BECOMING AN ADULT THROUGH ADVERSITY: YOUNG PEOPLE'S STORIES OF THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

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ABSTRACT

Background

The transition to adulthood is positioned as a crucial developmental process within the human lifespan (Brown, 2018), that research suggests has become increasingly more difficult and prolonged for the population of British youth, consequent to shifts in their social and economic context (Roberts & Lawrence, 2017). These trends are more prominent for racially subjugated youth, with long term psychosocial implications for clinical psychology practice. (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2005; Malek, 2011; Street et al., 2005). Despite this there is little clarity around becoming an adult from the perspectives of British Black and minority ethnic youth.

Aims

This research aims to explore the stories British Black and minority ethnic youth tell of becoming an adult in the United Kingdom (UK), and how hardship and culture feature within them.

Methodology

Taking a critical realist epistemological position, this research utilised unstructured interviews, narrative artefacts and systematic narrative analysis to explore how four British Black and minority ethnic youths', aged 20-26yrs, storied their transition to adulthood in the UK.

Findings

Overall, the findings state that the narratives British Black and ethnic minority youth use to story becoming an adult, are shaped by their historical, social, economic and cultural context.

Conclusions

This research provides an important insight into the intersection between hardships, culture, identity and the transition to adulthood, amongst youth from subjugated British communities. While these findings do not claim to be generalisable, they support research that states young people from racialised

backgrounds experience the psychosocial difficulties that impact all young people, plus additional issues specific to their culture, race and ethnicity (Malek, 2011; Street et al., 2005). Consequently, elevating British Black, and minority ethnic youth's stories of becoming adults within the context of their broader inequalities, is essential for providing adequate evidence-based care and support that meets their intersectional needs.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

The transition to adulthood has long been considered a pivotal developmental process (Arnett, 2001; Brown, 2018; Grob, 2001) that in recent years has become more difficult than for previous generations, due to social and economic inequalities (Roberts & Lawrence, 2017). Research has shown social inequality increases the likelihood of experiences of adversity and hardship in childhood and adolescence (Cook et al., 2003; Office for National Statistics, 2020; Patel et al., 2007); and established links to poor long-term psychosocial and economic outcomes into adulthood (Felitti et al., 1998a; Hughes et al., 2017; Mersky et al., 2013; Public Health England, 2017; Schilling et al., 2007) . Additionally, the literature states these trends are more prominent for marginalised minority ethnic youth who are also more likely to experience structural health inequalities (Keating et al., 2002; Malek, 2011; Street et al., 2005).

Given that the initial onset of poor adult mental health peaks during the transition to adulthood, before the age of 25years (Kessler et al., 2005; Kim-Cohen et al., 2003; McGorry et al., 2007), it is not surprising that, this period of the lifespan has been positioned as a key focus for mental health provision within Government guidance (Department of Health & NHS England, 2015; NHS England, 2019; NHS England et al., 2014). Research emphasises the need for better transitional care between CAMHS and adult services informed by a robust understanding of the journey to adulthood for British youth (Department of Health & Social Care & Department for Education, 2017; NHS England, 2019; NICE, 2016; Singh et al., 2010).

This introduction will critically appraise, position and define the key social constructs related to exploring the stories of racialised youth becoming adults in the UK. A narrative overview of the prevailing literature will attempt to contextualise the dominant narratives of becoming an , that positions young people as one homogenous group obscuring intersectional stories of this time. A

scoping review of the scant literature into British minority ethnic youth's journeys to adulthood , will highlight the need to explore how racialised youth in the UK construct and story becoming adults to further our understanding of their complex experiences and needs. The chapter will then conclude with a summary of study aims and research questions.

1.2. Taking a Critical Perspective of the Literature

A critical approach to the topic of becoming an adult will involve interrogating the existence and classification of adulthood, becoming an adult, and related constructs. This will include consideration of the sources, purpose and historical, social and political context of discourses about becoming an adult, as well as the scope and function of this knowledge for furthering our understanding of the topic.

It is important to acknowledge that the literature presented below is embedded within disciplines of social science that emerged during the 19th and 20th century from Eurocentric philosophical and theoretical underpinnings, concerned with understanding human development, individual difference and social cohesion during a time of colonialism, increasing industrialisation, cultural exposure and economic globalisation (Fernando, 2017; Majors et al., 2020). The research and practical applications of British psychology were governed by empiricism and positivism and so concerned with generating universal theories of understanding that often distanced individuals from the social, historical and political contexts that shaped their circumstances and distress (Fernando, 2017; Majors et al., 2020; Patel, 2003). While the discipline within the UK can be described as ethnocentric and historically located within Euro- American viewpoint (Greenfield & Cocking, 2014), it is still practiced with the assumption and aspiration of universality, that can give rise to fixed positions of meaning-making, regardless of intersectionality of knowledge and experience (Bhaskar, 2010; Patel, 2003a).

Through the critical appraisal of multiple forms of knowledge, I hope to widen the thinking around the transition to adulthood to create space for the consideration of relevant ideas and perspectives that may have been largely excluded or marginalised from the discussion.

1.3. Terminology

Many of the constructs discussed throughout this report are not psychological phenomena, but socio-political and legal constructions with psychological implications. As such, I have defined below how the terms 'race' and 'ethnicity', 'adversity' and '(transitioning to) adulthood' are conceptualised within this research, drawing on relevant texts in these areas.

1.3.1. Conceptualising the Process of Becoming an Adult

The construction of development within the age-defined stages of childhood, adolescence and adulthood within Britain, is a historically recent phenomenon embedded in biological, social, cultural, economic and legal notions (Arnett, 2004). However, despite the changeable and culturally determined nature of these constructs, they have become taken for granted both within the literature and wider society as an incontestible natural truth (Blatterer, 2007). In order to critically discuss the literature on young people's transition to adulthood, we must first determine how adulthood has come to be constructed within the context of British society as part of conceptualising young people's *becoming.* This is particularly pertinent to more topical claims in the literature that suggest, young people's transition to adulthood in recent generations, has become increasingly delayed by a prolonged adolescence (Arnett, 2004).

The conceptualisation of adolescence by Stanley Hall in the early 1900s (Arnett, 2007), semantically separated the construct of adult into the biological – those having transitioned through puberty evident from secondary sex characteristics, and the social – those determined to be an adult culturally or legally within their society.

Biologically speaking, an organism is deemed an adult when it is capable of sexual reproduction. In the case of humans, puberty served as the biological indicator for maturity, with children traditionally becoming adults once they become reproductively able (Fass, 2012). However, in human societies adulthood, along with adolescence and childhood, also has both legal

boundaries and social meaning, which have shifted over time and do not always overlap (Fass, 2012).

In the UK, adult status is defined by a set of laws that relate to the ‘age of majority’(currently 18yrs), when guardianship or parental responsibility is relinquished and legally located in the minor who is now seen to have control over their own actions, decisions and person (Family Law Reform Act, 1969). The legislative framework around the adult role, is embedded in cultural ideas around maturity and moral responsibility in relation to specific developmental tasks centred around reasoning and decision-making. However, even in the legal realm, adultness is not a universal truth and varies greatly depending on the context requiring adult status and cultural determined notions around age appropriate behaviours, e.g. legal ages of consent is 16yrs, the right to vote and drink alcohol is 18yrs, medical decision making can be granted at 12yrs old and the age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales is 10yrs old (UK Government, n.d.). However, the legal boundaries of context specific adult status have also changed over time due to cultural shifts around social morality. Additionally, legally defined adulthood can even differ within a single policy determined by where you live in the UK, (e.g. voting age in England is 18 and in Scotland and Wales it was lowered to 16 (Uberoi & Johnston, 2021).

As such the conceptual boundaries of adulthood in Britain today are diffuse, having been constructed over time and defined by markers along a trajectory shaped by the prevailing, cultural, economic and political context. This is reflected in the debates around defining the current process of becoming an adult in the literature (Syed, 2015).

Labelling this time in the lifespan as the transition to adulthood, has been critiqued for obscuring young peoples’ embodied experiences of this developmental time, by implying the period is fleeting before the main event of adulthood, (Arnett, 2004). Instead, the term ‘emerging adulthood’ was popularised to denote an new socially located developmental stage that captured and enabled theorising about what young people ‘are’ during this phase of their lives (Arnett, 2000). Further, distinctions have since been made between

emerging adulthood - the sociological context of the new developmental life stage; and *emerging adults*, the young people who occupy the life space (Syed, 2015). The distinction reportedly facilitates further examination of how young people navigate this phase of life and the legitimacy of claims made by the theory of emerging adulthood (Syed, 2015).

Following on from this then, it would be inappropriate to label individuals of the age range (18yrs – 30yrs) commonly associated with this life stage, as emerging adults. Equally, using the term young adults, while legally 'correct' risks mislabelling young people of this age, as being adults regardless of their self-identification, a form of hermeneutical injustice[1] ((Fricker, 2007). This research is concerned with avoiding the mislabelling of individuals and groups within rigid often ill-fitting socio-political hermeneutical frames. Consequently, the term young people will be used preferentially to refer to individuals aged 18-30yrs who may be described in the literature, legally or culturally, as being or becoming a young adult, navigating emerging adulthood or transitioning to adulthood. In this way I hope to minimise the assumptions implied by using a collective term that speaks to the demographic of age. As such, centring the subjective stories, through which young people dynamically construct their intersectional state of 'becoming an adult (Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 2008).

1.3.2. Race, Ethnicity, Whiteness and Intersectionality

Since Du Bois' 1903 seminal sociological work 'The Souls of Black Folk' (Du Bois & Edwards, 2007), the literature around race has long identified the concept as a socio-political construction. Originally Grounded in 16th century colonial, hierarchical justifications for the enslavement of Africans, social values, ideologies and symbols are attributed to the physical characteristics of human bodies, most notably skin colour, for the purpose of social, political and economic differentiation (Banton & Harwood, 1975; Du Bois & Edwards, 2007; Fernando, 2017; Omi et al., 1994; Wood & Patel, 2017). Omi and Winant (2015) also state that the social construction of race is located in and thus shaped by specific

[1] Not having the language to communicate and make sense of your social experiences because they are obscured from structural understanding and collective definitions within society (Fricker, 2007).

historical and socio-political context. Inextricably intertwined with this is the social construction of Whiteness, defined as the pervasive ideological and cultural practices that give rise to and maintain hierarchical, organisational, racialised and intersectional oppression; and results in access to privilege and power (Clarke & Garner, 2009). While this research rejects essentialist notions of race, drawing on critical realism, I also acknowledge that a concept socially defined as real, has tangible material social effects (Fernando, 2017; Omi & Winant, 2015; Thomas, 1928).

Within the literature, there is little consensus on suitable alternatives to the current racialised language in the United Kingdom. Therefore, the term "Black and minority ethnic" is critically used within this research as a fictional, political, reductionist, categorical, social construct understood within Britain to describe individuals who are defined as and have come to define themselves as 'Black' (including those of African heritage) or 'Brown' (including those of South-East Asian, East Asian and Middle-Eastern heritage) and oppressed as a result of skin colour or assumed racialised categories; as well as those from minority ethnic groups in Britain who also experience racism (Akala, 2018; Aspinall, 2002; Fernando, 2017; Wood & Patel, 2017).

1.3.3. Culture

Fernando (2017) states that one always has to acknowledge that culture and 'race' are interrelated and as such, notice and consider the real and social consequences of the ideology and structures that shape our experience in relation to race. Within this research, culture is considered to be a historically and socially constructed system of beliefs and practices by which a group of people give meaning to, understand, organise and perform their individual and collective lives (Parekh, 2000). As with all social phenomena, we both dynamically co-construct and internalise the hermeneutical frame to which we contribute, configuring our cultural identities as we move through, inhabit and connect with community spaces and groups at specific points in time (Brah, 1996). As such, social culture and our cultural identities are not static, but fluid and changeable, and can be difficult to define.

1.3.4. Hardship, Adversity and Resilience

The terms hardship and adversity are often used interchangeably, but hardships are events or experiences that can give rise to difficult conditions for living (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) and adversity the state of being in serious or sustained difficulty that can result in negative consequences for emotional wellbeing and development (Rutter, 1995). Great attention has been paid to understanding and mitigating psychosocial vulnerability to childhood experiences of adversity (ACEs) due to their links with poor health and socioeconomic outcomes into adult life (Aynsley et al., 2017; Boullier & Blair, 2018; Bush, 2016; Felitti et al., 1998a; Girresch, 2019; Hughes et al., 2017; Mersky et al., 2013; Schilling et al., 2007). However, this research often focuses on the young person within their micro context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), ignoring the interaction between the individual and the historical, social and political forces shaping their world and giving rise to the hardships and adversity they may experience (Patel, 2003a).

The dominant narrative around how and why some people are more able to strive and adapt in the face of adversity than others, is wrapped up in the construct of resilience (Rutter, 1995). The psychology literature claims this ability to 'bounce back' is associated with internal qualities and resources including self-efficacy, self-esteem, spirituality, and social support (Ahern et al., 2008). In recent years this concept has been extended to a multileveled approach, incorporating the preventative and protective capacity of not only individuals, but communities and systems to overcome stressors and maintain positive mental health, education and the economic outcomes (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Nevertheless, a critique of the construction of resilience and adversity, is that they are often presented within a culturally decontextualised framework that overlooks who shapes and defines what experiences may be classed as adverse and what positive adaptation looks like (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). As such this conceptualisation may also give rise to the construction of resilience as an internal adaptive process which perhaps serves to pathologise and blame the subject. As, when the external social structures that govern access to power and resources are

obscured, what does it mean for example if a person cannot pull themselves up by their bootstraps to improve their situation, or a community cannot rise above and strengthen itself in the face of adversity?

Whilst ACEs cover a broad range of biological, psychological and social experiences (Scottish Government, 2018) and the psychological, social and physical health implications are widely acknowledged (Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust, 2018; Franklin et al., 2001; Kirkinis et al., 2018), limited consideration has been given to the complexity and emotional labour that occurs as a result of experiences of marginalisation. Experiences of othering based on ethnicity, gender identity and other protected characteristics, are currently categorised within bullying and victimisation. However, this limits young peoples' experiences to individual and micro levels at best, mitigating the macro level social, historical and political conditions that can reciprocally influence outcomes of subjugated youth and are often obscured from mainstream theory, practice and policy (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In light of the above, within this research, adversity, hardship and resilience will be considered as constructs that act at multiple levels within the relevant local, cultural and structural contexts of the young people concerned.

