Tales of Sexual Diversity and Identity, from Second-Generation, South Asian Individuals in the United Kingdom

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List of Abbreviations

- South-Asian: S-A
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transexual, Queer/Questioning, +: LGBTQ+ or Queer
- Counselling Psychology: CoP
- Counselling Psychologists: CoP's
- British Psychological Association: BPS
- Health and Care Professional Council: HCPC
- People of Colour: POC
- Logico-scientific paradigm: LSP
- Narrative Paradigm: NP
- Social Identity Theory: SIT
- Self-Categorisation Theory: SCT
- Identity Process Theory: IPT
- Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: IPA
- Narrative analysis: NA
- Dialogic/Performative Narrative Analysis: DPNA
- Internet Mediated Research: IMR

Abstract

Despite existing literature describing South-Asian LGBTQ+ identities as 'complex', this community is often under-represented within psychological research. Much of the literature in existence has also been conducted through a Western lens, and largely infers that individuals who identify with these communities are plagued by obstacles when navigating their identities; leaving them unable to form a stable sense of 'self'. However, this Westernised approach, along with the lack of research may result in this community being 'silenced' or 'othered'. Furthermore, exploring these rich, diverse identities through a Western gaze revokes the ability, and personal agency for these individuals to create identities which are meaningful for them, and representative of their uniqueness.

This research sets to explore the identities of second-generation, South-Asian, LGBTQ+ individuals in the United Kingdom. For this community, difficulties regarding identity have often been found to contribute to higher rates of mental health distress, due to the multiple demands and expectations placed on their 'self'. Dialogically exploring identity narratives allowed for the consideration of individual's internal and external worlds, alongside capturing processes of identity navigation and the impacts of wider discourses. Furthermore, pairing the values of narrative inquiry with queer theory concepts permitted a more transparent, flexible and fluid discursive framework; allowing individuals the freedom to speak about, and understand their identities on their own terms. For this community, such notions were especially important to consider, permitting for identities to be conceptualised, expressed and understood in a multitude of ways. Furthermore, this approach allowed for the interrogation of systems of power, often embedded within knowledge production, cultures and histories, chiming with anti-colonial practices.

Presenting the accounts of eight, second-generation, South-Asian individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, this paper examines how individuals understand, share and 'perform'

their identities in the UK. In-depth exploration of participant's narratives also allowed insight into the meanings attributed to their intersectional identities, accounting for how the 'self' is constructed amid varying social, cultural, religious, ethnic and/or personal contexts. Due to Covid-19, the research was conducted online. Semi-structured interviews were recorded, before being individually transcribed and analysed using dialogical narrative analysis; attending to what was communicated/performed when expressing their identities, how identities were constructed, 'positioning', 'multi-voicedness'.

The analysis of each participant's narrative is shared individually, organised under inter-related themes which reflect a facet of their identities. Each participant shared and performed their narratives distinctively, offering insight into how their identities were constructed, and the meanings attributed to these. Similarities identified in ways of articulating, understanding and changing identities across narratives are also reflected upon and outlined. These are: 'active ownership of identities, activism and challenging norms and fluidity'. Each seemed to strengthen individual's sense of 'self'.

In addition to contributing to the limited literature focusing on this community in the UK, a key reflection from this research is the idea that despite adversities South-Asian, LGBTQ+ individuals face when navigating their identities in the UK, identity transformations experienced by this group were used to respond proactively to social, cultural, religious and relational forces, all of which seem to directly discriminate against them, and others. Implications for Counselling Psychology include the need to be more mindful of the complex identities held by South-Asian LGBTQ+ individuals, alongside increased attentiveness to the interactions between sexuality, relationship diversity and other distinct identity intersects. Counselling psychologists may also be able to draw on their leadership identity to promote systemic change, both within services and communities. Such

ideas align with the social justice philosophies of the profession, alongside the importance of being reflexive, ethical and collaborative; all of which are encompassed within this research.

Chapter One: Introduction

1. Introduction

South-Asian (S-A) LGBTQ+ identities are often described as 'complex' and interwoven (Chowdhury & Okazaki, 2020; Patel, 2019), with each layer being treasured by the community; individuals demand their identities are not condensed into monolithic labels (Alimahomed, 2010; Patel, 2019). However, little is known about the unique identities held by this community, as they, along with other people of colour (POC), are often underrepresented within psychological research (Alimahomed, 2010; D'Augelli & Patterson, 2001; Inman et al., 2014; Jaspal, 2014, 2017, 2018; Jaspal & Siraj, 2011; Patel, 2019; Redwood & Gill, 2013; Siraj, 2012); despite identity being broadly researched in psychology (Howard, 2000). A review of psychological research across the USA, found that only 133 articles published between 1980 and 2012 looked at the experiences of this group (Inman et al., 2014). Despite there being an increase in research over this period, this was not proportionate to the growth of the S-A population in the USA at the time (Inman et al., 2014). Moreover, only 1% of journals studied the LGBTQ+ community (Inman et al., 2014). I was unable to source a similar review completed in the UK, nevertheless outcomes may still stress the lack of research with this community, in Western psychology. This presents cause for concern, as POC and LGBTQ+ populations experience multiple layers of marginalisation which may be being overlooked due to the shortage of literature (Kumar & Nevid, 2010; McKeown et al., 2010; Narui, 2011; Sandil et al., 2015). This provides a strong rationale for this research.

The dearth of UK research was noticed during my literature search, with much of the research originating from Canadian or American sources. Research also tended to focus on experiences of other queer POC. Nevertheless, these too were considered, as they offered

insight into how collectivist ideologies and values, like those adhered to by S-A communities, connect, or disconnect, with sexuality, and the impact of this. I do acknowledge that reflections from S-A LGBTQ+ individuals in the UK may differ from the insights offered in these papers for many reasons, including diversities in social, political and historical contexts (Eysenck & Martin, 2001).

Lastly, as UK based literature with queer communities has largely tended to focus on exploring specific life experiences or phenomena, like parenting or relationships, little attention is given to issues of intersectionality (Butler et al., 2010; Das Nair & Butler, 2012), or 'full' identities, providing additional rationale for this research.

To understand more about the distinctive identities held by the S-A LGBTQ+ community, this research draws on narrative concepts; gaining understanding of how, and why their identities, are structured the way they are, and the meanings these offer (Squire, 2012; Sullivan, 2012; Willig, 2019). Closely and critically attending to the stories shared, also uncovers more than just descriptive awareness of identities (Moen, 2006; Riessman, 2008), whilst also offering awareness of the internal, developing stories constructed by individuals, through integrating past, present and future narratives (Bauer et al., 2008; Kerr et al., 2019).

Approaching this population through a narrative lens not only compliments the humanistic philosophies of Counselling Psychology (CoP) (British Psychological Society (BPS), 2006, 2019; Woolfe, 2010), but offers implications for clinical work, services and CoP more broadly; allowing us to better appreciate, and humanistically navigate ideographic narratives, rather than simply adhering to culturally specific suggestions of working.

Diasporic second-generation, S-A LGBTQ+ individuals face unique identity challenges, and may also feel pressured to conform to Western ways of living, and standards (Khullar, 2020). This added intricacy, burdens individuals to balance expectations of 'home'

and the West (Brah & Pheonix, 2004), often resulting in a higher prevalence of mental health distress (Chowdhury et al, 2020; Kumar et al, 2010; Sandil et al., 2015). Regardless, many are deterred from accessing support due to the presence of social and cultural norms that further marginalise their identities (Choudhury et al., 2009). The limited literature on this population perhaps also creates disparities in therapeutic support (Ade-Serrano et al., 2016). As the BPS widely emphasise the importance of appropriate mental health support, which encompasses adaptations for culture and identity (BPS, 2006, 2019a, 2019c; Remley & Herlihy, 2010), this again strengthens the value of this research.

Before I proceed, I would like to explicitly present my own 'self', as a second-generation, S-A, heterosexual, cis-female in the UK. Thus, I hold an 'insider' and 'outsider' status within this research context. I consider this to be important as I am aware of the ways in which institutions largely produce knowledge with the use of theories, language and epistemologies of the West (de Abreu, 2020). However, I believe my subjectivity is relevant to consider when researching this topic and population. Nevertheless, I do acknowledge that I am significantly informed by scholarship, and my upbringing in the UK, so cannot position myself as being entirely detached from Western subjectivity. Additionally, as I approach this research with a constructivist epistemology and believe knowledge to be co-constructed, I believe it is important that I make my own viewpoints unambiguous early on, as researcher positionality affects the entirety of research process (Darwin-Holmes, 2020). I elaborate on this further within the methodology section. To reflect on my inseparable connection to the research process, I also largely write in first person.

This research journey begins with brief descriptions of the terms S-A, LGBTQ+ and identity, offering insight into how I view these expressions in the context of this research. Despite offering these 'static' definitions, I would like to note that I view identities as ever evolving and fluid. Following on, I consider the implications of historical, social, cultural and

political contexts, and what it may mean to identify as S-A LGBTQ+, in the UK. This section importantly outlines the complexities within these identities. I also briefly reflect on identity formation theories and how these perhaps offer a vehicle to understanding identities. These insights are offered to contextualise this research.

Continuing, I review existing, available literature, providing a better understanding of the influences defining S-A LGBTQ+ identities, before highlighting the gap in the research, and informing readers of my research question. Subsequently, I discuss how I intend to carry out the research, before presenting the outcomes.

2. Definitions and Context

2.1. 'South Asian'

'South Asian' is a collective term used to describe individuals whose families geographically descend from Southern regions of Asia, including but not limited to, countries such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan (Lee & Ramakrishnan, 2020). Sub-sects of communities exist within these groups, divided by caste, financial status, social status and various other identity intersects (Lee et al, 2020). S-A individuals also speak many languages, and follow numerous distinct religions (Fleras & Elliott, 2000; Choudhury et al., 2009). Although perhaps an obvious point, these individualities can also contribute to how people see themselves, and subsequently speak about their identities.

At present, in the UK, 7.5% of the population identify as British-Asian, with 2.5% recognising themselves as Indian, 0.75% as Bangladeshi and 2.0% as Pakistani (Office of National Statistics (ONS), 2012). Remaining individuals identified as 'other' Asian or Chinese (ONS, 2012). The British-Asian community is the second largest in the UK (ONS, 2020).

Within this research I use the phrase 'South Asian' to move beyond the typically 'Indian-centric' view of this community within Western contexts (Venkatraman, 2021). I

acknowledge that the individualities held within these different communities allows the S-A community to exist independently, however agree with Venkatraman's (2021) notion that this phrase holds power as it allows for the existence of regional specificity within identities, alongside a resistance to be defined by borders. This is something I am also able to relate to within my own S-A identity, recognising aspects of difference, and community.

2.2. 'LGBTQ+ or 'Queer'

The term LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender) was first introduced in the early 90's to represent anyone who did not identify as gay (Stonewall, 2015). 'Q' was more recently added, and despite previously being a derogatory slur, it has been reclaimed by many LGBTQ+ individuals. For some, Q denotes 'queer', reflecting a rejection of binaries in gender and sexuality, whilst perhaps freeing individuals from sexuality stereotypes, whereas others use it to signify 'questioning' of sexuality (Stonewall, 2015). With gender and sexuality increasingly being considered as fluid, the + represents the growth of identities; with the acronym being extended to LGBTQQIAAP, incorporating 'Intersex, Allies, Asexual and Pansexual'; commonly shortened to LGBTQ+.

In past research, LGBTQ+ individuals have also been described as 'non-heterosexual', which although provides a broad conceptualisation of sexuality, may be seen to privilege heterosexuality as the norm. Consequently, I intend to use 'queer' and 'LGBTQ+' interchangeably, hopefully fostering a more inclusive space. I will also exclusively use the terms and pronouns participants self-identify with, for themselves and relationships. I believe this is important, as Western ideologies regarding sexuality, may not necessarily apply to POC (Butler et al., 2010), or in this instance S-A's; failing to acknowledge differences may further their invisibility, perpetuating 'identity violence' (Das Nair & Thomas, 2012).

It is however important for me to address that there are limitations to using the phrases LGBTQ+ and/or queer within this space. Firstly, Western understandings of sexual identity and 'labels' used, may not speak to, or capture the lived experiences and diverse meanings attached to intersectional identities (Massad, 2002), resulting in persecution and oppression (Khanna, 2009). Furthermore, the importance of adhering to these labels may reflect the continued impact of imperialism, where LGBTQ+ individuals are forced to adopt mainstream labels for their identities and relationships, due to social expectations and certain meanings held within Western societies (Massad, 2002). Reflecting specifically on the term queer, it is also important for me to acknowledge that this 'label' is one that is embraced by some, but rejected by others, due to its previous association with being used as a derogatory slur (Perlman, 2019).

Approaching the LGBTQ+ community as one, also presents its own concerns, as the nuances, and unique struggles of the individual identities underneath this umbrella may be missed or neglected (Sabsay, 2013). Furthermore, the experiences reflected by individuals may not be representative of all the identities under the umbrella (Sabsay, 2013). The term LGBTQ+ may also be viewed hierarchically, reflecting a male dominated image which again may not be reflective of all LGBTQ+ identities (Sabsay, 2013).

Despite these critiques, it is hoped that self-identification can encourage individuals to create, identify and express their unique identities in ways which are appropriate and relevant to them and their diverse experiences (Better, 2014). This research also aligns itself with 'Queer Theory', which acknowledges sex, gender and sexuality can take on any fluid form, which does not conform to heterosexual norms (Butler & Byrne, 2008). Furthermore, Queer perspectives support individual's choices in developing and expressing their own, personal, intersectional identities (Butler et al, 2008); not often acknowledged within LGBTQ+

research (McKeown et al., 2010). Approaching this research through this lens, I find myself supporting the humanistic and social justice values of CoP (Goodrich et al., 2016).

2.3. Second-Generation / Diaspora

Until shifts in political opinion occurred in the 60's (Brown & Talbot, 2006), post-World War II, the British empire permitted the migration of S-A individuals to Britain, to support the reconstruction of the economy (Brown et al, 2006; Parekh, 2006). This resulted in S-A's becoming a vital and visible community in the UK (Robinson, 2005).

These migrant communities were considered as the first-generation, as they were born outside of the UK, thus second-generation refers to those born in the UK, with at least one first-generation parent (Wang & Li, 2019).

The trans-national, diasporic nature of second-generation identities is said to be complicated (Brocket, 2020); on one hand, it is described as dynamic and hybrid, whilst on the other, individuals are seen to be relentlessly striving for a sense of belonging and connection to their 'homeland' (Durham, 2004; Mavroudi, 2007; Robinson, 2005). The fluidity of identity boundaries can be problematic, but also empowering, nevertheless it is important we remain attentive to the possible challenges that may occur within these identities through space and time (Brubaker, 2005).

2.3.1. South Asian Identity in the UK

To share understanding of the identities of S-A LGBTQ+ individuals, I must first contextualise them. Concepts of culture, race and ethnicity can be difficult to describe, largely because of the various definitions and understandings available (Das Nair et al, 2012). Ford & Harawa (2010) suggest that ethnicity is a 'multi-level' (group/individual), social construct connected with race, and is used to distinguish between diverse population groups, establishing group or personal identity. Culture fits within this, and is the notion of groups holding distinctive values, customs, believes and knowledge, which can be passed through

generations, feeding into ones identity (Kitayama & Cohen, 2010). For many LGBTQ+ POC, these descriptions can foster anxiety and conflict, in their identities (Das Nair et al, 2012). So, it is important to remain mindful of the complexities of using these terms linearly, and become aware of an individual's connections, and disconnections to cultural or ethnic ideologies. It is also important to recognise that culture and ethnicity are just two strands of identity for S-A LGBTQ+ individuals, with many others intertwining into their sense of self, e.g., culture may intersect with religion.

S-A culture is believed to be collectivist, relational, patriarchal and hierarchical in nature (Deepak, 2005). Individuals often have defining roles, with value systems promoting interdependence (Deepak, 2005; Kay, 2012). 'Elders' are expected to make decisions concerning numerous aspects of their children's lives, including marriage, which is typically heterosexual (Deepak, 2005; Patel, 2019); which is especially important, as families arrange their lives around continuity of their family name and care of elders (Bhandari & Titzmann, 2017; Deepak, 2005; Mehrotra, 2016). Consequently, parents believe it is their obligation to find 'suitable' partners for their children (Mehrotra, 2016). The inability to do this is deemed a personal failure, causing shame for families (Bhandari et al, 2017; Brar, 2012), as honour and tradition are seen to be compromised (Couture-Carron, 2020; Iqbal & Golombok, 2018).

Navigating these traditions and expectations can be particularly arduous for S-A women, due to the strict gender roles they are expected to adhere to, alongside a deep-seated belief that men hold superior positions (Suppal, 1996). Thus, women are expected to uphold these values, which ultimately reflect genuine feminity, devotion and respect (Suppal, 1996). Deviating from these standards and norms are said to bring increased shame and damage to the families reputation (Suppal, 1996).

Ultimately, though children are encouraged to develop individuality, this is only permitted within the context and boundaries of the family unit, with dignity, self-control,

respect and loyalty being emphasised from a young age (Alimahomed, 2010; Inman et al., 2014; Luther et al, 2019; Raval, 2009). Thus, from infancy, individuals are pushed towards, interdependence, self-sacrifice and compliance (Gilbert et al., 2004; Inman et al., 2014; Raval, 2009), resulting in less attention and power being given to personal identities, like sexuality (Matoo, 2014). This can be made especially difficult for individuals living in the West, as they navigate deeply engrained, often unspoken S-A family values alongside Western systems which favour individuality and personal expression (DasGupta, 2005). As a result, individuals are left to balance contradictory demands and social expectations when their performing identities, which can often result in anguish (Greig, 2003; Patel, 2019).

For S-A individuals, parents are often a source of support when faced with afflictions (Jaspal, 2020), thus, when attempting to understand personal identities like sexuality, individuals often hope to be understood and heard, but can frequently be left disappointed and face challenges to their sense of 'self', if no support is offered (Jaspal, 2020). Equally, parents of S-A queer individuals may find themselves battling with internalised, stereotyped images of what diverse sexual identity looks like, leaving them in a high state of psychological distress (Jaspal, 2014, 2020). Although social attitudes regarding LGBTQ+ identities are getting better, and perhaps has allows for more parental acceptance within Western societies (McCormack, 2012, 2018)., this however is not the case for all queer POC in Britain (Jaspal, 2020).

2.4. 'Identity'

According to the Cambridge Dictionary 'identity' ("Identity", n.d.) is "who a person is, or the qualities of a person, or group that make them different from others". In this vein, identity provides an understanding of the 'self', which perhaps encompasses experiences, memories, values and relationships (Verkuyten, 2018).

However, I believe this definition to be overly simplistic, and approaching identity through an intersectional lens may allow us to shed light onto complex, overlapping aspects of the 'self'. Intersectionality also offers an analytic basis for comprehending how aspects of individuals' political and social identities may merge, generating varied discriminations and privileges (Crenshaw, 1989, 2017). Furthermore, it can make visible the multiple identities held by individuals, whilst uncovering how these are relevant to day-to-day life (Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006).

Intersects of identity are often seen as shifting in a hierarchy of significance, responding to situations, experiences and stages of identity development, with some aspects of the 'self' playing larger roles in the performance of identity than others (Jordan, 2018; Narváez et al., 2009). Social contexts can also lead individuals to accept or reject aspects of their 'self', encouraging or suppressing different identities (Brown, 2018; Narváez et al., 2009).

2.4.1. Theoretical understandings of Identity

Identity can be conceptualised through varying paradigms, offering different ways to understand the 'self' (Bruner, 2000); the logico-scientific paradigm (LSP) and the narrative paradigm (NP).

LSP infers identity to be generalisable and verifiable through testing hypotheses (Benwell et al, 2010). It also advocates the 'Social Identity Approach' housing two distinct, yet related theories, with similar methodological, ideological and meta-theoretical assumptions (Hornsey, 2008); 'Social Identity Theory (SIT)' and 'Self Categorisation Theory (SCT)'. Identity Process Theory (IPT) (Breakwell, 1986) also locates itself within the LSP (Hornsey, 2008).

SIT arose through experimentally exploring intergroup dynamics, and found that individuals show favourable bias towards their 'ingroup', whom they feel a sense of

'belonging' to (Tajfel, 1972). This bias was seen repeatedly, despite experiments being lab based and stripped of context and meaning (Hornsey, 2008). Tajfel (1978) elaborated on this, proposing human interaction to be on a continuum, from 'interpersonal', where individuals relate with no awareness of each other's social categories, to 'intergroup', where an individual's representations as an ingroup member are made prominent, and distinctive, leaving idiosyncratic traits hidden; creating an 'us' and 'them'. Intergroup interactions supposedly strengthen group distinctions and personal identity (Tajfel, 1978), offering a 'positive' self-concept (Tajfel, 1978; Turner et al., 1987; Turner & Reynolds, 2012). These ideas resonate with collectivist communities, like S-A's, where group welfare is prioritised over individuality (Akkuş et al., 2017; Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1999). Therefore through this lens, it could be theorised that these individuals may be more sensitive to social and contextual change, creating severer evaluations of those perceived as being inconsistent with group norms (Oyserman et al., 2002; Triandis, 1999), like those identifying as LGBTQ+.

SCT centres itself on intragroup processes (Turner & Reynolds, 2012), and describes three layers of inclusiveness which are considered important for identity: the 'superordinate level' (human identity), 'intermediate level' (social identity) and the 'subordinate level' (personal identity) (Turner et al, 2012). Within SCT, if one level gains meaning, others lose importance (Hornsey, 2008), e.g., if an individual develops awareness of their unique potentials within personal identity, less attention is paid to the standards of social groups.

Finally, IPT (Breakwell, 1986) emphasises that identity 'threats' foster identity growth. According to Breakwell (1986) identity is shaped through two stages: 'processes and structures'. 'Processes' include 'assimilation-accommodation' and 'evaluations'; assimilation sees new aspects of identity being accepted, whilst accommodation makes room for new components. Through 'evaluations' individuals assign meaning to the contents of identity. 'Structures' likewise are two-dimensional, reflecting 'content and value'. 'Content' refers to

idiosyncratic characteristics, whilst 'value' alludes to a positive or negative weighting given to identity facets (Breakwell, 1986), which are based on flexible and changeable, social and personal value systems (Breakwell, 1986).Through these processes, it could be hypothesised that queer S-A's may still be able to construct finalised identities, despite social 'threats'.

Across the spectrum, NP advocates that identity is fluid and dynamic, fundamentally existing within interpersonal relationships, which validate identities (Benwell et al, 2010). Furthermore, identity is continuously constructed via dialogue, with narratives "engaging fully with the particulars of subjective experience*"* (Reid & West, 2015, p.3).

NP also emphasises the adaptability of identity, inferring that it is an "ideology cognised through the individual engagement with discourse, made manifest in a personal narrative constructed and reconstructed across the life course, and scripted in and through social interaction and social practice" (Hammack, 2008, p.222); aligning it with this research.

Epistemologically, NP chimes with social constructionist and constructivist philosophies, and views sexuality as being socially composed (Cerulo, 1997; Hammack & Cohler, 2009; Haslam & Levy, 2006). Thus, identities can be explored within a narrative framework (Wells, 2011), allowing us to consider how participants story their identities during interactions. It is important to note that whilst the aforementioned epistemologies share the underlying belief that meaning-making processes are rooted in specific socio-cultural contexts, they differ with regards to the emphasis placed on individuals, versus the social world (Vall-Castelló, 2016).

Although these models offer valuable insight in to identity formation, I approach them through a critical lens as predominant psychological theories, like these, are largely a product of the West, written by Western authors (Koç & Kafa, 2019). Thus, it is vital to question the extent to which they can be applied to individuals with diverse identities (Koç et al, 2019). There is no doubt that for diaspora living in Western societies there will be a deeper

engagement with Western culture, however the applicability of these models may still differ (Koç et al, 2019).

As identity construction can be a confusing and complex process for second-generation S-A's (Dhillon & Ubhi, 2003), it could be questioned whether racial and ethnic identity models such as the 'Minority Development Model' (Atkinson et al., 1997) or the 'People of Colour Racial Identity Model' (Helms, 1995) may be more relevant to consider when it comes to this community. However, these models are largely based on experiences of African American's, thus again may not be fully appropriate when looking at S-A's in the UK (Cokley, 2007; Iwamoto et al., 2013). Furthermore, these models are largely based in quantitative research (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007), inferring that there is a universal 'truth' to the identity formation process, much like the models within the LSP. More recent literature however reflects that for racialised individuals the development of the 'self' is a lifelong, fluid and changeable process, which continues even when the person feels 'secure' in their identities (Iwamoto et al., 2013).

'The South-Asian Identity Development Model', offered by Ibrahim et al. (1997) also advances existing knowledge regarding identity formation with ethnic minority groups. Based on the identities of first-generation and second-generation S-A's born in the USA, Ibrahim et al., (1997) explain that first-generation S-A's are better able to adapt to mainstream Western culture and develop a bi-cultural identity which encompasses aspects of social and familial cultures. The model suggests that individuals engage in dynamic processes of questioning conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, all of which result in identity acceptance. However, as this model solely focuses on first-generation S-A's, and does not offer insight into the complexities surround identity formation for second-generation individuals (Iwamoto et al., 2013; Miville et al., 2005).

Simplistically, outsiders could suggest that the diasporic S-A community should just choose one identity and stick with it. However, through a narrative framework, as identity is shaped by interactions (Das, 2009), individuals cannot simply 'hide' or disregard aspects of their 'self'. For example, even when merely being asked "where are you from?", individuals are instantly 'othered', as they cannot simply fit into the typically Anglocentric views of what being British implies, because of skin colour (Badruddoja, 2008; Rajiva, 2006). Parents of second-generation S-A's can further complicate identity navigation through the encouragement of assimilation, alongside discouragement of the abandonment of racial, ethnic and cultural identities (Aycan & Kanugo, 1998; Salam, 2004; Srinivasan, 2020); resulting in identity becoming a "dialogical process shaped by multiple, contradictory, asymmetrical, and often shifting cultural voices of race, gender, sexuality, and nationality" (Bhatia & Ram, 2004, p.228). Hall's (1995, 2004) research with the second-generation Sikh community in the UK elaborates on such ideas, stating that for the diasporic S-A community, identity formation becomes a creative negotiation of class, race, gender and other forms of identity available to individuals at home and outside. This has resulted in diasporic S-A's constructing different ways of 'being', which are often created from opportunities and limitations within ambiguous spaces of culture, family and power.

3. Sexuality: Evolving social perceptions

In addition to intersectionality, S-A LGBTQ+ individuals in the UK must be understood through historical, social, cultural and political contexts. Particularly reflecting on views of sexuality, both within the UK and S-A, it is clear to see the impact of social change, both on the community, and perhaps the above definitions. In this small space, I am unable to offer a comprehensive overview of such a complex history, and also cannot explore the histories of all identities within the S-A and LGBTQ+ spectrum; attempting to do so may be

a misjustice. Thus, I will reflect on the mainstream discourses, to provide a background for understanding existing literature, and the current research.

