of ethnicity, given the interview question) and explained this through both a claim to situatedness (first Scottish, then British and finally again Scottish) and a claim to genetics. As Moreton-Robinson (2000) notes, claims to 'blood' or 'genetics' serve to essentialise whiteness, leaving it beyond question or examination. It is potentially the case that interviewees responded to the interview question about ethnicity in terms of race because doing so allowed them to make a clearer claim to genetics, which provided a substantive basis for their responses – albeit a basis that situated the categories provided as beyond reproach. Further, and as Moddy's response demonstrates, the ambiguity of descriptors of whiteness allowed them to function as descriptors of choice: Moddy could claim white Scottish or white British ethnicity – or both or neither – precisely because there is typically no social cost to claiming (or not) differing affiliations to whiteness and ancestry.[3] Interestingly, Moddy's response also revealed a desire to distance themselves from the 'UK government', despite having claimed a nationalised ethnic identity. This capacity to claim national affiliation on the one hand, while on the other hand distancing oneself from identification with the national government, is itself a function of whiteness. That is, people racialised as white can both benefit from the privilege they accrue from living in countries where racialisation is a practice of

governmentality (Moreton-Robinson 2006) and refuse a relationship with the government that serves to regulate practices of racialisation.

In contrast to the three extracts presented above, the final two extracts routinise and render whiteness mundane. Jonathan stated that he was white British, only to dismiss this as an interesting ethnic category:

RUTH: How do you describe your race or ethnicity?

JONATHAN: I'm white British.

RUTH: Yeah, cool, didn't want to assume.

JONATHAN: Yeah, no there's nothing interesting going on here ethnicity-wise.

This response potentially served two purposes: first, treating whiteness as mundane, to the point that 'there's nothing interesting going on'; and second, signalling to the interviewer that there was nothing more to be made – and that nothing more would be made – of the response. As Castagno (2014) notes in the context of schools, discussion about whiteness is often framed in terms of social niceties: to enquire about race (and to insist upon a conversation about it) is often perceived by people racialised as white as impolite (indeed, we might reflect on whether our interview question, put in the language of 'race or ethnicity', was an unconscious attempt to ask 'politely' about race). To insist on a conversation about whiteness, then, is not only to be impolite, but also to risk being read as essentialist or ignorant. As Best (2003) discusses in regard to her attempt, as a person racialised as white, to speak with a person racialised as white about whiteness, focusing on whiteness can be read as a failure to uphold the mandate of colour-blindness, and hence a failure to perform anti-racism. While we cannot know what exactly Jonathan meant by stating that 'there's nothing interesting going on here', his statement certainly

functioned to shut down the conversation, rendering any further discussion redundant (because 'there's nothing interesting').

Lewis also rendered whiteness mundane, through his use of the word 'just':

RUTH: Cool. So I don't want to assume, how would you describe your ethnicity?

LEWIS: I'm just white British.

RUTH: Yeah.

LEWIS: Fat, boring old one.

Similar to Jonathan and his use of the phrase 'nothing interesting', Lewis's use of the word 'just' suggests that nothing more should be made of his statement that he was white British. Being white British was 'just' what it was: beyond comment, beyond the need for explanation, beyond question. Yet again, a minimally encouraging response from Ruth appears to have elicited a further comment from Lewis – one that, in many ways, bolstered the 'just' claim, making his statement of ethnicity further beyond question. By evoking a three-part list of descriptors ('fat, boring, old'), and by using descriptors that are typically attributed with negative valance, Lewis implicitly challenged Ruth to frame white-Britishness as an interactionally salient topic. In other words, his negative descriptors did not invite critical commentary about whiteness. Rather, they potentially functioned to foreclose this discussion by shifting focus to other identity categories that would certainly not be open to 'polite' conversation in a research interview. Framing whiteness as boring stands in contrast to the common framing of people not racialised as white as 'exotic' (Torgovnick 1991). Again, while we cannot know why Lewis made this follow-up statement, when situated in a relationship to the response 'just white British', he appears to have been shaping (or limiting) any further conversation about whiteness.

Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter, we have explored two parallel stories. One story told of how our primary focus on gender and narratives of conception, pregnancy and childbirth in a research project on male, trans/masculine and/or non-binary gestational parents meant that we did not attend sufficiently to whiteness. The other spoke to what it meant to talk about whiteness with participants racialised as white, and how such conversations were limited both by broader narratives about race and whiteness and by our framing (or lack thereof) of whiteness as an interview topic. As we suggested in the introduction to this chapter, both stories have implications for our research, as well as for the lives of male, trans/masculine and non-binary gestational parents, more broadly.