1.4. Background: The Process of Becoming an Adult

Across a range of contexts, the process of becoming an adult has been positioned as a central concern of human experience. Over time, examination of this cultural and social phenomenon has given rise to a body of literature within the social sciences focused around understanding its function and boundaries as a developmental construction. The following narrative review draws on anthropological, psychological and sociological perspectives to provide a contextual summary of the prevailing theories and debates that speak to the social, cultural and structural dimensions on the conceptualisation, process and implications of becoming an adult.

1.4.1. Anthropological Perspectives

Anthropological perspectives of becoming an adult emphasise the process as culturally and environmentally specific, i.e. dependent on the social group(s) to which the young person belongs and the cultural environment they inhabit (Lancy, 2014). Through acculturative integration, the young person is socialised to the expectations of their culturally constructed adult state (Lancy, 2014).

The French Anthropologist and Folklorist Arnold Van Gennep developed the term rites of passage to describe the rituals or ceremonies associated with changes of state, social position and age (van Gennep, 1909/ 2019) . He proposed that these rituals and ceremonies protected the stability of social systems by orienting its members around a collaborative task, facilitating the transition and assimilation to a socially defined identity or status, and mediating any sense of loss associated with the change (Dunham et al., 1986; Frey, 2013; van Gennep, 1909/ 2019).

Three phases of passage where outlined. The rite of separation (preliminal) to isolate the individual from their original social state or identity (e.g. adolescence). The rite of transition (liminal) is also known as the 'betwixt and between' where the individual stripped of their previous identity assumes a state of unclassified uncertainty and is engaged in activities (e.g. belief, value and knowledge acquisition) to propel them towards a new social identity (adulthood) that is just out of reach (Dunham et al., 1986; J. C. Turner et al., 1987; van Gennep & Kertzer, 2019). The rite of incorporation returns the individual back into their original community who witness and celebrate their assumption of their new social status, identity and associated role (van Gennep, 1909/ 2019).

Several researchers have paid particular attention to life cycle rites of passage, especially the '*universality of the adolescent search for passage into adulthood and its dependence on social context'* (Dunham et al., 1986, p. 140; Markstrom et al., 1998; Markstrom & Iborra, 2003; Schlegel & Barry, 1980). Much of Van Gennep's theorising around rites of passage has been expanded on and adopted into religious, sociological, psychological and lay ideology, forming a basis for

thinking about identity construction, (i.e. cultural, ethnic and racial or religious identity) as a function of the process of becoming an adult (Dunham et al., 1986; Forth, 2018; Frey, 2013; Markstrom & Iborra, 2003; Schlegel & Barry, 1980).

As part of the ritual process paradigm, rituals have been conceptualised as a mechanism of cultural socialisation and exploration, creating a cultural dependency that motivates the young person to imitate community constructed behaviours around adulthood (Dunham et al., 1986). Imitation facilitates the young person's alignment with the community's adult culture, transitioning them through conformity, engagement and mastery towards an internalised community prescribed adult identity, role and function (Dunham et al., 1986). The young person is then reincorporated by their community in their new adult social role having internalised not only the community culture but also the community's perspectives of them and their place within the group (Dunham et al., 1986).The rite of passage is deemed successful with their subsequent transmission of appropriate community culture and behaviour and their fit alongside other members (Dunham et al., 1986). Parental and primary caregiver support has been shown to have a central role in the success of this transition, through socialisation to cultural traditions and norms regarding societal expectation and appropriate behaviour (Lensvelt et al., 2021; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2013). However, what happens when a young person resists the dominant cultural perspectives of adulthood or identity within their society? Complexity also increases when the dominant social markers of adulthood, (e.g. employment, parental independence, etc.) become increasingly more difficult to achieve consequent to the community's adult culture becoming too diffuse to provide a clear transitional path as has been shown to be the case in modern British society (Brown, 2018).

In response to the absence of distinct rites of passage to guide the way to becoming an adult within modern Western society, Markstrom and colleagues integrated Erikson's theory of identity formation with (Dunham et al.'s (1986) ritual process paradigm (Markstrom et al., 1998). The secondary school environment was described as severing adolescents' connection from their context of childhood, propelling them into the transition of adolescence and stripping away

their child status as they moved through successive school years (Markstrom, 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998). Markstrom and colleagues likened Erikson's turbulent transitional stage of identity stabilisation where adolescents explored new roles, delaying the responsibilities of adulthood until specific psychosocial tasks have been completed (e.g. acquisition of skills, knowledge and fidelity) to van Gennard's rite of transition. Consequently, young people are integrated back into social structures through the endorsement and acceptance of their resolved adult identities and roles, one that not only benefits the young person but also serves the wider social system as they uphold existing traditions and practices or resist outdated ideological practices (Erikson, 1968; Markstrom et al., 1998). In this way social context is shown to be central to identity development and the process of becoming an adult, with successful transition more likely in a supportive and nurturing context where the rules defining appropriate behaviour are clear and in which the adolescent is open to and accepting of adult knowledge and wisdom (Erikson, 1968; Frey, 2013; Markstrom, 2011; Markstrom & Iborra, 2003).

Consequently, the types and functions of rites of passages are likely to be shaped by the dynamic changes in local, national and global cultural and social influences over time. Markstrom (2011) has suggested in the absence of meaningful community-based rituals, young people seek out, define and create their own marker events, shaped by peers, social media and technology, as a function of Erikson's identity confusion stage of psychosocial development. However, adolescent-derived rituals frequently involve participation in behaviours deemed antisocial and potentially problematic at an individual and a community level, (e.g. binge drinking and recreational drug use, unsafe sex) as they take place in the absence of adult endorsement and guidance (Markstrom, 2011). Regardless, these rites may still serve particular developmental functions in marking, recognizing, celebrating maturation (Dunham et al., 1986; Markstrom, 2011; Markstrom et al., 1998). Cultural endorsement, shared narratives of the ritual event and collective identity can be provided by social peer groups resulting in a sense of security and purpose for the young person as they become an adult (Markstrom, 2011).

The development of adolescent rites of passage embedded in liberatory principles aimed at engaging young people from minoritised backgrounds, have demonstrated positive outcomes within school and community settings (Blumenkrantz, 2010; Brookins, 1996; Curry, 2016; Freire & Freire, 2007). Intended to facilitate cultural and holistic engagement of young people at multiple levels of experience, they encourage the sharing of cultural practices and narratives about becoming an adult between young people, their families, and communities as they transition to adulthood. The literature suggests adolescent rites can beneficially prepare , upskill and guide young people to adulthood with shared implications for the rest of their communities (Blumenkrantz, 2010; Brookins, 1996; Curry, 2016; Freire & Freire, 2007; Markstrom & Iborra, 2003). Previously lost practices that promote socialisation to cultural values and practices such as oral storytelling and are rooted in rooted in broader historical and cultural contexts of meaning, may also be reclaimed as a form of resistance against colonisation by dominant social and political forces (Dunham et al., 1986; Markstrom, 2011; Wade, 1997). In lieu of recent global anti-oppressive, antiracist and decolonising social consciousness raising, this might be particularly pertinent for marginalised youth. However, it is important not to sanitise and colonise the beneficial traditions and cultural knowledges underpinning the practices of adolescent rites, under the guise of therapeutic necessity as has previously been construed for other cultural and religious practices (Purser, 2019). Traditional rituals derive their greatest meaning and impact rooted within the cultural context from which they originate. Thus, in current British society where neoliberalism has given rise to the prominence of autonomy and reduced social cohesion, it is crucial that socialisation rituals aimed at supporting young people as they become adults, arise from the intersectional communities and cultures in which they are embedded (Blumenkrantz, 2010; Markstrom, 2011; Markstrom & Iborra, 2003).

The Anthropological perspective emphasises the acquisition of a cultural positioning and identity through the transmission of community culture as integral to the social and developmental process of becoming an adult (Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; Markstrom, 2011; Markstrom & Iborra, 2003). As such, the international lens of the literature, highlights the broad variability of the

phenomenon cross-culturally within and between communities and social groups shaped by the values, beliefs and practices transmitted to the young person (Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; Lancy, 2014). Enculturation facilitated as part of collaborative social relationships with trusted, more knowledgeable others, positively mediates becoming an adult (Curry, 2016; Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; Markstrom, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). However the research also suggests the process of cultural socialisation and identity development as a function of their acculturative integration to adult status will be more complex for racialised British youth living in a dominant Eurocentric majority culture and so warrants further examination of the psychological processes at play (Blumenkrantz, 2010; Brookins, 1996; Greenfield & Cocking, 2014).

1.4.2. Psychological Perspectives

Within developmental Psychology, there are several models that conceptualise becoming an adult as a transition between a sequential hierarchy of increasingly complex stages of development (e.g. Erikson's psychosocial stages, Piaget's stages of cognitive development, and Havighurst's developmental tasks, Levinson’s seasons of life theory, , Arnett’s theory of emerging adulthood). Initially, construction of age-related stages of adolescence, were embedded within biological (puberty, brain development) and cognitive milestones related to the acquisition of psychosocial competencies (e.g. social independence, emotional intelligence, planning and problem solving, abstract thought) and identity construction (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968; Giedd et al., 1999; Johnson et al., 2009; Marcia, 1966; Piaget, 1971; Syed, 2015). Ambiguity around the age boundaries of subsequent phases increase beyond secondary school, when the structural parameters of the education system begin to fall away and other socially determined role-related markers associated with the construction of adulthood (e.g. employment) come into play (Syed, 2015).

Subsequently, transitions to adult stages are socially determined, in that an adequate and supportive environment is required in which to achieve the function of the stage and make a stable transition to the next. This arguably has implications for the development and wellbeing of marginalised young people, whose experiences of hardship or adversity during this developmental period

have the potential to disrupt their life events, social contexts and identity formation, in turn impacting wellbeing and mental health and thus making becoming an adult more challenging (Cote, 2014; Girresch, 2019; Lensvelt et al., 2021; Munson et al., 2013).

1.1.1.1. *Emerging Adulthood in more detail:* Within developmental psychology, the construct of emerging adulthood has become a dominant framework for the examination of becoming an adult. Developed at the start of the 21st century, it conceptualised the elongated trajectory of the transition to adulthood for 18-25years olds. The proposed life stage was defined by five distinct behavioural and psychosocial features, geared towards individualisation. These included identity exploration, increased life instability, increased optimism and availability of opportunity, self-focus due to a lack of obligation and responsibilities and subjectively feeling like neither an adolescent nor an adult (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2007).

Arnette's framework quickly garnered lots of interest for potentially furthering understanding around the delayed transition between adolescence to adulthood with which the term became synonymous, and the increasing risk of stress and distress reportedly experienced during this time (Cote & Bynner, 2008; Turner & Avison, 2003). A measure of emerging adulthood was developed with as a research tool with limited validity (Cote, 2014; Syed, 2015). Whilst the theory of emerging adulthood has been seen by some as a vital contribution to the evidence base, the construct has also been greatly scrutinised generating a number of debates evaluated against the evidence-base by Syed (2015). The prevailing critique is of the theory's claims around the universal applicability of a construct perceived to ignore the complexity and heterogeneity of becoming an adult (Bois-Reymond, 2015, 2016; Cote, 2014; Cote & Bynner, 2008; Hendry and Kloep, 2007). Specifically, that cultural context, ethnicity and access to economic resources determine '*who gets to be an emerging adult*' (Cote, 2014; Hill et al., 2015; Syed, 2015, p. 14).

Research into becoming an adult presents a consensus that similar transitional periods of the life span have been identified for young people across countries in Europe, south America and China (Nelson et al., 2004). However, the construct of emerging adulthood does not appear to neatly translate across cultures (Arnett, 2011; Cote & Bynner, 2008; Hill et al., 2015; Syed, 2015). Researchers found young people living in countries including China and Argentina, placed greater emphasis on stability and collectivist goals with a greater focus on others as opposed to independence and exploration as characterised by emerging adults in the US (Nelson et al., 2004; Facio et al. 2007). Pakistani youth were shown to actively negotiate between the dominant cultural values and expectations and their personal interests around exploration and choice of career, and relationships, learning to integrating the both cultural perspectives into the construction of their identities as they became adults (Hassan et al., 2019).

Research has also shown that the interaction of cultural values embedded in ethnic, religious and gendered identities also influence becoming an adult (Cote, 2014; Hassan et al., 2019; Hill et al., 2015). Young African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans were shown to adopt a bicultural identity integrating dominant social values of individualism with the collectivist values of their ethnic cultural heritage (Arnett, 2011). Similarly, the dimensions of feeling in-between, self-focus and other-focus varied in relevance dependent on ethnicity within Dutch youth (Hill et al., 2015). As such, values of independence and collectivism were shown not to be opposite ends of a mutually exclusive spectrum but separate constructs that can co-exist.

Structural and economic boundaries and adversity have also been identified as impacting the trajectory of becoming an adult, particularly for young people marginalised on the basis of their race and ethnicity Syed & Mitchell, 2013), and social class (Bois-Reymond, 2015; Cote & Bynner, 2008). By positioning young people's negotiation of this time as a hopeful exploration of optimistic future opportunities (Arnett, 2004), there is an assertion of greater autonomy whilst negating their socioeconomic context (Cote & Bynner, 2008; Hendry & Kloep, 2007). In reality, research has shown that young people from more socially

deprived backgrounds were less positive about their lives, experienced less satisfaction, were more likely to be employed in unstable positions, were less self-focused and reported low mood. (Arnett, 2015; Arnett, 2014, 2016; Reifman, Arnett, and Colwell, 2007).

In many industrialised countries, social class is often confounded with race and ethnicity, resulting in the overrepresentation of minority ethnic groups amongst the lower social classes (DeNavas et al., 2010). Black, Asian and minority ethnic youth report greater experiences of discrimination and racism as a result of structural barriers, which are linked to poor mental health, wellbeing and physical health outcomes (Akala, 2018; Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021; Kirkinis et al., 2018; Syed & Mitchell, 2013).

Access to educational opportunity (Arnett, 2000; Cote, 2014; Cote & Bynner, 2008) living with long term health conditions(Shelley et al., 2020), substance misuse (Davis et al., 2018), family dynamics (Allen & Mitchell, 2015; Allison, 2016), care leavers (Munson et al., 2013), and homelessness(Williams & Sheehan, 2015) have also been shown to impact the applicability of emerging adulthood with compounding effects.