Queer identities were punishable in the UK from as early as the fourth century (Boswell, 1980); largely due to the influence of the church (Hubbard, 2003). As time progressed, prosecutions against homosexual males increased, with legislations like 'The Offences Against the Person Act 1828', deeming homosexual activity a criminal offence (Stonewall, 2017).

However, many protested these restrictions, creating 'underground' spaces where sexuality could be expressed freely (Burns, 2018). Homosexual rights activists also surfaced, alongside increased research into sexuality (Lewis, 2013). British sexologist Havelock Ellis, argued that diverse sexuality was not a 'disease', but a natural 'abnormality' which did not need 'treating' (Barker et al., 2008; Herrn, 1995). During this period, feminist gender studies journals, also attempted to challenge relationship and gender stereotypes and began reporting insights into lesbian identities (Barker et al., 2008; Stonewall, 2017). Although female homosexuality was not overtly targeted by legislation, it was however discussed in Parliament for the first time, with the view of introducing regulations (Derry, 2018). Discussions were however quickly dismissed due to fears that a law would raise attention to, and encourage women to explore same-sex relationships (Derry, 2018).

Following further research in the 20th century, sexuality was described as existing on a fluid continuum, ranging from 'complete heterosexuality to complete homosexuality' (Kinsey et al., 1948/1998), and bisexuality was introduced (Barker et al., 2008; Lewis, 2013).

Activists continued to battle for LGBTQ+ rights and equality, initially focusing on homosexuality. Thus, the Sexual Offences Act 1967 was introduced in England and Wales legalising homosexuality on the condition it was consensual, private and between individual

aged 21+ (Stonewall, 2017). The Criminal Justice Act 1980 in Scotland followed, also decriminalising homosexuality (Stonewall, 2017).

Unfortunately, due to the HIV/AIDs epidemic, sexual prejudices resurfaced. Section 28 was introduced, illegalising the 'intentional' promotion of homosexuality or publication of homosexual materials (Stonewall, 2017). This remained until the early 2000s, when it was eventually repealed, along with other legislations forbidding diverse sexuality (Stonewall, 2017).

Sexuality in S-A was understood through stories (Bosia et al., 2020; Chandrasekar & Gurusamy, 2019). Older religions like Hinduism, reflected that our bodies, personalities and sexualities resulted from karmic burden, a natural act of God (Bosia et al., 2020). The introduction of Islam to the S-A continents in the sixteenth century altered these views, with the Quran explaining that males and females were created as distinct beings, with differing roles (Luther & Ung Loh, 2019). British and Portuguese colonisers exacerbated negative perceptions of diverse sexuality (Chandrasekar et al, 2019). The conservative, Catholic views brought by colonisers resulted in sexually diverse individuals being seen as the 'white man's burden', who needed saving (Chandrasekar et al, 2019). Colonisers described sexual fluidity as degeneracy, with open conversations about sex and sexual identity being widely discouraged (Chatterjee, 2012). Over time, S-A nations began embracing conservative Western ideologies regarding sexuality, believing that gender and sexual fluidity should be discouraged (Bosia et al., 2020; Chatterjee, 2012; Pailin, 1984). As a result, communities like the Hijras ('hermaphrodite') were also depicted as 'abnormal', losing their previously held strong social and spiritual identity (Luther et al, 2019). Their identities were also criminalised (Chatterjee, 2012).

Although today, Hijras are recognised as a third gender, post-colonial views remain, as countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan continue to illegalise same-sex relationships

(Kallivayalil, 2004). The repeal of colonial-era laws, like Section 377 in India, which directly discriminated against LGBTQ+ identification, has only recently occurred, meaning there is a long way to go for LGBTQ+ equality across S-A (Luther et al, 2019).

As S-A's immigrated to the UK, views regarding sexuality forged during British rule remained (Lewis, 2013). The maintenance of these polarised perspectives erases identities which do not use Western conceptualisations to understand sexuality (Alimahomed, 2010; Brah & Pheonix, 2004; Mitha et al., 2021; Patel, 2019). Thus, queerness is depicted as being shameful and stigmatic, creating higher levels of mental health distress due to the often associated rejection, honour' based violence, and/or abuse (Idriss, 2020). Stigma is also frequently internalised, and intensified by rejection and racism from the wider queer community (Jaspal, 2017; Mitha et al., 2021), furthering difficulties in navigating a sense of 'self' (Cyrus, 2017).

4. Chapter Summary

This chapter contextualises the research, whilst also offering readers insight into my views as a researcher, and how I intend to approach this topic. Next, I will set the scene for this thesis, highlighting the gaps in literature and elaborating on the relevance of this work to CoP. I will then consider methodological considerations in chapter three, before presenting the analysis of participant interviews. Finally, I will broach limitations, suggestions for future research and research implications. Throughout, I intend to remain as reflexive as possible.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

1. Introduction

With CoP's assuming an active leadership position in topics of multicultural concerns (Kennedy & Arthur, 2014), this research offers a much needed voice to an often under-researched community (Patel, 2019). I strongly believe the lack of research on this community also illustrates the extent to which they have been made invisible, and perhaps unintentionally silenced. This is concerning as existing literature which focuses on this community reports individuals to experience numerous marginalisations and turmoil within their identities (Choudhury et al., 2009; Ghabrial, 2017; Jaspal, 2018; Luther & Ung Loh, 2019; McKeown et al., 2010; Narui, 2011a; Patel, 2019; Sandil et al., 2015). Existing literature which has researched the voices of racialised LGBTQ+ diaspora also highlights the existence of higher rates of mental health distress being linked to a sense of not belonging (Cochran et al., 2007; Díaz et al., 2001; Ghabrial, 2017), both at home and within the queer community (Akerlund & Cheung, 2000). This sense of not belonging is said to be exacerbated due to the varied experiences and identities held by individuals (S. Shah & Tewari, 2019), alongside pressures rooted in cultural, religious, gender and heteronormative expectations (Brar, 2012; Deepak, 2005; Jaspal, 2020).

Alongside the dearth of literature, existing research centring on S-A queer individuals may only offer partial insight into their identities as the majority of papers largely focus on specific experiences of queer S-A's (Butler et al., 2010; Das Nair et al, 2012), such as racism or arranged marriage. Attending to 'whole' narratives can foster insight into the relationality of identity, offering validation, and a connection to wider social and cultural narratives, alongside enabling us to see how identities can be fluidly and dynamically constructed (Benwell et al, 2010). Additionally, these insights should enable us to consider the strengths held by this community. For example, within many of the papers reviewed, outcomes

explicitly and implicitly described individuals to use personal agency to navigate identities and overcome difficulties. Although agency has been found to be important for mental health (Lysaker et al., 2001), it is rarely researched, or considered further; something I have remained mindful of throughout the research process.

Within this literature review, I also draw on a narrative framework to tell the story of how social, cultural, religious and ethnic structures can impact S-A queer identities in the UK, and how individuals navigate these changing structures through time and contexts (Narváez et al., 2009). Before I commence, I would like to address that much of the below literature does not offer epistemological and ontological transparency, alongside reflexivity, both hugely valuable within qualitative research (Berger, 2015). This has also made it difficult to appraise methodologies from a paradigmatic perspective. Awareness of a researcher's positioning can also promote cohesion and consistency, whilst supporting empirical assertions (Holloway & Todres, 2003). The lack of reflexivity has also resulted in difficulties understanding the researchers personal and professional processes, which perhaps connect with epistemologies (Råheim et al., 2016), alongside how data was co-constructed (Smith et al., 2013).

2. Culture, Ethnicity and Sexuality

As alluded to above, S-A queer diaspora face many tensions whilst attempting to understand, construct and express their identities (Al-Sayyad, 2010; Khullar, 2020). The many identities held by individuals intersect, responding to, and being shaped by lived experiences (Brown, 2012). The prominence and performance of identities is also seen to alter across time, and in response to contexts (Narváez et al., 2009), with different contexts creating tensions, or resiliencies, which in turn foster rejection or acceptance in one's 'self' (Brown, 2012; Narváez et al., 2009). Additionally, internal conflict between identities, regardless of their value, may also influence the acceptance or rejection of identities (Narváez

et al., 2009). As the second-generation, S-A, LGBTQ+ community in the UK are exposed to countless socio-political factors regarding their sexuality, gender, religion, culture and so on, these perhaps determine how they value and negotiate their sense of 'self', with unique intersections fostering distinctive lived experiences, both shared and individual.

Finally, it is also important to reflect that the tensions queer S-A diaspora face in navigating identities may also be rooted in an extensive history of colonial exploitation (Chatterjee, 2012). It seems that colonisers attempts at 'fixing' depravity within S-A cultures through reshaping parts of society, politics, religion and culture have resulted in identity binaries being established and continuously reinforced through the expectations and pressures individuals face when navigating their identities, alongside the colonial constructions and language used to describe them (Chatterjee, 2012). Although Western ideologies regarding sexuality have become part of the dominant discourse, the roots of this rhetoric must be acknowledged.

2.1. Navigating Conflicting Ideologies

With S-A family values stressing interdependency, collectivism and typically heteronormative values (Deepak, 2005; Jaspal, 2020), for queer individuals navigating sexuality can be particularly difficult as LGBTQ+ identities are deemed to be rooted in Western ideologies (Goldberg, 2010; Patel, 2019; Puar, 2013).

Attempting to own and express sexual identity can, for some individuals subsequently result in parental rejection (Jaspal, 2020) due to the significance of heterosexual marriage and relationships in S-A culture; non-heterosexual marriages and relationships threaten honour (Bacchus, 2017). Jaspal (2014) researched this phenomena within his qualitative paper, which explored the cultural pressures marriage posed for twelve British S-A gay men. Using diary entries recorded over a month, participants were asked to reflect on family expectations, heterosexual marriages and discussions around this. Using interpretative phenomenological

analysis (IPA), Jaspal (2014) found that shame was experienced both internally and externally, through negative self-perception and how others saw, and felt about them. Shame was also widespread, reaching beyond the immediate family, to extended members (Jaspal, 2014). Although this paper offers valuable insight into the significance of heterosexual marriage, and implications of threatening family honour, Jaspal's (2014) use of IPA may not offer satisfactory recognition to the integral role of language within participant's reflections (Willig, 2008, 2019). A rebuttal to this may be that IPA's main aim is to gain understanding of experiences, which intertwines with the use of language (Smith et al., 2013), and that it is recognised that meaning-making takes place within the context of narratives and discourse. Nevertheless, IPA's focus on *what* occurs within experiences may not facilitate understanding of *why* (Cassidy et al., 2011). Moreover, although IPA can offer hermeneutic, contextual and idiographic insights, allowing us to understand cultural positions of experience (Smith, 2008), it may not offer insight into the detailed links between culture as a 'system', and 'practice'; 'system' being how society has been organised to meet individuals basic needs, and the structures available to do this (Buskell et al., 2019), whilst 'practice' is the manifestation of cultures, particularly the traditions, customs and ways of being for ethnic or cultural groups (Frese, 2015). For example, reflecting on traditional S-A marriage and family systems, which perhaps dictate who may marry whom, under what conditions and following which procedures, this may typically manifest as heterosexual marriage, with vast family involvement, and religious practices intertwined.

It seems S-A families' heteronormative principles, morality, humility and modesty being 'damaged' by queerness is perpetually reported throughout much of the literature, and appears to be a shared experience with other POC (Deepak, 2005; Gilbert et al., 2004; McKeown et al., 2010; Riggs, 2007). Research also infers that the experiences of queer females are filled with greater internal conflict as they are seen to deviate from stereotyped

gender roles and challenge patriarchal structures (Alimahomed, 2010; McKeown et al., 2010; Patel, 2019; Sandil et al., 2015).

S-A queer identities are also said to threaten the continuation of S-A tradition and culture (García et al., 2019; Jaspal, 2014, 2018; Narui, 2011; Parent et al., 2013) as they imaginably align more with Western discourses regarding sexuality. Goldberg (2010) talks about this within his article which depicts the story of a gay, Middle Eastern female, who was raised and schooled in the UK. The interviewee describes her experience of 'coming out' and speaks about her parents persuading her to take her own life and being pushed into a heterosexual marriage. Interestingly, the shame and humiliation experienced by her family was not directly linked to the interviewees sexuality, but rather the fact that she had made her family appear 'modern, westernised and filthy' (Goldberg, 2010). Although Middle-Eastern values may vary to S-A ones, it could be questioned whether S-A queer individuals perhaps face similar experiences, due to their shared traditional, collectivist ideologies (Goodall, 2014).

In addition to external pressures and judgements, internalised heteronormative values which reject queerness (Choudhury et al., 2009; Jaspal, 2014, 2021; Patel, 2019; Sandil et al., 2015), are also said to significantly complicate S-A queer individuals ability to accept their sense of 'self'. Moreover, the difficulty in finding the language to negotiate their identities, within such a rigid framework reinforces marginalisation (García et al, 2019; Jaspal, 2014, 2018; Khan, 2011; Sandil et al., 2015). An example of this comes from Islam's (1998) research, where queer S-A women described Western labels regarding sexuality to be incomprehensible, as they did not appropriately depict relationality. Although this research was conducted over twenty years ago, the notion that women did not see themselves as embodying sexuality, but rather experiencing it with others remains (Bal, 2016; Patel, 2019). Individuals may however feel that in order to claim their identities, particularly sexuality,

they need to align with existing, Western labels used in the UK, despite these perhaps not resonating with their experiences (Das Nair et al, 2012); leaving them feeling isolated or vulnerable (Das Nair et al, 2012). Conversely, queer individuals may resist 'labels' in order to reflect the shortfalls of these terms (Gopinath, 1998).

Broadening our references around S-A sexual identity may also offer an awareness of how some individuals may not be prevented from expressing or constructing valuable and meaningful identities, but instead navigate identities fluidly and creatively, depending on context. For example, practices like 'coming out' may not be deemed a priority (Khullar, 2020), with individuals perhaps less willing to abandon aspects of their ethnic and cultural identity, or attachments to family systems (Alimahomed, 2010; Raval, 2009). Instead, they may prefer to express sexual identity in a ways which are inclusive of their multiple identities, whilst remaining affiliated with culture and tradition (Alimahomed, 2010; Jaspal, 2018; Karim, 2014). Individuals may also uncover socially suitable ways of representing 'queerness', for example identifying strongly as feminists (Bacchus, 2017; Gilbert et al, 2004), strategically and resourcefully representing their sexual identity, whilst shielding against possible disapproval (Gilbert et al., 2004); inferring a level of personal agency in establishing one's sense of 'self'.

Alimahomed (2010) exemplifies this within her research exploring ways in which Latina, Asian and Pacific Islander LGBTQ+ females negotiated their identities within racial/ethnic communities. She found that many individuals assumed an 'oppositional conscience' to rigid compartmentalisations of western LGBTQ+ identity and preferred more subtle ways to express sexual identity, whilst remaining respectful to their cultural heritage (Alimahomed, 2010). Growing up relationally, individuals were also less willing to abandon their unique cultural or familial identities (Alimahomed, 2010; Mair, 2010). This agency raises the question of whether queer individuals have begun adapting and shifting traditional

views of collectivist interdependency, in favour of endorsing individualised choices, within their collectivist identities.

With S-A LGBTQ+ identities continuing to be framed through Westernised, heteronormative perspectives, individuals face recurrent battles to balance Eastern and Western expectations and values (Bhandari et al, 2017; Khullar, 2020; McKeown et al., 2010). However, it is important to note that these experiences may not be universal, with some S-A LGBTQ+ individuals being able to carefully negotiate, construct, and share their identities in ways that are meaningful for them (Jones, 2016; Kallivayalil, 2004; Zaidi et al., 2016). I will reflect on this further below.

3. Acculturation, Enculturation and Identity

Acculturation and enculturation processes may also support the balancing, or organisation of identities. Here, acculturation refers to the extent immigrant communities have adopted Western ideologies, whilst enculturation denotes the degree to which ethnic, heritage cultures and 'norms' are retained (Kim et al., 2009). Although acculturation has historically been one-directional, with extensive internet and social media usage, it has now become multi-directional (Dhariwal et al, 2013; Forssell, 2017).

Difficulties in organising and expressing identities can often result in mental and emotional turmoil, due to a lack of 'belonging' (Klein et al., 2020; Rahman & Rollock, 2004). Identity conflicts and the mental health implications of this may be exacerbated for second-generation, queer S-A's, as they are torn between the values and expectations of two vastly different societies, both of which they desire to belong to (Dhillon et al, 2003; Khullar, 2020; Meston & Ahrold, 2010). Contextualising this, Western scripts are described to emphasise individualism, extroversion and liberalism, with qualities like diverse sexuality and dating typically being normalised and increasingly accepted (Zaidi et al., 2016). For S-A individuals these individualities are said to be stigmatising and culturally deviant as they

challenge family honour (Zaidi et al., 2016). Although it could be said that diasporic S-A attitudes and values have become moderated following UK settlement in the late 60's, for example with smaller family sizes and women accessing education and employment (Brown et al, 2006), research continues to highlight that S-A diaspora experience difficulties in identity navigation due to 'traditional' cultural and/or religious values of the 'home' clashing with those expected in social settings (Al-Sayyad, 2010; Brown & Talbot, 2006; Clini & Valančiūnas, 2021; Dugsin, 2001; Rao et al., 1984).

Despite these ongoing struggles, diasporic S-A's have begun creating mutually inclusive spaces, shaped by the need to cope with opportunities and restrictions offered by each culture (Adur & Purkayastha, 2017; Deepak, 2005; Dhariwal & Connolly, 2013; Inman et al., 2014; Moorti, 2005; Srinivasan, 2020), and navigate processes of acceptance, denial, adjustment and reformulation of both cultures (Brocket, 2020; Deepak, 2005). However, for S-A queer people, this journey is perhaps more complicated, due to the perception that they have deviated from heteronormative beliefs, laced throughout their S-A identity. Yet, literature suggests that individuals with numerous identity layers can apply fluidity to their 'self', adapting to environments, relationships and situations (Ching et al., 2018; Ghabrial, 2017; Narváez et al., 2009). For queer S-A's this perhaps offers opportunities to decide how sexuality fits into their lived experiences (Narváez et al., 2009), and to make personal choices regarding how they define, locate, and express their identities in various situations (Alimahomed, 2010).

3.1. Forming 'New' Identities

Identity navigation is said to be unique for each individual, rooted in their distinctive identities and life experiences (Deepak, 2005). As described, second-generation, queer S-A's must not only navigate enculturation and acculturation processes, but may also need to cope with managing beliefs and expectations connected with LGBTQ+ identity in two varied

cultures (Alimahomed, 2010; Choudhury et al., 2009; Narui, 2011a; Sandil et al., 2015). For many, this is described to be a dynamic process, as individuals respond to social influences and the significance of these identities within different contexts (Inman et al., 2014; Jordan, 2018; Narváez et al., 2009). For queer diaspora this allows them to decide whether to share or conceal their sexual identity, consequently controlling their lived experiences (Mair, 2010; McKeown et al., 2010; Narui, 2011a; Narváez et al., 2009). Such processes also allow individuals to define their identities within different settings, and for some sexual identity may not always be the most important, or even need to be disclosed (Alimahomed, 2010).

Digital spaces for queer POC have too hugely supported diaspora to navigate identities through the internet, whilst also creating spaces for global solidarity and community (Mahn & Dasgupta, 2021). Adur & Purkayastha's (2017) consider this process within their work. Using content analysis of S-A LGBTQ+ online auto-ethnographies and organisational webpages, alongside interviews with 30 American S-A LGBTQ+ individuals, they reported that despite numerous oppressions faced due to 'foreignness', this did not define their identities (Adur et al, 2017). Instead, communities challenged boundaries consigned to their identities through facilitating controversial conversations in online spaces, rejecting heteronormative beliefs surrounding religious and cultural identities. This implies autonomy through challenging pre-colonial symbolism, alongside reflecting the creativeness used by diaspora to navigate and construct identities which align with their needs and experiences. However, Adur et al (2017) do not elaborate on the impact of these conversations on identities, as well as how or why such conversations bear relevance to their sense of 'self'; a gap I consider in this research. Data for this research was also drawn from a larger study, conducted between 2009-2012, which I was unable to source. As such, the retrospective nature of the data may overlook the influence of socio-political changes over time. Sample bias may also pose problematic, as Adur et al's (2017) sample consisted of

solely individuals identifying as activists. Thus, although extremely insightful, reflections may be more representative of an activists' identity, one supposedly grounded in challenging social injustices and re-defining identities (Horowitz, 2017); perhaps differing from the wider S-A LGBTQ+ community.

Adur et al's (2017) use of multiple languages can too be critiqued. Although through a constructivist lens, their use of English interspersed with Hindi, Bengali and Urdu terms, could be celebrated, as it permits freedom to co-construct individualised ways of showcasing experiences (Bo, 2015), conversations expressed in one language may be comprehended differently in another, particularly with their chosen analysis method, resulting in an understanding of accounts which may not be entirely ideographic (van-Nes et al., 2010). Furthermore, with their use of content-analysis, there may be a difficulty in interpreting and articulating data as it may have been intended (van-Nes et al., 2010), as this methodology is deemed inherently reductive, especially when exploring complex accounts (van-Nes et al., 2010). Some individuals may experience difficulties when engaging in discourses and may not fully be able to express experiences, resulting in interpretations of interviews and texts housing larger amounts of researcher bias, thus offering partial insight into identities (van-Nes et al., 2010). This again reflects the need to carefully consider appropriate methodologies, which can offer a clear voice for members of marginalised or oppressed groups, to promote cultural understanding and inform theories (Suzuki et al., 2019). Polkinghorne (1995) suggests that methodological approaches coupled with reflexivity, may be more useful in enabling participants to express themselves more subjectively, as they are able to story their experiences in a way that make sense to them, rather than the audience.

Contemporary scholarship on acculturation continues to emphasise the value of online spaces for ethnic minority LGBTQ+ individuals (Dey et al., 2018; Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016; Jafari & Goulding, 2013; Karim, 2014). US literature points to online spaces

having a profound impact on queer identities, offering a safe space for free self-expression, and perhaps a place to 'prepare' for living with sexual differences in the physical world, permitting individuals to effectively construct and gain confidence in their identities (Alexander & Losh, 2010; Craig et al., 2015; Fox & Ralston, 2016; Meyer, 2019). For S-A queer individuals in the UK, it could be theorised that online spaces may offer scope to liberally and safely explore identities, as they perhaps seperate themselves from traditional, cultural 'norm's which may otherwise be enforced onto them in the 'real world'.

The impact of global acculturation and enculturation can also be seen outside of Western contexts. Karim's (2014) qualitative work exploring the impact of online acculturation in the Bangladeshi lesbian community demonstrates this. Following a group of women who were able to use the internet to explore their sexualities, Karim (2014) uncovered they were able to use Western ideologies learnt online, to craft positive identifications with sexual identities, as opposed to ones restricted by religion, culture or tradition. They were also able to distance themselves from social pressures, becoming increasingly assertive in representing their identities; managing fluid identities through taking control of defining their identity and preventing others from overruling their sense of 'self' (Garvey et al., 2019; Rahman & Valliani, 2016; Raval, 2009).

Developing a strong sense of 'self' more broadly, may also enable individuals to challenge their own internalised prejudices. With their research with Hispanic and Asian groups in the USA, Meston et al (2010) explain that greater acculturation in other domains of identity may promote more lenient attitudes towards sexuality. This notion was supported by Luu & Bartsch's (2011) research with Vietnamese migrants. Thus, for individuals in this study, a strong overall sense of 'self', may foster increased tolerance and flexible attitudes towards their own diverse sexuality, lessening the conflict in understanding, and expressing their identities. Furthermore, individuals may encourage others to adapt their understanding

of S-A queer identities, perhaps moving away from restrictive, traditional and sometimes stereotyped perceptions. Ocampo's (2014) research depicts this idea of educating others further. With his sample of second-generation, Filipino and Latino gay men in America, Ocampo (2014) reported that individuals used their unique positions to challege historical, typically heteronormative expectations. He explained that despite difficulties with acculturation and inter-generational conflict, individuals were able to construct identities, encompassing sexuality, religion and culture. Furthermore, individuals used their positions to test and re-test ways of expressing their sexuality openly, whilst explicitly educating 'elders', supporting them to overcome deep-seated prejudices. Canadian research with second-generation LGBTQ+ Pakistani females echoed this idea (Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002). What is clear, is that over time, individuals appear to have become open to exploring identities more freely, offering liberation from the 'norms' and expectations of their heritage culture. As such, enculturation and acculturation amongst S-A LGBTQ+ individuals may be useful to consider, as it would allow us to contemplate the values and individualities held by individuals, on their own terms, alongside how they navigate conflicting social ideologies. Furthermore, I may be able to reflect on how acculturation perhaps fosters identity changes, whilst enculturation could offer the potential to 'anchor' the 'self' (Berry et al., 2006; Schwartz et al., 2006). 'Anchoring' ones identity may also foster identity 'pluralisation' (Fisher, 2003), allowing individuals to make links between identities; negotiating intersectional identities without conceding or overlooking aspects.

Alongside the internal conflicts faced by S-A LGBTQ+ individuals, Alimahomed (2010) advocates that the open presence of 'whiteness' within LGBTQ+ spaces can pose a barrier for S-A queer identities; individuals are often left feeling like a 'meta-minority', or 'undesirable' due to their cultural and ethnic differences (Das Nair & Shirley, 2012; Jaspal, 2017; McKeown et al., 2010; Mitha et al., 2021). S-A queer individuals also hinted at subtle

acts of racism and micro-aggressions, as well as being branded as ‘complicated’ by the wider queer community, with such views threatening their identities (Han, 2008; Jaspal, 2017; Patel, 2019; Vaccaro & Koob, 2019). Certainly, calls to add brown and black stripes onto the Pride flag were also met with backlash (Baggs, 2019). This ‘othering’ may again leave individuals feeling pressured to ‘come out’ or ‘assimilate’ into a space which may not be suitable or viable for them, to foster a sense of ‘belonging’ or understanding of their ‘self’ (Jivraj & de Jong, 2011; Kehl, 2020). Canadian research by Patel (2019), which explored S-A queer women’s experiences of racism within the LGBTQ+ community in Toronto reflected that queer spaces preserved an ethos of ‘white privilege’, which condemned intersectional identities held by S-A queer woman. Subsequently, S-A LGBTQ+ women were left feeling invisible and alienated, as they did not fit the mainstream conceptualisations of what queer women should be. Jaspal's (2017) research exploring ethnic prejudices faced by gay men in the UK echoed this, highlighting that S-A LGBTQ+ individuals in the UK too experienced multiple forms of ‘otherisation’, which maybe threatened the construction and expression of their identities. Jones (2016) explains that the ‘otherisation’ of the S-A LGBTQ+ individuals by the wider queer community may be a way of validating one’s own status as a legitimate citizen as someone who should not be discriminated against; pointing to potential political rhetoric on how LGBTQ+ rights may have merged with right-wing political interests over people of colour in the UK, as well as continued colonial oppression (Asthana & Oostvogels, 2001; Han, 2008; Jaspal, 2014; O’Donnell & O’Rourke, 2006; Patel, 2019; Srinivasan, 2020). Though the continued social exclusions, racism and disadvantages faced by S-A LGBTQ+ individuals in the UK has contributed to the higher rates of mental health difficulties they experience (Bhui, 2005; Jaspal, 2017, 2021), literature points to individuals negotiating their identities in inventive ways, shrinking the detrimental effects of their several minority statuses, and capitalising on the many choices that belonging to several diverse

groups gives (Das Nair et al, 2012; Dhoest, 2020; Patel, 2019). I believe it is important for us to acknowledge the strengths and resiliencies in being able to navigate identity tensions in such creative ways, as failing to recognise the agency and courage to cope with these demands runs the risk of viewing this group as helpless and perhaps further marginalises them. I reflect on the importance of personal agency for queer POC below, and the value of this with regards to identity formation.