As the literature on gestational parents shows, whiteness shapes experiences of reproduction, birth and healthcare. Cisgender women racialised as not white consistently report less than positive experiences of reproduction, often with highly negative implications for their experiences of birth and parenting (Davis 2019). Transgender men racialised as not white are shaped by ideologies of both whiteness and cisgenderism. Ware (2015), for example, describes that he 'spent so much time trying to be prepared for being a pregnant man and then a trans dad. I didn't think to prepare for being a black man raising a baby who reads to many as white' (p. 67). Echoing the literature on mixed-raced families (Phoenix and Tizard 2005), Ware's comment is a testament to how whiteness shapes the ways in which parents and families racialised as not white are viewed, engaged with and responded to. The multiple forms of marginalisation that men such as Ware face require ongoing attention in research on men, trans/masculine and non-binary gestational parents.

Importantly, and returning to Ahmed's (2004) concept of the double turn, it does not suffice to focus solely on people racialised as not white when it comes to gestational parents who are men,

trans/masculine and/or non-binary. Certainly this focus is important, as it serves to combat the whiteness that is often inherent in transgender studies. At the same time, however, we must turn first to focus on – and critically analyse – the role played by whiteness in transgender studies. The materials we have presented in this chapter suggest the central importance of theorising, thinking about and applying this focus within research in the field of transgender studies. It is not enough (though it is certainly important) to simply ensure that research samples are racially diverse. Nor is it sufficient (though it has utility) to examine whiteness post hoc, as we have done in this chapter. Instead, what is needed is an approach to transgender studies that speaks to intersectionality from the onset, including when it is intended or assumed that a research sample will be entirely comprised of people racialised as white. Returning to the example of Ware (2015), many of his experiences echo those of other trans/masculine gestational parents. Importantly, the ideology of cisgenderism negatively impacts the lives of all people – especially people viewed as situated outside of normative gender categories (i.e. pregnant men). Yet cisgenderism does not operate in a vacuum. Rather, it operates in relationship to other ideologies, including whiteness.

Further, with regard to cisgenderism, the work of Ansara and colleagues (Ansara and Hegarty 2014; Riggs, Ansara and Treharne 2015) underlines the central role played by ethno-centrism in shaping cisgenderism. The authors suggest that the category of 'transgender', treated as the paired opposite of 'cisgender', is culturally bounded, and does not hold true across cultures (or indeed across time within a given culture). They thus caution against the universalisation of the category of transgender, highlighting the importance of cultural differences in understandings. In this chapter, we have built on the work of Ansara and colleagues by highlighting the importance of examining whiteness in our study of male, trans/masculine and/or non-binary gestational

parents. Specifically, and with regard to ethno-centrism, we have suggested that there is a need to think beyond cross-cultural differences in experiences of gender and gendered categories, by performing the first part of Ahmed's (2004) double turn and critically examining the omnipresence of whiteness in transgender studies. This involves both naming and talking about whiteness in transgender studies (Vidal-Ortiz 2014) and shifting away from the often exclusive focus on people racialised as white (Snorton 2017).

The above points about whiteness, transgender studies and the lives of male, trans/masculine and/or non-binary gestational parents bring us to the question of prevalence. As noted above, we actively sought to recruit a racially diverse sample. However, this intention was potentially hampered by our whiteness as a research team, our recruitment tools and the subsequent reach of our call for participants. These are all matters that a focus on whiteness might have helped to address, as such a focus would have encouraged us to recruit a more racially diverse project team and advisory committee and to consult with a diversity of people about the project design. Yet all of these strategies might still have failed. This is because we do not actually know the true racial diversity of the population of male, trans/masculine and/or non-binary gestational parents. In a way, this represents a chicken and egg paradox: we do not know how racially diverse the population is until we undertake the research; but the research, itself, no matter how well-planned, may not capture racial diversity, in either a real or a representative fashion.

In other words, is it a side effect of whiteness that we imagine all population groups to be racially diverse? Are some population groups primarily white because the group, itself, is formatively shaped by whiteness? We do not mean to suggest that people racialised as not white (including men, trans/masculine and non-binary people) do not wish to become gestational parents, but to recognise the impact of whiteness and racism on people's reproductive decisions and options.

Certainly whiteness is not omnipotent, much as it might appear as such. However, whiteness as an organising logic, a form of power and a form of cultural capital (and the corollary marginalisation represented by non-whiteness) does shape the ways in which people live, move in and experience the world. Thus, a focus on whiteness in the study of male, trans/masculine and/or non-binary gestational parents could help us identify factors that could potentially assist people racialised as white in their efforts to become gestational parents in the face of cisgenderism, as well as factors that could potentially limit people racialised as not white in their efforts along the same path. In other words, while it is vitally important to listen to the stories of male, trans/masculine and non-binary gestational parents racialised as not white, this does not represent the only approach to examining the effects of racialised marginalisation. Additionally, we might look at the ways in which whiteness facilitates movement and the enactment of rights – how it, in differing ways, smooths a pathway through cisgenderism (Ahmed 2007).

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[2] Xir and xie are pronouns that some non-binary people use to refer to themselves.

[3] This is complicated in the context of Ireland and Britain by the racialisation of Irish Catholics (historically positioned as *non*-white) in the development of racialised capitalism under British colonialism (Virdee 2019). Moreover, as Bhopal (2017) observes, 'white' Roma people and Traveller communities in Britain continue to experience severe racism.