The transition to adulthood can be especially complex and challenging for certain groups of young people, such as those leaving care (Barn et al., 2005; Brown, 2018) Research looking at carer leavers' experiences of becoming adults showed that many found it difficult to adapt to the fast pace post 16 years old, at which they were expected to assume adult roles (e.g. independent living, employment, financial responsibility) dictated by the organising structure of statutory services (Barn et al., 2005). Many reported feeling unsupported and ill prepared by services for their transitions to adult life and forced choices left young people feeling disconnected from the communities in which they lived, isolated and living alone (Barn et al., 2005). However, if young care leavers still had continued support through established and positive foster carer relationships, this mitigated some of the practical impact of some of these experiences (Barn et al., 2005).

Economic changes reflecting technological shifts in the job market, alongside widening access to further education have meant more young people attending university as a means of increasing the likelihood of securing well-paid jobs in a landscape of increased competition (Cote, 2006, 2014; Cote & Bynner, 2008). Increasing tuition fees in 2006 and 2012 resulted in reductions in university applications particularly from young people aged 19 and 25-29 (UCAS, 2012, 2021). Whilst the overall the rate of applications remains strongly linked to family income reflecting the structural divisions that continue to shape the expectations around roles and responsibilities during young people's transitions to adulthood (Cote & Bynner, 2008). For young people choosing to enter the job market straight from school, reports show that they are more likely to be employed in the hospitality sector, in fixed term posts or on zero hours contracts(Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021). In light of this economic constraints may result in a faster entrance into adulthood for these youths (Bynner, 2005). Côté's suggestion that the active exploration of emerging adulthood was more likely a forced wondering in response to restrictions around economic opportunity and freedom perhaps seems more likely (Côté,(2000, 2006; Côté & Bynner, 2008).

The literature shows that positioning young people within one unifying account of emerging adult, does not speak to the stories of those who do not fit coherently into this category (Cote, 2014; Cote & Bynner, 2008). However, Arnette argued the theory drew attention to the deferential experiences of subjugated youth, asserting emerging adulthood as a cultural theory shaped by the sociocultural and economic context in which emerging adults were located (Arnett, 2011). Subsequently, while the defining boundaries of emerging adulthood were uniform across countries, their experiences of the age-stage would be nuanced and shaped by their context to give rise to many emerging adulthoods (Arnett, 2011; Syed, 2015). As the developmental markers of adulthood varied country to country and between cultures so too would the function and experience of the life stage (Arnett, 2011; Arnett, 2012).

Arnett appeared to be arguing a form of flexible universalism in declaring emerging adulthood a cultural theory and generalising from the American, Eurocentric, middle class with whom the research was predominantly carried out,

to the rest of the ‘Industrial World’. Without a body of research to confirm emerging adulthood also speaks to the experiences of marginalised youth, the theory is another example of categorical fallacy (Kleinman, 1987) and a result of hermeneutical injustice (Fricker, 2007).

Overall, the literature positions ethnocentric, developmental psychology perspectives of becoming an adult against cultural psychological approaches that conceptualise the process as a more culturally variable social construction (Syed, 2015). Focused on both the embodiment of becoming at an individual level and who gets to become on a social level, critiques of the evidence-base highlight the need for a more contextualised approach that accommodates an intersectional lens through which to explore the journey to adulthood (Cote & Bynner, 2008; Syed, 2015).

1.4.3. Sociological Perspectives

In Britain and much of the Global North, the transition to adulthood has been defined within an ethnocentric, ages-stage framework, that is mutually shaped by chronologically related developmental, cognitive, physiological, legal and social markers. Overtime and between epistemological schools of knowledge, becoming an adult had been conceptualised and marked in various ways. In the early 1900s, Stanley Hall an American Psychologist coined the term adolescence to describe young people aged 14 to 24years, that had gone through puberty and were experiencing behavioural and emotional confusion before the stability and taking up of social roles and responsibilities that marked becoming an adult (Arnett, 2006). The outdated model of standard adulthood that still forms the foundation of all enquiry of the life stage, is a construction embedded in the cultural values of the post-World War II ‘Golden Age’ around 60 years ago (Blatterer, 2007). From this, a conceptualisation of staged models of development began to be established, whereby age-related markers are used to divide life into distinct sequential, hierarchical phases and subphases from infancy to old age (Syed, 2015). Over time, the age-boundaries of adolescence reduced, shaped by the education system, legal framework and social context.

Traditionally, the achievement of adult status was indicated by the social signifiers embedded within a Western culture of social recognition of what comprises a '*finished'* adult. (e.g. stability of employment, relationships, independent living and parenthood) (Blatterer, 2007; Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2005). Cultural shifts within modern industrialised societies (including increased access to higher education, the Women's Rights Movement and changes in attitudes to premarital sex) led to the social significance and attainment of these milestones becoming increasingly delayed with subsequent birth cohorts (Arnett, 2004; Cote & Bynner, 2008; Hill et al., 2015).

The gendered nature of becoming an adult has also loosened with societal norms around women's permanent engagement in employment and the departure of men as the breadwinner (Brannen & Nilsen, 2002). The increasing variation in the standard trajectory and traditional sequencing of becoming an adult, has been attributed to increasing importance of individualisation as a pivotal concept of social change within Western societies (Brannen & Nilsen, 2002). A product of modernity, the traditional socially defined template of becoming an adult, has been replaced by subjective, idiosyncratic versions, embedded in the autonomy and choice of each young person over social cohesion (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). As such, some have come to view each young person's transition to adulthood with reference to their own context and beliefs (Brannen & Nilsen, 2002).

Subsequently, intangible markers and processes like responsibility, independent decision making, identity formation and stability have also come to indicate this period of biographical change (Arnett, 2000; Cote, 2006; Erikson, 1968; Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007; Marcia, 1966). However, this way of conceptualising adulthood has drawn criticism from some sociologists due to the individualising focus that positions the construct as an intrapsychic process (Blatterer, 2007). Research with British adolescents suggests adulthood is conceptualised through the process of social categorisation located in the performative context in which the young person is engaged (Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007), and characterised by the generational cohorts (the cultural, political, economic context) into which young people were born and grew up (Blatterer, 2007). As such, while there is a

consensus within the discipline of the *taken for granted*-ness of the social category there is also acknowledgement of the ambiguity around the norms of the social group, particularly in relation to attainment of adult status. Some view the characteristic inbetweeness of becoming an adult, is a function of the internal complexity of the various descriptors used to legitimise or contest adult status within different contexts and based on the salience of contextual biopsychosocial markers (Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007).

Overall, the varying definitions of adolescence and adulthood, illustrate the transitive dimension of becoming an adult for British marginalised youth and the need to unpick the complex interrelated developmental processes, identity construction and intergroup relations in the context of inconsistent culturally pluralistic societies (Sinclair & Milner, 2005).

1.4.4. The Current Socio-political Context of Becoming an Adult in the UK

The Socio-political context in the UK has shifted over the last 50 years. Neoliberal narratives focused on economic development through competition, consumerism, and capitalism, have fostered a culture of individualism making social cohesion more difficult to maintain (Cohen, 2017). As such, resulting economic disparities including decreasing employment stability, the increasing cost of housing relative to household income (Office for National Statistics, 2021) and compounding social inequalities in education, the main organising structure of the transition to adulthood (Brown, 2018), mean this generation of young people are more limited in opportunities and life choices than their predecessors (D'Arcy & Gardiner, 2017). These fiscal inequalities have been shown to have implications for young people's health and wellbeing (McDaid & Knapp, 2010; Public Health England, 2017).

Additionally, the global Covid-19 pandemic, has led to dramatic changes for the whole UK population. For young people this impact has been more pronounced due to reduced access to education and increasing social isolation as a result of remote learning, working and increasing unemployment (Office for National Statistics, 2020). Furthermore, the recent political climate has seen communities coming together in solidarity to express their anguish and demand change

around issues of sexual violence against women, Brexit, the climate crisis, trans rights and racial inequality. Increasing exposure to images and expression of collective distress through social media, may also present further implications for young people's mental health and wellbeing (Holman et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2017; Zhao & Zhou, 2020)

1.4.5. Becoming an Adult and Mental Health

Considering the above literature, it is perhaps unsurprising that 75% of mental ill health in adults has been shown to develop before the age of 25 years old (Kim-Cohen et al., 2003). High levels of lifetime exposure to adversity have also been (causally) linked to experiences of anxiety and depression by young people (Giedd et al., 1999) with first onset peaking during the transition from adolescence to adulthood (Kessler et al., 2005; McGorry et al., 2007).

Whilst policy has acknowledged the importance of health, education and employment services for young people, associated initiatives have had varying success and despite increased demand for mental health provision in the UK there have been significant funding cuts in recent years, resulting in unmet need (Mental Health Foundation, 2017; NHS Providers, 2016; The Mental Health Taskforce, 2016).

There is also persistent evidence of mental health inequalities affecting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and young people attributed to a range of factors including greater persistent poverty and deprivation, social exclusion, institutional racism, staff cultural incompetence, poorly designed services, stigma and fear (Keating et al., 2002; Malek, 2011; Street et al., 2005).

These findings suggest current mental health provision do not adequately meet the needs of young people un the UK particularly those from subjugated and racialised communities. This highlights the importance of developing services informed by the literature that provides and understanding of the psychosocial intersectional needs of young people transitioning to adulthood in the UK in the current socio-political context.

1.5. Scoping Review: British Black and Minority Ethnic Perspectives on Becoming Adults in the UK

The scoping review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) presented below was undertaken to identify existing literature exploring the intersectional experiences of British, Black and minority ethnic youth's transition to adulthood. Searches of both 'grey' and published literature were undertaken of PsychARTICLES, PsychINFO, SAGE, Journals Online, CINAHL and Science Direct databases, using the terms listed in Appendix A and limiting for the period of 2000-2021. The references of relevant articles were reviewed to identify missed supplementary publications.

1.5.1. Culture and the Construction of Adulthood

The literature above acknowledges changes to the social and cultural context of the UK have led to great variation in how adulthood is constructed (Cote, 2006; Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007).However there has been limited exploration of how British minority ethnic youth conceptualise the phenomenon. Gupta et al., (2007) used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore experiences of separation and individualisation within the experiences of second-generation British South Asian women living in Britain. A key finding of the research concerned participants' conceptualisations of adulthood. They felt their understandings of adultness were located in Western age-related legal indicators and differed greatly to their parents' defined by South Asian relational and occupational social markers that privileged family connection over independence (Gupta et al., 2007). Mac an Ghaill and Haywood's (2005) thematic analysis similarly found that for young Bangladeshis, leaving home and starting work were not strong indicators of becoming an adult like they were for their White peers. These findings suggest variation in the ways that Black and minority ethnic youth conceptualise the social markers of becoming an adult that differ from the prevailing theoretical constructions within the evidence-base. The literature would suggest these findings are linked to young people's socialisation into their ethnocultural community and wider dominant adult social roles (Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; Syed & Juang, 2014). However, with such limited research available, further exploration is needed of how racialised youth construct and

navigate the boundaries of adulthood as they move through the social and cultural spaces they inhabit.

1.5.2. Becoming an Adult and Ethnicity and Identity

There is a dearth of studies aimed at exploring how ethnicity influences young people's experiences of becoming adults and very little research conducted with British minority ethnic youth within the last 10 years. Cassidy et al., (2006) conducted a comparative exploration of Scottish majority and minority ethnic youth during the transition from secondary school. The research was concerned with minority ethnic youth's transition from secondary school into further education or the job market, a milestone characterised as integral to becoming an adult in the literature. Using a mixture of predominantly quantitative questionnaires and the content analysis of interviews, they reported key findings related to ethnic identity (Cassidy et al., 2006). The research suggested family expectations, responsibilities and cultural ideas around career stability shaped minority youth's planning for their continued education, compared to their white peers (Cassidy et al., 2006). Participant responses also showed Scottish ethnic minority youth placed greater emphasis on claimed their intersecting ethnic, religious and Scottish identities than did their White peers. The integration of participants' cultural identity had implications for their increased self-esteem particularly for Chinese and Pakistani youth, despite having to work hard to define themselves as Scottish within prejudiced and discriminatory spaces (Cassidy et al., 2006).

These findings were consistent with Harding et al., (2015) whose longitudinal study with minority ethnic youth aged 21-23 years, impressed the importance of family, religious and ethnic connection as a way of constructing group membership, cultural identity, and securing social and emotional support and guidance during the transition.

Mac an Ghaill and Haywood's (2005) comparative exploration of British Bangladeshi youth's experiences of becoming adults in Newcastle. They found that while White British professionals such as teachers and employers, tended to hold stereotyped assumptions that Bangladeshi youth experienced cultural

identity crises as a result of socialisation to conflicting Bangladeshi and British culture, participants reported this was untrue (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2005). However, Young Bangladeshi participants did report a sense of othering due to ethnic segregation, and racism, perceiving themselves to be at the bottom of the local minority ethnic hierarchy (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2005). Researchers reported that due to increased structural social inequalities, difficulties around school attainment and stereotyping around gendered roles, Islamophobia, refugees and asylum seekers, British Bangladeshi youths were often socially excluded resulting in life-restricting opportunities (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2005; Schwartz & Unger, 2010).

Sinclair and Milner (2005) demonstrated that through the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis, aspects of young British Jew's ethnocultural identities shifted and developed during transitions to university, with their strong sense of Jewish social membership providing security and belonging alongside a subjugated sense of vulnerability and ambiguity. This suggests along with the literature above, that young people's constructions of belonging to ethnocultural group may be psychologically beneficial for their conceptualisations of self, countering the individualising nature of the UK's dominant diffuse pathways to adulthood (Cote & Bynner, 2008; Sinclair & Milner, 2005). Additionally, young people may be trying to dynamically integrate multiple cultural identities that are given greater or lesser salience dependent on the meaning and function of those cultural and social categories to the individual within their social context (Sinclair & Milner, 2005).

It is important to consider the nuanced experiences of seen and unseen difference between White, Black and Brown minority groups in the context of Whiteness (Clarke & Garner, 2009). Doing so importantly allows us to consider the varying perspectives of 'visible minority' youth, who can be subject to different or greater experiences of racism and discrimination as a result of not being able to 'pass', due to their intersecting visible differences to majority White spaces (Majors et al., 2020).