4. Individual Agency

4.1. What is 'Agency'?

Theoretically speaking, agency can be explained as one of two processes, 'externalism' or 'internalism' (Sugarman & Sokol, 2012). Where 'externalism' refers to active choices within socio-relational, developmental and contextual spaces, 'internalism' describes agency as the generation, expression and experience of choice (Sugarman et al, 2012). Through viewing identity exploration and construction as a fluid, active and ongoing process, this imbues individuals with agency (Mavroudi, 2007); they are neither freely swaying uncontrollably, nor are they stationary, blindly following rules and expectations placed upon them.

4.2. The Value of Individual Agency

Despite the oppressions and prejudices repeatedly faced by S-A queer individuals, their personal agency has recurrently offered means to creatively consider, and share their identities in meaningful ways (Alimahomed, 2010; Karim, 2014; Patel, 2019). Although agency has been implicit throughout the majority of literature available, the importance of it is yet to be explored and something I consider in this research. For diaspora, the inclusivity of all identities seems to be extremely important, even if they are not expressed simultaneously (Alimahomed, 2010; Beharry & Crozier, 2008; Ludra & Jones, 2009). Despite this at times resulting in identity conflicts, it also seems to reflect the assertion of personal agency and

self-efficacy in defining identities, which allows for personal identities and desires to be expressed, without abandoning cultural roles and responsibilities (Raval, 2009). For queer diaspora, the creativity in identity navigation also allows for the re-configuration of Western labels regarding identity, establishing a hybrid of cultures and creating spaces for new cultures encompassing many identity intersects (Manalansan, 2006; N. Shah, 1998).

Meyer's (2012) work also proposes it to be a common misconception that all LGBTQ+ POC face clashes between their sexual and cultural identities. Through his qualitative study in the US, which aimed to assess whether LGBTQ+ identity collided with black and Latino/Latina identity, Meyer (2012) found that external judgements and rejection from their communities did not result in individuals doubting their identities. Instead, lesbians of colour stressed their self-sufficiency to challenge discourses, whilst gay men of colour highlighted their physical and emotional strengths to challenge perceptions of them being 'weak'. Experiences of black lesbian women also varied from black gay men, and white lesbian women, reflecting the importance of drawing on an intersectional lens. Nevertheless, it seems that drawing on personal agency to represent their identities, individuals were able to navigate 'anti-queer' violence, without diminishing their sense of 'self'.

Although these experiences may differ to S-A LGBTQ+ individuals, this research supports individuals to convey all aspects of the 'self', including means of navigating distress and strengthening identities, fostering insight into how individuals are shaped, relationally and societally (Shotter & Billig, 1998). Considerations of personal agency may also allow us to explore how S-A queer individuals actively construct, and co-construct their identities with others, strengthening and making sense of experiences, whilst developing a sense of 'self', located in culture, history and social context (Haste, 2004). This approach is also described to foster increased visibility, ensuring individuals are seen, through a lens which captures all

aspects of their identities, whilst confronting colonial practices of sexuality in the West (Patel, 2019).

Theoretical models regarding identity, like IPT have also previously been used to gain insight into understanding experiences of actively negotiating identity, whilst highlighting potential threats for ethnic minority individuals. Jaspal & Cinnirella's (2010) research looking at the lived experiences of twelve British Muslim, gay men, used IPT as their interpretive lens to explore how individuals made sense of identities. The paper reported that intersections of ethnicity, religion and sexual identity resulted in identity conflicts. However, individuals were able to employ many coping techniques in order to manage 'threats', perhaps reflecting agency. Despite its value in highlighting coping techniques used by this group, the authors report that the research adopts a realist epistemology, and that participants' accounts of sexuality are "a fairly reliable reflection of their cognitions which allows the analyst to theorise motivations, subjective experience, and meaning" (Jaspal et al, 2010, p.854). Ontologically, this implies that facts about personal identities can exist outside of these individuals, whilst epistemologically, our senses can recognise the world as it is (Marshall, 2019); perhaps indicating identities to be finalised and concrete. This conflicts with the notion that identities are fluid, changeable and idiosyncratic. With IPT being located within LSP, the philosophical grounding for this tool implies that insights into intersectional identities may be logical and testable (Hornsey, 2008).

Jaspal et al (2010) also suggest that participants experienced guilt, connecting their sexuality to God, or an effort by Satan to dissuade them from God. However, this may be more complex, as participants also overcame threats to their identity by implying, they were 'God's creation', and with God being 'perfect' this meant individuals viewed themselves as a result of perfection. This again reflects the value of personal agency, as individuals here appeared to shape the meaning of religion to add value to their sense of 'self'. Similar

findings are echoed within wider LGBTQ+ research, with individuals drawing on, and adapting meaning of religion, or 'higher power' to gain solace and strengthen self-perception (Brennan-Ing et al., 2013; Rosenkrantz et al., 2016); in turn challenging traditional, historical and generational views of religion.

Through fully acknowledging the value of personal agency for S-A LGBTQ+ identities within this research, I consider how, and why identities are constructed and negotiated the way they are, within different social contexts; offering an integrated insight into intersectional identity (Langdridge, 2007, 2013; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Sullivan, 2012; Tribe & Bell, 2018). Furthermore, with this approach, individuals' ability to navigate identities to create something meaningful for them can be reinstated, with identities being constructed and re-constructed through the stories that are told (Given, 2008; Goltz et al., 2016; Hiles & Čermák, 2008; Murray, 2015).

5. Chapter Summary and Rationale for Current Research

It is clear to see that second-generation, S-A LGBTQ+ individuals face numerous difficulties in navigating their intersectional identities (Alimahomed, 2010; Das Nair et al, 2012; Jaspal, 2017, 2021). The unique position of these individuals also leaves them torn between the values and expectations of two vastly different societies, both of which they seek belonging to (Khullar, 2020). Yet, individuals holding diverse multi-layered identities appear to draw on inventive strategies to manage their lived experiences, burdens and personal desires, permitting them to function within social structures that directly, and indirectly seek to marginalise, oppress, disempower and discriminate against them (Mitha et al., 2021). The limited research on S-A LGBTQ+ identities in the UK seemingly contributes to the numerous marginalisations they already face (Choudhury et al., 2009; Jaspal, 2018; Luther & Ung Loh, 2019; McKeown et al., 2010; Narui, 2011; Patel, 2019; Sandil et al., 2015), as individuals are rarely offered a voice to share their experiences. Through contributing to research in this

area, it is hoped that as a CoP, I can take an active leadership role in encouraging the promotion of social justice (Tribe et al, 2018), and offering a voice to this often side-lined group.

The importance for research focusing on S-A LGBTQ+ individuals is heightened due to this population having been found to be at higher risk for mental health difficulties (Chowdhury et al, 2020; Kumar et al, 2010; Sandil et al., 2015). Discriminations may however be furthered within therapeutic spaces as Western ideologies regarding sexuality could be used to conceptualise individuals experiences, despite these perhaps not being applicable or appropriate (Butler et al., 2010; Das Nair et al, 2012; Patel, 2019). Furthermore, the language, used to describe these intersectional identities may be missing, meaning it is important for clinicians to not to assume meanings of definitions of individuals identities, or how these intermingle, whilst challenging post-colonial opinions of sexuality, culture and ethnicity. As such, I maintain a position of respect and curiosity, allowing for humanistic, distinctive understanding to develop (BPS, 2006, 2019a; Cooper, 2009). Through offering a space within this research for S-A queer voices, here, I understand the extensive issues faced in constructing their identities in the UK and gaining insight into how they navigate these. Moreover, with the social justice lens of this research, this research intends to open up discussions around increasing the culpability of white LGBTQ+ individuals, supporting them not to maintain Western, prescriptive practices of queerness placed on their ethnic counterparts, through pejorative attitudes or actions; promoting inclusivity (Chávez et al., 2016; Suzuki et al., 2019).

Reflecting further on language and discourse, whilst linking with the social justice and humanistic morals of this research, careful consideration of methodologies is also important. Thus, this research employs methodologies which offers a high level of connection between theoretical frameworks and the actual experiences of individuals (Palmer

& Parish, 2008); creating a medium by which social justice is enacted (Lyons et al., 2013). By supporting individuals to share their own personal stories, I may also begin to understand ways in which current Western-centric views on queer identities can be challenged, allowing us to embrace diverse possibilities of intersectional identities (Glassgold, 2007; Glassgold & Drescher, 2007). I believe this approach is novel, as I was unable to source literature exploring S-A LGBTQ+ identities in this way.

Lastly, as I also believe that co-construction is central to accessing these realities, and identities, with the researcher-participant relationship playing a crucial part in accessing and expressing narratives (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019), narrative methodologies may be the most appropriate approach to address the question: **"How do second-generation, South-Asian LGBTQ+ individuals speak about their identities in the United Kingdom?"**

In the following section, I describe the theoretical influences which underpin my chosen topic and methodologies in detail.

Chapter Three: Methodology

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the methodology chosen to explore the above research question. In this section, I begin by considering the underlying assumptions of my question, before reflecting on my rationale for selecting qualitative methods, namely Narrative Analysis (NA). As NA refers to a constellation of analytic procedures (Figgou & Pavlopoulos, 2015), I then deliberate why I believe Dialogic/performative NA (DPNA) (Frank, 2012) specifically, is an appropriate way to explore intersectional identities. As researcher's epistemological positioning and personal reflexivity inform methodological selection process, I will subsequently outline this. Penultimately, I describe the practicalities of carrying out this research, before reflecting on the importance of ethical practice, and the measures I have taken to ensure moral conduct.

Although I intend to remain reflexive throughout this chapter, I finish by exploring researcher reflexivity. To reflect the notion of narratives being co-constructed, I continue to write in first person, sharing my inseparable involvement.

2. Methodological Considerations

2.1. Underlying Assumptions of Research Question

"How do second-generation, South-Asian LGBTQ+ individuals speak about their identities in the United Kingdom?"

This question aims to gain insight into the identities of second-generation, S-A LGBTQ+ individual in the UK, and the meaning-making processes they perhaps engage in, to understand their sense of 'self'. It also intends to capture identity fluidity, considering how individuals comprehend, and co-construct their past, present and future identities, meaningfully. Thus, the research question makes three assumptions:

1) second-generation S-A LGBTQ+ individuals can creatively remain active agents in conceptualising meaningful intersectional identities, despite adversities and potential identity conflicts,
2) identities can be created, and re-created through different narratives, depending on interpersonal contexts, and are therefore not unitary or finalisable,
3) identities can be shared through storytelling, and performance.

The best way to explore such question seems to be through the use of qualitative methods, which I describe further below.

2.2. Qualitative vs. Quantitative Methods

Willig (2019) encourages researchers to reflect on their research aims, prior to selecting methodology. Here, qualitative enquiries appeared best suited to explore S-A LGBTQ+ identities in the UK, as it helps us to focus on idiosyncratic stories, which highlight "what the experience is like for them, what these experiences mean to them, how they talk about them, and how they make sense of them" (Willig, 2012, p.1). Qualitative methodologies also infer that meanings of experiences can be uncovered and co-constructed through deep reflection facilitated via discourse and interaction (Ponterotto, 2005; Sciarra, 1999).

Open-ended, exploratory questions used within a qualitative framework can also provide rich, descriptive data, offering insight into how sense is made of individuals' context dependent experiences, making this an appropriate form of data collection (Riessman, 2008; Willig, 2019). Additionally, Yardley (2000) explains that qualitative methods recognise that impartial evaluations of outer reality cannot exist, instead, reality is built through subjective viewpoints and spoken via stories; "it is assumed that a person is essentially a storytelling animal, or that they naturally construct stories out of life" (Smith & Sparkes, 2008, p.17). Therefore, as this research intended capture expressions of rich intersectional identities,

qualitative methods appear to be the most appropriate fit. As such, I have utilised narrative methodologies, more specifically DPNA (Frank, 2012). I detail my rationale for why I deem this approach suitable, below.

2.3. Narrative Approaches and CoP

Descriptions of NA vary, depending on theoretical orientations, the research topic and methodological approaches (Andrews et al., 2013). Moreover, how narratives are understood is culturally framed, with many of the current ideas regarding narrative inquiry being rooted in Western philosophies (Wells, 2011). Nevertheless with its foundations in scientific enquiry and interest in humanistic experiences (Riessman, 2008), narrative research can also foster in-depth understanding of how and why hetero-normative expectations perhaps need to be challenged and the impact these views have on S-A LGBTQ+ identities. Taking this into consideration, the lens I have adopted for this research also encompasses beliefs from 'narrative humility' (DasGupta, 2018), rooted in Tervalon & Murray-Garcia's (1998) concept of 'cultural humility'. This rose in response to critiques against cultural competence, which may suffice during daily interactions, however not in psychological settings (Tervalon et al, 1998). However, as proficiency of all cultures is perhaps unfeasible, a position of 'not knowing' is encouraged, enabling others to direct their insights. As such, it is important to adopt a critical stance, routinely self-evaluating our roles, assumptions and responsibilities to participant's stories; endorsing the "very act of listening" (DasGupta, 2018, p.980). I believe this perspective lends itself nicely to NA and CoP, promoting a person-centred exploration of intersectional identities (BPS, 2013, 2019a).

According to Gergen (2009) narratives as storied events, ordered sequentially to express meaning to specific audiences. However, this description omits broadly definable experiences, such as life stages (Wells, 2011). Squire (2012) elaborates, believing narratives to be meaningful and sequential representations of experiences and life transformations.

Thus, narratives offer a way for individuals, or groups, to highlight their desires, insights, actions and motivations (Hiles & Čermák, 2008; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008), whilst creating a sense of cohesion to identity (Ghabrial, 2017; McAdams, 2011; McAdams & McLean, 2013; Moen, 2006; Riessman, 2008; Squire, 2012; Sullivan, 2012). As such, narrative methodologies may facilitate deeper insight into identity, and the conditions that may trigger experiences, located in past, present and anticipated future events (Riessman, 2008; Willig, 2008, 2019). Adding to this, Bruner (2004) states that 'self-making' stories are steered internally and externally - through memories and social validation – and shaped by storytelling genres within cultures. This captures identities unfolding, alongside tensions faced by participants in navigating identities (Frank, 2012), and somewhat resonates with this research.

NA uses stories as data, examining the structure, content, performances and/or contexts (Wells, 2011). Stories are kept whole to explore holistic discourses, rather than being broken down into smaller sections to analyse (Hiles et al, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Willig, 2019). Additionally, NA may allow us to utilise language better and attend to the ways culture speaks through individuals (Riessman, 2008); language is "deeply constative of reality" (Riessman, 1993, p.5) and not simply a "transparent medium, unambiguously reflecting stable, singular meanings" (Riessman, 1993, p.2). NA also distinguishes 'others' as being crucial, with stories being co-constructed (Hiles et al, 2008; Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 2008; Willig, 2019). Embracing this view meant it was important for me to be mindful of my position, alongside my identities, as storytelling can be responsive to participant's perception of the interviewer, interview setting and researcher-participant interaction (Capps & Ochs, 1995; Kvale, 2007).

Chiming with the social justice philosophies of CoP (Kennedy & Arthur, 2014; Tribe et al, 2018) NA provides narrators a voice, "empowering people to be heard, who might

otherwise remain silent" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.204). This voice permits us to focus on subjective narratives, illuminating the multi-dimensional, contextualised and intersectional identities of S-A LGBTQ+ individuals, who may otherwise remain neglected within social science research (Bogdan et al, 2007; Hiles et al, 2008). With CoP's answering the call to challenge oppressions of intersectional identities, it is hugely important that clinical practice, research and training are also rooted in a 'global helping paradigm', that promotes liberation (Suzuki et al., 2019). One way to do this may be through selecting appropriate methodologies (Suzuki et al., 2019), which explore and promote, individual's choices in cultivating intersectional identities. This can also give the opportunity to consider individual's resilience and strengths, which may have developed from overlapping identities, whilst creating unique and individualised relational spaces (Suzuki et al., 2019). This is especially important as S-A LGBTQ+ individuals, and other POC, experience unique adversities, rooted in familial and cultural identity intersects (Kumar et al, 2010; Sandil et al., 2015).

NA also aligns with the humanistic values of CoP (Crimmins, 2016), alongside feminist theories (Miller, 2017). Although I will not explicitly outline feminist theories here, I have remained mindful of specific concepts throughout. For example, attending to the importance of acknowledging intersectional identities, empowerment, diversity and social justice (Remer & Oh, 2013), whilst deeming participants to be experts to their lived experiences. Furthermore, feminist theories stress collaboration and self-reflection to be invaluable to learning and evolution (Miller, 2017); shown within reflexive practice and my chosen methodology.

2.4. Dialogic/Performative Narrative Analysis (DPNA)

As mentioned, NA refers to an array of analytic techniques (Figgou et al, 2015). Constructionist in nature, thematic and structural NA explore the existence of a natural world, which can be observed and explained (Riessman, 2008; Wells, 2011). Whilst structural NA

focuses on the order of narrative, thematic NA reflects over-arching themes across multiple stories, looking specifically at what is said (Patterson, 2013; Riessman, 2008; Wells, 2011). Both however can be critiqued for perhaps decontextualising narratives (Riessman, 2008; Wells, 2011), paying little attention to broader socio-cultural or historical properties of stories, and the interactional nature of narratives (Riessman, 2008). Neglecting these may be detrimental when exploring intersectional S-A queer identities.

Rooted in constructivism and discursive psychology (Wells, 2011), DPNA combines elements of thematic and structural NA (Riessman, 2008), and can enable researchers to attend to what is said, and how narrators arrange and share stories (Riessman, 2008). With regards to identity construction, DPNA sees this as an ongoing, interactive process, making it particularly suited to this research (Wells, 2011).

Additionally, DPNA considers individual narratives to consist of 'voices', encompassing dialogues between multiple voices (Frank, 2012); accounting for interactional, historical, institutional and discursive contexts (Davies & Harré, 1990; Wells, 2011). Listening to how these many voices interact, within one voice, is unique to this approach (Frank, 2012). Bakhtin (1984) termed this 'polyphony' and 'heteroglossia'; 'polyphony' is how one speaker's voice resonates with voices of others, i.e., who the speaker listens to, while 'heteroglossia' stresses how stories are accumulated through language and genre. 'Others', heard in heteroglossic dialogue refers to community speech, as opposed to specific individuals. When exploring S-A LGBTQ identities, this may allow us to situate individuals within their experiences and contexts.

An added element of DPNA is the consideration of whom stories are aimed at, for what purpose and within what circumstance (Riessman, 2008). DPNA is also broadly interpretive (Riessman, 2008; Wells, 2011), drawing on the works of Mikhail Bakhtin and Erving Goffman. Goffman (1990) referred to individuals as 'social actors' playing a role

within interactions. Here they attempt to shape other's impressions of them, by regulating what, and how much information is shared; perhaps equating to individual agency. Furthermore, Goffman (1974) explained that when speaking, individuals spend most of their time performing, rather than offering information. Identities can be constructed and articulated through these performances (Goffman, 1974). Therefore, the reaction of the listener, or reader is linked with the act of storytelling (Riessman, 2008). Storytelling responds to others, anticipating future responses, including within the re-telling of the stories (Frank, 2012). For Bakhtin, narratives were viewed as unfinished and continuously and relationally evolving (Emerson & Morson, 2005); reflecting fluidity. With this, S-A LGBTQ+ individuals can be viewed as active agents in conceptualising their unique, evolving identities through the narratives they share with others.

I am aware that through drawing on DPNA, I may be rejecting the presence of oppression and power in society, perhaps even suggesting these to be constructed and maintained via language. However, as Shotter et al (1998) advise DPNA is characterised by a move to account for the impact of social practices, rather than solely individuals' minds, I have remained mindful of these structures and their impacts throughout.

DPNA values aligns with CoP in many ways. With dialogue being central to narratives (Wells, 2011), and an important tool for transformation, approaching research through this perspective represents a respect for participant's scope for continued change (Frank, 2012); indicating its humanistic, ethical ethos (Jacob, 2014). Furthermore, with narrative and dialogic research rooted in postmodernism and constructivism, this infers that there are multiple truths, which can be contextual and situational (Orlans & Van-Scoyoc, 2009), offering a more person-centered approach. The idea that no other individual should have a final say over someone else's experience or identities also fits with CoP, shifting away from pathologisation (Riessman, 2008). Lastly, the requirement of researcher reflexivity, and

an acknowledgement of co-construction (Riessman, 2008) is also consistent with CoP's commitment to rigorous and ethical research (BPS, 2018).

2.5. Epistemological and Ontological considerations

Aligning with narrative and constructivist philosophies, I believe that individuals construct their own perceptions of the world, and identities, in their own way (Harper et al., 2012; Moon & Blackman, 2014; Wells, 2011). It is important that these differences are understood, to evaluate wider social structures (Moon et al, 2014).

As NA intends to understand individualised account of identities, a constructivist epistemology has allowed me to consider how participants interact with the world (Marshall, 2019). NA also attends to the concepts of 'relational being' (Gergen, 2001, 2009) and 'narrative knowing'(Bruner, 1991, 2004); the former refers to the idea that individuals need to be understood relationally (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), whilst the latter infers that knowledge is constructed through storied lived experiences, with listeners hearing the narrators attempts to make sense of life events, alongside personal values (Bruner, 1991, 2004). Such notions chime with constructivism, as it is believed that meaning is formed through interactional, relational processes, i.e., co-constructed (Wells, 2011).

Within these interactions, 'facts' regarding S-A LGBTQ+ identities could be seen as depending on subjectivity, with 'facts' being changeable and not objectively 'correct' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Marshall, 2019). This aligns me with a relativist ontology whereby narratives are viewed as being constructed inside social contexts, rather than mirroring reality (Frank, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 2005); meaning is created through narrative rather than simply being conveyed (Frank, 2012; Wells, 2011). Adopting a relativist perspective may also allow me to view identities as subjective and personal to that individual, reinstating agency and ownership. Through relativism, no set of facts can be objectively correct, and what facts do exist are subjective (Marshall, 2019). This can allow individuals to create and

share identities that are truly relatable to them, further aligning with the humanistic values of CoP (Haslam & Levy, 2006; Woolfe, 2010). Furthermore, as social beings, we can begin to acknowledge that categories of experiences and 'labels' are socially constructed, fostering curiosity in identity exploration and awareness (Haslam et al, 2006). Axiologically, this infers that meaning can be co-constructed differently between individuals and cultures, and cannot be simply 'black or white' (Frank, 2012, 2016), perhaps reflecting there may be multiple ways to understand and express identities.

In sum, epistemologically constructivist and ontologically relativist, I believe that narratives regarding the intersectional identities of S-A LGBTQ+ individuals are co-constructed differently, through many interactions. Through carefully attending to these stories, I can gain insight into *how* identities may be constructed the way they are, as well as *why* individuals see themselves in certain ways (Riessman, 2008; Wells, 2011). Drawing on collective influences from narrative and constructivist philosophies, which stress that the world and realities cannot be acknowledged through one singular strand of knowledge, I account for the existence of multiple possibilities, available to those who expand their perspectives, embracing these realities (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019; Guba et al, 1994, 2005; Marshall, 2019). I have not forged claims, or discovered truths about identities and how they are constructed, understood or expressed, as I believe that no truths can be held with certainty within the meaning-making process, only that expressions, behaviours and context can be interpreted (Bruner, 1991; Marshall, 2019; Squire, 2012).

Lastly I do not deny the existence of the physical world, however believe that what gives the physical world meaning is the mutual understandings created between individuals when they engage (Frank, 2012). Although this places a critical nature to this research, I do not extend as far as being proactive with my values, shaping the aims and processes of my

research (Gemignani, 2017; Sorour & Sakhaway, 2016); I simply remain true to the identities and narratives of S-A queer individuals.

In the next section, I outline the practicalities of carrying out this research, and how I applied theoretical knowledge regarding DPNA, into practice.

3. Research Design

3.1. Participants

3.1.1. Sampling: Inclusion Criteria

The research required a sample of individuals who identified as:

- Queer or LGBTQ+
- Second-Generation
- South-Asian
- Being born and raised in the UK
- Aged 18+
- Speak fluent English
- Participants must not be experiencing active suicidal ideation or thoughts regarding deliberate self-harm. Participants should also not be facing environmental risks, such as direct harm from others'.

Though social science approaches often use 'labels' to categories people, like sexuality or ethnicity, labelling is often incapable of capturing the intricacies of experiences, individual or collective (Brickell, 2006; Chambers, 2002). While language plays a significant role in the expression and comprehension of experiences, i.e., labelling, it can also outline pre-existing entities remaining in impartial state, awaiting classification (Brickell, 2006; Chambers, 2002; Ussher & Mooney-Somers, 2000). Thus, researchers can often struggle to inclusively recruit, as labels may not resonate with participants (Ussher et al, 2000). For

example, for queer S-A's, Western labels regarding their sexual identities may not be conducive, and could perpetuate marginalisation (Ade-Serrano et al., 2016; Das et al, 2012; Narváez et al., 2009; Roffee & Waling, 2017). Furthermore enforcing 'normative', western, queer 'labels' may also have revoked individuals' agency to construct culturally conducive identities (Ade-Serrano et al., 2016; Burkhart, 2003). Reflecting on this, I encouraged self-identification, creating an inclusive space for any individual who identifies as queer or LGBTQ+. This was made explicit within the research poster (appendix 1).

Participants were also invited to self-identify as S-A, with this again being outlined in the poster (appendix 1). This was important as Western psychological research has often categorised S-A identity as being homogenous (Iwamoto et al., 2013). However, due to differences in culture, food, religion, language and many other facets, this group is in-fact heterogenous (Iwamoto et al., 2013). Furthermore, experiences of diasporic individuals may influence how individuals situate and understand their identities, with these insights being dynamic and fluctuating, rather than stable and fixed (Bhar, 2012). Reflecting on my own experiences of being second-generation S-A, it was also important for me to consider the idea that interactional, or situational contexts can also change and define identities, with differing contexts resulting in diverse, or pluralised identities (Bhar, 2012). Thus, to capture the heterogeneity of S-A identity, along with the dynamic nature of diasporic identity, self-identification felt important to consider.

Ultimately, the encouragement of self-identification and participant selection was driven by my aspiration to capture as much representation of S-A queer identities as possible, as these voices are often under-represented within psychological research (McKeown et al., 2010; Patel, 2019; Puar, 2013; Siraj, 2012). I do however recognise that due to the diversities and heterogeneity of this group, unique individualities may have been unaccounted for (Iwamoto et al., 2013). Nevertheless, as this research intended to promote discourse focusing

on S-A queer identities in the UK, this method of participant selection was important to increase visibility for this group, and allow individuals to be seen, heard and understood, whilst perhaps also influencing others (Idnani, 2021).

Participants were also asked their preferred pronouns/self-descriptors, during the initial screening call (appendix 2), along with a few other demographic details. During screening calls, a full risk assessment was also completed, exploring suitability to partake. This was important as literature reports this community to experience higher rates of mental health difficulties (Burns, 2018; Burns et al., 2015; Chowdhury et al, 2020; Gilbert et al., 2004; Kumar et al, 2010; Sandil et al., 2015; Schuck & Liddle, 2001).

Accounting for the impacts of acculturation, this research focuses on identities of second-generation individuals, who perhaps face distinctive obstacles in navigating their sense of 'self' (Gupta et al., 2007; Kallivayalil, 2004; Zaidi et al, 2002). To articulate narratives clearly and for the purpose of analysis, only fluent English speakers were recruited.

Sample sizes for qualitative research are typically small due to the rich and detailed data gathered, and extensive analysis processes (Creswell, 2013; Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Ritchie, 2011; Wells, 2011). Wells (2011) suggests five participants to be sufficient for NA, while others recommend between two and ten (Creswell, 2013). Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2007) also advocate examining sample sizes from previous research which follows a similar design. Following consideration, eight participants were recruited, allowing me to attend to the nuances of each narrative (Butina, 2015; Mccormack, 2004). Brief details of each participant are outlined below:

Pseudonym	Pronoun	Gender Identity	Sexual Identity	Religious Identity	Ethnic/Racial Identity
'Omar'	He/Him	Cis Male	Gay	Muslim	Bangladeshi
'Haniya'	She/Her	Cis Female	Gay	Muslim	Pakistani
'Arushka'	She/Her	Cis Female	Lesbian	Hindu	Sri Lankan; Tamil
'Jay'	He/Him	Cis Male	Gay	Hindu	Indian
'Nimisha'	She/Her	Cis Female	Lesbian/ Queer/ "Person"	Muslim	Pakistani
'Simran'	She/Her	Cis Female	Bi-Sexual	Sikh	Punjabi; Indian
'Zara'	She/Her	Cis Female	Demisexual/ Gay	Muslim; Sufism	Pakistani
'Aditya'	He/Him	Cis Male	Gay	Muslim	Mauritian; South-Asian

3.1.2. Recruitment

Participants were recruited through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Social media recruitment was chosen for its effectiveness in reaching a wider participant pool (Sanchez et al., 2020), whilst maintaining a degree of anonymity (Gelinas et al., 2017). Due to Covid-19, this also became the safest way to recruit.

With the permission of page administrators, the recruitment poster was shared with S-A LGBTQ+ groups; Hidayah, Sarbat LGBT Sikhs, British Asian LGBTI, Dosti Leicester, Birmingham South Asian LGBT, and The Mosaic Trust. Reflecting on my researcher position and sexual identity, which render me as 'outsider' to this community, collaboration with social media page administrators was essential; they became 'gate-keepers'. Recruiting without disclosing my positionality may have been socially irresponsible, placing my

research agendas first (BPS, 2018). I requested that participants contact me directly by email, should they wish to take part, or had any question about the research, or me. It felt important to offer this space to develop the participant-researcher relationship early on. Furthermore, literature points to participants being more likely to engage when researchers are transparent and relatable (Berger, 2015; Shinozaki, 2012). Although a researcher's positionality cannot increase narrative validity, relatability can build trust, particularly when working with marginalised groups (Muhammad et al., 2015; Reicherzer et al., 2013; Riggs, 2007).

Participants were also free to ask questions during the screening call. All participants enquired about my motivations for pursuing this project and about my identity. I therefore believed it was important to share brief insights into my lived experiences, using a suitable amount of self-disclosure. This again built trust, whilst demonstrating empathy and congruence (Muhammad et al., 2015; Reicherzer et al., 2013; Riggs, 2007; Treharne & Riggs, 2015). It was important not to over share, as this could result in boundaries being blurred or create power imbalances, much like the therapist-client relationship (Muhammad et al., 2015).

3.2. Materials, Data Collection and Participation

3.2.1. Participation

Individuals requesting to take part were emailed a 'participant information' letter (appendix 3), outlining the nature and purpose of the research, data collection/storage and confidentiality/anonymity. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw, facilitating autonomy, and ensuring the research remained ethically sound (BPS, 2018; HCPC, 2016). Following agreement to take part, participants were emailed a consent form (appendix 4). These were signed and returned via email, prior to participation. Interviews were then scheduled. Prior to commencement, all individuals were explicitly made aware of

confidentiality and the limits of this and were encouraged to find a private space to safely and freely complete interviews.

3.2.2. Data Collection

Due to Covid-19, interviews were only permitted to be conducted via Microsoft Teams. With verbal consent from participants, these were audio and video recorded.

A short, semi-structured interview schedule (appendix 5) was used to explore the research question. Morrow (2005) reflected that the fewer questions researchers asked, the more stories tended to be elicited. In practice, I found this to be the case, as interviews naturally unfolded and flowed. Patton (2015) describes this interview style to be informal and conversational, which is although is guided by the research purpose, allows for a more natural interaction.

Interview questions were loosely formulated using existing literature exploring queer identities of POC and were kept open-ended, allowing for the probing and following-up of issues as they arose, without restricting the interaction (Mann, 2016; Patton, 2015). Questions were discussed within research supervision to ensure they remained bias free and relevant.

Prior to interviews commencing, to maintain respect and autonomy (BPS, 2018) participants were informed that they could decline to answer certain questions if necessary. During the interview, prompts were used to illicit more detail or regain focus. These were kept to a minimum, allowing for spontaneous sharing of stories. Mishler (1986) explains how this can also empower individuals, facilitating agency to speak using "their own voices" (Mishler, 1986, p.118). Interviews lasted between one hour to one hour and thirty minutes; sufficient time for participants to unravel stories, whilst remaining mindful of the analysis process (Elliott, 2005). At the end of interviews, participants were offered ten minutes to verbally debrief. A debrief letter was also emailed (appendix 6), and participants were encouraged to contact me if they had any further contributions or questions. A reflexive entry

was made following each interview, documenting reflections and my own responses to the interviews.

3.3. Analysis

3.3.1. Method of Analysis

Phenomenological and narrative methodologies were considered during the early stages of this project, on the basis that they both aim to obtain emic, ideographic accounts of personal experiences (Smith, 2008). Both approaches may also have allowed me to acknowledge the existence of multiple realities, aligning with my relativist ontology (Smith, 2008). Nevertheless, as realities can be co-constructed through language, interaction and context (Caduri, 2013), with individuals holding agency during social exchanges, to fluidly navigate identities in endless ways that make sense to them (Gergen, 2016), NA seemed a better fit. Furthermore, as phenomenological research tends to explore experiences of specific phenomenon (Giorgi, 2008; Smith et al., 2013), offering insights into *what* happens, NA may allow us to reach beyond, considering *why* experiences, or narratives may be arranged in specific ways; allowing deeper focus on dialogue (Wells, 2011), whilst aligning with my epistemology, ontology and axiology.

3.3.2. Procedure

DPNA does not follow a step-by-step process, but pushes the skill of slow and attentive reading, or "close reading" (Andrews et al., 2008, p.9), which facilitates analytical thought (Clandinin et al, 2000). Analysis can also occur throughout the research process, rather than solely post data collection (Etherington, 2007). Through "close reading" (Andrews et al., 2008, p.9), decisions can be made about what to include, and how stories piece together, depending on the area of research (Frank, 2012).

All transcripts were manually transcribed verbatim; no formal transcription process is necessary for DPNA (Chase, 2011; Holstein & Gubrium, 2012; Wells, 2011). This allowed

me to fully immerse myself within the data, re-establishing my rapport with participants. Following transcription, interviews were imported into NVivo Pro 12 software, for analysis. During this process Holstein & Gubrium (2012) recommend implementing 'analytic bracketing', to interchangeably attended to different narrative aspects and consider how these interact. Through my repeated readings, I specifically attended to what was communicated and performed, positioning and the presence and impact of others' voices, highlighting and making notes on each.

Beginning by explicitly looking at what was openly communicated and how stories were told/performed, I utilised ideas from Frank's (2012) line of DPNA questioning, asking, "what is at stake for whom, including storyteller and protagonist in the story, listeners who are present at the storytelling, and others who may not be present but are implicated in the story? How does the story, and the particular way it is told, define or redefine those stakes, raising or lowering them? How does the story change people's sense of what is possible, what is permitted, and what is responsible or irresponsible?" (Frank, 2012, p.74).

Within this, I was also considered 'positioning', reflecting on participants abilities to establish their position through connecting themselves with lived experiences, and communicate moral perspectives (Wells, 2011), e.g. "I do X, but not Y". 'Positioning' can also reflect connections with others who perhaps share experiences (Shuman, 2012). I additionally used Aveling et al's (2015) guide to address 'positioning', permitting me to highlight awareness of, and understanding the existence of differing 'i-positions' (Hermans, 2014), from which people speak, and shift between. Aveling et al's (2015) method can also be used to stress the various 'voices' inside an individual's 'voice'. Finally, Aveling et al (2015) clarify how voices of 'inner-others', may emerge within narratives, as either direct or indirect quotes, (e.g., "my mother said X"), referencing beliefs, utterances or opinions of other people or groups (e.g., "they think, or believe X"). Others may also appear through

speech as ‘echoes’; utterances which could originate beyond the narrator (Aveling et al., 2015).

Participants can also ask themselves questions, correct themselves or interrupt what they were saying to quote someone else, referred to as ‘auto-dialogue’ (Josephs & Valsiner, 1998), and can be used to address whether voices are critical, supportive or contradictory, and if interactions between voices creates changes, resistances or silences (Aveling et al., 2015; Valsiner, 2002). Following Aveling et al.'s (2015) step-by-step guide, I firstly noticed and documented varying ‘i-positions’ within each narrative, before considering the voices of ‘inner-others’ and ‘auto-dialogue’.

As I engaged through the above processes, I also began identifying ‘typologies’ which appeared important to interviewee’s narratives. These were evident in what participants explicitly spoke about, and how they shared and built their identities. ‘Typologies’ reflect a collection of common solutions, to common problems amongst participants (Frank, 2010, 2012). They can show how narrative resources can be used to create resolutions, whilst questioning whether ‘typologies’ “enhance[s] [individuals] capacity to hold their own in circumstances of vulnerability” (Frank, 2012, p.49). Furthermore, Frank (2010) states, “elaboration of types of narratives allows recognising the uniqueness of each individual story, while at the same time, understanding how individuals do not make up stories by themselves” (Frank, 2010, p.119); reiterating ‘polyphony’ (Bakhtin, 1984).

Although my initial intention was not to present ‘typologies’, these appeared significant, leading me to add this layer of analysis. As typologies were built up through understanding differing layers of analysis, I frequently checked these against the raw data.

Within DNPA the concept of ‘unfinalisability’ (Frank, 2012) is worth noting; the notion that there is no one final say on one’s experiences (Riessman, 2008). Although this is not an analytical step in itself, this is a concept I have remained mindful of throughout this

research process. ‘Unfinalisability’ proposes that identities can be defined and re-defined, or told and re-told, perhaps never-ending (Frank, 2012); emphasising the fluidity of how identities are shared and understood. The rejection of an ending however is a tension within DPNA, as research requires data to be reported in finalised ways (Frank, 2012). Nonetheless, dialogic philosophies anticipate that readers will continue to alter the meaning of what is created and read, bringing forward novel ideas and questions; continuing the dialogue and facilitating the continuation of narratives (Frank, 2012). Therefore, whilst existing research, regardless of methodological or epistemological perspective, may report something apparently final about an individual’s identities, through the lens of DPNA, there is no real end, just cycles of new dialogue (Frank, 2012).

Lastly, methodologically, DPNA places a greater emphasis on the changing boundaries between the self and other in comparison to other methods (Sullivan, 2012); underlining the importance of relational reflexivity. Fully acknowledging my influence on the data, and recognising that it is impossible to pinpoint and deconstruct the impact of this (Bishop & Shepherd, 2011; Koven, 2011, 2012), I took measures to promote reflexivity by listening back to interviews soon after conducting them. During this process, I reflected on my thoughts, reactions and emotions, documenting this within my reflexive journal; crucial to increasing integrity, credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Finlay, 2002).

4. Ethical Considerations

4.1. Ethics Approval

As this research involved the exploration of potentially sensitive topics, I was challenged to consider the ethical value, and benefits of the project for the S-A queer community (BPS, 2014; Sanjari et al., 2014).

Ethical approval (appendix 7) was sought prior to data collection and was accepted by the ‘Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology at the University of East

London (UEL)'. I adhered to ethical guidelines of research, outlined in the BPS 'Code of Human Research Ethics' (BPS, 2014), 'HCPC guidance on conduct for students' (HCPC, 2016) and UEL 'Code of Practice for Research Ethics' (UEL, 2015).

Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) explains that for research to be morally responsible, researchers must be sensitive to moral issues and actions, alongside being knowledgeable, honest and fair. I have committed to these issues throughout the research process, respecting participants and their narratives (Gair, 2012).

Alongside ethical approval, a data management plan (appendix 8) was devised to ensure the safeguarding of data (BPS, 2018). I adhered to 'Data Protection Regulation: Guidance for Researchers' and UEL 'Code of Practice for Research Ethics' (UEL, 2015).

4.2. Ethical and Practical Considerations

Power may be an ethical issue which requires careful thought throughout research processes (Dowling, 2005), i.e., as the research author, I hold the power to depict participants in any way I choose. I felt obliged to ensure I did this responsibly, respectfully and fairly, balancing what I perceived participants intended to express, alongside the academic requirements of the project. This is especially pertinent, as research intending to 'offer a voice' to marginalised groups may run the risk of not representing participant's stories accurately (Andrews et al., 2013); narratives may be misused, "to create pity, or the illusion of compassion in which others' stories become allegories for suffering, but at the cost of making the person who suffered an exotic other" (Shuman, 2012, p.131). It was extremely important I remained transparent and reflexive throughout, whilst fostering an effective and trusting relationship with participants which encouraged autonomy, attending to power imbalances through increasing collaboration (Råheim et al., 2016).

Researcher safety was also important to consider, as narratives may have been emotionally impactful for me, or potentially resonated. To manage my overall wellbeing, I continued to access personal therapy and appropriately drew on supervision.

Despite online research being no riskier than face-to-face research (BPS, 2017), it was important I considered changes to the nature of risk, and my ability to assess it (Gosling, et al, 2004). I referred to the BPS 'ethical guidelines for internet mediated research' (IMR) (BPS, 2017) for guidance, as IMR focusing on complex topics, including sexuality may require additional consideration to safeguard participants (BPS, 2018; Burles & Bally, 2018). I learned that one of the central issues within IMR is what constitutes as a 'public' or 'private' space, with this informing procedures regarding consent (Eysenbach & Till, 2001; Sugiura et al., 2017). This posed no concerns to this research, as informed consent was a requirement. However, through reading, I become aware that the greater risk within IMR comes not from participating, but from possible disclosure of information later. As I recruited from 'open' social media platforms and was aware of the continuous changes made to privacy management, this may have meant that private content could very quickly become public. I became concerned that if participants commented on the recruitment poster, this could be seen by others, possibly resulting in complications around confidentiality and participant safety. As discussed before, holding 'outsider' status as a researcher also meant I needed to consider ways in which I could work alongside the community, weighing up the needs of the research alongside participant safety, confidentiality and dignity (Sugiura et al., 2017). Mindful of this, I worked with page administrators, and agreed that comments on the research poster would be switched off, and potential participants should only contact me directly by email; maintaining boundaries and emphasising my role as a researcher (BPS, 2017). We also agreed to only advertise the poster for four months, removing it after. This allowed adequate recruitment time, whilst ensuring online spaces remained safe. The post

was removed after four months because participants may have unintentionally revealed their association with the study by 'liking' it, again creating a potential confidentiality breach. Whilst posted, a brief disclaimer underneath the post notified participants of this; exercising a high level of social responsibility and collaborative working (BPS, 2017).

Further reflection on the idea of 'public' and 'private' spaces led me to consider whether video interviews may have been seen as 'intrusive', as I would perhaps breach the 'private', or 'confidential' space of the participant, as many were at home (Anderson & Muñoz Proto, 2016). After weighing up the cost of video interviewing against the benefits, prior to the interview commencing, participants were made aware that the use of their camera was not a requirement and I respected their choice; ensuring privacy and respecting their right to self-determination, whilst protecting participants from harm (BPS, 2017, 2018; Peters et al., 2020). Explicitly offering participants a choice regarding camera use offered an opportunity to maintain confidentiality, whilst re-addressing power imbalances through facilitating autonomy (Anderson et al, 2016; Gelinas et al., 2017; Peters et al., 2020). Such conversations also pushed me to think specifically about participant's individual needs. For example, one participant explained that as he lived with his parents who were unaware of his sexuality, he would need to speak quietly. Although he did not explicitly express safeguarding concerns, we agreed that should he need to leave the call at any point, he would be able to, and we could resume when convenient for him. Similar adaptations were considered for other participants, when necessary.

5. Credibility, Quality and Validity

Methods of quality assurance, like reliability and validity are linked to quantitative research (Willig, 2008). Epistemological and ontological differences within qualitative research have shown these measures to be unsuitable (Mannay, 2013; Whelen et al, 2011). Furthermore, as narratives are not required to be factual reports of events, but "one

articulation told from a point of view that seeks to persuade others to see events in the same way" (Riessman, 2008, p.187), methods of validation, including generalisability and replicability, are not applicable; to claim 'truths' across participants eliminates their numerous possible ways to exist (Parker, 2004).

Riessman (2008) explains that validity, and quality should be considered within the methodological framework that informs the research, however, for narrative research, there are no formal tools. As such, I drew on Yardley's (2000) four dimensions, which are used as a framework to evaluate, and uphold the quality and validity of qualitative research. These are outlined below. Yardley (2017) stressed that these must be flexibly applied.

5.1. Sensitivity to Context

'Sensitivity to context' is deemed a vital aspect of qualitative research (Yardley, 2000, 2017). It can be addressed in many ways, like drawing on appropriate literature and increasing awareness of participant's socio-cultural contexts, alongside attending to ethical issues. Insights gained through the exploration of theories and literature, should however not guide researchers interpretations of data (Yardley, 2000). Attending to social contexts in which data is gathered is also essential and must include considerations of researcher positionality in relation to participants (Yardley, 2017); evaluations of perceived power imbalances within the researcher-participant relationship is required (Yardley, 2017).

To attend to 'sensitivity to context', I reviewed a range of literature available to me, from various disciplines. The literature review also enabled me to capture the 'gap' in the research and develop my research rationale.

Throughout the research process, I also kept a reflexive journal. This supported me in exploring my own expectations, bettering my understanding of my researcher position, and addressing issues of power; insights are provided in the next section. I believe this was especially important as I share identities with participants.

Ethical issues were also deliberated and addressed throughout. For example, confidentiality was safeguarded, with careful consideration into the implications of IMR with a marginalised population, and the use of information, consent and debrief letters.

5.2. Commitment and Rigour

'Commitment and rigour' can be shown through the appropriate selection of methodology, and immersion in the data (Yardley, 2000). A sufficient amount of data should also be collected, with analysis being conducted in 'completeness', i.e., looking beyond the surface (Yardley, 2000).

This research followed principles of DPNA (Frank, 2012), which centred on exploring the ideographic narratives of participants identities. As narratives are believed to be co-constructed, this requires researchers to be adequately immersed within the data, throughout the research process (Wells, 2011). I engaged with each interview individually, transcribing and analysing each narrative carefully to capture each story.

5.3. Coherence and Transparency

According to Yardley (2000, 2017) 'coherence' explores whether the research makes sense and remains consistent throughout. 'Coherence' can also be provided through considering if the research question and philosophical underpinnings of the work are suitable (Yardley, 2000, 2017). 'Transparency' can be achieved through clearly documenting methodological processes and analysis (Yardley, 2000, 2017). Efforts to maintain 'coherence and transparency' are documented earlier in this chapter.

5.4. Impact and Importance

The final component is 'impact and importance'; determining the value of the research, which may be theoretical, socio-cultural, or have wider implications for other disciplines (Yardley, 2000, 2017). I reflect on this further within the discussion chapter.

6. Reflexivity

Explicit reflexive practice is central to constructivist epistemology, and consistent with CoP values and ethics (Berger, 2015; Finlay, 2002). It is also a core component of DPNA, due to the co-construction of narratives (Frank, 2012; Riessman, 2008; Wells, 2011).

Feminist theorists posit that subjectivity within research processes can compromise data collection and analysis processes (Pillow, 2003). Furthermore, existing or new inequalities can be created through researcher subjectivity (Brisolara et al., 2014). Committing to reflexive practice bolsters qualitative research validity and credibility (Etherington, 2009), as questioning research processes demonstrates awareness of possible dilemmas and solutions, whilst permitting readers to deliberate these for themselves (Etherington, 2009; Pillow, 2003; Willig, 2019). Additionally, interrogating and confronting issues within research processes can promote a compassionate, non-exploitative approach towards participants, whilst addressing unhelpful instances of power within the research relationship (Pillow, 2003; Whelen et al, 2011).

6.1. A note on my 'Insider/Outsider' Status

The way in which participants were positioned in relation to me and others' will be considered during analysis, as McNess et al., (2015, p.300) reflected that "being inside or outside is often part of everyday language and consciousness".

'Insider' research refers to researchers studying a 'group' that they also belong to (Kanuha, 2000), sharing identities, cultures and languages for example (Asselin, 2003). 'Outsider' status refers to no connections or commonalities between the researcher, and participants (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

In the context of this research, I assume both insider and outsider status with my shared S-A identities, alongside my positions as a heterosexual, cis-female, researcher. I reflect on this further, below. Nevertheless, shifts occurred in how I constructed and

presented my own identities during interviews, in response to participants positioning of me and others', in relation to them (Shinozaki, 2012). Thus, a fixed 'insider'/'outsider' dyad was not possible to maintain, meaning it was important for me to consider my positions throughout this research. Furthermore, it was important that I 'bracket' my assumptions of participants experiences (Asselin, 2003), assuming nothing about their identities.

6.2. Personal Reflexivity

As participants are in dialogue with, and co-constructing realities alongside me, it was important I recognise that they may not only have been responding to questions, but also to their perceptions of me, what they expect me to be aware of, and perhaps want to hear (Riessman, 2008). They may also have imagined readers of the research, expecting them to make their own decisions about my influence on research outcomes; related to credibility and trustworthiness of the research (Creswell, 2013).

To facilitate reflexivity, I journaled my internal and external responses throughout the research process; probing my own assumptions, interests and motives for research, in the hope of detecting aspects of my 'self' which may skew data (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Finlay, 2002). Here, I will also explicitly state my position, allowing readers and participants an insight into my 'self'.

I am a second-generation, S-A (Indian descent), heterosexual, female in my early thirties, whose first language is English. I also speak Tulu and Hindi. I was raised Hindu, however, do not strongly affiliate myself with religion. I was born and raised in the East Midlands and relocated to London five years ago. I have also previously lived in other parts of the UK and have travelled extensively. My working background ranges across primary and secondary-care mental health settings, with experiences in acute mental health, IAPT, student mental health, HIV, psychosexual therapies, and gender and sexuality. The beliefs and values I hold reflect my biculturalism of Indian collectivism and Western individualism, with it

often being difficult to separate and distinguish which parts of me are Indian and which are Western, perhaps similarly to participants. I am aware however that they are circumstantially and situationally dynamic. Nevertheless, I am conscious that Western cultural and humanitarian beliefs inform the overall orientation to my outer world, whilst Indian culture and traditions influence beliefs which guide my personal choices, and morals. I believe these to all have influenced my interactions with participants. As a result, I intended to remain actively reflective, deliberating how my experiences may distort what I heard during interviews, and my responses, both during conversations and analysis.

A key point of difference between myself and participants is sexuality, and I am cognisant that identifying as heterosexual offers me a position of privilege in society, in comparison to participants. It is important for me to be mindful that despite creating strong rapports, moments of misunderstandings or mistrust may occur due to some power differentials being unwavering (Ahmed et al., 2011); possibly impacting the relational research dynamic.

Offering participants an appropriate amount of self-disclosure resulted in realisations of shared experiences and interests, personally and professionally, or a common history. This was particularly important as it may not only have enhanced the quality of data acquired (Dwyer et al, 2009; Redwood et al, 2013), by breaking down barriers to disclosure, but may also have helped with minimising power disparities within our relationship (Dwyer et al, 2009; Redwood et al, 2013). Transparency throughout the research process may also have offered a space to comfortably build trust, allowing interviews to become a privileged moment of intimacy with each individual who shared their narratives (Dwyer et al, 2009).

7. Chapter Summary

Here, I outlined the theoretical underpinnings of this research, alongside the rationales behind my methodological choices. I then discussed the research design and how I

implemented analysis procedures. I also deliberated ethical considerations, alongside the credibility of this research, before discussing the importance of reflexive practice and sharing insights into my 'position'. Next, I present the analysis and outcomes gained from participant interviews.

Chapter Four: Analysis and Outcomes

1. Introduction

Here, I outline the analysis of my eight participant interviews. Each participant is presented individually; I attend to the uniqueness of how identities were constructed and expressed by each participant. Thus, the majority of this section is devoted to their individual analysis, followed briefly by 'typologies' (Frank, 2012). An example of the analysis process has been included within the appendix (9).

Narratives are presented under themes, illuminating a facet of participant's identities. Within themes, I reflect on interview content (what they spoke about), performance (how identities were constructed and shared), 'positioning' (how/where participants place themselves within their stories) and 'multi-voicedness' (who/the various 'voices' within an individual's 'voice'). This seemed to be the clearest way to present the outcomes, with minimal confusion, as stories were often interrelated, or overlapping. I have included extracts from transcripts to reflect aspects of content, performance and 'positioning'. Here, embolden words are comments emphasised during stories, reflecting content and performance, whilst 'positioning' is signified through underlined text. 'Voices' are explicitly reflected upon and noted. Lines are also detailed, allowing readers to establish at which point extracts were drawn from.

Prior to outlining each participant's analysis, I offer details of their background and identifications. Identifiable information has been pseudonymised or omitted (BPS, 2018; HCPC, 2016), and participant detail have been kept brief to safeguard confidentiality; it is simply offered for context.

2. 'Omar'

Omar is a Bangladeshi male, in his early thirties. He identifies as gay and is in a long-term relationship. He described his partner to be English. Omar spoke a lot about his religious

and familial identities, and how these often were misaligned with 'Western' aspects of his 'self', namely sexuality.