1.5.3. Becoming an Adult, Ethnicity and Education

1.5.3.1. *Transition to higher education and employment*: The education system within Britain has become a gatekeeper for the job market and so has been positioned as important for successful social inclusion and transition to adulthood. Brown's (2018) literature review of the difficulties British youth face during the transition to adulthood, showed there is a significant degree attainment gap despite an increase in minority ethnic youth continuing on to university over the last 20 years (Alexander & Arday, 2015). Despite equivalent qualifications, Black, and minority ethnic graduates are less likely to be interviewed for a job than their white peers (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000). Additionally, Bangladeshi and Pakistani graduates if successfully appointed, were likely to earn the least of their peers (Peters, 2015). The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021) found while the majority of young people aged 25 years or younger were employed in permanent contracts prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, those from minority ethnic groups were more likely to be unemployed and on zero-hours contracts. The above literature describes the social disparities young people form minority ethnic background face, a common focus of research and policy. While a useful starting point, this literatures does not speak to the psychosocial processes young people might uses to respond to these inequalities. More examination is required to centre Black and minority ethnic youths' voices and explore how they respond to and make sense of these social disparities.

1.1.1.1. *School Exclusion*: Wright et al., (2005), conducted research into the experiences of excluded African-Caribbean children and young people, noting the dearth of literature examining their persistent over-representation in school exclusions. Interviewing over 100 young people, they explored the strategies excluded African-Caribbean youth developed and how family, community and agency support enabled them to successfully transition to adulthood (Wright et al., 2005). Gathering perspectives from excluded youth, their families and professional support networks, Wright et al. (2005) found young people reported a sense of unfairness and distress around their exclusions, as well as reporting inconsistences in the consequences for their white peers despite presenting with equivalent or worse behaviour (Wright et al., 2005). Successful transitions to adulthood were facilitated by coming to see the exclusion as a turning point for

positive change, pragmatic and emotional support from family and friends, access to resources and alternative educational opportunities, social and cultural connection and membership, class and financial capital and the resolve to overcome their exclusion label (Wright et al., 2005).

1.5.4. Becoming an Adult, Ethnicity and Hardship

The transition to adulthood can be especially complex and challenging for certain disadvantaged groups of young people, such as those leaving care or accessing mental health services.

1.5.4.1. *Care leavers*: For young people leaving care, the transition to adulthood is often very challenging. Notably, for those from Black Caribbean and mixed heritage, placements in families which reflected their own ethnic backgrounds appeared to mitigate poor outcomes as they became adults, including poor long term educational outcomes, homelessness, and leaving care at an earlier age (Barn et al., 2005). Additionally, living in a multi-racial context where they were able to see and have contact with others who looked like them, was important for a more secure self-concept and ethnic and racial identity development (Barn et al., 2005). This aligns with the literature that highlights that opportunities for positive and sensitive cultural and ethnic identity development through young people's access to knowledge and socialisation with their cultural heritage, is related to better psychosocial outcomes and a stronger sense of self, regardless of their placement context (Lensvelt et al., 2021). The literature also suggests that, young people's sense of difference as a result of their former looked after status intersects with their experiences of marginalisation and oppression due to their visible, multifaceted, racialised, religious, gendered intersectional identity (Barn et al., 2005; Lensvelt et al., 2021). However, young people's cultural identity formation has also been shown to be adaptive through the blending of aspects of their minority ethnic culture with identity congruent aspects of the dominant one in order to make sense of and develop a contextualised cultural identity (Schwartz & Unger, 2010).

1.5.4.2. *Mental health services*: Enduring mental health inequalities within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities particularly the youth population,

stems from a range of factors including increased social exclusion, persistent deprivation and poverty, institutional racism, poorly designed services, staff cultural incompetence and social and cultural stigma and fear located in historical experiences of services (Keating et al., 2002; Malek, 2011; Street et al., 2005).

Drawing on life span models to examine ethnic discrepancies in health, Harding et al., (2015) conducted a longitudinal follow-up study to examine the psychosocial factors that protect the health and wellbeing of racialised minorities becoming adults in the UK. Their follow-up study with 21-23 year olds, showed that family connectedness and parental caregiving, cultural integration (measured by ethnic diversity of friendships), and frequency of attendance at a place of worship were, appeared to have a protective effect on mental health as the minority ethnic youth began transitioning to adulthood (Harding et al., 2015). This suggests that how minority ethnic youths relate to their cultural identities can mitigate or contribute to mental health outcomes, which is significant considering as already mentioned that three quarters of all adult mental health difficulties first emerge before 25yrs (Kim-Cohen et al., 2003).

1.5.4.3. The Criminal Justice System: Research has shown a number of disparities between Black and minority ethnic youth and their white peers within the criminal justice system with implications for their successful transition to adulthood (Lammy, 2017). Black and minority ethnic youth offenders are reportedly more likely to have unmet needs around learning and mental health whilst in the criminal justice system, obscuring the true causes and culpability of offending behaviour with detrimental consequences for the long-term outcomes of these young people (Ministry of Justice, 2017). Black and minority ethnic children, also over-represented in the criminal justice system, were more likely to be placed on the Police National Database following involvement with the police even for minor offences (Youth Justice Board, 2011). This had long-term consequences for their employability, financial stability and life choices in adulthood due to routine record checks common for carers in finance, education and the NHS, (Youth Justice Board, 2011). These are examples of how ethnic minority youths navigate additional adversity and racism at an institutional level.

1.5.5. Becoming an Adult Ethnicity and Policy

Despite the recent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities Report's (2021) findings that structural racism was no longer a concern in the UK, evidence suggests that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are at increased risk of experiencing to social and economic deprivation(Aldridge et al., 2011; Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021; Office for National Statistics, 2020). While there has been recent consideration of the needs of marginalised communities at a national level, (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021; Department of Health & Social Care & Department for Education, 2017; Department of Health, 2011; Keating et al., 2002; National Institute for & Mental Health in England, 2003), Black, Asian and minority ethnic youth are often overlooked in these initiatives; with due consideration not given to recommendations around issues of race equality at all levels of service delivery (Malek, 2011). Consequently, it is important to centre the voices and stories of British Black and minority ethnic youth within the context of the broader structural inequalities they may experience in order to provide adequate evidence-based care and support that meets their intersectional needs.

1.5.6. Summary

The literature reviewed predominantly draws on quantitative methodologies to examine the impact of structural challenges faced by British Black and minority ethnic youth in comparison to their White peers, during the transition to adulthood. The limited research again highlights the variation in experiences of becoming an adult shaped by culture, ethnicity and structural inequality. This suggests, how Black and minority ethnic youth socially construct experience and cultural identity, will have implications for their psychosocial outcomes (Clarke & Garner, 2009; Majors et al., 2020). Given the implication for mental health provision, there is a need to further explore how Black and minority ethnic youth navigate and construct the boundaries of developing adulthood with their multiple cultural and social contexts.

1.6. Rationale

1.6.1. Justification and Clinical Relevance

The process of becoming an adult is acknowledged as a social construct with cultural and contextual variation, reflected in its historically dynamic conceptualisation overtime and between epistemological schools of knowledge. Arguably, this suggests it is not a universal process amongst young people, despite the essentialist positioning of much of the ethnocentric developmental psychology literature on the subject. Given the social and economic disparities within British society that have made the paths to adulthood more elongated and diffuse, how young people navigate becoming an adult and socially construct their adult role and identity, will have a significant bearing on their wellbeing and life trajectories (Clarke & Garner, 2009; Cote, 2014; Majors et al., 2020)..

Consequently, exploration that furthers our understanding of this developmental process should be inclusive of the wide cultural and social contexts of British young people (Cote, 2014) However, there is a scarcity of research within psychology that examines the stories of British Black and minority ethnic youth, thus developing our conceptualisation of the complexities and issues of power they may face positioned as ethnic minorities living in the majority White spaces of the UK. Without this knowledge, the development of more effective mental health provision that meets the intersectional needs of British youth is not possible.

This research seeks to contribute the often subjugated voices of British Black and minority ethnic young people to the conceptualisation of becoming an adult in the UK. through the exploration of their stories of how they navigate this developmental process in the context of their cultural, social and ethnic context. The hope is that by moving beyond questions about whether young British Black and minority ethnic youth feel like adults, to exploring their stories of what it is like to navigate the pathways of becoming an adult, this study will build on the limited empirical evidence-base around the psychosocial outcomes, by gaining an

ideographic perspective from an underrepresented and underserved population (Galambos & Leadbeater, 2000).

To address the gaps in knowledge and understanding, the following research aims, and questions were developed.

1.7. Aim of present study

- Centre the voices of an underrepresented and marginalised population
- Explore the intersection between ethnicity, culture, identity and transition to adulthood, amongst youth from subjugated communities,
- Contribute to literature on becoming an adult in the current context of the UK

1.8. Research questions

1. What stories do British Black and minority ethnic youth tell about becoming adults?
2. How do culture and adversity/ hardships feature within these stories?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Epistemological Justification and Position

The existing literature regarding the transition to adulthood has largely been positioned within a realist, positivist stance that ontologically describes the constructs of adulthood, race, and adversity as discrete, physiological and intrapsychic processes, that can be objectively observed as part of material reality. However, these assumptions can serve to subjugate alternative perspectives -As such, this research is underpinned by a critical realist paradigm that asserts that our knowledge of the world is separate to the material reality of it, instead constructed through our social and reciprocal interactions within the political, social and historical context we occupy (Bhaskar, 1978, 1991). Thus, the theories developed as a result of our meaning making as social agents are not fixed, but dynamic and changeable; and so to reduce the objective material reality, to our subjective, context specific understanding of material reality, would be to perform the epistemic fallacy (Bhaskar, 1978, 2010).

This research is concerned with the stories young people in the United Kingdom who identify as part of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, tell about the developmental notion of becoming an adult. As such, It will attempt to contribute to the literature through tentative estimations of reality and avoid the reductionist position of the epistemic fallacy (Bhaskar, 1978, 2010).

2.2. Methodological Justification and Position

2.2.1. Selecting a Qualitative Methodology

A qualitative approach to this research was chosen to redress the nomothetic approaches governing the discussion around the concept of emerging adulthood and adversity. The resulting conceptualisation of these phenomena is thus ethnocentrically located within dominant Western, Euro American, psychiatric heuristics that may not fit for racialised youth in Britain and can silence the alternative experiences not captured within this frame (Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; Patel, 2003b).

Another artifact of the literature is that young people's contextualised voices are often homogenised, neglecting the subjective idiosyncrasies of how, as active social agents, young people are engaged in reflexive and fluid meaning-making about their multiple intersecting identities, adulthood and the changes most salient to them at this time (Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 2008). As such, through the employment of qualitative approaches, this study seeks to foreground young people's conceptualisations of becoming adults within a critical realist epistemology that posits that as individuals, we are not ontologically distinct from our social reality and so cannot be understood outside of our social and historical context to gain access to an authentic self (Bhaskar, 2010; Willig, 2013),

The exploration of how individuals conceptualise themselves in relation to others and the world around them can be conducted using various qualitative methods. In identifying which method was most appropriate for this study, I considered their capacity to meet the aims of the research (Patton, 2015; Willig, 2013).

2.2.2. Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is concerned with exploring the stories individuals construct temporally in context, to make sense of their experiences (Riessman, 2008; Weatherhead, 2011). As the voices of racialised youth had largely been obscured from dominant conceptualisations within the literature, this research is concerned with centring participants as co-constructors of knowledge, Narrative practices align well with this aim, as they are engaged with supporting participants to author their preferred life stories (Elliot, 2005), Consequently, addressing some of the inherent power disparities that may be associated with other qualitative methods that elicit explanations in response to enquiries from another (Riessman, 2008). The stories participants tell about becoming adults can thus be seen as a means to better understand their perspectives in context, whilst allowing them to stay in closer contact with the lived events of their lives (Riessman, 2008).

The narrative review of the literature (1.4) showed, the construction of adulthood has largely been positioned within a realist epistemology. Historically, proposed as a universal age-stage framework for understanding this developmental process, epistemologically speaking this has served to limit the complexity of what there is to know about psychosocial processes of self-identity, culture and adversity. As stated above this contributes to the epistemic fallacy in the conceptualisation of the process of becoming an adult (Bhaskar, 1978, 2010).

Narrative approaches focused on the self, culture and their interrelatedness, allowing space for the exploration of the construction and influence of social-political structures of, adulthood, ethnicity, culture and adversity groups through the stories people tell (Crossley, 2007; Elliott, 2005; Weatherhead, 2011). While these concepts are acknowledged as socially constructed within subjective relational linguistic practices, they are also deemed to have material impact and meaning for individuals and groups located in realist assumptions (Bhaskar, 2010; Crossley, 2007). A Narrative psychology approach aligns with the critical realist epistemology from which exploration of the social constructs central to this study can take place. The narrative method does not subscribe to assumptions of objectivity but values the importance of gaining a story that reflects the interpretations and values of the individual in context (Plummer, 1983). A subjective account of narrative identity can avoid the extreme positions of both constructivist, and essentialist views of the self (Crossley, 2007; Elliott, 2005; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). That is, acknowledging the subjectivity of experience provides a middle ground between the notion that all knowledge, is socially constructed and located within prior experiences and culture (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and the notion that a person's reality is characterised by permanent, universal, observable attributes (Elliott, 2005; Mayr, 1982).

Narrative theorists and researchers propose that as part of a holistic process of analysis of the stories people tell, we can gain insight into British Black and minority Ethnic youth individual in society, signified by the personal values, feelings and attitudes they express, detail of the wider social and cultural narratives to which they respond and are influenced by and the events and situations of their lives (Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 2008).

2.3. Study Design

2.3.1. Consultation

To better align the development of this study with my epistemological and ethical position, I conducted a series of consultations with potential stakeholders of the research area. In doing so, I hoped to redress some aspects of the power hierarchies that serve to limit the involvement of individuals from racialised groups as participants as opposed to decision making collaborators or co-constructors within psychological research (Kalathil, 2013).

Following the preliminary identification of the research idea, I had the opportunity to explore and discuss the research focus and its utility, engagement of young people as contributors and research methodology with both a member of the People's Committee Participation Group - affiliated with the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Course at the University of East London – and through focus groups with psychotherapy staff and members of the Young People's Participation group at a voluntary sector psychology and health service in London. Both groups were consulted around the research aims, methodology, recruitment, data gathering and management of risk. This process was integral for supporting the exploration and attempted mitigation of the assumptions I bought to the study. The consultations also directed decisions to gather data via the unstructured interview as opposed to a focus group and provide an open but private space in which young people could freely tell their story, and the inclusion of a narrative artefact to provide multiple mediums to communicate becoming an adult.