2.1. Navigating identity boundaries: "someone has done witchcraft on you"

A central theme of Omar's interview reflected his experiences of navigating familial, cultural and traditional values, against his own morals and beliefs. Omar spoke about his identities being multi-layered, with some, like religion and culture, being attached from birth, and others which he has come to learn about himself, like sexuality; the latter is misaligned with the former. As a result of this misalignment, Omar reflected his identities to be in conflict at times. Nevertheless, he did not want to 'let go' of difficult to manage identities, as they remained important to his sense of 'self'. Instead, Omar spoke about using his position to challenge, strengthen or adapt his identities, educating himself, and others, along the way. Interactions with others appeared to be a challenging, yet important part of this process. For example, when educating others, namely his friends and/or his partner, about culture, or his family about sexuality, Omar spoke about often being met with judgement, as others seemed unable to let go of their assumptions or perspectives of who they think he *should* be. To manage the frustration caused by this, Omar shared that he needed to create and offer different 'versions' of himself (for example, I-as-Muslim or I-as-Gay), within different spaces, allowing him to navigate threats to his identities safely, and at his own pace. This appeared to be particularly difficult with regards to managing religious ideologies (voices of inner others), and seemed to permeate through his other identities, a tension surfacing throughout our conversation.

Omar explained that he was born into an extremely religious family and was dedicated to religion by his father; he was sent to a 'Hafizi' (Imam school), to train to be an Imam. Over the years, Omar explained that he had become increasingly detached from certain religious teachings and began identifying as "culturally religious as opposed to

religious-religious" [Line:29]. This comment infers that Omar has adapted religion to align with his personal ethics, whilst using his position to highlight restrictions rooted in his 'strict' religious and family values. This may also act as a way for him to adopt a 'separate' position – in some ways choosing individuality, over traditional, collectivist, S-A scripts.

Despite assuming this position, Omar explained that his family often refused to allow him to let go of traditional ideologies, forcefully assigning him to religious and social categories, denying his separation. He stated, "the idea of what **they** have of me, **it's probably an illusion**, is **not the real me at all**, so they think **I** am religious, believing in God, want to pray five times a day, will do things the way **they** do things." [Lines:93-95]. Through this comment, it seems that Omar indirectly positions himself within the family but adapts the representation of his identities to suit them; perhaps protecting himself and the family from judgements or rejection from wider social structures. His use of "they" and "I" or "me" presents this separation to the audience. However, it seems that Omar's attempts to nurture and express his personal identities appear to be met with him being viewed as problematic by his family:

Extract 1

"**they'll** just come out with religious quotes and, you know, "Mohammed said this, or he said that", or "**we** should also be doing this, let's go and have a date, or have a fast for tomorrow", all of that stuff. **You** just ha-, **constantly having to play along**, because if **you** don't it's like "why are **you** not playing along, is it because **you** don't believe what Mohammed said". So yo-, **you** kind of **expose yourself** a bit. Erm, so, **you**-, it, it's a **very fake kind of appearance**, and **if you don't go along with it, it's like something is wrong with you**."

[Lines:104-110]

Later in the interview, he speaks about how his family refer to his personal identities as the work of "witchcraft" or the "devil", stressing their distaste. Extract one reflects this, whilst also highlighting a few of the many voices within his narrative, which appear to represent judgements or rejection, perhaps extending beyond his family, to the wider religious, and cultural community; his identity as a member of these communities may be at stake. Inner voices of Omar's parents, and family are explicit, as he performs, and references conversations previously had with them. Within these voices, it is implied that the voices of the wider community may be intertwined, as Omar mentions religious scriptures or rules which *should* be followed and are perhaps laid out by others. His position seems to change throughout this extract and the one below. In extract one, he initially refers to the separation between him and his family using "they'll" to show this, before switching to "we", positioning himself directly within their unit. For much of the speech however, he refers to himself as "you", as though he is viewing himself through their lens and describing himself how they would. This may offer a way to convince the audience that this is not how he sees himself, but how he is seen by these communities; perhaps reflecting self-acceptance in his identities and re-affirming his I-position.

With Omar feeling as though he must endlessly "play along", this may illustrate how, to him, others from his background tended to veer towards being against challenging the 'status quo', perhaps even how deviating or raising the possibility of change may lead to rejection. This can be seen further in extract two, as Omar shares his inner-speech and performs a comment made by his sister:

Extract 2

"To give you an example, when I first told my sister, who also grew up here-, so I thought you know what she'll understand. The first response was, **"**it's because **you're** not living at home and you have culturally taken on cultural ideals of another culture that doesn't agree

with **our**, you know, religion. So, **you need to come back home and we will correct your ways again.**"

[Lines:135-138]

The position of his family appears juxtaposed with Omar being in favour of questioning and curiosity, "my ideals and how I think is near enough impossible, because unless you talk in their language and their terms, you won't ever get through" [Lines:125-126]. He explained that his own understanding of Islam was that questioning and "honesty", towards yourself and others, constituted a way of worshipping; an aspect of his religious identity he remains firmly aligned with. He reflects that although his family acknowledges this core value, "in their head God can't have intended this" [Line:217], leading them to act in a way *they* believe is right. Adopting different representations of himself may allow Omar to feel in control of his identities, rather than being controlled by others, remaining 'true' to himself; "part of the identity will not be identifiable to some of the people you associate with, whether it's friends or family" [Lines:8-9]. This perspective may also allow Omar to assimilate, bridge and balance the external voices of the West, with Bangladeshi, Islamic voices from 'home'. As reflected in extract two, Omar perhaps sees this to have been different for his sister, imagining her to view Western ideologies as disruptive to her, and her families 'norms', challenging cultural, historical and religious voices, and identities, which have passed through the family for years. Omar's interpretation of his sister's internal dialogue may also signify that the family home represents safety and belonging, with Omar somewhat being separate from this, positioning him as "you/you're" whilst the family is "our/we"; perhaps implying that he is no longer belongs, or is safe.

The 'danger' posed by Western ideologies is shared through Omar's reflection that integration and assimilation have been difficult for his family to achieve, despite it being socially desirable. As non-UK citizens, they did not experience the same rights, and

privileges that he, or a UK citizen perhaps does, highlighting the voices of political institutions (extract three). Omar indirectly indicated that he was aware of discrimination and perhaps racism within the political system. Through his racialised identity, this had perhaps become clear to him, and was entangled with the notion that the UK did not consider itself his, or his family's, or his communities' home. As he describes this, he implies that this is the same for the wider S-A community, as he refers to "we"; perhaps including me within his narrative. His positioning of me being with him becomes explicit later as Omar states, "it would be great if this research could go further and be used to change how therapy is. Like I've had a therapist in the past who was white, and I just felt like they didn't understand, why would they though, but it made it harder for me." [Lines:518-521]. Switching back to a collectivist stance, possibly because of recognising discrimination, Omar's pause in extract three offers a moment of reflection during speech but could also signify his parent's exasperation in trying to assimilate, as well as the voices of minority ethnic groups more broadly.

Extract 3

*"*I think **policies in the UK** make thinks a lot harder like immigration rules and the way **people have been put together**, it's like **we aren't meant to integrate**, that's probably why my parents found it so hard to fit in [short pause] and then **they want to protect** the group **they're in, and as their children, we** have to **follow the rules** too, to **protect everyone**."

[Lines:454-458]

2.2. Questioning new identities: "I do feel like I have to constantly apologise too, which is not what I should be doing"

Through the interview, Omar reflects on how specific events during his life have presented as transformative experiences, provoking self-reflection; from entering university, dating experiences to difficult workplace dynamics. Although these experience may have

been difficult, they appear to have contributed to Omar's 'self'. For instance, when talking about workplace dynamics, Omar spoke of recently having to contemplate his position and identity within his role as a result of other's unconscious and conscious prejudices towards him. Reflecting on the interactions between his inner-voice and the voices of inner-other's, he spoke about apologising for representing his 'whole' self, or the "honest" version of himself, however had not considered why this was. Over time, he came to recognise that his actions perhaps signalled deep-seated prejudices stemming from religious, historical, or cultural inner-voices, leading him to challenge his own internalised views on identity. He described this as a "journey", implying movement and fluidity while also displacing his previous identities where he perhaps was only able to share aspects of himself which were socially and culturally acceptable.

His relationship appeared to be a pivotal point of change, allowing Omar to become more transparent and welcoming to identities he may have previously side-lined. He may previously have felt compelled to live the 'version' of himself his family knew, out of fear of rejection from the religious, cultural, and wider LGBTQ+ community. Omar also spoke of avoiding the S-A LGBTQ+ community, as they represented his "struggle", and perhaps the many voices of rejection. With support of his partner, Omar spoke of embracing his many identities, and qualities, approaching these with the curiosity he already embodied (I-as-Curious), which had somewhat dissipated because of anxiety and fear. Directly aligning himself with the S-A LGBTQ+ community through online platforms, and taking part in this research, Omar talked about his growing confidence to represent himself, reinstating his position as someone who challenges and questions the 'status-quo'; "We have so many issues as it is, and we don't need to keep them going." [Lines:515-516].

3. ‘Haniya’

Haniya is a Pakistani female, in her late twenties and identifies as gay. She comes from strict Islamic background, and reflected largely on the impact of this, alongside her fight for freedom. She and Arushka have been dating for several years.

3.1. Finding the real me: “I’m gonna pray and it's gonna go away”

Within Haniya’s narrative, she considered how she revised and altered her way of ‘being’, alongside considering her current and former ‘self’; religion appeared as a central theme in her narrative. She spoke about the ways in which she had been socialised into, and assigned her religious identity through her parents, wider religious figures and organisations; the voices of inner-others seemed to permeate through her former ‘self’. Islam was an extremely large part of her former identity, as Haniya spoke of wearing a Hijab from a young age, signifying and performing her commitment to, and embodiment of religion. She explained that she no longer did this, removing her affiliation with religion, perhaps instating ownership and control over her identity. Haniya performed her disidentification with Islam, outwardly and inwardly, through her speech regarding her, and other’s beliefs, and with her appearance. Comparing her ‘old’ and ‘new’ identities, she explained that although religion still bears significance, she did not wish to defy the religious morals that had been instilled within her. Thus, it was ‘better’ to detach herself from her Islamic identity completely; perhaps representing the existence of inner voices of religious figures, and her family, who discourage and disallow sexual fluidity.

Removing herself, also meant disconnecting from LGBTQ+ individuals who do adhere to Islamic religious practices:

Extract 1

“**they** were definitely South Asian, erm and **they** came up to **me** and **they** had, er a trans flag, and **one of them** just said to me, “oh, **we're** just going to go pray in Nāmaz on this flag if you

wanted to come join us. **They** were just like "oh hey, nice to see you, you're welcome here, it's nice to see **another Asian person**" and **I** was just like "OK you know what, **I'm not comfortable** with this, **this is not OK**. **I'm not cool**""

[Lines:383-388]

Within this extract, I clearly see that Haniya distances herself from religion, even when embodied by others from within the queer community. She situates herself in opposition, despite others attempting to align her with them to promote 'belonging'. Their voices appear welcoming, supportive and comforting, while Haniya's suggests anxiety, rejection and distress; reflected through her performance of sharing this story with the audience. I get the impression that Haniya worries that directly aligning with these women may dishonour her religious identity, and perhaps the voices of her parent's, religious communities, and scriptures. Earlier in the interview, Haniya stated, "I think my, my gayness and my queerness is most important to me", when describing her identities, leading me to also question whether her sexual identity may be at stake if she did re-align herself with religion. As such, disconnecting with religion allows her to maintain ownership of her sexual identity and freedom.

Communicating, and showing her sexuality to others is of high importance to Haniya. She appreciated how others supported her to embrace and own her sexual identity, through online platforms and at university. It seems Haniya wants others to observe and react to her sexual identity, perhaps seeking for others to be encouraged to embrace their less represented identities. Moreover, as someone who performed discretion regarding sharing her narrative, Haniya proclaimed it to others via her appearance through the removal of her Hijab, accentuating the pride she holds within her current identity which incorporates sexuality, dissipating her former 'self'.

As Haniya continued to describe her process of navigating identities, she spoke about her experiences of being a UK national and an immigrant. Although born in the UK, Haniya was raised in Pakistan for a few years, before returning here. She described experiencing few minor difficulties readjusting to the UK, depicting a somewhat uncomplicated sense of cultural identity, perhaps not having given this aspects of her 'self' (I-as-Pakistani) much thought. Elaborating, she depicts a somewhat straightforward experiences of integration in UK, opposing the voices/echoes, expectations and experiences of others; "Everyone says, "oh you know, if you're Pakistani and you've grown up in in the UK, it's very difficult and you have this thing". And I'm like "I don't. I don't have it, it's not- [laughs]" [Lines:172-174]. Here, I wonder if her laughter is because of the ease of her assimilation, or whether this is an attempt to disarm the blow of being unable to situate other identities, namely her sexuality. Haniya's dialogue centring culture appeared like that of religion as she explained early in the interview:

Extract 2

"it's the **gayness that's the issue**, not the, not the being Pakistani, so **I** feel like that's a part of **my** identity that **I hold on to** more strongly like. It means more to **me** 'cause **I fought** more for it I suppose it isn't-, **it isn't just a given."**

[Lines:148-151]

Although she describes her sexuality as an "issue", she places high importance and value on this aspect of herself. Her need to 'hold on' to it, implies a strong grasp, as this identity could be taken away from her, or de-valued, at any moment by other's. Her 'fight' for her sexual identity signifies the turmoil and distress she went through to reach her current 'self'. Haniya speaks more about this as the interview continues, reflecting on the deep state of depression and isolation she endured whilst battling to understand her sexuality. She described this period of her life as a "turning point" drawing on, and internalising the voices

of the “diverse, open-minded, liberal” individuals she had become friends with. This shared experience allowed her to connect more with her own open-minded, liberal, and diverse self, fostering confidence in owning, and representing her sexuality; “I felt a bit more comfortable with telling people at this point” [Line:472]. With the support of others, it seems that this adversity brought about heightened self-awareness, and new, positive identifications (I-as-Pakistani, Gay, Woman).

Remaining on this journey has not been without its issues, as Haniya talked about sharing her sexuality with her family, and the difficulties around this; she was told to pray and not to act on her sexual urges. Rather than allowing this to lead to distress, impacting her mental health, she responded by further embracing her sexuality, becoming prouder. Her desire to form a community with individuals who may have undergone similar experiences and taking part in this interview signalled and performed this, as much as her story and words did.

3.2. Reaching self-acceptance: “for me it’s all about the freedom”.

Another central theme of Haniya’s narrative is ‘freedom’, something which she had not been granted for much of her life. She positioned herself as being ‘othered’ by her cultural and religious identities, perhaps reflective of the voices of individuals and institutions. Initially these identities were central to her ‘self’, however, the distress they caused lead her to separate from them, forging freedom in her identities. This was however not straightforward. Nevertheless, with time and the support of others, Haniya finds her current ‘self’, within a position of active, yet tentative integration, development, and self-acceptance. This movement reflects the fluidity in her identities, as well as her agency in navigating identities through her narrative.

Haniya also challenges mainstream narratives around sexuality in the UK. She talked about the importance of finding ‘descriptors’ that worked for her, not the benefit of society.

She explained that although mainstream ‘labels’ would describe her as a lesbian, this did not sit well with her as “it's so derogatory and it's erm [short pause] used- it's used so much in like porn and it's you so much in like it's lesbian makes it sound like it's for the male gaze.” [Lines:40-42]. Her statement implies a need to deconstruct mainstream, patriarchal narratives around sex and sexuality. She also reflected that her identification with the ‘label’ gay is more meaningful, as it separates her identity from “two white women”, strengthening her uniqueness as a member of the S-A LGBTQ+ community. This theme, along with the above, reflects Haniya’s need to position herself in ‘opposition’ to the other, or by distancing herself either from the ‘labels’ or expectations of others.

4. ‘Arushka’

Arushka is a Sri Lankan, Tamil female in her early twenties and identifies as lesbian. She is Haniya’s partner. She reflected on feeling “lucky” that she came to understand her sexuality “as an adult”; with her position highlighting the injustices of prejudice alongside the privileges she has, relative to others who may have experienced turmoil in navigating identities at a younger age.

4.1. Unconscious assimilation: “I didn't really think of myself as erm being Asian”

Interestingly for Arushka, conflict in her cultural identity was a central theme. She described being aware, yet unaware of her Tamil, or S-A identity until she went to university:

Extract 1

“when it comes to my **ethnicity, I feel more conflicted,** actually, and, um, I was brought up in a house where all the **children spoke in English** and my **mom and dad spoke in Tamil to each other** and so erm, sometimes **I didn't really think of myself as erm being Asian**, even-, and it was only when I went to university and I got to spend time with more people from different erm countries and different backgrounds, that I kind of realised [laughs] that **I**

was not white."

[Lines:24-32]

Reflecting on her former self (I-as-White) and the ways in which she saw her cultural identity prior to attending university, she laughs. I wonder whether she feels a sense of embarrassment, or awkwardness, for not recognising that she was "not white"; perhaps answering to an expectation that she must feel a sense of 'belonging' to her heritage country, despite largely being socialised into white culture. She elaborates later in the interview, speaking about how her Sri Lankan, Tamil identity was "embarrassing", which may have been another reason for denying the existence of that identity; "I erm think **I went to school in a very white area** erm [short pause] the way that **people** erm dealt with not being white at my school was just to **make jokes** about their identity or their culture, and **things other people said were quite embarrassing**" [Lines:99-102]. Her position reflects her own, and minority individual's, experiences of being 'othered', perhaps using humour to deflect the distress this may have caused. Her pause during the performance of this story may be indicative of pain, stemming from racism and discrimination, perhaps associated with voices of political institutions. Assimilating to the mainstream community seems to have been a way to protect against this. Her former identity seems to comprise of many voices, largely from social contexts, i.e., school, peers, and the neighbourhood. The voices of her parents appear to be indirectly intertwined here too, as she touches on them only speaking Tamil to each other and speaking to Arushka and her siblings in English; perhaps implying through performance, that the Sri Lankan, Tamil identity was not for the children, only them. This may have been a method to encourage assimilation into the UK 'norms' and 'standards' through language, ensuring they 'fit in' and perhaps protecting them from the conflicts, or challenges they faced within their Sri Lankan identity, when assimilating to the UK.

Although this may have been the case, it seems that her parents were perhaps conflicted, as Arushka talks about the 'privileges' held by the white children, which were not given to her:

Extract 2

"**people were allowed to do things that I wasn't allowed to do,** and **I** wasn't allowed to go out with my friends, and, and **they** were. And I think I saw all of the restrictions and then just got embarrassed about everything else as well."

[Lines:171-174]

It seems that although her parents encouraged them to 'fit in' they perhaps feared losing their cultural identity, limiting acculturation through restricting socialisation, to preserve and protect their S-A identity. This may however have furthered the confusion and conflict Arushka felt in her cultural identity, as she explicitly reflects on the differences between "they"/ "people" and "I".

Uncertainties around belonging appeared to be a primary issue for Arushka, arising throughout our interview, with discourse largely exploring traditional ideas of nationality and belonging. Speaking about her transformative experiences regarding her cultural identity at university, she talks about her current self through a lens of belonging, as she met others like her, "**I** just thought, "oh [laughs], that's amazing, because erm, you can just hang out with this group of people and **you don't have to explain anything",** and no one laughs at anything." [Lines:106-108]. It seems these experiences perhaps eradicated the embarrassment that her former self felt, allowing her to embrace this identity which was placed at a distance for some time. She tells the story using first and third person ("I" and "you"), perhaps seeing herself from the position of these individuals, who ultimately became a part of her; positioning herself within a group, more comfortably, within the discomfort of trying to be something else. Learning from others appears to have encouraged Arushka to take ownership of her cultural identity, as she goes on to talk about how this has become an important part of her,

and something which she is no longer willing to let go of, “I think I just thought I wouldn't it would be such a shame if everything about my culture is lost in one generation erm, just because I'm embarrassed about it.” [Lines:122-124]. This experience particularly resonated with me, allowing me to really ‘feel’ the conflicts experienced by Arushka.

4.2. Strength in independence: “I kind of understood my sexuality as an adult”

Similarly, to culture, Arushka talked about understanding her sexuality at a later age. She described herself as being “lucky in a way”, as she was financially and socially independent, meaning she was able to take care of herself if conflict arose within her family; interestingly, freedom in identities only arose through social independence. She spoke of friends at university who explored sexuality at a younger age, “**they** thought a lot about trying to change their sexuality, repress it, but **I [short pause] fortunately** didn't have to do that.” [Lines:51-52]. Her positioning through “they” and “I” represents the differences in their experiences. The pause may also act as a moment of reflection on her fortune, and the freedom in her sexuality.

Her time at university and friendships seem to have offered a truly emancipatory experience; she not only developed and strengthened her identities but gained autonomy and confidence in her sense of ‘self’. It seems that Arushka may also have internalised the voices of ‘others’, which resonated with her own. This however was not without its challenges, as S-A ‘norms’ and ‘ideals’ appeared to permeate throughout her thinking, consciously or unconsciously:

Extract 1

“**I** think I just **assumed** that when I finished university, I would have **to leave home and then I'd have to get married soon**. And erm because I because **I'm the eldest**, I don't know where I got this idea from, but I kind of er, made up in my head that **I would have to get**

married, and **I'd have to marry someone that could erm, would be stable** and could **provide for my sisters**."

[Lines:301-305]

Although Arushka talks about not knowing where she "got this idea from", she later speaks about traditional 'norms', which perhaps indirectly reflect voices echoed through generations. Despite these voices positioning her as being independent through the use of 'I', this position appears to be intertwined with collectivist values, as she is framed as being a provider. Her reflection also potentially infers an internalised belief, perhaps echoed through stories shared by others, and the media, that queer relationships are not 'stable', with her 'provider' role perhaps being at threat. She recalled needing to challenge these ideas, with her relationship with Haniya enriching introspection as they simultaneously reflect on their shared experiences of being S-A. Arushka talked about this learning being ongoing, later in the interview. She voiced recognising internalised homophobia, which perhaps echoed patriarchal and gendered views on women, and relationships. Engaging more with the S-A LGBTQ+ community, has supported her in confronting these ideals, whilst giving her the opportunity to learn from others. This extended beyond social settings as Arushka also talked about respectfully challenging 'elders', who maintained such ideologies. Arushka talked about drawing on her cousins and siblings for support when doing this. When sharing her sexuality with her 'elders', this allowed her to use her collectivist, S-A identity to bolster, and share her sexual identity more confidently, "I just thought if I tell my mom on her own, she'll really struggle, and she won't talk to anyone. But if her sister's there they can talk about it together" [Lines:387-388]. This also seems to have enabled Arushka to maintain ownership of both identities.

5. ‘Jay’

Jay is an Indian man, in his early twenties and identifies as gay. He positioned himself as privileged in comparison to other S-A LGBTQ+ individuals due to the freedom he has had in flexibility navigating his identities. Jay spoke about previously holding separate layers of identity, which he is currently fusing together.

5.1. Personal religious identity: “I think a lot of things come from religion”

Religion seemed to be a big part of Jay’s ‘self’; he was raised in a Hindu household; however, his parents were not deeply religious. Jay explained that he socialised himself to religion in ways which were meaningful for him, as he grew older. He stated that he became increasingly curious about Hindu culture and tradition, and through his own reading, he began feeling empowered by elements of religion, which strengthened his position, as a Hindu, Indian and a gay man (I-as-a Hindu, Indian, Gay, Man). He disregarded religious ideas which did not align with his identities, allowing him to assume a more meaningful sense of self. He also explained that the empowerment offered by his religious identity supported him to confront others, who may attempt to diminish his sexual identity, by claiming sexual fluidity is not permitted within Hinduism, challenging the voices of ‘elders’, religious institutions and colonialism:

Extract 1

“**I** started **researching and hearing stories** of like deities that were like men once, and then they like, transform into women and have sex with other men, and all of this so-called crazy stuff, and then, that-, find-, like, it defined it as a way that like, "**oh, there's a place for me**" that-, I was like, **"oh, like there's a space", like "I'm included in this great, like this whole philosophy""**

[Lines:192-197]

Extract 2

"**we** seem to come from this, **I** come from this culture that's like really **accepting** in the old ways of like homosexuality and, people changing gender and **everyone's respected**"

[Lines:206-208]

Extract 3

"**they're using religion** as a sort of like a way to say **you're not part the norm.** And that just, i- it just perplexes me [laughs], and **I'm** like, "**but you're kind of wrong",** you know, it's like, it's not right."

[Lines:211-213]

These brief extracts show the internal, and perhaps external interactions that have taken place between Jay himself, and religious communities/institutions, an interaction of voices. Interestingly, his position changes throughout the dialogue. In extract one, he positions himself as being aligned, to this community, implying a sense of belonging. Referring to the "whole philosophy", seems to offer historical, and generational roots to his sense of 'self', perhaps further strengthening it. His use of "I" and "me" suggest a real sense of ownership (I-as-Hindu). In the second extract, it seems I too become aligned with his identity narrative, as he refers to "we". However, this is short lived, as he reverts to using "I", perhaps in attempt to realign with himself. This again appears to be situated within a community, as he refers to "people" and "everyone". Despite the confidence in these identities, it seems ownership of these may be at stake in extract three, as he talks about "they", perhaps indirectly referring to 'elders' or religious institutions/communities, using religion as a 'weapon', to minimise who he is, and remove his belonging. I can see that Jay is speaking to himself through their lens, with the use of "you're". This internal dialogue continues as Jay talks about them being wrong. This perhaps highlights to the audience, that for Jay, despite strength in his religious 'self', this valued aspect of identity could also be

used against him, imposing difference onto him. Through this, Jay seems to be indicating that he is aware of discriminations, homophobia, and injustices, which could position him as being the minority, within the minority.

5.2. Learning from others: "he taught me, like, showed me the ropes and in a sense"

Gathering knowledge, appeared to be transformative for Jay, empowering him with insight to reinforce his identities. In addition to reading, Jay talked about learning from others, reflecting on how people in his life supported to shape his identities; enabling him to venture through difficult periods in solidarity, whilst seeing and hearing how they dealt with identity struggles. He referred specifically to learning from online platforms, and his first romantic relationship. He presented this ex-partner as an educator, alongside other partners throughout his life. Through these experiences, Jay talked about learning to be confident and open with sexuality, permitting himself to increasingly align with the queer community (I-as-Indian, Gay, Man) and be proud to do so. His pride is reflected through his positioning, with the use of 'I', signifying ownership:

Extract 1

"**I've** had so **many different types of experiences** with different types of gay men, **I** had the opportunity to like meet so many different types of gay guys, different people, and, yeah, really super confident of like being identifying as a gay man and quite, not super confident but like really proud as well. **I was never proud before growing up**. **I'm** really proud now"

[Lines:364-368]

Despite the freedoms Jay expressed having, he explicitly speaks about being bullied and discriminated by others during his college years. This was largely at the hands of S-A individuals, leaving him feeling 'othered' by his cultural community, as they damagingly commented on how Jay carried himself, particularly how he spoke, performing his identities:

Extract 2

> "the **South Asian** community, even now, **they're** like, oh, "**you** don't sound like you're from 'the Midlands'", and I know exactly what that means. It means **you don't sound like you're Indian** and you know, ki-, it ties into that, like, sort of posh boy sense where it's like, oh, er, "**you're** the Indian-", that's-, "**you're** trying to be white" and the white people are trying to get trying to be like, "**you're** just gay""
>
> [Lines:286-290]

It seems that the echoes of bullies, which positioned him as 'white', resulted in Jay being 'othered' within the extract above, fostering confusion. He goes on to speak about how he "got rejected from everywhere." [Lines:292-293]. Again, Jay's positioning ranges throughout this speech, as he refers to internal dialogues, taking place between himself and peers. He is speaking to himself through other's positions, in a harsh tone, telling himself that he is wrong in his identities, beliefs and values. Alternatively, these may also be the echoes of other's, addressing that Jay does not share identities with them, enacting rejection. It is clear that others have imposed social categories upon Jay, forcing him to identify with their judgements. It seems there is frustration communicated through his stilted speech within the extract. He goes on to speak about others who have challenged his assimilative identity, as well as political institutions restricting his national and cultural identities into a 'tick box'; a familiar story I share. Despite these challenging experiences, through connecting with others who accepted and embraced his identities, it seems that these judgements initiated a turn towards finding out more about identities which resonated more with him, strengthening Jay's sense of 'self'.

6. ‘Nimisha’

Nimisha is a Pakistani female in her early thirties. She began the interview by reflecting on the value of ‘descriptors’ for her. She explained that for the purposes of taking part in this research, she identifies as “lesbian or queer”, however would otherwise simply define herself as “a person”, representing her identities, through her own lens and not that of mainstream queer ideologies.

6.1. Simplifying identities for others: “"OK, lesbian or queer". Fine I wrote something there you go.”

A central theme throughout Nimisha’s narrative was how she was often made to simplify her identity for others, particularly her sexuality. She described periods in her life where she needed to actively make decisions about how she identified her place in the world, and how these aligned, if they did, with the social categories she was often placed in by others. She shared this through the performance of her narrative, with a tone of anger and frustration. I wondered if other’s ‘labelling’ her, limited her ownership of her identities. To understand more, I asked how Nimisha would describe herself as “a person” (I-as-Person), and what it meant to her to describe herself in her own language:

Extract 1

Erm [short pause] **a person, as a person, I see everybody as people,** I don't see "ah that guy's gay, that guy's straight, that guy's black or that guy's white or [short pause]" it's always "that's a person", and I've just met this person, you know, how-, it's just-, just strange to me and **I never really see the differences**. The way **I see myself is from the qualities I have**, more so than the nature of identity erm, for example, my job, the things I like doing er, those sorts of things, I, [short pause] **I just think people are people**, and that's as far as I believe it should be. As, soon as **you** put a colour or a category or an orientation **you** tend to **divide people”**

[Lines:18-25]

Her repetition of “people” or “person” throughout this extract implies frustration, as though this is a familiar argument that she has had on many occasions. Her pause before answering may have performed this frustration, as she perhaps braces herself for recurrence. She states this explicitly later in the interview, “I hate having to come out repeatedly, and it's just boring, it’s very, boring” [Lines:237-238]. Nimisha wants unity, challenging the voices which have created, and maintained divisions, oppressions, and discriminations in society, such as racism or colonialism. I get the impression that British, and perhaps global mainstream labels used to denote social categories, place limitations on what, and who, Nimisha is ‘supposed’ to be, imposing stereotypes onto her. Being a “person” affords her the ability to adopt different perspectives, modifying what it means to be a S-A LGBTQ+ individual, whilst holding onto values of her former and current self. She also spoke about “no identity”, at times being an accurate depiction; perhaps serving the same function. Her use of positioning here also clearly suggests separation, as she uses “you” and “I”, as she refers to herself and society. I wondered if my use of “you” during questioning, alongside my position as a researcher, despite our joint S-A heritage, had served to maintain this division.

Throughout her interview, communicating and showing her “qualities” as “a person” seemed vastly important for Nimisha. She was reflective, emotive and thoughtful throughout the interview, performing her strengths. She appreciated how others who shared similar morals and values had taught her to embrace her ‘whole’ self, without needing to justify or simplify her identities for others. Now, it seems as though Nimisha would prefer others to respond to her “qualities”, instead of the social categories she may have been placed into. Furthermore, she seems to seek for others to take note, rejecting social ‘labels’, ‘norms’ or expectations and represent themselves fully, rectifying the imbalances between minority-majority communities.

Nimisha also performed ownership over her "qualities" through appearance. She described the way she dressed and her preferences for appearance, challenging how others would categorise this as being stereotypical of lesbian or queer women:

Extract 2

"**I** dress, **my clothes are what you would say are masculine or male**, stereotypically **my** hair, maybe is, is, that style, but **many women have short hair**. And so, **I think it's more so their problem than mine.**"

[Lines:297-300]

As she speaks in extract two, Nimisha continues to assume the position of someone 'othered', referring to herself as "I", or "my" and the world, including me, as "you" or "their". She described performing these "qualities" from a young age, "**I** noticed **I** don't want to wear a dress, **I** wanted to wear shorts and T-shirt and **I** wanted to play with boys instead of the girls. **I** wanted to play with a farm set instead of a doll or things like that." [Lines:128-130]. Referring to her former self to begin with, before connecting with her current self and the ownership of her "views", Nimisha described how she would often "fight" with her mum, and it being "a battle" to confront the gendered stereotypes which were imposed on her. She explained that this was particularly difficult when it came to her hair, with this being an ongoing "battle" up until a year ago, as Nimisha always wanted short hair; "I think that was the most prominent feature, I was always into short hair" [Lines:130-132]; she challenges the voices of mainstream Pakistani culture and ideology, communicated through her mother, with long, straight hair being the 'ideal'.

Nimisha reflected worrying how other's may perceive her, because of her appearance, "I don't wish to be perceived as a boy I wish to be viewed as very much female, because I identify with female, very much" [Lines:301-302]. Despite being confident in performing and carrying her identities, it seems difficult to trust that other's will view, or even allow her to

represent the person she wants to be, particularly in the workplace, placing this aspect of herself at stake. She spoke of this as an ongoing anxiety, and something she is not yet sure how to navigate. However, she remains unwilling to sacrifice her identities for anyone, perhaps signifying a strength in who she is. This carries through into her familial relationships, as she explains:

Extract 3

"The things that I do, the choices that I make, no-, [short pause] **my parents' reaction does not influence that anymore**. It did at one point in time but not anymore. **I just live my life** with my relationship, I don't live with **them**, **I** actively chose not to live with **them** so that **I can live freely** with a job with and partner, and so that's all that matters."

[Lines:434-438]

In extract three, I see Nimisha positioning herself as separate, yet very much together within her family unit; allowing her to own who she is, whilst maintaining important relational bonds. Although perhaps difficult at times, this separation seems to allow Nimisha identities that comprise of freedom and flexibility and autonomy in her sense of self, and how she chooses to represent these, without having to minimise herself.

7. 'Simran'

Simran is a Punjabi (Indian), Sikh, female, in her early twenties, who identifies as having a "fluid sexuality", or as bisexual. She speaks largely about her ongoing, introspective exploration of identities.

7.1. 'Good' and 'bad' identities: "I'd describe my sort of identity as both sort of, light and dark"

Balancing identities emerged throughout Simran's interview and was a dominant theme. Referring to "light and dark", she described 'good' or 'bad' aspects of her identities.

She talks about needing both “elements” to construct her current sense of self. She touches on this being challenging, due to cultural and social ‘norms’ and expectations:

Extract 1

“**Light** is more, the compassionate and empathetic side of myself, erm the **qualities that I really like about myself** and the qualities that perhaps **I like about other people**, **how I see myself in other people** and **I** guess sort of those, in terms of like, sort of **social, socially constructed traits**, you know like **the good qualities** in someone, such as hard working and all the different qualities. Whereas the **dark** side is one of the qualities that **we** don't really discuss as humans, or **we** don-, **we're not as forthcoming with those**.

[Lines:21-27]

She elaborates that ‘dark’ qualities are ‘taboo’, or “topics or subjects or experiences that aren't spoken about in our culture” [Line:73]. As she explains this, her positioning varies. Simran speaks about herself as an independent entity (‘I’/‘myself’), but also as belonging within a group (‘we/we’re’), referring to humans. With the latter, she also touches on the importance of other’s, who help her to construct her sense of ‘self’. I find myself wondering how Simran assigns traits into ‘light’ and ‘dark’, and which aspects of her identities perhaps influence these allocations. My curiosity transpires during the interview as I unintentionally interrupt her, implicating my agenda, within her narrative. I pause and encourage Simran to continue. It becomes clear that she is viewing “light and dark” through a cultural lens as she states:

Extract 2

“it's just a **stigma** around those certain qualities, or the way that **you** have to be, or the way that **you** should be perceived in society, **especially being Indian and my background**. So actually, living up to this standard and this-, these **cultural expectations, social**

expectations, institutions and your parents from your friends, your family being a certain way."

[Lines:35-39]

Simran's use of 'you' perhaps indicates the voice of others' expectations for how she should behave or think, particularly as a S-A female. This is made explicit as she touches on 'living up' to the standards of others. Prior to extract two, she also refers to '**our**' culture, perhaps indicating an awareness that I too may experience similar difficulties as a S-A female; positioning me with her. Her reference to 'our' collective identity occurs routinely during the interview. I attempt to remain neutral throughout.

Continuing, Simran speaks about her ongoing process of exploring her "light and dark" identities. Questioning her position within social and cultural structures became another theme throughout our interview, especially when referring to her former position. This was shown within the performance of her narrative through auto-dialogue, as she asks, ""where do all of these concepts and theories and values and systems all fit into me as a person?" [Lines:127-128]", ""oh, my God, who am I?"" [Line:147]. Following these lines of questioning appear to have increased Simran's self-awareness, and self-acceptance of her identities. Through increased curiosity, Simran reflects on being able to flexibly shape her identities to resonate with her values, as opposed to others' expectations. She described this process as leaving her feeling "confident or comfortable" within her 'self', whilst creating an increased ability to verbalise, and share her identities. Raising self-awareness has also allowed Simran to challenge deep-seated, cultural beliefs about herself, offering a "sense of freedom"; allowing her to position herself as a Sikh, Punjabi, Bi-sexual, Female. These former beliefs may also have been a representation of internalised familial, cultural, historical and religious voices.

Challenging her former beliefs also occurred through performance. Simran described becoming increasingly “rebellious”, and “not listening as often” to her parents, whose voices appeared to permeate throughout Simran’s cultural ‘self’. She reflected on needing to do this without letting go of what she already knew, “**you** also still resonate with some of those expectations, or beliefs or values, and it kind of keeps **you** stuck there, and then you get confused by **your** identity” [Lines:145-146]. Referring to herself in third person perhaps offers a representation of what her internal dialogue may look like, as she argues with the confusion caused by others. Later, Simran also reflects on challenging patriarchal expectations within religion, by embracing scriptures and teachings which promote “equality”, allowing her to align with her values, and reject those which do not resonate. She depicted this as a means of constructing, and living, as her “authentic self”. Showing this “authentic self” to others also seemed to be important. She intended to ‘represent’ this version of herself to the audience, through her appearance, as she wore her hair down and donned red lipstick; “at home it would be hair up, no red [laughs], no red lipstick [laughs]” [Lines:340-341]. This also acted as a means of pushing historical and traditional social and cultural boundaries as she mimics her mother and states, “"this is how-, not how Indian girls are, they don't cut their hair, they don't wear make-up, they don't do any of these things" [Lines:115-116]. Although her actions signify strength in her identities, I wonder if Simran’s laughter whilst speaking about the differences in her appearance at home implies a level of unease, perhaps even anxiety, as the performance of her sexuality may be at stake, or open to be challenged by her parent’s and/or cultural structures. This discomfort is made explicit towards the end of our interview, as Simran reflected on her apprehensions regarding participating in this research and how much of her narrative she may be willing share:

Extract 3

> “"am I going to **change** this story, am I going to like sort of **dumb it down** a little bit, am I going to say in this way or how am I going to say, oh, how much am I going to disclose?"”

[Lines:557-560]

It seems that although Simran aligned me with her throughout the interview, she worried about my ability to comprehend her narrative. It also became clear that she continued to fear others' judgements, which may leave her identities vulnerable and perhaps changeable by others.

The idea of other's changing her identity to suit them became another important element, within this theme, as Simran talked about other's asserting their views of "good and bad" identities onto her. She spoke about "most people around" her implying that she should be timid and submissive with her identities. For Simran, this further highlighted the existence of patriarchy, within culture and religion. She explicitly talked about this being communicated by her parents, brothers, and cousins, who adhere to "old systems". She described this way of living as "linear", implying that her life may have been mapped out for her, in line with generations before. Reflecting further, she contemplates whether this is the same for her half-siblings, who are mixed heritage (half-white). She understood that these identities would come with its own prejudices and restrictions, however felt that with 'whiteness', she would be freer within navigating her identities; allowing her to "break away" from a "linear way of life" and permitting her more freedom and choice in being, and representing, her "authentic self". Her deliberation also implied that being white offered a position of privilege and power, something which she, as a S-A female, within the patriarchal systems she was socialised into, did not have.

8. ‘Zara’

Zara is a Pakistani, Muslim, female, in her early thirties. She identified as ‘demisexual’, or gay. She described her experience of ongoing, continuous, identity exploration.

8.1. Surrendering identities: “you can't be both Muslim and gay”

This theme was pervasive throughout Zara’s narrative and was fundamental to her understanding of herself. She began by describing her journey into Islam, both as a female, and someone who identified as LGBTQ+. She explained that although religion was present in her upbringing, this was never strict. Religion was therefore something she “came to, like with heart and with re-, real kind of faith”, [Line:33] following witnessing a traumatic event. After this event, Zara spoke about the anxiety she endured surrounding death, and the afterlife, which led her to connect with religion. Speaking through her former lens, mismatches between sexuality and religious values appeared to become increasingly present, leading her to feel she needed to “compromise one part” of herself. Through the gaze of her current self, Zara has been able to reach a point where she now realises this was not necessary. She described herself going through a process of “unlearning”, to acknowledge this; perhaps separating herself from internalised voices rooted in religion, society and culture.

Zara explained that with the use of therapy, she came to accept that for her, sexual identity is “not a choice”, it was “just how [she] connects with people”; it did not “resonate” with her to “lead a heterosexual life”. She described that although she was aware of her sexuality from a young age, she believed this was something that would not be tolerated by others. Despite these perceived boundaries, Zara stated that she explored her sexuality freely during her adolescence, permitting herself ownership over this identity. The ownership of sexuality is also implied through her positioning throughout this extract, as she refers to

herself in first person, as “I”. She described the empowerment this offered:

Extract 1

“it was just **liberating** in a sense of, "OK, I am-", in the sense of "**OK, I am acting, or I am, I am, exploring a part of me that I can't explore, or haven't been able to explore or I know I shouldn't be able to explore, but I'm exploring that,** and **I'm exploring it in a relationship** which is obviously harmonious and is reciprocal" or whatever, so it was, it was liberating. So that **I can be this person**”

[Line:305-310]

Although it seems this experience was “liberating”, the voice of family, friends, peers, and perhaps religious, cultural, and social structures appear to be intertwined within her internal dialogue, through her statements of not being able to, or allowed to, explore sexuality. Unfortunately for Zara, these internal voices manifested, and this relationship ended abruptly as her partner’s parents found out; perhaps implying further impermissibility, placing her sexual identity at stake. She explained that she “**had** to come out [long pause]”, removing her ownership over this aspect of herself, as she was forced to act. Her long pause following this statement perhaps signifies the shock of that experience. Zara talked about telling her sister first, “her first response was like, "no", and, I was like, "but I like her", and she was just like, "no". And then that was that-, that was the end of the conversation” [Lines:342-343]. For Zara, this may have further reinforced that ownership of her sexual identity was not permitted. As abruptly as the conversation ended, so did Zara’s “liberating” experience, leading her to repress her sexuality. Zara spoke about feeling as though diverse sexuality was out of bounds and believed she would be “dismissed”; she “closed the door on **that** for very, very long time” [Lines:386-387]. The imagery Zara presents of ‘closing the door’, alongside referring to her sexual identity as “that” perhaps further points to this aspect of her ‘self’ being taboo, something which must be unseen and hidden.

Following this experience, Zara spoke about living a “heterosexual life”, with a male partner, for four years. She spoke about ascribing to S-A gender roles, assuming a passive, and timid position in relation to her partner, and needing to “dim” her “masculine side”, which she described as a “real part of my femininity” [Line:538]. Zara described this as living a “dual life”, almost convincing herself that she was heterosexual. She was unable to remain in this relationship, realising that “it doesn't resonate with me to lead a heterosexual lifestyle” [Lines:514-515]. However, she continued to feel unable to connect with her sexuality, leading her to pursue religion further, “**I** did what **I thought was the right thing** to do at the time, which was just **throw myself into, erm, my religion**” [Lines:518-519]. I wonder whether Zara’s “thoughts” at the time convey the voices of inner-others. From here, she spoke about her journey of learning to be “a conventional Muslim”. It seems this journey re-introduced fluidity and flexibility into Zara’s identities, allowing her to re-connect with her sexuality. She described this as an internal and external process, as she began accessing reading around religion and sexuality and attending groups with individuals who experienced the same, or similar journeys, learning from others and herself, whilst fostering a sense of community and belonging. Zara also spoke about self-acceptance, and honesty offering a transformative experience, “I don't know who I am and I'm never going to know who I am until I fully kind of embrace and be honest with all parts of myself, even if it's just with me and not externally” [Lines:480-482]. It appeared Zara had re-situated herself as central to her own narrative, pushing aside the expectations and needs of other people, and institutions; “I've fucking got nothing to lose, like I've given four years to this, I've done, I've done whatever I can.” [Lines:583-584]; “I feel like every moment that I interacted or even entertained, that, I just diminished parts of myself.” [Lines:528-529]. “Dim[ing] parts” [Line:531] of herself for others appeared to draw Zara closer to sacrificing and losing a hugely important and valuable facet of her identity. She was no longer willing, or able to

tolerate this, liberating herself through her position as a Pakistani, gay, woman. Despite the frustration through the tone of her speech implying this to be a rash choice, Zara explained, "I feel like for me, it was such a subtle and gradual process, although a lot of things happened in between" [Lines:666-667]. She also implied that this learning and acceptance of her identities needed to occur at her own pace, and on her own terms, and is not yet ending, as her 'journey' continues.

9. 'Aditya'

Aditya is in his early twenties and identified as a Mauritian gay man. Aditya acknowledged that although geographically Mauritius was located on the South-Eastern coast of Africa, his cultural identity resonated more with being S-A, so requested to take part, because of this.

9.1. Hierarchised identities: "I feel more attached to other labels than some"

Aditya explained that his identities represented a certain level of conflict and controversy, adjoined with acceptance. He reflected "different layers to [his] identity*"* and was unsure about the order of these layers. He was, however, certain of which came last:

Extract 1

"I did meet you know, a lot of brown people, a lot of desi people, who you know, are supposedly the same ethnicity as me, <u>I</u> connected much more, with, people who were either from island nations and or specifically people from like the West Indies or like black people from the West Indies, Trinidad, Jamaica, Guyana, or even black people from like other islands. **<u>I</u>** connected much more strongly, with them than I did desi, so that's why I think **I'd put South Asian as like my last identity**."

[Lines:36-43]

He speaks about S-A, or 'desi' (describing cultures and people from the Indian subcontinent) identity as being one which he identifies with yet is hugely disconnected from.

His request to participate in this research implies his connection with being S-A but may also reflect a means of claiming ownership over his S-A 'self' and perhaps his space within the community. Aditya argued that the S-A label often became problematic due to the social representation of what being S-A meant, which somewhat varies from Mauritian culture. As a result, he found himself on the side-lines of this identity. Connecting more with individuals from similar island nations perhaps permitted a sense of belonging, which he did not receive from S-A communities. Aditya used his position to highlight that although judgments and expectations cast from the S-A label placed him as an outsider, someone looking in from the outside, he was unwilling to let go of his alignment with being S-A, maintaining ownership.

Continuing to contemplate the order of his identities, Aditya states, "I think the most important to me are "**Muslim, Gay and Mauritian**" [Lines:91-94], ranking them this way. Being Muslim however came with restrictions that Aditya could not be gay, contrasting with his reality, adding further conflict. These restrictions perhaps reflect the voices of religious and cultural figures. Nevertheless, his response to this has been to inform others of the many roles he inhabits, educating them that identities can hold different meanings for different individuals. This position implies purpose and agency; a role through with which he can instigate change, sharing knowledge which perhaps goes against traditional expectations and ideologies. Throughout the interview, Aditya presents his many identities, depicting his multi-layered, rich, and diverse 'self'. Placing his religious identity first may also demonstrate the importance and weight this aspect of identity for him, which in the eyes of others perhaps cannot exist. To understand this better, I asked Aditya why he ranked his identities, and this was his response:

Extract 2

"**You're** right, actually, erm. **I guess there's no need** for it to be put in order, but I think I guess I'm drawn to putting it in order because obviously **I feel more attached to other**

labels than, some others, you know. So, I guess in that sense**, I do feel like there's a need to put it in an order**. But **I** think **you're** right, I mean, if you think about it, **I shouldn't really have to**. **I don't really need to put them in order**."

[Lines:76-82]

I wondered if Aditya felt challenged by my question, as though I had perhaps questioned the value of his ranking, and therefore his identities. To return to gauging his perspective on his narrative, I asked if ordering them allowed him to make sense of them, to which he replied "I think so. I think so. I think so." [Line:85]. I sensed frustration within his response, particularly as Aditya states he "shouldn't really have to" place his identities in order yet feels that he perhaps, has no choice. His use of "I" perhaps also positions him as different and separated from the rest of the community; a position he may be defending. This may additionally be Aditya referring to his own experiences as an individual within the community. He seems to place me as a voice of reason, or an expert, stating that I am right and that he should not need to justify or order his identities; perhaps certifying his 'difference' and separation from the rest of society. I am also unclear if this is a question or statement, addressed directly to me or society; implying on some level that Aditya may want to protest how him, and others are treated; as seen in extract three. Perhaps it's because his identities as a British, man do not grant him the freedom, they 'should', and society does not accept LGBTQ+ identities in the same way as heteronormativity. I try and remain neutral, stating that it feels like it makes more sense to have them in order, but do not infer who it may make sense to. He repeats "I think so", three times, as though this represents a familiar pattern of interaction, performing a routine justification of his identities:

Extract 3

> "**I** just think it's very important, that like **these kind of voices are heard**, like pe-, and like um, **we're not sort of swept under the carpet** and forgotten about, you know."
>
> [Line:782-784]

Speaking more on religion, Aditya goes on to share his understanding of his relationship with God, through his lens and nobody else's, drawing on his knowledge, insight and experience of Islam, to connect these to his sense of humanity (I-as- Muslim). He also explained that despite this strong religious relationship, and this identity being his own, the actions and comments of others can often leave him deflated and saddened, as mainstream social judgements persist, perhaps attempting to erase this aspect of his identity. Nevertheless, he holds true to religion being at the top of his hierarchy and steps out of what is perhaps expected of someone who identifies as S-A, LGBTQ+. Throughout extract three, Aditya positions himself in many ways:

1) Someone aware of discriminations,
2) perhaps an activist, or rebel, questioning social standards and expectations,
3) someone who is discriminated against/ 'othered'.

The tension and conflict of holding these differing positions was present throughout his narrative. For example, minimising his religious identity meant perhaps facing less backlash from the wider Islamic community, while defending his position within the religious community meant he was able to also be true to himself. Aditya also reflected on the multiple voices which supported him in learning about his religious identity. Alongside literature, he spoke about the voices of his mother, and a good friend, and the meaning these conversations ascribed to his religious identity. Aspects of these conversations however left Aditya in a contentious position, due to the judgement's religion placed on sexuality. At this point in his life, these were exacerbated through the voice of institutions, particularly his university and

Islamic Society. Despite this, Aditya mentioned his own research, and personal relationship with God offered a means to challenge these voices; allowing for him to maintain this aspect of himself. This could be viewed as a form of activism, addressing, and urging others to follow his lead and magnify their vision outside restricted religious, cultural and social structures, to build a bigger picture.

9.2. Being 'othered': "You have your own community, in a sense, from that one label itself, that's just very wildly and vastly different."

During several points in the interview, Aditya positioned himself as 'different' from both S-A and LGBTQ+ communities. This is also highlighted above. He spoke about having a 'different' background to others from his 'homeland', furthering his difference. More recently, Aditya explained that despite meeting people from numerous, diverse background at university, he continued to be 'othered', shaping his ongoing experience and identities.

I also see Aditya's attempts to counteract this difference by channelling his time and energy into building his academic identity. He describes his differences as perhaps placing him at a disadvantage to his heterosexual counterparts, "subconsciously that is pressure, you know, and I feel like in order to, to be on par, with, like, my straight classmates, and to get respect from my straight classmates, I had to be number one" [Lines:473-476]. Aditya reflects on "internalised homophobia" playing a big part in upholding this ideology, as he feels this has been the only way for him to earn his worth, and his place in society. He refers to this as perhaps being common across the LGBTQ+ community, with there being few spaces where fluid sexuality is accepted or tolerated, particularly for S-A individuals. Aditya knew that I too identified as being S-A, and often placed me as being a part of this community, referring to "we" or "us". However, when discussing sexuality, he again returned to a point of difference, placing me in a different social category.

9.3. Tentatively exploring identities: “it was like an escape, for sure. Especially Tumblr, I think Tumblr was a really big escape for me”

Aditya described himself as being in “a very [long pause] precarious, half in, half out situation” [Line:764-765]; one where he can express his sexuality freely, and one where he continues to restrict the existence of his sexuality. He talks about actively using the internet and social media platforms to explore his sexuality, positioning himself in a place of belonging, amongst the LGBTQ+ community:

Extract 4

> “**I wouldn't be able to understand who I am, or I wouldn’t be able to [short pause] have connected,** with other people, in a way that I have, if wasn't for that, if it wasn't for sites like **Tumblr, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram**. I just wouldn't have been able to see these kind of people and I, I **wouldn't have been able to [short pause]** you know [short pause], even **come to terms with myself**.”
>
> [Line:351-355]

He describes online spaces as offering safety, which for him, does not exist within the real world. It also offered an “**escape** from my identity” [Line:393].

Aditya also enacted his queer identity through presenting an understanding of similar concerns experienced by others holding minority ethnic group and LGBTQ+ identities; referring to common experiences shared across the group, both globally and locally. He shared stories from friends who he had met online to illustrate the struggles these individuals faced when attempting to merge sexuality into their existing identities; with the voices of others featuring as constructive, resilient, and strong, as they continuously battle for what’s at stake; freedom in fluid identities.

10. Typologies

Although each participant narrated their unique story, they were brought together on the same story telling landscape through needing to share their experiences of navigating their second-generation, S-A, LGBTQ+ identities in the UK. Their stories evidenced individualities alongside commonalities. Here, I briefly present the typologies which appeared, through close reading of each story.