2.3.2. Inclusion Criteria

There were three inclusion criteria for the participant group.

1. Individuals aged 18-30 years old, the age range commonly referred to in the literature as emerging or young adulthood (Arnett, 2000).
2. Identifying as British and belonging to a Black or minority ethnic group.

3. Experience of hardship, included, but not restricted, to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)[2], bereavement, poverty, difficult peer relationships, and community violence and inequality.

2.3.3. Recruitment and Sampling

A mixed recruitment strategy was used as adopted. Voluntary sector organisations supporting young people around education, employment, housing, sexual health, substance misuse and health and wellbeing, were initially approached via email (Appendix D) and telephone and social media, to disseminate a research advert (Appendix C: Recruitment Advert) to potential participants inviting them to find out more information by contacting the researcher via email, telephone number or social media (all research specific). The involvement of charitable organisations in the research ended here.

In response to Covid-19 restrictions, a snowballing approach to recruitment was also taken whereby, the research advert was also posted on my social media sites, shared throughout my personal and professional networks and other voluntary sector organisations with a national reach, or engaging potentially marginalised young people in leisure, sport or creative interests will be approached.

All participants were recruited through the research advert posted on social media the researcher's personal network.

2.3.4. Sample Size

Narrative analysis typically includes small samples of five to six participants to facilitate in-depth engagement with the narratives (Frank, 2012; Gilbert, 2002). Aligned with this, my intention was to sample six to eight participants, allowing for varying interview quality, attrition, and unforeseen difficulties with recruitment. I recruited four participants to the study due to recruitment difficulties in the context of Covid – 19. After, revisiting the literature on narrative inquiry and

[2] originally defined in Felitti et al. (1998), and adopted by subsequent research in this area

discussion in supervision of the potential benefits and limitations of small sample size, I felt this adjustment acceptable in the context of the doctoral thesis. Narrative methods are concerned with the processes through which individuals make sense of their experiences as opposed to making generalisations across populations, and thus do not typically use a statistical sampling method (Riessman, 2008). Indeed, ethnographic approaches concerned with exploring specific social phenomenon, in line with this study, analyse single to small case samples to gain detailed and deep understandings (Etherington, 2011).The limitations of this studies relatively small sample size will be discussed further in the critical review (4.7.3).

2.3.5. Consent

Prospective participants who expressed interest in taking part in the research were contacted to arrange a time to discuss the research and participation in more detail. At this stage, the participant invitation and information sheet (Appendix E**Error! Reference source not found.**) were provided via email or WhatsApp, so prospective participants could look over this, ahead of their initial information session with myself. This session involved talking through the information sheet in detail, highlighting procedures in place around confidentiality and anonymity, their right to withdraw, and ways of looking after their wellbeing and safety whilst participating in the research, as part of a larger conversation that allowed them to make an informed choice to consent to participate in the study. This took place either over the phone, via Microsoft Teams or WhatsApp, in line with the individual's preference and resources. Prospective participants who agreed to take part in the research following this discussion were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix F) shared via email or WhatsApp and return this electronically prior to or during the interview session, which was also scheduled either via Microsoft Teams or telephone according to the individual's preference. Participants were asked to choose a pseudonym for use in their interview transcripts. Fully informed consent was obtained from all participants and none requested to withdraw their data from the study following completion of their interview.

2.3.6. Participants

Four individuals participated in the study and are identified by their chosen pseudonyms and presented alongside their demographic features in table 1.

Chosen pseudonym	Age	Gender Identity	Ethnicity	Employment status
Yusuf	26yrs	Male	British Pakistani	Student
Ben	21yrs	Male	British Black Caribbean	Employed
Jade	21yrs	Female	British Mixed heritage, Black Caribbean and White English	Student
Jess	20yrs	Female	British/ Irish Black African	Student

2.4. Data Collection

Informed by the young people's consultation process and the literature, open semi-structured interviews were employed to explore participants' stories of becoming adults. The interview schedule (Appendix G) was informed by (Etherington, 2011) and comprised lose prompts and open question aimed at deepening the co-construction of participants' narratives as they freely guided the direction and content of the stories important to them (Elliott, 2005).

2.4.1. The Narrative interview

Within a narrative methodology, the aim of the interview is to create a space in which the storyteller/ participant and the listener/ researcher can co-construct a rich coordinated narrative account. As such, I initiated the discussion process during the interview by asking them to share their story of becoming an adult ensuring they had the space and time to share their stories (Riessman, 2008).

Most participants struggled with the initial unstructured nature of the interview process and required a shift to a more semi-structured interview process using the schedule (Appendix G) to scaffold the emergence of their stories of becoming an adult. I attempted to encourage elaboration and collaboratively revisit shifts in topic as a way of exploring and unpicking their narratives of culture, adversity and becoming an adult (Riessman, 2008).

As a result of the ongoing and subsequent mandated Covid-19 related restrictions, these interviews took place remotely by means of a video conferencing platform

2.5. Data Analysis

Narrative analysis is not typically governed by a specific procedure, but the following describes how I drew upon Crossley (2007) systematic and Fraser's (2004) thematic line by line narrative approaches within an ecological systems framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), to outline some of the practical features and questions I was concerned with throughout the analytic process. As Fraser (2004, p. 186) states, the steps were often not discrete phases, but flowed into one another in an *"overlapping and un-sequential" process"*..

Crossley's (2007) systematic approach draws on narrative concepts taken from McAdams, 1993) semi-structured interview protocol. These were utilised within the analysis as core elements around which to interpret and organise participants transcripts into stories and narratives (Crossley, 2007; Fraser, 2004). These concepts included life chapters forming the contents of participant's stories and comprised of key events (e.g. an important conversation, a salient decision; Crossley, 2007). Significant people and relationships were also notes along experienced stresses or problems, personal ideologies and values(e.g. faith),and finally a possible overarching life theme that ran throughout their story (Crossley, 2007). As part of Fraser's (2004) line by line analytic narrative approach detailed below, the narrative tone of participants stories and narratives were noted along with imagery used to characterise life chapters and the themes of participants personal, community and societal narratives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Crossley, 2007).

Further examination across participants' stories also took place allowing storied commonalities and differences or contrasting narratives to be discussed in relation to the existing literature.

2.5.1. Interview

Following each interview, I recorded initial impressions of the participants' stories. reflected on the emotions expressed and what they elicited in me throughout our conversation in my research journal

2.5.2. Transcribing the Interviews

I transcribed each participant's interview verbatim, including repetitions unfinished sentences, silences and pauses, anonymising the information to maintain confidentiality. Punctuation was used to facilitate clarity and readability whilst maintaining sentence structure and units of meaning (see Appendix I for transcription conventions).

2.5.3. Reading and Familiarising

I repeatedly read through the transcript to get a sense of prominent and common narratives and sub narratives developing an initial narrative map of individual participants' stories

2.5.4. Interpretation of individual transcripts

I analysed participants' individual transcripts systematically looking specifically at:

- The mini stories they told about becoming an adult
- the themes of these including key events, people, contexts and motivators
- the imagery and language use to convey their messages
- The tone of how they talked about their experiences (for more detailed see (Appendix J)

2.5.5. Scanning across the domains of experience

To avoid analysis that focused on one dimension of participants' lives, I looked at the narratives featured in participants stories related to their different ecological contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979):
Micro - personal,
Meso – groups: family, cultural,
Macro - structural features of participants' personal narratives

2.5.6. Linking the personal with the political

In examining how dominant narratives could be used contextualise and understand participants' stories, I thought about participants' stories related to dominant existing narratives around becoming an adult and the impact of culture and adversity. I also thought about how their stories might relate to some of the literature of becoming an adult.

2.5.7. Commonalities and differences among participants

I also looked for similarities and differences in the content, style and tone the stories participants told to identify and shared or contrasting narratives that gave social context to their stories or indicate something about their stories of becoming adults.

2.5.8. Weaving the analysis together: Personal story to academic narratives

Using the interpretative working map of each participant's individual story, I began to construct my written analysis, reflexively revisited their stories and my research questions to check the coherence and validity and acknowledge of the subjectivity of my interpretations.

2.6. Data Quality and Trustworthiness

Throughout the research, the following processes were used to evaluate the rigour of the methodology and as such, the trustworthiness and quality of the data.

2.6.1. Research transparency was addressed through a reflexive review (2.7) and a research journal to document how my personal context may have shaped the project.

2.6.2. The plausibility of how my re-storying captured participants' authoring of becoming adults, was addressed through the inclusion of excerpts from participants' narratives to illustrate the credibility of my interpretative claims (Polkinghorne, 2007). An iterative inductive approach to analysis was taken, triangulating my interpretations from participants' transcripts with the literature, contextualised within the social and cultural environment which shaped participants' stories. Supervision was used to evaluate the plausibility and coherence of the constructed stories and adjustments made in response to feedback.

2.7. Researcher Reflexivity

Narrative methodologies consider the researcher as a subjective participant in the co-construction of the stories and data the participants provide (Riessman, 2008). Reflexivity is a dynamic process of interaction within and between ourselves and our participants, and the data that informs decisions, actions and interpretations at all stages (R. Etherington, 2008).

We are therefore operating on several different levels at the same time.
To be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment….(Hertz 1995)Throughout, I tried to remain mindful of the influence of my context as a thirty something, second generation Black British, female, Trainee Clinical Psychologist of Jamaican heritage who has experience of working with racialised young people both within child and adult mental health settings. Initially, my professional experience of the impact of transitions to adulthood on the wellbeing for young people, led me to this research. As I reflected on the area more, thinking specifically about some of the young people I had worked with and my own experiences, I was reminded of how structural issues of race and adversity complicated experiences of the transition to adulthood. I was aware of how my own ethnic minority identity may shape my conscious and unconscious narratives on racism and ethnicity, adversity distress and resilience and the transition to adulthood within majority white spaces may have influences my perspectives and decisions on data collection and analysis. I also wondered about the distribution of power in relation to participants' perceptions of me within the narrative of 'them' and 'us'. Them, in terms of my

visible age and status as an adult but also as a mental health professional involved in the creation of evidence to advocate for improvements for young people like themselves. But also as Us to variable degrees dependent on the participant, in my shared status as an ethnic minority British by birth who not only could empathise but had shared similar experience of others and racial discrimination. I wondered how this impacted on the stories they chose to share with me. This will be explored more in Section

2.8. Ethical Considerations

2.8.1. Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of East London's (UEL) School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-Committee (Appendix N). As part of the methodological development of the research, minor amendments were made to the project and approval for these obtained (Appendix O). These included:

- A change in the wording of the title to better reflect the methodology
- A change to the wording of the research questions to better reflect the methodology and epistemological positioning of the research
- Adjusting the participant inclusion criteria by:
    - increasing the upper age limit to 30years old, widening the participant population for ease of recruitment in the context of covid and hopefully contribute to the research question by possibly drawing on reflective perspectives from participants who had 'fresh' memories of becoming adults, but who may no longer consider themselves in the midst of the process.
    - Changing the wording of the criterion around ethnicity/ the construct of race to define who would be included as opposed to who would not and so centring the population sample linguistically within the research.
    - Widening the scope of the access to services criterion to facilitate the inclusion of participants from a wider population who may not have accessed specialist support as a result of their experiences of hardships to fit with the literature around young people's

experiences of adversity and where they may present for support; and facilitate recruitment.

- Adjusting the inclusion criteria on the advert to reflect the inclusion criteria of the research and facilitate recruitment by preventing the self-exclusion of individuals who may see the advert and considered participation in the study, but not identify or label their experiences of hardship/ adversity in this way. As the research is concerned with how events socially defined as hardships/adversity may feature within young people's stories of becoming adults, widening the sample population in this way will not affect its focus.
- Changing the format if the interviews to include the use of unstructured interviews in line with the research epistemology and narrative methodology and the feedback from the consultation process.

2.8.2. Management of Risk to Participants

Whilst participants were not asked directly to speak in depth about their experiences of adversity, at times sensitive topics and experiences of distress featured within their stories. Throughout the interview I monitored for signs of participant distress, checked in with the participant, acknowledged their experience and tentatively asked permission to explore these events further with them if it felt integral to better understanding their story. Participants were also reminded as part of the participant information (Appendix E) that they could take a break or switch topics if they began to find the conversation difficult. No interviews needed to be concluded as a result of participant's becoming highly distressed, and participants managed their own wellbeing during discussions by expressing a preference to change or come back to the subject and taking short comfort breaks when needed.

2.8.3. The Participant Debrief

Following the interview each participant was debriefed. This involved time and space to reflect on their experiences of sharing their stories, having the opportunity to ask questions they had about the research and next steps in relation to the analysis process. Participants were also given a debrief letter

(**Error! Reference source not found.**) which reminded them of their right to withdraw their data from the research and included my contact email address, along with statutory and voluntary services, if they wished to contact me to discuss support options during the month following the interview.

2.8.4. Researcher Wellbeing

To manage my own potential distress to hearing and analysing participants' storied pain, I utilised existing wellbeing strategies at my disposal as a trainee clinical psychologist, that allowed me to maintain some distance from the material whilst also acknowledging and paying close attention to, how participants' narratives might trigger my own shared experiences of racism and othering (Saakvitne, 2002). I used my research diary to following interviews and during analysis, to reflect on my thoughts and embodied emotions as required by narrative methodology (Fraser, 2004) and accessed existing peer reflective spaces and supervision when needed to reflexively process my own emotions whilst maintaining the confidentiality of my participants.

2.8.5. Data Management

A management plan was reviewed by UEL to safeguard ethical handling of participants' data (Appendix …). Participants' identifiable information (e.g. names, contact details and participants' chosen pseudonyms) were stored in an encrypted password protected files on the researcher's UEL H: Drive.

The interview audio recordings were stored in an encrypted password protected folder on the researcher's password protected computer and backed up in an encrypted password protected folder on the researcher's secure electronically encrypted university server (OneDrive). The recordings were anonymised using participants' pseudonyms during transcription which took place within 4 weeks of the interviews. The recordings will be deleted from my password protected computer on degree conferment.

The transcripts were stored in encrypted password protected folders on the researcher's password protected computer and backed up on their secure electronically encrypted university server (OneDrive). Codes produced from

analysis of the data using NVIVO software, were stored in a password protected file on the researcher's password protected computer.