10.1. Active 'ownership' of identities

All participants implied their identities to be fluid, often describing the navigation of them to be a journey. They all inferred, either explicitly or implicitly, that this needed to occur at a safe pace for them; perhaps permitting control over an already unsteady path. Partaking in this research may have become a part of the active ownership process. The metaphor of this being a 'journey' reinstates movement and progression, and perhaps. Journeys seemed less than smooth, as individuals seemed to need to adapt understanding and representations of themselves throughout. Although journeys may end, for participants this was not the case, as they aimed to contest internalised colonial voices, which have for so long finalised and 'othered' their narratives through claiming authority and positioning them in stereotyped ways; connects with the notion of 'unfinalisability'. For example, Zara, Simran and Jay talked about actively challenging internal and external perceptions of identity, strengthening their 'self'. Their journeys were unfinished, growing through life stages and contexts. Arushka also reflected this, speaking about how her identities will perhaps shift again as she considers parenthood. It has been important to attend to whole narratives to portray this 'journey'. I did not want to impose ideas onto, or finalise participants identities, subsequently reinforcing colonisation through inhibiting participants options to live differently.

Lastly, all participants stated self-acceptance and awareness was crucial for ownership and empowerment. This often took place through active learning, acquiring knowledge from others, independently. The internet appeared to play a central role in offering freedom, flexibility, choice, and agency, enabling individuals to adapt, and generally manage difficult events during their life or conflicting aspects of identities. They each assumed active roles in depicting their guiding their narratives and depicting their identities, incorporating choices regarding how they presented themselves within our space, and to the audience. When individuals faced issues, like having identities imposed upon them, taking control over positioning seemed a useful tool to create their own unique 'new' identity expression.

Participant	**Active 'ownership' of identities**
Omar	"I'm just **not going to stand for it** and feel like I need to justify who I am."
Haniya	"I kind of need to accept it and **I need to live this life and I need to be myself**, that if I had to come to terms with- like **I knew I was gay**."
Jay	"I think I just **completely embraced it**"
Nimisha	"The way **I see myself** is **from the qualities I have**"
Arushka	"I just felt like, "**oh, everything about me is making sense now**", and **it was nice**, and it was quite **scary sometimes,** but it was **also good**."
Simran	"I want to be an **authentic** person and **be very true to who I am and what makes me happy**"
Zara	"fundamentally it's just I can't do it [laughs]. I just **couldn't do it anymore**."
Aditya	"I have to **be okay and cope**"

10.2. Activism and challenging 'norms'

All participants seemed to use their understanding of themselves, and their journeys, to react against issues they were unhappy about. In fact, all were active in challenging these

issues, through either educating and supporting friends/family members, volunteering through charities or online platforms, promoting social change. The strength in their identities seemingly allowed them a position to retaliate against systems which perhaps worked against them and prohibited them from accessing their current identities. Thus, the majority of participants talked about challenging themselves and their unconscious prejudices. This is also reflected in the above typology. It seems there is a positive component of disobedience and creativity in all their responses. All expressed committing to social and personal change, enacting the changes they desired through identity performances during interviews.

Participant	**Activism and challenging 'norms'**
Omar	"I just need to **keep fighting** and hope this research also offers a platform to **fight against social injustices**"
Haniya	"bring kind of **perspective to things that isn't there so much** out there, and that other people can **relate to one another**."
Jay	"**not everyone has the same, especially South Asians, have the same experience** as I have."
Nimisha	"although maybe there are lots of attention on LGBTQT people, it's white people, as opposed to Asians, BAME communities, so **more attention is needed for Asian communities**."
Arushka	"not everyone see's people who are like them on TV or in books, and that's okay, it-, **it doesn't mean that you're not real**."
Simran	"be able to **share** that with other people and hopefully **helping someone else that might be going through similar, or the same journey**."
Zara	"it's about **creating a safe space** to speak"
Aditya	"I think what's really, really, really important is to [short pause] have a **community**, with, like, other LGBT people"

10.3. Fluid Identities

The fluidity of participant's identities is perhaps reflected through the structure of their narratives; there appears to be no clear beginning, middle and end. Fluidity can also be seen within the first typology. Continuity was also evident throughout each narrative's connection of past, present and imagined future. Each also deliberated the processes of identity change they had endured, manifesting within the interview interaction too. For many, positive identity changes seemed to have occurred whilst at university, though framed against a backdrop of hardship. Belonging and inclusion with LGBTQ+ or S-A peers, facilitated transformations, as well access to exploration in online spaces. Transformations were not represented as solely positive, nor were they easily achieved as they were associated with conflict.

Lastly all participants described their identities to be 'multi-layered' and interwoven. They also reflected on assuming different positions within differing narrative contexts. Many either implicitly or explicitly, reflected on how they had flexibly adapted representations of themselves, depending on their audience, or the social situation they were placed in. For example, displaying and communicating sexuality may be more important in some settings than others. Reflecting further on this, the majority expressed that 'coming out' aligned with Western narratives and was somewhat of a "luxury" for S-A LGBTQ+ individuals. For queer S-A's 'coming out' looked very different, with safety, and necessity to 'come out', needing to always be considered. They also talked about coming out in ways that worked for them, and to the people that they felt they needed to come out to; allowing them continued ownership of their identities.

Participant	Fluid identities
Omar	"even though LGBT is LGBT, being South Asian adds a **whole new and different level**"
Haniya	"**it's about being able to live openly**, like for me that's important, and I've adjusted that over the years"
Jay	"I was never proud before growing up. **I'm really proud now**."
Nimisha	"I'm not the type of person who would go out overtly and say yes I'm queer or I'm gay or whatever, **I'm proud of who I am**, I am proud to do that, but having to shout it out, which-, **I don't think is necessary for me personally**"
Arushka	"**I tell people I am comfortable with** who I am"
Simran	"**I'm free**, because I essentially am."
Zara	"I feel like I've **come out in the right** time because of my own resolve"
Aditya	"I feel like I'm in a very [long pause] precarious, **half in, half out situation** like for some people [short pause], I am out, to some people I'm not."

11. Chapter Summary

This chapter shares the analysis of each participant's interview using DPNA principles. Themes were used to outline ways in which participants communicated and performed their identities, before 'typologies' were presented to reflect commonalities across narratives. Direct quotes were incorporated to demonstrate my arguments and ground the analysis in the data. Next, I will discuss the analysis in the context of broader considerations, critically evaluate this work and consider the implications for this research for CoP.

Chapter Five: Discussion

1. Introduction

This final chapter is divided into three sections. First, I will consider the insights gained through the analysis and consider how this learning locates itself within wider theoretical frameworks of CoP, narrative research, DPNA and existing research in this area. Although each participant was presented individually, I will reflect on the typologies, in relation to the existing psychological research. Next, I will deliberate the quality of this research, touching on the strengths and limitations, and avenues for future research. Finally, I will explore possible implications of this work.

2. Discussion of Narrative Typologies in Context

2.1. Active 'ownership' of identities

This typology refers to how participants took 'ownership' of navigating their identities; it seems they drew on a repertoire of distinctive identity positions via their narratives (Koven, 2012), adapting these according to contexts, and dialogical exchanges. This reclamation of 'self' could positively impact their mental wellbeing (Lysaker et al., 2001; Yanos et al., 2010).

'Ownership' of identities broadly seems to enable queer POC the ability and power to negotiate identities in creative and liberating ways, breaking away from restrictive ideologies regarding their identities (Ocampo, 2014; Riggs & Das Nair, 2012; Zaidi et al., 2016). Thus, participants here seemed to not allow other's judgements cast doubt upon their sense of 'self', or limit their identities, but instead creatively fostered meaningful intersectional identities which worked for them, much like those in Meyer's (2012) research with queer black individuals. As participants shared and performed their identities in ways which were important for them, this may have facilitated greater integration of identities, benefiting their mental health and wellbeing (Rosario et al., 2005, 2011).

Some participants also reflected on using one identity as an anchor for exploration, albeit a changing one. Chiming with Fisher's (2003) ideas regarding identity 'pluralisation', this seemed to allow them to negotiate, and foster links between their identities without rejecting or hiding aspects of their 'self'. For example, Jay spoke of socialising himself into Hinduism, and how this empowered his identities, and position, as an Indian, Hindu, gay man. Omar reflected a similar narrative and shared how his personal religious journey allowed him to remain connected with religion through reframing his views, whilst embracing sexuality, or 'Western' identity. This approach shows how S-A queer individuals can subtly embrace 'difficult' identities, like sexuality, whilst retaining their heritage identities; similarly to findings from Alimahomed's (2010) research with South-Pacific Islanders. Creating a bridge between identities may offer a sense of security, and has been shown to bolster self-esteem (Greig, 2003).

Contrarily, some participants disowned identities to create stability in others. For example, Haniya reflected on Islam being central to her former 'self', however through detaching herself from religion, she gained control of her identities. Although this experience at times manifested guilt, similarly to reflections from Jaspal et al's (2010) research, Haniya described how this allowed her to create an alternative, more meaningful take on her identities. The emphasis on embracing and expressing individuality was seen across participants, allowing them to create a 'self' which was perhaps different to how they were raised, and perhaps positioned by others'; resonating with the concept of choice rooted in 'Queer Theories' as individuals develop and express their own intersectional identities (Butler et al, 2008).

All participants emphasised the individualised, multi-layered nature of their identities, and it seemed the ability to flow between them broadened their sense of 'self', whilst directly challenging stereotypes and 'voices' which were thrust upon them (Ellis, 2012); challenging

the limitations of how they are expected to be. Nimisha enacted this by rejecting social labels and calling herself a 'person', whilst Simran performed this through her appearance. Challenging oppressions and decolonising identities may have offered a means to increase their sense of identity and visibility (Fabella, 2002); subsequently lessening the negative mental health implications of prejudices (David, 2014; David & Okazaki, 2006). Additionally, as identities assigned by others can often be treated with ambivalence, perhaps due to the restrictions or limitations they impose (Bowen, 2014), through performing personal choices, individuals seemingly revoked 'control' over their identities.

Lastly, all spoke of their identities being fluid and advancing; chiming with ideas of unfinalisability (Frank, 2012); "identity is like food, it is something you can make and remake" (Bowen, 2014, p. 203). This metaphor seems to characterise participants here, representing how identities can be actively and purposefully, created, and re-created.

2.2. Activism and challenging 'norms'

This typology was particularly interesting, as all participants wished to use their self-awareness and strengths to contest discriminations. Jay described this as using his 'privilege' to support others.

Although positive, this seemed to signify a displeasure with the way things are, together with a yearning for change (Horowitz, 2017). Dialogically, this could be a reaction to how individuals have been obstructively positioned for years. Jay expressed this in his narrative as he described how others expected him to speak and act, perhaps portraying the image of a heterosexual, S-A male. For Jay, and others, it became important to assume various, meaningful identities which rebelled against limiting labels and voices. The refusal to be defined by labels was seen across all participants, in differing ways; from Nimisha's desire to simply be seen as a 'person', to Aditya's identification as a gay, Muslim, man, pairing identities which have traditionally been seen as conflicting. Similarly to the findings

of Adur et al's (2017) work, participants used their position to defy margins assigned to their identities by others.

To further promote change, almost all of the participants reflected on educating themselves, either independantly or with the support of others. The internet, and university also provided transformational spaces to freely and safely navigate their identities. Knowledge not only armed individuals with insight but offered ways to fully embrace their identities and educate others; reminiscent of Ocampo's (2014) research, where individuals used their position to educate others and challenge prejudices. For example, Jay talked about challenging others with his knowledge of Hinduism, whilst Simran and Nimisha talked about how personal therapy allowed them to perform their identities in line with their desires, i.e., through appearance, whilst challenging others' perceptions. They all seemed to want to inspire others to follow suit.

For Arushka, education also meant needing to challenge her own internalised prejudices, which is common with S-A LGBTQ+ individuals due to internalised heteronormative social values (Choudhury et al., 2009; Jaspal, 2014; Patel, 2019; Sandil et al., 2015). This can often result in symptoms of depression and anxiety (Newcomb & Mustanski, 2010), however Arushka spoke of this being an important, active process, which offered her ways to reclaim her 'self'.

For all participants, resisting 'Western' or traditional S-A ideologies around who they *should* be, seemed to be important. They organised identities in ways which better resonated with their experiences (Das Nair et al, 2012; Gopinath, 1998). This is perhaps not only valuable on a personal level, but could strengthen their 'collective' identity; a process by which individuals acknowledge their commonalities and work in unison to facilitate more spaces to freely navigate and express identities (Anderson-Nathe et al., 2018); a notion which was expressed explicitly, and implicitly throughout their interviews. This movement has been

seen with black, queer individuals, who have proclaimed promotion of intersectionality and inclusivity, in the hope of thwarting the erasure of minority LGBTQ+ identities (Pender et al., 2019)

It seems for all queer POC, activism and collective action is another powerful response to oppression (Campbell & Deacon, 2006; Labelle, 2019). Engaging in activism has also been shown as crucial to wellbeing (Gilster, 2012; Kulick et al., 2017), with efforts to challenge heterosexism having positive impacts on confidence and self-efficacy amongst LGBTQ+ individuals (Kulick et al., 2017; Wernick et al., 2014). For participants in this research, taking part in interviews may also have offered an opportunity to express and challenge the injustices faced, rather than adopting a passive, apathetic stance, which seemingly maintains injustices.

2.3. Fluid Identities

This final typology relates to how individuals attributed personal change. It is important to note that interviews included questions regarding changing identities, which encouraged these discussions.

The majority of participants reflected on how their identities adapted as they engaged in varying contexts and conversations. As mentioned, university offered significant transformative experiences, for all. Haniya explained that university allowed her to learn about her sexuality from others, whilst drawing on their support. It seems participants flourished in community spaces, as these perhaps offered freedom to flexibly navigate identities. Lairio et al's (2011) work points to community spaces, like university, being a place of critical reflection, enabling the exploration of potential ‘new’ identities (Luyckx et al., 2006; Tudino et al., 2020), that align with personal desires, needs and values. Furthermore as university offers a sense of ‘belonging’ (Kim & Sinatra, 2018; Seyranian et

al., 2018), individuals may feel this is a stable environment to navigate identities safely. Such sentiments resonate with all participants' in this research.

However, Luyckx et al (2006) explained that periods of identity exploration at university can also be linked with poorer mental health; as reflected by Haniya, Nimisha and Simran's stories. Nevertheless, the support gained within these spaces offers wellbeing and adjustment (Rosario et al., 2005, 2011; Ueno, 2005), and has been found to positively impact LGBTQ+ mental health (Meyer, 2003); again reflected by participants here.

Active exploration and community-based learning, also occurred online, at times in parallel with university experiences. For participants, online spaces seemed to offer greater awareness and tolerance of diverse sexuality, allowing them to enculture and acculture to identities which may otherwise be out of reach (Talbot et al., 2020). Virtually observing and learning about sexuality from others seemed to generate greater autonomy, challenging misconceptions and counteracting prejudices (Garvey et al., 2019; Karim, 2014; Meyer, 2019; Rahman et al, 2016; Unis & Sällström, 2020), much like for the Bangladeshi women in Karim's (2014) research who strengthened their lesbian identities online.

Despite community spaces, alongside personal agency permitting participants to learn about their identities, it seemed the fluidity of their navigation ebbed and flowed, as traditional S-A heteronormative scripts would sometimes obscure their journeys. For Simran, it appeared that the linearity of S-A identities, echoed by the many voices she engages with, preventing her from representing her "authentic self". Nevertheless, she described persevering, using her activist identity and personal agency to support her.

Discussions around 'coming out' also reflected the importance of approaching S-A queer identities fluidly and flexibly. Participants explained that 'coming out' narratives relied heavily on 'white' Westernised ideologies; reflected within the existing literature (Butler et al., 2010). The language used to describe this process was not reflective of their experiences,

and for many, coming out was not a priority; echoed by other POC (Alimahomed, 2010; Karim, 2014; Raval, 2009). Haniya, Zara and Aditya explained that 'coming out' required safety and could be unconstructive and dangerous if done in accordance with Western expectations. It has also been shown to foster detrimental impacts to mental health (Alimahomed, 2010; Meyer et al., 2021). Instead, it seems that participants were guided by flexible processes of choosing how, where and when they wanted to share their 'whole' identities, maintaining power, fluidity and flexibility. Typically, 'coming out' can also be seen as a way of queer people lending power to others; 'coming out' places individuals at the mercy of others prejudices, as they hold the power to refuse or accept you (Das Nair et al, 2012; Das Nair et al, 2012). It seems participants in this research were no longer willing to tolerate this, as this perhaps limited the fluidity and flow of their journeys.

3. Critical Evaluation of Research

3.1. Quality of Research

As described within the methodology, Yardley's (2000, 2017) four broad principles were drawn upon to assess the quality of this research. These are:

1) 'Commitment and rigour'

2) 'Transparency and coherence'

3) 'Sensitivity to context'

4) 'Importance and impact'

I will briefly reflect on each in turn, deliberating how I believe these have been considered. These criteria need not be used rigidly, but can offer a simple way for researchers to reflect on, and justify their work (Yardley, 2017).

Commitment and rigour is often reflected through becoming intertwined with the research area, skills in the chosen methodology, data collection and undertaking an in-depth approach to analysis (Yardley, 2000, 2017). Here, rigour has been maintained through

routinely attending research supervision, which facilitated a space to 'step back' from the research. This was vital during the analysis phase, increasing my insight into narratives. Supervision also allowed me to identify personal biases, and how these possibly impacted the data; enabling me to deeply contemplate my processes of understanding the data, uphold transparency and maintain reflexivity. Keeping a reflective diary throughout also supported with this, allowing me to foster transparency, as I evaluated the motivations and experiences that underlined this research. Transparency was also achieved via documentation of the data collection and analysis processes, and the use of excerpts within the analysis.

Active commitment and involvement throughout the research process demonstrate rigour. I immersed myself within narratives, strengthening my understanding of how this research could be used to inform CoP ethos and practice, and contribute to other fields. This is documented below and reflects the impact and importance of this work. CoP implications were also explored within supervision, furthering ideas of how this research may add value to existing literature.

Coherence was maintained throughout the research process, as I appropriately paired theoretical and methodological philosophies. Lastly, thinking about sensitivity to context, research can often demonstrate this through showing awareness of participant's socio-cultural contexts, or viewpoints, and how these may influence what is said, as well as how it is interpreted (Yardley, 2000, 2017). Qualitative analysis must also commit to not imposing rigid, inflexible categories onto data, but tentatively consider the meanings generated from participant interactions (Yardley, 2017). Through comprehensive literature exploration, examining my personal, professional and academic philosophical positions, I have become increasingly aware of participant's differing socio-cultural contexts; supporting me to maintain sensitivity throughout. Sensitivity was also upheld through reflexive practice. Sharing identities with participants, whilst also being involved as a researcher, meant it was

necessary for me to take added measures to uphold rigour. This was highlighted during my first interaction with transcripts, as I found myself looking for experiences which resonated with mine, leading me to miss certain nuances. Through using personal therapy alongside supervision, I believe my personal experiences not only offered insight into the difficulties, and successes participants faced, but also reinforced my commitment to the research; provoking me to maintain a detailed, yet sensitive approach to narratives. I believe these measures reinforce the quality of this work and contribute to the research strengths documented below.

4. Research Strengths

This research presents many strengths and limitations, which I will address here. In addition to contributing to existing literature, this research has offered a voice to those who are largely under-represented within psychological research. It is hoped that the narratives shared here, invites others to attend further to this population, allowing us to increase understandings of their complex intersectional identities.

Another key strength of this research is the methodology used. DPNA enabled me to look at *what* participants said, and *how* it was said, or performed, distinguishing it from other research with this population. The extensive flexibility within DPNA (Frank, 2012), also enabled me to engage with all aspects of participant interactions (Frank, 2012), particularly during the analysis phase. This 'close reading' offered insight into how individuals positioned themselves, and others', including me, within narratives, offering unique social and interactional insights (Riessman, 2008) into S-A LGBTQ+ identities.

'Positioning' also alluded to practices individuals used to protect their mental wellbeing, like retrieving ownership of identities, approaching identities fluidly and drawing on activism. Although this was not the central focus of this work, awareness of this seems invaluable. It perhaps also offers an area for future research.

Reflecting further on 'positioning' it seems that DPNA can also facilitate conversations regarding how dominant discourses have perhaps contributed to how S-A queer identities are negotiated and shared (Wells, 2011); offering dialogues between how individuals interpret themselves, alongside what others' 'voices' relay to, and about them (Frank, 2012; Josselson, 2011). The changeability of these dialogues, seemingly represents fluidity in how identities are interpreted, whilst the continuation of conversations points to 'unfinalisability' (Frank, 2012).

'Unfinalisability' (Frank, 2012) may also be seen through the ways in which participant's stories, and identities, shifted within interviews. Dialogically, this could signify a way to resist definition, and challenge discourses, cultures and systems, which position S-A queer people in ways that do not resonate; disobeying others' definitions of who they are 'supposed' to be, dialoguing these ideas, and shaping their identities in novel or unexpected ways. This pro-activity to constructing identities may be a way for participants to encourage others and embody progressive social change.

In the following part of this chapter, I will discuss the implications of these strengths further. Before this, I will consider the limitations of this research.

5. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Reflecting on intersectional identities, it is important for me to acknowledge that a limitation of this research may be that distinct intersects of identity under the S-A and LGBTQ+ umbrella, were perhaps inadvertently unaccounted for, such as caste, gender or age. McNess et al (2015, p. 304) explain that "without a detailed understanding of the history and cultural underpinning of a group, 'outsiders' may be distracted with what they see as different, and so focus on certain aspects...without real depth of analysis or understanding". Not addressing these distinctions may have run the risk of brushing over specific, even more unique awareness of identities, and can cause researchers to misrepresent data (Patel, 2019).

Additionally, the binary representations of cultural identity, along with sexual identity within this space may have resulted in the rich, intricate nature of S-A queer identities in the UK being oversimplified or lost. This may also have unintentionally resulted in essentialist and/or orientalist thinking, which exaggerates 'difference' and 'exoticizes' communities (Burney, 2012; Robbins, 2015; Vignoles, 2018). For example, binary representations of cultural identity during recruitment may have maintained static, homogenous depictions of S-A identity, which previously was seen as incompatible with queerness, and in many ways still is. Although unintentional, it is important for me to reflect that these methodological choices may have been driven by my Western lens, leading me to invertedly objectify and subjectify participants through my own gaze, position of power and image of them (Burney, 2012). Thus, future researchers may benefit from increased reflexive practice, with particular attention to the impact of positionalities and unconscious biases, and how these influence knowledge production, along with extra attention being given to the importance of an anti-essentialist, non-binary stance (Goethals et al., 2015).

Despite this critique, it is important for me to address that this research was not intended to offer in depth insight into the full spectrum of S-A and LGBTQ+ identities, but to simply offer a voice to an often-silenced, under-represented community within Western psychological research (Alimahomed, 2010; McKeown et al., 2010; Patel, 2019; Puar, 2013; Siraj, 2012). As queer, racialised individuals within Western contexts often face rejection and/or erasure from both LGBTQ+ and ethnic/cultural communities which they belong to (Puar, 2013), it is hoped that increased visibility may result in further research and discussion focused on this community, lessening the literature gap, alongside educating others to *see* and acknowledge the importance of this group within society, and history (Idnani, 2021). Furthermore, the promotion of S-A queer visibility can result in the affirmation of individuals sense of 'self', alongside increasing self-worth (Idnani, 2021).

Self-identification was another way I remained mindful of lessening further marginalisation. This may also have acted as a means of counteracting binary thinking as it reinstated participant's autonomy; respectfully encouraging them to self-determine which 'labels' resonated with them (Martela & Riekki, 2018). This method of recruitment may also have allowed me to capture the different experiences and relationships individuals have with their different identities. For example, attending to the ways in which different identities perhaps attribute to diasporic trajectories, or even how identities can be influenced by different social and relational contexts (Král et al., 2019; Mavuso et al., 2019). Through pairing this approach with a dialogic narrative framework, it was hoped that following self-identification with these umbrella 'labels', participants would share their distinct identities during interviews. I believe participants in this research were able to do this, contributing to research implications, and promoting change which is relevant to them and emancipatory, as it stems from their narrated experiences (Mavuso et al., 2019). Nevertheless, I do still acknowledge that it may also have been useful for me to acknowledge during recruitment that I do understand there are many sub-sects within intersectional identities, promoting transparency. Still, I hope that through focusing on each narrative in turn, and using DPNA, unique aspects of identities, can continue to be amplified, remaining true to the narratives shared (Frank, 2012; Riessman, 2008; Wells, 2011). Afterall, I was largely interested in meaning-in-context and subjectivity.

Another possible limitation of this research may be my 'outsider' status, as a heterosexual, cis-female, researcher. When speaking about cultural, or religious details, participants would largely speak freely, without explanation, highlighting the value of holding an 'insider' position. However, this too was the case when speaking about sexuality, leaving me to wonder whether participants positioned me as an 'expert' in the field, expecting me to be fully aware of the nuances of S-A sexuality. Again, this may have

resulted in subtle individualities being missed, by treating the LGBTQ+ community as a singular group. Furthermore, this can often lead to research findings being conflated (Murr, 2013). Future research may benefit from exploring identities within specific groups, like, S-A queer women, or accounting for subsects of identities, bolstering the use of humanism and intersectionality. It may also be valuable to begin by simply gauging how participants 'define' identity as a concept; something I did not initially consider and recognise could be helpful in hindsight.

Finally, within dialogic research, not asking participants for further input following interviews, for example by inviting them to check transcripts, may also pose as a potential limitation. Unfortunately, due to the time constraints of writing this paper, this approach was not feasible. This method may have offered participants a means to respond to data, and interpretations, furthering reflexivity and strengthening narrative co-constructions (Harvey, 2015). Increased collaboration may also have aligned further with the social-justice values of CoP, adding an additional ethical lens to the research (Vanclay et al., 2013).

6. Research Implications

The theoretical underpinnings of this research infer that knowledge is co-constructed, and therefore context-specific and partial (Wells, 2011). Afterall, participants remain 'out there' sharing new narratives, whilst perhaps developing and adapting their ever-evolving sense of 'self' (Frank, 2012). As such, implications gained from this research are tentative. It is hoped that understandings gleaned from these unique stories may facilitate wider reflection, discussion and contributions for clinical practice, services and CoP as a discipline. Below, I offer possible suggestions from this research.

6.1. Implications for Clinical Practice

Therapeutic spaces can be central to supporting LGBTQ+ individuals through identity navigation (King et al., 2008). However, many individuals worry that professionals may

directly attribute mental health difficulties to sexual orientation (Golding, 1997), or fear that queer issues may be misunderstood, due to heteronormativity in healthcare approaches (King et al., 2008; Lucksted, 2004). For S-A queer individuals, and perhaps other POC, barriers to accessing therapy may be furthered, as Western/white models of psychology may not echo with their experiences (Das Nair et al, 2012). Thus, it would be important for clinicians to carefully attend to the stories clients share about their unique identities and experiences, and perhaps appropriately adapt interventions, to meet their diverse needs (HCPC, 2015).

Drawing on constructivist or narrative philosophies, when exploring identities, and discriminations, may also support clinicians to understand the impacts of systems of power (Das Nair et al, 2012). Specifically drawing on DPNA principles may also permit insight into how clients negotiate identity issues, and draw on their strengths, to consider future directions for their unfinalised stories. Such ideas align with principles of positive psychology, where the acknowledgement of strengths can foster better mental health management and increase self-esteem (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011; Lytle et al., 2014). This approach may also bolster personal agency, supporting clients to avoid, pre-empt and prevent negative impact of discrimination and oppression (Whitley & Denise-Campbell, 2014).

Clinicians can also listen out for the finalising of narratives by facilitating dialogical thinking (Frank, 2010). 'Opening-up' stories can strengthen individuals sense of 'self', as they consider ways for their identities to fluidly and flexibly develop (Frank, 2010). Dialogic thinking in therapeutic spaces may also allow insight into identity changes and/or challenges, alongside who may be involved (Bertrando, 2018). This process must be approached tentatively and slowly, perhaps even at the clients own pace, to avoid creating added narrative finalisations (Ganzevoort et al., 2011). Ultimately, familiarisations with narrative types may support clinicians to offer individualised, humanistic, narrative spaces, with more beneficial formulation and treatment planning (Ganzevoort et al., 2011).

‘Typologies’ may also be valuable to highlight stories that contribute to narratives, and their uses, alongside illuminating potential risks e.g., deliberate self-harm (Frank, 2010). Here, closely attuning to client’s narratives is essential, as ‘typologies’ may not be made explicit (Das Nair et al, 2012; Das Nair et al, 2012). For example, ‘coming out’ must be navigated tentatively, so they are not finalising, or being defined by clinicians assumptions. Consequently, before drawing on ‘typologies’, clinicians must reflect on their own assumptions and prejudices (HCPC, 2015). Therapist’s personal reflection may also minimise the possibility of assuming meanings to client’s identities, and how these may interact (Das Nair et al, 2012). Thus, clinicians can respectfully and curiously foster idiosyncratic awareness of which identities may be in the background, or foreground, in varying contexts (Das Nair et al, 2012; HCPC, 2015).

Within the tentative and dialogic explorations of S-A LGBTQ+ identities, it is imperative that ‘coming out’ narratives are cautiously explored, lessening the possibility of clinicians causing further ‘othering’. Clinicians must also have awareness of differences within ‘coming out’ narratives. O’Sullivan (2021) advises that ‘coming out’ explorations with POC should be adapted, permitting them to ‘invite’ the world in, at their own pace; promoting identity ownership and personal agency (O’Sullivan, 2021).

‘Inviting in’ also gives individual’s the privilege to share themselves in spaces, with people they trust, whilst lessening the burden of not sharing their identities due to not feeling safe or ready (O’Sullivan, 2021). ‘Inviting in’ also gives room to those who may find comfort in some ‘labels’, but not others, without the worry of educating others as they continue to understand themselves (O’Sullivan, 2021). These sentiments resonate highly with all participants here and may be invaluable to embrace. ‘Inviting in’ could also result in ‘self’ limiting barriers being challenged, generating spaces for individuals to understanding and embrace their identities on their own terms (O’Sullivan, 2021).

6.2. Implications for Services

As a CoP, I understand that healthcare services cannot fully abandon the diagnostic approaches (Naylor et al., 2017). However, it is our responsibility to facilitate more humanistic ways of conceptualising distress, and identities, particularly when working with diverse, often marginalised communities (BPS, 2019). Alongside the above implications, I subscribe to the idea that services too should create spaces where stories can be heard (Naylor et al., 2017), implementing change beyond the therapy room. Such ideas align with CoP's individualised, subjective approach (BPS, 2006; Cooper, 2009) and may lessen the possibility of 'symptoms' being separated from socio-political contexts in which they are located, which is strongly cautioned against (Papadopoulos & Lees, 2002). Thus, closely attending to identity narratives may permit understanding of client's experiences of distress through the stories told and performed. Such insights could be used to teach others (Greenhalgh et al., 2017).

Supervisory meetings, or training to promote self-evaluation could also allow teams to observe how diagnostic or heteronormative biases may influence the running of the service and therapeutic spaces (Das Nair et al, 2012); endorsing change on an individual and systemic level (Das Nair et al, 2012; Glassgold, 2007). Moreover, these spaces may promote ongoing reflection towards social justice issues, like racism, faced by these groups (Laszloffy & Hardy, 2000).

Increasing service reflexivity may support teams to move beyond 'cultural competence' and align more with concepts of 'cultural humility'; invaluable when working with intersectional identities (Greene-Moton & Minkler, 2020; Tervalon et al, 1998). 'Cultural humility' denotes a "a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing power imbalances . . . and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations" (Tervalon et

al, 1998, p.123). This also connects with narrative humility, which encourages clinicians, teams and researchers to assume a position of curiosity with clients; upholding CoP's person-centred, humanistic values (BPS, 2013, 2019).

Lastly, reflecting on the importance of community for participants in this research, in order to facilitate more holistic change, services may also benefit from linking with community-based networks or social groups, either online or offline. Appropriately sharing these with clients may allow individuals to create a supportive network, perhaps strengthening their abilities to navigate their identities. It is however important that such attempts to promote social-inclusion are done at the client's pace, with consent, maintaining their autonomy and respecting their needs (HCPC, 2015).

6.3. Implications for CoP

CoP distinguishes itself from other psychology domains by embracing diversity, activism and social justice as a core value (Hargons et al., 2017; Nadal, 2017; Norcross et al., 1998). Thus, CoP's may be able to use their activist identity to support queer S-A, and POC more broadly, to challenge mainstream discourses around culture, religion, ethnicity and sexuality, through education, clinical practice, training and their personal lives (Nadal, 2017; Rafalin, 2010). For S-A LGBTQ+ individuals, this may lead to the creation of more community spaces to learn and thrive, strengthening their activist identities.

Increased training on sexual identities may also be vital, as many clinicians report feeling ill-equipped to explore this with clients (Haboubi & Lincoln, 2003). This however is unsurprising, due to the minimal teaching offered on sexuality (Alderson, 2004; Mollen et al., 2020; Montenegro, 2015). Improved training, may enable CoP's to assume an active role in broaching issues within intersectional identities and may lessen clients' hesitation to begin such conversation due to fears of judgement, or discomfort (Cruz et al., 2017). Furthermore, as research points to therapists needing to be comfortable in addressing sexuality to provide

holistic, culturally appropriate care (Cruz et al., 2017) further teaching may permit CoP's to pay increased attention to specific issues of culture, ethnicity and race, when exploring sexual identity (Ade-Serrano et al., 2016).

CoP's can also assume their leadership roles to promoting systemic change through research (BPS, 2019; Fassinger & Shullman, 2017; Suzuki et al., 2019). CoP's attraction to qualitative methods makes us suited to critically attend to political, social and moral processes (Rafalin, 2010), which may impede intersectional identities. Thus, the insights from this paper and others, could be used to offer guidance to educational institutions, on how to work collaboratively to prevent discriminations faced by S-A LGBTQ+ individuals, and other queer POC, which may otherwise be missed (Das Nair et al, 2012); facilitating systemic change. This seems especially important due to identity exploration contributing to higher levels of mental health distress at university (Luyckx et al., 2006).

Finally, CoP's can continue to contribute to the dearth of literature on this population, using their unique positions to develop skills, practice and social justice through research (Moradi et al., 2009).

7. Concluding Remarks

I set out to explore how second-generation, S-A, LGBTQ+ individuals understood, and shared their identities through narratives. Eight participants, self-identifying as S-A LGBTQ+ requested to participate in semi-structured interviews; conducted online due to Covid-19. DPNA principles were used to analyse the data. To remain true to the unique narratives of each participant, interviews were analysed and presented individually. Insights from this process revealed that participants drew on individual agency, activism and fluidity to construct their distinctive, intersectional identities, and overcome obstacles, which were often imposed by others.

The research also highlighted numerous ways for CoP's to support this community in tackling social justice issues, and creating a space for their unique identities, and narratives, to thrive. As well as contributing to the wider literature base focusing on S-A LGBTQ+ identities, and this research supports to prevent the continuing marginalisations and 'othering' faced by this community. Furthermore, the insights from this research can be used to support individuals to not only challenge stories which are available to them, but vitally generate novel and evocative narratives in response.

I would like to conclude by echoing my position, that this research was never intended to offer a finalised 'statement', but rather to produce dialogue and response. For me, this research process has been a huge source of learning, inspiring many conversations and debates. I truly hope that each reader will engage with this research in novel and perhaps unexpected ways, sharing the importance and value of adopting a humanistic, intersectional approach to identities. Furthermore, I hope this research raises discussions around mental health, culture, ethnicity and other interactions of identity; even areas which may have not yet been considered. The ultimate hope is to draw responsiveness to the issues faced by S-A LGBTQ+ identities, and aid this community in 'opening-up' narratives and reconstruct their storied identities, thereby 'holding their own' (Frank, 2012).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Recruitment Poster

Appendix 2: Screening call schedule

Screening Questions

Thank you for contacting me and expressing your interest in wanting to take part.

At this point, it's important for us to go through a few screening questions just to check whether the study is suitable for you to take part in, as well as ensuring that taking part is not detrimental to your mental or physical health in any way:

Name:

Pronoun:

How you do you identify?

Risk/Safety Specific:

As the research may touch on sensitive topics, it is important that if any risk is highlighted during our interview, we are able to maintain your safety and offer support which may be more appropriate at this time. With this in mind, I will offer details of support services you can access but will also be asking for your address, or the address at which your interview will be taking place. Should I become concerned during (or following) the interview process, for your safety or the safety of others, I will need to contact the relevant services to ensure you are supported appropriately..

a) *Would you be comfortable to provide these details?*

The next few questions are to explore risk:

In the past, have you been involved in or witnessed a traumatic event? Such events might be things like being in or seeing an accident, physical or sexual abuse, being involved in a natural disaster…

a) *If yes, do you experience any symptoms of trauma from these experiences?*

a. *Prompt: these might involve, nightmares, flashbacks, hypervigilance/avoidance*

In the last 3 months, have you had thoughts about taking your life?

a) *If yes, have you made any plans or preparations?*

b) *Do you feel that you can keep yourself safe?*

a. *As the research may involve talking about difficult topics which may increase such feelings, it might be better if the participant seeks mental health support at this time to maintain their safety and wellbeing – signpost and advise to speak to GP/support network.*

In the last 3 months, have you experienced thoughts relating to self-harm?

a) *If yes, have you made any plans or preparations?*

a. *As the research may involve talking about difficult topics which may increase such feelings, it might be better if the participant seeks mental health support at this time to maintain their safety and wellbeing – signpost and advise to speak to GP/support network.*

Do you feel that you could pose a risk to those around you, or be at risk from anyone around you?

a) *If yes, elaborate:*

b) *If you feel at risk from anyone around you, how have you been maintaining your safety and how will you continue to do so?*

a. *It sounds as though now might not be the right time to take part in research and it might be better to seek support in maintain their safety and wellbeing – signpost and advise to speak to GP/support network/police if necessary.*

Trans- Specific Questions:

If mid-transition:

Research suggests that individuals can often experience higher levels of mental health difficulties (Dhejne, Vlerken, Heylens & Arcelus, 2015) during transition – since starting your transition, have you experienced any symptoms of depression or anxiety (i.e. lack of motivation, worrying a lot, difficulties concentration, feelings of hopelessness)?

a) *If so, are you currently working with a therapist/counsellor?*
a. *Are they aware of such feelings?*

b) *During the research interview, some difficult topics may arise, do you think speaking about these could be distressing in any way, worsening any symptoms you may already be experiencing?*

a. *Would it be helpful to discuss this with your therapist and we can arrange a follow-up call?*

Covid-19 specific (if necessary)

Are you currently experiencing any symptoms relating to Covid-19 or currently self-isolating?

a) If yes, are you following the government recommendations?
a. *If participant is experiencing symptoms, recommend they focus on physical well-being and is welcome to contact me again once they are well.*

b) If no, do you feel physically able to speak for between 60-90 minutes?

In this instance, all interviews will take part over Microsoft Teams.

If interviews are taking place over Microsoft Teams:

Do you have a safe space where you are able to speak freely, whilst maintaining confidentiality?

a) *It must be quiet and free from distraction, so we are able to hear each other.*

b) *Interviews will take place over video call, is this something you are comfortable with?*

Appendix 3: Participant information sheet

PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve.

Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Project Title: *Identity Narratives of the Second-Generation, South Asian, LGBTQ+ Population*
Research Question: *How do the Second-Generation, South Asian LGBTQ+ Community Speak About Their Identity in the United Kingdom?*

Who am I?

I am a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology. As part of my studies I am conducting the research you are being invited to participate in.

What is the research?

The aim of my research is to understand how the second-generation, South-Asian, LGBTQ+* community speak about and make sense of their identities in the United Kingdom. I hope to gain insight into how individuals negotiate personal values and desires alongside social factors, such as family and culture (to name a few); focusing on the individual agency when constructing identities.

Ideas that may arise from this project could contribute to the wider knowledge base surrounding identity construction, particularly relating to the South Asian and LGBTQ+ population. The knowledge gained can also provide ideas for potential change and learning within healthcare settings or support services, enabling us to understand and support individuals from diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, it could highlight further areas for research. Some participants may also find it cathartic to talk and share their experiences, offering a space to process their difficulties.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that the Committee's evaluation of this ethics application has been guided by the standards of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Why have you been asked to participate?

As my research focuses specifically on the narratives of the South Asian, LGBTQ+* community, I am looking to involve individuals who identify with the below criteria:

- Second-Generation
- South Asian*
- UK Born and Raised
- Identify with the LGBTQ+ Community*
- Aged 18+
- Must speak fluent English

*Acknowledging that the terms South Asian and LGBTQ+ may include a number of identities, therefore I choose not to elaborate on them, allowing you to self-determine whether these '*labels*' may resonate (or

potentially resonate) with you. You will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and you will be treated with respect.

What will your participation involve?

If you agree to take part, the first thing to happen will be a brief screening phone call to ascertain whether this research is the right fit for you. Following this, should we continue, a consent form will need to be completed. You will also be required to provide some general information about yourself, which should take no longer than 5 minutes. You will then be invited to take part in a 1:1 interview. The interview is designed to capture an account of your life story, exploring how you have come to learn who you are. The aim is to consider these, with respect to what you feel these give your identity.

I anticipate that the interview process may last between 60-90 minutes and will be audio-recorded for analysis. Interviews can take place at a room the University of East London in Stratford, or online, using Microsoft Teams. Should the interview be online, it is important that you have a safe space, free from distraction to speak, whilst also enabling us to maintain confidentiality. If you are based outside of London and are unable to travel to the University of East London, I am also able to travel to you, if you would prefer. Please not however, this may only be an option if I am able to source a private and confidential space, i.e. private room in a public library.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to offer a financial incentive for your participation, however I do offer my sincere gratitude. Your participation will also be very valuable in helping to develop knowledge and understanding of my research topic.

Covid-19:

As per the University of East London's current policy, should the impact of Covid-19 continue, i.e. lockdown, social distancing, interviews will **only** take place online. This is to ensure the safety of participant and researcher.

Safety and Confidentiality

Your privacy and safety will be respected at all times.

Any personal details that you provide throughout the research process will be kept confidential. Identifiable information will always be anonymised, and you will be given a pseudonym with transcriptions. The data will be stored on a university secured hard-drive (H: drive) and will only be accessible by me. Information will not be shared with others. Examiners and my supervisor will have access to the anonymised transcriptions. The data will also be retained until the end of the project and will be destroyed/deleted after submission.

Should you wish to participate, please do be aware that you are not obliged to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable to speak about. You are also able to stop participation at any point. Sufficient time will be allowed to explore all questions, as well as concerns that may arise; however, interviews may involve recalling difficult events or experiences. As a result, during the research process, if at any point I become concerned for your welfare, or the welfare of others, I will contact the relevant support services, i.e. emergency services. With this in mind, and only for this purpose, I would request that you let us know your address or the address at which you intend to complete the interview. This information will only be kept for the duration of the interview and will be used for no other purpose. In order to offer additional support, you will also be provided with details of organisations that can offer you therapeutic support. Furthermore, participants will also be signposted to appropriate resources, as well as encouraged to speak to their GP.

What will happen to the information that you give?

At this point, you are under no obligation to take part and participation is entirely voluntary. Should you wish to continue, you are also free to withdraw your participation at any time without explanation or disadvantage to yourself. You may also request to withdraw your data following participation, provided that this request is made

within 3 weeks of the data collection; leading to data being removed and destroyed. After this point, as the analysis process will have begun, withdrawal will not be possible. All information will be stored on a university secured hard-drive (H: drive), which will only be accessible by me.

Following the data collection period, interviews will be transcribed. They will be analysed following the 3-week period. Through the analysis process, I aim to represent each participant as authentically as possible, giving voice to each narrative. Extracts from interviews may be included within the write up of the project, however these will be anonymised, with any identifiable information being changed or removed. Anonymised information from transcripts may also be accessible to my supervisor and examiners.

Following completion of the project, as short article may be written for publication within an academic journal. Although this may include extracts from interviews, this again will be anonymised, and identifiable information will be omitted or changed. I will also ask if you would like for me to forward you a summary of the findings following the studies completion.

Data gathered within the interviews will, transcribed and anonymised. These will be stored within the UEL repository following completion of the study, or after publication for up to 5 years; in line with GDPR guidelines. No identifiable information will be retained. Storage of data will be reviewed every 5 years after this, allowing for it to be used within future research.

At any point, please do feel free to ask any questions that may come up.

If you are happy to continue, the next step will be to sign a consent form prior to participation. Please feel free to keep this invitation letter for your reference.

Alternatively, if you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below:

Shradha Billawa - Email: u1516798@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact the research supervisor [**Dr. Jeeda Alhakim**, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ or **j.alhakim@uel.ac.uk**]

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
(t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you in anticipation,
Yours sincerely,
Shradha Billawa

Appendix 4: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in a research study

Research Title: *Identity Narratives of the Second-Generation, South Asian, LGBTQ+ Population*

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher(s) involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should I withdraw; the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data after analysis of the data has begun.

Participants Name (Block Capitals)	
Participant Signature	
Researcher's Name (Block Capitals)	
Researcher's Signature	

Date: ……..……

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Pronoun:

Age:

Nationality:

How did you hear about the study?

1) *How do you name/define/describe your identity?*

   Prompts if needed:

   a. *How do you view your cultural/sexual identity as it's situated within the UK?*

   b. *Are there some aspects of your identity that feel more important than others? If so, which ones?*

2) *Could you tell me a little about how you came to recognise this identity?*

   Prompts if needed:

   a. *Does your upbringing, family, the internet or community contribute to your identity?*

   b. *Would you describe yourself as 'out?'*

      i. *If so, could you tell me a little about this experience?*

      ii. *If not, could you describe your experience around this?*

         1. *Would you say 'coming out' is important or necessary?*

3) *What helped you develop your South-Asian Queer identity?*

   a. *Has anything helped you to create/understand the identity that you hold?*

   b. *Do you face any difficulties with your South-Asian LGBTQ+ identity?*

4) *What are your hopes (or even concerns) for the outcomes of this research?*

   a. *Why were you interested in participating?*

5) *Is there anything you would like to add, or you think would be useful to know?*

Other possible prompts/follow up Q's:

- Can you tell me a bit about your family/upbringing?

- Can you tell me a bit about the community you grew up in?

- Friends? Family? Other influences?

Appendix 6: Debrief letter

PARTICIPANT DEBRIEF LETTER

Thank you for participating in this research. The aim of this project was to explore narratives of the second-generation, South Asian, LGBTQ+ population, in order to gain insight and awareness into how they speak about and understand their identities. I hope that the impact of this research can provide a body of knowledge within the field, to empirically support clients holding diverse identities within a multitude of ways, therapeutically, socially and practically. This research may also provide insight into future areas of research. Your contributions will complement the development of information in this area.

If you wish to withdraw your participation from research project, you are able to do so within three weeks of this interview by myself with your request. Withdrawing your interview from the project will mean that all data belonging to you will be electronically and physically destroyed, and unused. After the three-week period, the interview will be analysed as an anonymous part of the collective body of data and will not be retractable.

Data arising from this interview will be used anonymously, and selective quotes will be anonymised to support the data. All data will be retained and stored securely (anonymously) in the UEL repository. As outlined in the consent form, this will be storied for up to 5 years after completion of the project or publication, in accordance with GDPR regulations. The storage of data will be reviewed every 5 years.

What if you feel distressed from taking part?

It is not anticipated that you will have been affected by taking part in the research, and all reasonable steps have been taken to minimise potential harm. Nevertheless, it is still possible that your participation, or the after-effects, may be challenging, distressing or uncomfortable to deal with in some way. If you have been affected in any way, you may find the addition resources/services that have also been offered on the following page, helpful in relation to obtaining further information and support. In the event of risk, confidentiality may be broken in order to maintain your safety and the appropriate services (emergency services) will be contacted immediately. They will be directed to the address which you have given. As mentioned, these details will only be retained for the duration of the interview. It is also advisable that you liaise with your GP.

You are also very welcome to contact me or my supervisor following completion of the interview, if you have specific questions or concerns.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me on the email address below:

u1516798@uel.ac.uk

If you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact the research supervisor [**Dr. Jeeda Alhakim**, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ or j.alhakim@uel.ac.uk]

Stonewall - A national campaigning organisation which also provides a directory of local services for support and advice for LGBTQ people.

T: 0800 50 20 20

E: info@stonewall.org.uk

W: http://www.stonewall.org.uk/

London Friend - Provides counselling and support service for LGBT+ communities. Also offer support groups and social activities for diverse communities.
Helpline: 020 7837 3337
T: 020 7833 1674 (office)
E: office@londonfriend.org.uk
W: www.londonfriend.org.uk

Galop - London's LGBT anti-violence and abuse charity. They give advice and support to people who have experienced biphobia, homophobia, transphobia, sexual violence or domestic abuse. They also support lesbian, gay, bi, Trans and queer people who have had problems with the police or have questions about the criminal justice system.
Helpline: 020 7704 2040
T: 020 7704 6767
E: info@galop.org.uk
W: www.galop.org.uk

Gaysians - an alliance of multiple charities (national), support groups, meet-ups, activists and leading voices within the South Asian LGBTQ+ community.
Due to the number of charities in collaboration with Gaysian, please see their website for further information on specific services: https://www.gaysians.org/about

Mind - A national mental health charity which provides information and support. Their website also lists LGBTQ mental health services here.
T: 0300 123 3393 Text - 86463
W - https://www.mind.org.uk **Phone number - 0300 123 3393 Text - 86463**
E: info@mind.org.uk

NHS - The NHS provides free healthcare, counselling and support to everyone in the UK, you can access free support through your GP. If you are worries about an urgent medical concern, please contact 111 or 999, depending on the severity.
W - https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/LGBhealth/Pages/Mentalhealth.aspx

Crisis Support:
For immediate support, please contact your local A&E/Emergency Services.

Samaritans – 24 hours telephone services offering emotional support for those experiencing mental health difficulties.
T: 116 123
W: https://www.samaritans.org

Give us a Shout – Text service for those in need of crisis support
T: 85258
W: https://www.giveusashout.org/

Please be aware that due to the impact of Covid-19 although many of the services are still offering support, the method of delivery may differ from previously, i.e. telephone sessions instead of face-to-face, and some services may also have limited provisions. In this event, it is recommended that you speak to your existing support network, who may be able to offer support, or liaise with your GP.

Appendix 7: Ethical Approval

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants
BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Jeff Salter

SUPERVISOR: **Jeeda Alhakim**

STUDENT: Shradha Billawa

Course: Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology

Title of proposed study: Identity Narratives of Second-Generation, South Asian, LGBTQ+ Population

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.

2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.

3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY
(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

2. Approved – minor amendments

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

A) Current UEL policy states that all research interviews must be conducted online and this should be recorded on the form and amended in section 5.17, 6.2, 6.4, Appendix A.

B) 6.1, Appendix A and Appendix C: Is it within the researchers remit to identify family members or friends of respondents to support them post-interview? Is this a condition of participation? Issues of anonymity and responsibility are raised here and I would suggest similar advice contained in 6.2 could apply to respondents. Please discuss with supervisor.

Major amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

Confirmation of making the above minor amendments *(for students)*:

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name *(Typed name to act as signature)*: *Shradha Billawa*
Student number: 1516798

Date: 21/05/20

(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES / NO

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

☐ HIGH

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

☐ MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

☐ X LOW

Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any).

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature)*: *Jeff Salter*

Date: 6/5/20

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's Insurance, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard

Appendix 8: Request for Title Change (Ethics)

University of East London

School of Psychology Ethics Committee

REQUEST FOR TITLE CHANGE TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

For BSc, MSc/MA and taught Professional Doctorate students

Please complete this form if you are requesting approval for a proposed title change to an ethics application that has been approved by the School of Psychology

By applying for a change of title request, you confirm that in doing so, the process by which you have collected your data/conducted your research has not changed or deviated from your original ethics approval. If either of these have changed, then you are required to complete an 'Ethics Application Amendment Form'.

How to complete and submit the request	
1	Complete the request form electronically.
2	Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (page 2).
3	Using your UEL email address, email the completed request form along with associated documents to Dr Jérémy Lemoine (School Research Ethics Committee Member): j.lemoine@uel.ac.uk
4	Your request form will be returned to you via your UEL email address with the reviewer's decision box completed. Keep a copy of the approval to submit with your dissertation.

Required documents	
A copy of the approval of your initial ethics application.	**YES** ☒

Details	
Name of applicant:	**Shradha Billawa**
Programme of study:	**Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology**
Title of research:	**Identity Narratives of the Second-Generation, South Asian, LGBTQ+ Population**
Name of supervisor:	**Dr Jeeda Alhakim**

Proposed title change	
Briefly outline the nature of your proposed title change in the boxes below	
Old title:	**Identity Narratives of the Second-Generation, South Asian, LGBTQ+ Population**
New title:	**Tales of Sexual Diversity and Identity, from Second-Generation, South Asian Individuals in the United Kingdom**
Rationale:	**Adapted the language in the title to reflect the diverse nature of South-Asian queer identities, and because of the Western ideologies associated with the term LGBTQ+.**

Confirmation		
Is your supervisor aware of your proposed change of title and in agreement with it?	**YES** ☒	**NO** ☐
Does your change of title impact the process of how you collected your data/conducted your research?	**YES** ☐	**NO** ☒

Student's signature	
Student: (Typed name to act as signature)	**Shradha Billawa**
Date:	**12/01/2022**

Reviewer's decision		
Title change approved:	**YES** ☒	**NO** ☐
Comments:	**The language of the new title reflects better the identity of the studied population. The new title will not impact the process of how the data are collected or how the research is conducted.**	
Reviewer: (Typed name to act as signature)	**Jérémy Lemoine**	
Date:	**13/01/2022**	

Appendix 9: Data Management Plan

Appendix 10: Example of analysis process from NVivo