Following degree conferment, the anonymised transcripts will be deleted from all previous locations and stored solely in password protected files on an encrypted external hard drive in a locked cabinet on the researcher's private property and retained for five years in line with UEL data management procedures (University of East London, 2019).

3. RESULTS

This chapter outlines the systematic narrative analysis conducted separately and sequentially on the transcripts of each participants' interview. Each section will begin with a brief profile of each participant to locate them in their present social context, followed by a short overview of their story. My re-telling of each participant's account will be presented by integrating excerpts of their stories alongside my interpretation of the complex and interwoven narratives and sub-narratives constructed as part of each interview. While they may appear as discrete, self-contained accounts, this is to facilitate readability by providing an interpretative structure around which to coherently draw and present the findings. Finally, I will conclude by presenting some of the shared narratives told by the participants

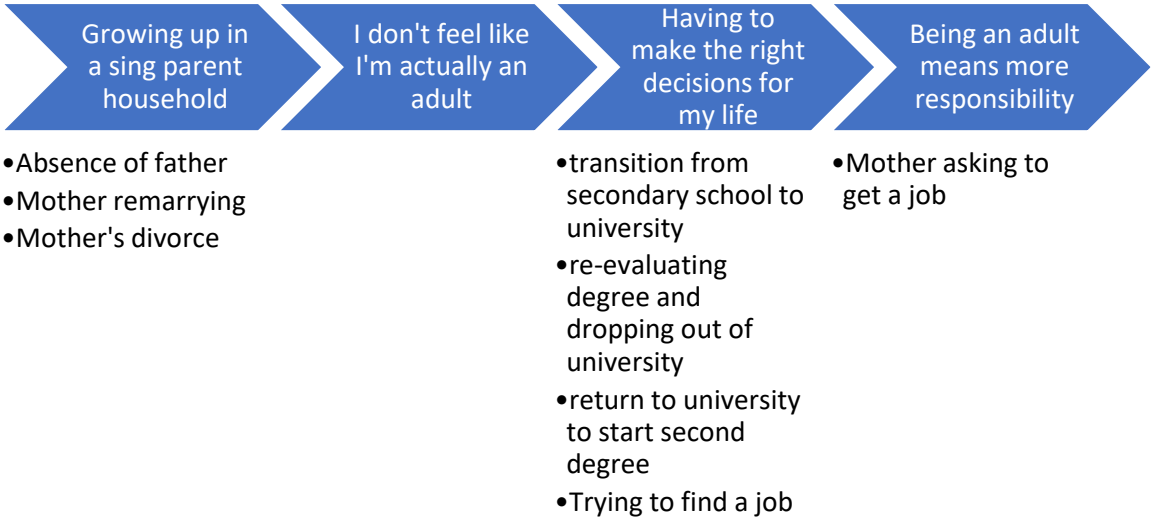
3.1. Yusuf's Story

Yusuf is 26years old and identified as a second generation (European Commission, n.d.) British Pakistani cis male. At the time of the interview he was a university student studying an undergraduate degree and living at his family home in Scotland.

Yusuf constructed his story of becoming an adult chronologically through past, present and future biographical events, drawing on narratives of gendered cultural norms of the performative signifiers of adult status (Blatterer, 2007). Figure 1 details the timeline of events he storied.

Figure 1

Life chapters and key events that construct Yusuf's story of becoming an adult



Yusuf constructed his story of becoming an adult into four main chapters: *"growing up not knowing"* , *"the encroaching nature of adulthood"*, *"Trying to make the right choices for my future", "Being an adult means more responsibility"*.

3.1.1. Growing up in a single parent household

This chapter stories Yusuf becoming an adult through the challenges and hardships of growing up in a single parent household.

> *I mean my journey (…) in becoming an adult erm. It's been, has been coupled with challenges and problems and challenges, issues I suppose. Erm and its particularly difficult erm becau/. Navigating through life ermm without erm/. Since erm (…) since I was brought (…) up in a single family household. Erm, so (…). erm, I suppose I was (…) I was just giving you the sense that I didn't have like a male role model to look up to. But erm/. I mean in terms of guidance and support, I think I had erm had that in ample/. I had that in ample amounts. So erm I mean, I still don't feel like it. I was alone. I mean, I still had/. I mean, I was/. I feel like I was able to cope. Erm life wasn't like impossible and I wouldn't say I had a very hard life. It was just erm in this aspect, erm not having a father figure. I suppose it just kind of affected me erm, in the sense that I Erm/. Yeah, just I*

suppose/. Er the things erm that you're supposed to be told by your parent, well your father I suppose, I wasn't told them because my mom wasn't aware of those erm issues or those things. So erm I just had to/. I tried to read up on/. I had to try to learn that those things myself. [18-31]

Yusuf's use of the word "coupled" alongside his repeated emphasis of the "challenges" he has faced, to provide a sense of difficult events he may be finding hard to put into words. Yusuf appears to be constructing the incidental nature and continued inevitability of hardships in the context of his family environment linked to a key event of having an absent father. He appears to locate his difficult start in proto-professional[3] health narratives of childhood adversity

His personal narratives of family structure and cohesion appeared to intersect with social normative narratives of family makeup. As Yusuf stories growing up in a single parent household, he seems to draw on health narratives to construct a story of overcoming or coping with hardships he experiences as a function of growing up in his family context. In plotting his story in this way, Yusuf seems to be priming me to empathise and perhaps co-construct his accounts within a professional health narrative of hardship and overcoming.

Yusuf seems to story his father as the absent idealised male role model that perhaps would make navigating the transition to adulthood easier. In this way perhaps he is also alluding to the narrative he stories later on, of the loss of childhood/ adolescence perhaps as a result of being socialised and positioned by his mother to perhaps step into the role of his absent father.

"It was different to people's/. Being, uh, not er like a nuclear household where you'd be having two parents involved. They can, um. I suppose erm yeah I mentioned the role model aspect. I didn't have a role model. Erm I didn't have a male role model. Erm and I suppose erm (…) erm (…) I suppose I felt like erm different to other people because erm my father wasn't in my like and I did like.

[3] framing personal difficulties within professional language and as such in need of specialist support, e.g. entrance of anxiety and depression in to mainstream, lay language and used to describe normal worry or sadness (de Swaan, 1990).

Erm in the media and like everywhere you kind of see/. You're told like the norm- the normal family is a family with erm two parents there. And yeah, I did feel like erm different to other people for not having erm a/ my father/. Erm not having a father in my life. Erm I suppose um I always kind of um, maybe envied/. Not envied/. I'm not sure envied. I was kind of erm f- f- f- /. Looked at other people who had fathers and I used to like erm kind of/. I'd kind of imagine kind of (…) imagine how their relationship would be and like. I suppose just erm I was kind of curious what it was like having father in your life. Erm I suppose um I always kind of um, maybe envied/. Not envied/. I'm not sure envied. I was kind of erm f- f- f- /. Looked at other people who had fathers and I used to like erm kind of/. I'd kind of imagine kind of (…) imagine how their relationship would be" [line 176-187]

He seems to narrate a sense that while he has never had a father, it is something that he'd *"kind of imagine"* and *"envied"* perhaps feeling he was missing out. This perhaps highlights the internalisation of wider social and cultural narratives of family that appear to draw on narratives of connection and cohesion (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). There is a sense that in "*imagine[ing] how their relationship would be"* Yusuf may have felt othered as a result of not being a part of "*a nuclear household",* to him perhaps the dominant representation of a family system.

In contrast, Yusuf characterises the "*ample"* guidance and support of his mother. His repetition and emphasis of these assertions seems as though Yusuf may be trying to convince himself that his mother's guidance and support were a suitable substitute for his imagined male role model. As Yusuf continues to story, he again draws on proto-profession health narratives to construct his coping with life in *"a single parent household".* Drawing on wider cultural narratives about single parent households and socialisation into gendered social roles, he seems to be storying causal statements to explain the challenges he has faces "*navigating through life"* in this way (Ide et al., 2018)

> *"We had like erm money issues. Worries. Money iss-. Money worries as well because erm/. My father wasn't present erm. So my mom had to, um (…). She ha- erm/. Um I feel like/. Yeah my mum had to erm. At some*

point she had to work err she had to err work as well. Erm and then erm I felt like erm there was a erm/. I was maybe I erm kind of erm/ (…) I feel like some/. Er when I fin- er when I kind of became an adult I was like er/. I felt like it was expected that I would kind of become the m- kind of become the m- man of the house. Which I didn't know/. I didn't want to take on this kind of role because. I felt like um that was kind of mean that I'd be erm kind of the head of the family which didn't really make sense because erm that should be the parent and erm it's not the son. [line 189-199]

Yusuf does not story the circumstances of his father's loss, only the difficulties he has faced a result - *"money worries"*, his mother having to work, the expectation for him to "*become the man of the house",* lack of "*role model"*. Yusuf's tone seems to change now from one of lamentation to perhaps frustration in his narration of being positioned to take up the social role of "*man of the house*".

Yusuf appears to be positioning himself and his mother as being done to. He may be storying a sense of powerlessness and lamentation about the hardships he and his family have faced as a result of having to cop in the absence of his father.

Yusuf's personal narrative of family context seems to permeates his telling and forms the basis of the hardships and challenges he subsequently faces. Much of his story is told in the shadow of this narrative of growing up in a single parent household.

3.1.2. I don't feel like I'm actually an adult

This chapter seems to story the Yusuf's sense of feeling in between in relation to becoming an adult and the difficulty he has knowing how to construct his adult social identity. This appears to enact starts with his narrating not knowing how to tell his account.

"So it's kind of hard to start. Ermm (…) to kind of talk about, I think. I don't know it just feels erm/. I don't know. Erm/. (…) Just erm my journey of becoming an adult right?" [line 4-6]

Through this tentative opening statement full of false starts and hesitation, Yusuf both names and performs the impossibility of narrating his transition to adulthood, perhaps as a result of his uncertainty of his embodied adult status and how to performatively describe his becoming. He appears to create distance between himself and the construct of adulthood through his use of *"it"*, before going on to name his embodied sense of not knowing. In seeking further clarification about my expectations, he appears to be looking for guidance around the appropriate language or frame of reference for storying adultness and his relationship to it. This suggests a sense of not having the appropriate language for storying his transition to an adulthood, perhaps as a function of not having though about it before and so not knowing where to start.

However in the previous chapter Yusuf's also narrates a sense of not knowing how to construct his becoming an adult in the absence of a clear path or *"role model"* to socialise him to the cultural adult social role (Dunham et al., 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). Indeed previously in his storying the impact of growing up in a single parent household, Yusuf appears to causally contextualises personal narrative of not knowing in wider cultural narratives that give rise to gendered parenting roles around the knowledge *"you're supposed to be told"* that should be transmitted from fathers to sons (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

> *"Ermm, (…) yeah so I suppose erm/. I just ermm/. Ermm, I dunno I just think err/. Ermm I suppose it's been erm, (…) umm (…) quite umm/. Yeah it's been challenging I suppose. Erm I don't really/. I felt like time, erm, went by really fast. And I don't feel like I'm actually, like I'm an adult actually. Like, like I still/. Err I think I am//. I do have. I do think I'm mature. I'm mature and I think I have (…) I think I am like/. I have the skills that are required to be an adult (…) but um. But umm, I feel like ummm. I don't feel like, I'm actually like (…) an adult. I don't fee- um/. So I just feel like um. Ummm. I still feel like um, something. I, I think I still feel like I'm in my teenage years for some reason. I guess that's how I feel but erm."* [10-18]

His use of *"feel"* and reference to the metaphorical "*journey"* suggest he may be constructing his adulthood through narratives of internal embodiment and an observable path to travel . Through his use of the present tense (e.g. *"feel"),* Yusuf also seems to be voicing that he is still in the liminal space of becoming (Dunham et al., 1986; Markstrom et al., 1998) and thus perhaps the difficulty of reflecting on and storying the ambiguity and chaos of this hard to define in-between space that he may not previously have thought about (Frank, 2013).

Yusuf appears to narrates his powerlessness to the encroaching nature of adulthood and perhaps with it the passing of his "*teenage years"* through the active transience of time. In switching from the past to the present tense when describing his relationship to adultness, Yusuf seems to be drawing on wider social, biological, cultural and legal narratives that may link a particular past event, (perhaps his 18th birthday), as perhaps a public indicator of his adult status to others. This appears to create some distance and Yusuf seems able to retrospectively reflect on and start to story this part of his account.

Yusuf voices a mismatch between his internal embodied sense of being an adult and the imposing wider narratives that he feels position him as one, evaluating himself in relation to vague social qualities of adultness – "*maturity", "the skills"* – perhaps unclear of how to narrate these, and so relying on my filling in the gaps based on a shared social knowledge of adultness he assumes I hold.

3.1.3. Having to make the right choices for my future

In this chapter Yusuf continues to construct his story of becoming an adult by narrating his navigation of important future oriented decisions

> *"Yeah, and erm. Yeah I've um/. (…) I suppose erm/. (…) I suppose erm becoming an adult as well has/. It's kind of pushed me. I feel like er its err/. (…) Becoming an adult has meant/ Its meant me err having to take erm/ having to make er decisions err/ having to make more decision for myself. Like er decisions for myself. I had to choose my own/ which course I wanted to do. Erm I want to do that after school and I wasn't sure actually*

for quite a while. I chose something I thought I, that I thought interested me but err (…) that didn't have much career prospects. And so I, I dropped out and/ Then I ended up doing/. Erm I ended up/ after a few years erm I enrolled onto another university course, which I liked. I like it, erm (…) less that the first one, but um I felt it definitely had better career prospects. Overtime. I did erm (…) grow to enjoy it more. I think I enjoy it quite a bit. I erm like the chall- because its/ it's almost quite/. Its quite challenging. Erm so quite um/. It gives me personal satisfaction, because when I've, when I've err/. And I've told my mum you know I've kind of tackled a topic and I've understood something on my course then yeah I fell er I get quite happy because you know its actually quite challenging for me. So erm yeah." [Line 33-47]

Yusuf stories his experience of making values-driven decisions in the context of the education system. Specifically having to give up a course he enjoyed for a course that might provide future financial stability. His emphasis and repetition of "*decisions for myself*" may conveys the felt weight and responsibility but also an uncertainty and perhaps a sense of regret he feels about the process. There is also a sense that decision making served as part of a developmental exercise for Yusuf that enabled him to acquire skills and knowledge but that was a difficult one to go through. Indeed his use of the word "*pushed"* seems to communicate the challenging nature of the process perhaps to his sense of self and emotional wellbeing. These is also the sense of him feeling done too as a function of the process. He appears to story the conflict and consequences of making decisions motivated by internal themes related to enjoyment and mastery in comparison to the external future oriented themes of responsibility.

Yusuf seems to draw on narratives about the legitimacy of knowledge to construct values based narratives about decision making.

I mean I suppose mom did try to guide me, but I feel like erm/. I hadn't really erm been listening to/. I mean, I didn't listen. I think I didn't used to listen to her that much. I mean, not in a disrespectful way. I didn't ignore

her. But I just didn't/. I suppose I didn't err implement her advice because I just thought my err/. I thought she might not be err understanding. Maybe she/ because she er she comes from a different background. So I suppose because of that as well. I mean I listen to her now. The things/ the advice that she gives me. I do try to you know implement it now. I guess before I thought maybe I know better. Not know better I guess I decided to think that erm she doesn't/ she's not giving me the right advice or she doesn't erm know what my problem is. She isn't understanding me. Because she comes from a different background form a different culture. By culture I mean. Because she was born in Pakistan. Erm she's erm (…) she's erm/. I feel/. Sometimes I feel like she doesn't understand/. Although she's been in the UK for more than two decades now she doesn't understand the erm/. She doesn't understand the kind of understand about the culture and the environment here.[Line 90-104]

In storying his experiences of decision making, Yusuf appears reluctant to share that his mum might have offered some good advice that he chose to ignore. He seems to locate his embarrassment and previous decision making partially in a societal narratives of adolescent self direction and independence (Arnett, 2007), but also in narratives about cultural and perhaps gendered knowledge. Yusuf's attempts to story his decision making, appears to construct a narrative about the legitimacy of minority ethnic cultural knowledge comparative to majority British Anglocentric knowledge that may be located in wider social narratives of Whiteness (Clarke & Garner, 2009). As a result there is an implicit undermining of his mother's knowledge and cultural competence because she was born in a different country. Yusuf's narrative appears to reflect structural racism and wider social narratives about minority ethnic groups, migration and perhaps islamophobia that he has been socialised to and also intersect with aspects of his ethnocultural identity (Cassidy et al., 2006; Fernando, 2017). His use of these narrative to justify his decision making may be an enactment of internalised Whiteness previously visited on him and his mother by others in the majority White spaces in which they live.

In storying his sense of being misunderstood by his mother due to his dual identity as a British Pakistani – he may be alluding to how growing up within the UK may have resulted in him to develop differing values and ways of being of national and generational cohort differences (Blatterer, 2007). Yusuf's storying appears to reflect the possible blending of the multiples aspects of his minority ethnic culture with aspects of his dominant White Scottish one perhaps as a way of construct and contextualised cultural identity the allows him to better navigate his multiple contextual setting (Schwartz & Unger, 2010).

Yusuf appears to draw on narratives of mastery and overcoming in relation to his new course and in his storying he perhaps appears to be trying to convince himself that there can be enjoyment and a sense of achievement in these endeavours. However, through his narration he perhaps creates an air of disappointment and maybe regret. Yusuf appears to construct adulthood within wider cultural narratives of responsibility and appropriate adult behaviour . His generalisation of his personal narrative of making tough decisions may serve to distance him from the emotional impact of having to give up his dream.

Yusuf's narratives around decision making appear located in wider economic narratives of making the right choices to achieve financial security. However, as he stories his attempts to transition into the job sector he seems to narrates an economic double bind – of wanting to make his own money but being prevented from entering the job market because of a lack of work experience. A common experience for young people in the current economic climate of the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2020).

> *"The thing as well, er lacking work experience that is kind of causing lots of problem for me er getting a job because, I've got quite a lot of rejections (sigh). Although (inc.) It feels quite erm disheartening. But you know I've just got to keep on trying. So now I'm trying to do some freelance. Yeah I'm trying to pick up something freelance I can do. But I suppose its taking taking a bit of time to kind of (breath) find out what would be good. Erm what I would want to do, what's good and what I'd like to do. You know what I'd enjoy and also what would be profitable. I suppose it's kind of erm*

figuring it out. It's kind of erm can be a bit tricky. It can be kind of worrying as well sometimes because (breath) I kind of want to/. I want to I suppose start earning some money for myself (sigh) (…). But erm, (…) I just feel like I I'm not getting anywhere. But I suppose I'll just, I just keep trying though. (…) Hmm."[line 62-73]

In storying his difficulties around securing employment, Yusuf appears to be narrating the rejecting nature of the job market and perhaps his apparent powerlessness to be able to change his situation. He stories the impact of this on his self-esteem and perhaps his earlier reference to narratives of mastery and achievement were a way of bolstering his confidence through positive self-talk in relation to his current context of finding employment. Through his storying he perhaps communicates the hardship of the job sector for young people, and a sense that to be successful they have to be planning their futures very early on. The decisions he made whilst at school appears to be having real implications for his financial future in the current competitive economic system. Yusuf stories a sense of bewilderment and again draws on his personal narratives of not knowing and having to make these decisions on his own.

Yusuf continues to construct his story of becoming an adult through conflict, again between money and pleasure. He stories an attempt to try negotiate a compromise between keeping hold of something pleasurable through the freelance work he is seeking, but perhaps knows deep down this may not be possible if he is to fulfil his financial obligations. The toll this appears to be taking on him navigating these decisions alone in the absence of a more knowing perhaps male others that he feels he guide him, appears to be high.

3.1.4. *"Being an adult means more responsibility"* [4] and Obligation

Throughout his story Yusuf constructs becoming an adult through narratives of acceptance of and resistance to totalising responsibility.

[4] Quote from transcript [611-612]

"Um I suppose erm/. Yeah, just that being an adult just erm means more responsibilities and and kind of just/. Yeah, I've always associated responsibilities with being adult. Being an adult and it's kind of/. I want to still enjoy life and things erm. I just feel like that's kind of/. I feel like that's not really possible when you're an adult". [611-616]

"Because life is supposed to be fun and enjoyment. Yeah (…) and erm I suppose that's it really". [line 615-616]

Yusuf appears to story the inextricable and totalising impact of responsibility in his construction of adulthood. His narrative seemingly positions responsibility as powerful, all-encompassing and impossible to resist once adult status has been attained. There is a resoluteness and a fearfulness that appears to motivate his resistance to responsibility and as such adulthood. Given Yusuf's previous narrative about the hardship of living in a single parent household, his construction of adulthood as responsibility may perhaps be constructed through his observations and socialisation to his mother's struggle as a single parent.

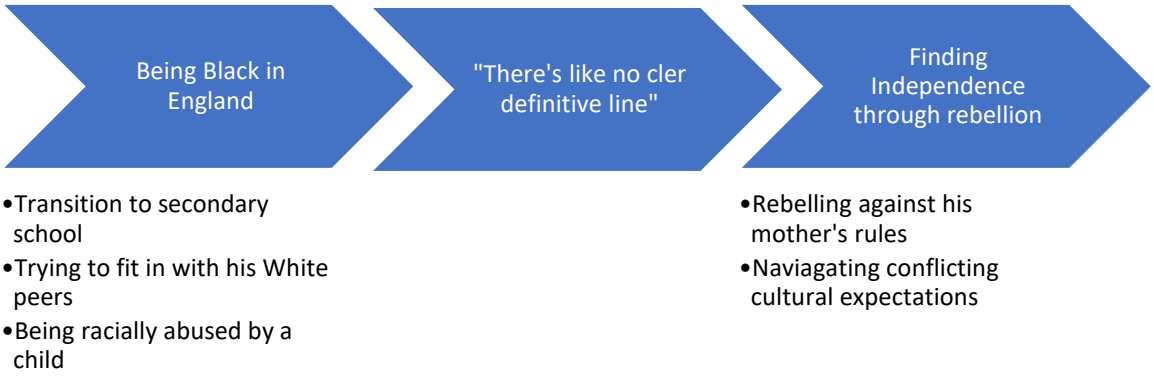
3.2. Ben's Story

Ben is 21 years old and identified as a second generation (European Commission, n.d.) British Black Jamaican cis male. After leaving school he entered the job market and at the time of the interview he was in full time employment and living with his family in the England. Ben shared that a portion of his secondary education had taken place in Jamaica and he had previously accessed mental health services in the UK.

Ben then went on to construct his story of becoming an adult through three main chapters, being Black in England, There is no definitive clear line, finding independence through rebellion. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the life chapters Ben narrated with their associated life event.

Figure 2

Life chapters and key events that construct Ben's story of becoming an adult



Ben did not bring an artefact with him. When asked he spoke of the significance of reading a book he felt prepared him for success, constructed as economic and family stability. This appeared to trigger his narration of feeling his schooling had not prepared him well for a successful future, characterising the guidance he had gained from school as concerned with the tolerance of high workload and perhaps stress, as opposed to how to navigate workplace relationships which he felt would be more helpful

> *when I read the book, I realized that a lot of things that we/ we were taught in school you been told. It was preparing us in the sense, it was preparing us for the workload, not exactly the experience that comes along with the work. If you know what I'm saying. So when I read the book erm, I was/ I was really inspired because I knew that. After reading this, I could implement things I couldn't before. I could be err, (…) more assertive with my decisions. Plus, erm relationships and, and what else? Relationships and, err I wouldn't say sanity. What's the word? Peace of Mind are also way it takes to be successful because you can be successful in the workplace all you want, but that doesn't necessarily bring you peace and joy and happiness. So, you have to take that into consideration as well. When you become an adult because you don't want to erm burden*

yourself or put pressure upon yourself to the point where you can't take it anymore. [line 30-40]

Ben appeared to construct becoming an adult as transformational learning perhaps connected to the development of his personal ideology about emotional wellbeing and success.

3.2.1. "Being Black in England"

Ben storied his personal experiences of growing up as a Black male in England through key events through which he appears to construct his story of anticipating and mitigating *"others"* sense of threat in his presence.

> *"Well, I would say. In today's society. Well, not only today's society. The past(.) I would say how many years, 400 to 500? Maybe 600 years? People of darker complexion have been looked down upon. In various cultures, but going on for my experience as a British citizen, I would say that, because I'm 6 foot and dark skinned um that it's (…) I wouldn't say it's harder, but I would say, in fact yes, I would say it's harder for me because I have to erm personify myself or carry myself in a way that doesn't seem threatening to other people because um first impressions are everything."* [line 98-104].

Ben constructs the personal impact of how he feels positioned by society, by appearing to draw on wider narratives and stereotypes located in structural racism. He seems to locate the origins of wider political narratives about race and ethnicity, (e.g. Black people as *'threatening'*) historically in the enslavement of Africans by Europeans from the 16th to the 19th century (Fernando, 2017). In doing so Ben perhaps constructs an intellectualised incidental societal narrative of shared minority experience and perhaps status, as he stories his personal 'harder' life, in the structural contexts of colourism[5] and later explicit racism. By

[5] A discriminatory practice located in racism whereby individuals with lighter skin tones are privileged over those with darker skin tones as a function of White beauty standards (Walker, 2004).

drawing on psychological narratives, to story stereotyping within a shared social construct *"we all do it",* Ben perhaps appears to further narrate structural racism as a normal and maybe expected process.

> *"I wouldn't say I've had it that bad. But still it's there, because even though that's just a microaggressions, that um, it's still the basis of racism. It's still institutionalized like. I if, it's harder for me. To get to where I want to be, I have to work a lot harder than everybody else because of how I look."* [lines127-131]

Within his personal narratives of racism, Ben often storied himself in a position of powerlessness, through the incidental influence of his social and institutional context. In storying how "*trying so hard to fit in"* at his White majority school, affected his wellbeing and sense of self, his narration of distress and perhaps shame in relation to his racial identity, perhaps conveys the sense of double conscious (Du Bois & Edwards, 2007). That is, the pain and rejection of seeing himself as less than and threatening, through the eye of others in the majority White spaces he tries to navigate.

> *"Overall, I must, I think. That the pressure of being who I was at some point in my life became. In terms of my skin, colour became a bit overwhelming. […] I went to a predominantly white school and literally like I remember my first two years or my first year. I tried so hard to fit in with those around me. I even changed change the way I spoke. Talking erm What's it? What's it called? [The regional dialect]*[6]*. As in with the [reginal accent]. So I could see myself going down a path. But then, so there was one thing that happened to me, that changed my whole perception…"* [line 139-149]

Ben appeared to narrate how the wider structural narratives that inform wider social appropriate behaviour, were instilled in him by a protective mother and

[6] Text anonymised to preserve confidentiality of the participant

stemmed from his Christian upbringing, (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In doing so he appears to construct what may be a family narrative that accepts racism as expected and perhaps his responsibility to defend against through appropriate behavioural adaptation.

> *"I've always been a 7th day Adventist Christian. So in terms of manners, discipline, politeness, I've had to have that regardless, towards my family. So, it wasn't really hard for me to portray that outside of the house because I, I wouldn't say that I'm not naturally like this anyway. But it was instilled in me on top of that as well so"*

Despite evidencing numerous overt oppressive acts visited upon him by "*the locals",* his storying seemed to suggest he judges the severity of others' actions against him as relative. His repeated minimisation of his personal day to day experiences whilst at school, appeared to be in contrast to his previous commentary on wider historical and structural narratives of racism within society. The construction of his personal narrative may have offered a protective way of perhaps convincing himself that things could be worse, a sub narrative he appears to draw on throughout his account, that may or may not serve to distance himself from the pain and enduring burden of having to sanitise and silence parts of himself to maintain the comfort of others.

> ""

Ben appears to narrate the reclaiming of his true self through narratives of cultural connection and belonging. At this time Ben had recently transitioned to secondary school and so was navigating a number of new relationships with teachers and peers within a new and initially unfamiliar learning environment. Ben describes trying to "fit in" with his White peers, and perhaps within the wider school community, through the creation of a public self that mirrored the majority. and may have masked and made palatable the parts of himself he deemed unacceptable in their eyes. However, whilst his *"conforming"* public self may have allowed him to establish friendships with his White peers, Ben was storied

“losing” his private, hidden authentic self, perhaps characterised by his racialised, ethnic and religious self.

> *my mom had sent me to the shop. And I was walking to the shop, going to get whatever my mom told me to get. And this little girl, she couldn't have been older than eight. She was probably eight-seven. And she called me a N*. And I was like this isn't right, like how can a child, refer to me in such a way? And she does even know me and I haven't done anything to her. I'm just walking going about my business. And I went home, pondered it. And then I went back to school like the next day and severed ties with a couple, couple of my friends. And started a new friendship group with er, with people of ethnic backgrounds, and we became really close. And to be honest, I think that's what er. I wouldn't sa-/. (..) Yeah, it saved me in a sense, because I was losing myself. I was becoming/. I was conforming to what people/. Well not people. What society wanted me to be. So yeah, that's all I got to say on that.”* [149-158]

Ben storied his confusion, disbelief and pain at the injustice of a young girl’s unprompted racial abuse towards him, as a motivational turning point. His emphasis of the girl’s age and child status alongside narratives of age-appropriate knowledge and the maintenance of racism, suggests Ben may have felt her childlike status too had been violated, perhaps by those who would teach her racist ideology and behaviour. His revisiting of this story later on in his account also perhaps spoke to the totalising and pervasive effect of this experience and the insidious and transgenerational nature of racism. Ben’s repeated questioning of her possible motives also may have conveyed sorrow, that he may be so subjugated as to have to endure oppression from a child merely for existing in the same space, despite his compliance.

Throughout this story, Ben perhaps narrates the critical event that prompted his reflection and enables him to act towards reclaiming his authentic self through connection and refuge in peers of “ethnic backgrounds”. Seemingly, their shared and similar subjugated cultural experiences may have provided a diasporic

community within which he felt safety and connection, perhaps permitting him to shed his previous public mask and reclaim and reveal his private authentic self.

3.2.2. "There's no like clear definitive line"

Ben appeared to story his adult status within the macro context of the British state, which specifies the intersection of legal narratives and dominant social norms about developmentally appropriate and acceptable behaviours across the life span (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

> *"I'm held a lot more accountable for my actions. First of all, the law tells me I'm an adult. Essentially, from the age of 16. Even though we can't do a lot of things until 18, but the age of consent is 16. So, [cough] essentially from then you are, you should be classed an adult. Even though, yes, it's 16. When you go to/ or was it 18. Where you go to/. When you stop being sentenced, when you get sentence for crime, you don't serve time in juvenile you get sent, you serve time in the grown prison. So, according to the law. I am most definitely, an adult"* [263-268]

He appears to begin with a sense of confidence and certainty as he draws on legal narratives of adult responsibility and culpability. However, his initial assuredness perhaps gives way to confusion as he tries to clarify the muddled inconsistencies in British law (Family Law Reform Act, 1969; UK Government, n.d.). His use of "'should" along with his performed certainty, suggest he may want clarity around the defining boundaries of adulthood, perhaps from me who he may have positioned as being able to impart this information as an more knowing other (Vygotsky, 1978). However, in their absence, he appears to be trying to assert this for himself by drawing on legal narratives that govern at what age children are tried as adults.

Ben's construction of adulthood suggests a possible mismatch between his felt sense of embodied adulthood and the wider cultural state narratives, legal, social and historical, that may label him not only as an adult, but a culpable Black male adult due to structural racialised narratives (Lammy, 2017; see 3.2.1.). Given that Black, and minority ethnic people, particularly young men are disproportionately

represented in the criminal justice system in the UK (Ministry of Justice & Race Disparity Unit, 2020), it may not be surprising that he co-constructs adulthood within the legal realms of the criminal justice system.

Ben's apparent desire for clarity maybe indicative of underlying anxiety about his felt uncertainty and confusion which perhaps is reminiscent of his sense of belonging and identity as a result of his experiences of racism.

> *"I'm past my adolescent years. Still, in my youth though. And er experience tells you you kinda (…) you start gauging like the events that are happening around you. For instance, a lot of people my age, I know, well females my age that I know have children. And they are adults. Erm from that point on you are an adult. When you are responsible for taking care of another, another person. You are/. You automatically become an adult so yeah. I would say/. (…) I would say I'm an adult. In terms of/. I don't know like/. To say/. Other than. The actual ability to reproduce in society. I don't know what would be more of an indication of becoming an adult. Like being socially accepted to have a child at a certain age. I don't know what would be more indicative if you know what I'm saying."* [268-277]

Gendered reproductive narratives also seem to feature within Ben's construction of adultness. These are perhaps located in his storied experience of his parent's separation and subsequent parenting relationships. Ben appears to narrates his mother as his supportive, loving, yet firm single parent, who, perhaps in the absence of his less available father, seemed to become his consistent example of adultness (Nelson et al., 2018).

He may construct the boundaries of adult status by drawing on wider gendered developmental narratives of socially sanctioned behaviour (i.e. having a child), across the life stages (Greene et al., 1992). These state that girls go through puberty and reach developmental and reproductive maturity earlier that men, who can maintain the freedoms of developmental immaturity for longer. Through narratives of parenthood, the boundaries of adultness co-constructed by Ben,

may be more embodied for women and less so for men and perhaps contribute to his felt sense of uncertainty around his adult status (Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007).

> *"I wouldn't say what I'm doing now, isn't any different to err (…) what I could have been doing when I was like 12, 13, 14 like. I may not have been an adult but I still/. It didn't hinder me from doing the things that I could be doing now. That's the thing about this, in today's society and today's culture. There's no like clear definitive line. You have people who are older than me who in a sense may act more immature than, than I would. So the indication is where/. I would say that the clearest indicators are when society says you're allowed to have a child, that's what I would say." [277-283]*

In storying the blurred and inconsistent culturally determined boundaries of adulthood, Ben may have come full circle in storying his confusion around his adult status. His narration of the absence of a felt sense of adultness between his current self and his childhood self , may signify his reflective realisation, through storying the complexity of the construct, that perhaps there is "*no definitive line"* dividing childhood from adulthood (Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007). As such Ben appears to story a need to look to the state for a social approved indicator that he may have constructed as socialisation into the cultural role of parent (Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; Syed & Juang, 2014) .

3.2.3. Finding independence through rebellion

In this chapter, Ben appeared to narrate the mismatch that occurred as a result of his transition from a small ethnically diverse primary school to a majority white secondary school. He seemed to story that his growing desire for autonomy and freedom, may be motivated by his increasing awareness of the disparities in culturally secular narratives around teenage behaviour. Additionally, Ben seemed to construct his motivation within a cultural community narrative of the parenting approaches and expectations of his culturally black Christian mother parenting a black male child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

“So then my mother sent me to a predominantly white school. I saw that/ how they act acted was different. And in a sense, I saw it as freedom. So I wanted to have my freedom, and I I would say I became somewhat rebellious. And all the discipline that my mother tried to instil. Um I would say it ,it almost was like fuel for the fire. Like it like. Kind of just in it made me think that my actions were justified because “you’re literally proving the point that I have no freedom because of what you're trying to say is still about me”. What you're trying to? Gain control in my life. I would say in my case it was. It was. It was kind of detrimental because. It. It wasn't. I wouldn't say it wasn't warranted, but in the way she went about it was a bit frustrating for me.”[326-331]

Ben appeared to narrate a battle that ensued through a cycle of his increasing rebellion in response to reciprocally increasing authoritarian discipline and parenting from his mother, perhaps in an attempt to maintain parental power and authority. Ben storied his frustrations and behaviour by perhaps drawing on social narratives that highlighted their differing constructions of appropriate adolescent behaviour and roles as a result of generational and national cohort-related shifts in the cultural, political and economic contexts into which they were each born and grew up (Blatterer, 2007).

He appeared to draw on intellectualising social narratives to position himself as knowledgeable and wise, perhaps in order to legitimatise his personal narrative of rebellion against the apparent tyranny of his mother’s parenting. He appeared to stories the dynamic with his mother using the imagery of “*fire”.* perhaps to suggest his behaviour in response to her trying to impose boundaries, escalated out of control. However, there may also be a suggestion of conflict in Ben’s storied reflections on the situation, now that he has perhaps distance away to reflect on what might have been going on for both himself and his mother at the time. His storying may reflect a new constructed perspective from which he can position himself alongside his mother to understand her possible motivation as a desire to protect him. Perhaps anticipating how his young Black behaviour may

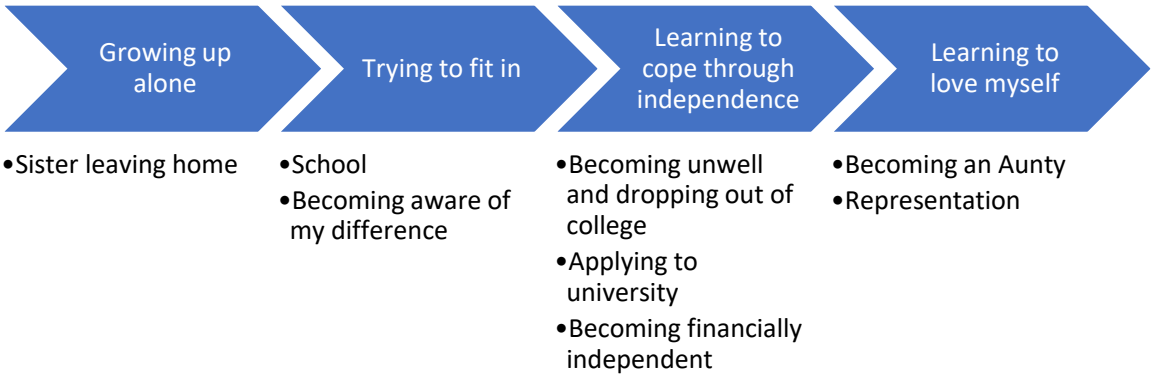
be interpreted within organising structures in comparison to his White male peers (Lammy, 2017; Wright et al., 2005).

3.3. Jade's Story

Jade is 21years old and identified as a third generation (European Commission, n.d.), British mixed heritage, Black Jamaican and White, English cis female. At the time of the interview she was a full time university student, studying an undergraduate degree and living in student accommodation in England. Jade storied her account of becoming an adult largely through salient key events past, present and future (e.g. her sister moving out, starting work, applying for university) and in relation to significant people as shown in Figure 3 below

Figure 3

Timeline of life chapters and key event that construct Jade's story of becoming an adult



Narratives of belonging and connection in the context of identity were interpreted as featuring frequently within Jade's story of becoming an adult. She narrated four chapters in the construction of her story of becoming an adult. These included *growing up alone*, *trying to fit, learning to cope through independence, learning to love myself.*

3.3.1. Growing up alone

Jade began constructing her story of becoming an adult by narrating her childhood relationships through the memory of school prior to her sister moving out of the family home and finding herself seemingly alone.

> *"I'd say I think for me when I look back I think of like friendships and school and that. For me that was like a really big and important part of growing up. For me all my friends were older than me as well, so I felt like I was always the youngest, so I was always trying to be more grown up as well. Uhm (…) But yeah in school (…) hmm yeah I don't really know. It's weird because when I look ba/ when I think back, I can't really think of (...) a lot apart from like school memories. I can remember my sister coming to pick me up from school. Um and then I can think of when I was old enough I would go to my friend's house before school and after school. And then my sister moved out. And then it was very much just me and my mom. And then I was just by myself and (…)."* [7-15]

Jade begins by telling the narrative of wanting to *"be more grown up" as a child.* She appears to story the incidental nature of this perhaps due to always feeling like the youngest. Jade's narration through the use of *"I"* and *"for me"* perhaps clarifies the personal nature of her story. Her explicit *"look back" perhaps* seems required to make sense of becoming an adult. Jade appears, perhaps f for the first time, to be noting the change of something that she may now have an awareness, of as a function of the retrospective capacity that comes with the passage of time. In this there is perhaps a sense that becoming an adult does not happen overnight, but it is a gradual and developing process, the beginning of which is blurry and so may need to be located in what came before – her childhood.

Jade appears to story the centrality of school within her childhood which is perhaps unsurprising given its organising nature for all children of school age in Britain. However, in her storying, the other unspoken dimensions of her childhood appear lost in contrast to the dominance of school. Jade's construction of school within her story appears to characterise it as of great importance, and perhaps a source of least distress. She seems to narrates her relationships with others

through their contact with school and all other things are perhaps lost and cannot be remembered until her sister moves out and she is left *"just by myself".* Jade's storying of this moment of loss, perhaps communicates a stepped but rapid falling away of family connection. She perhaps appears to both narrate and enact through her unfinished sentence and pause, a sadness and emptiness in contrast to her earlier storying of a life filled with school. Jade seems to story a finality of things that may be changed forever.

This opening chapter appears to set the scene for the first half of Jade's story, which appears to perhaps be one of loss facilitating becoming an adult. She seems to stories an incidental nature to the events of her life so far. She appears to position herself as a passive character perhaps being done to. This may be indicative of Jade's process of reflective authoring through which she makes links between experiences that perhaps reveal something difficult about her life that then needs to be resisted or conversely a resistance to think about the difficult aspects of her life.

3.3.2. *"Trying to fit n"*

In this chapter Jade appears to construct becoming an adult through the wider narratives of racism and whiteness, perhaps as a function of her mixed heritage. She seems to draws on narratives of cultural belonging and identity to story the challenges and consequences of navigating her racialised existence through her daily interactions in the majority white spaces she occupies (Du Bois & Edwards, 2007).

> *"Like there was like 10 black people in my school. I think that that played a part like. Even in my history classes when it was like about slavery or something. People would just be looking at me or/. Luckily I had another black person in my history class so they're looking at us and it was just so awkward. Erm and then like walking through town people always look. People always just (…) I don't know but it was a very different reaction to me than it was to my friends. (…)"*[37-43]

She appears to story becoming an adult whilst navigating the pain and perhaps shame of her racialised existence in her *"white community",* where the *"looks"* of "older White middle class people" signalled to her that she was other (Clarke & Garner, 2009).

> *"It's like I didn't really notice it when I was younger. And then it would be small stuff like going into shops and like the security guard would come follow me but not my friends and stuff like that. Or just people just giving me looks, because where I live it's a lot of like older White White middle class people. So just give me a lot of looks, Um I don't know. It doesn't really bother me now. But I think I used to get bothered about it actually. In fact I definitely did used to get bothered about it. There was one point where I think I was just/. I didn't really know (…) who (…) I was or (…) anything like that. So like to really like love myself. So I really wanted to be white. There was just this point where I like literally got bleach from under the cupboard and was like really like scrubbing my skin. I really just wanted to be white. I wanted to be like my best friend. (…) I don't even know what changed from that because I love myself now. I don't know. I felt like that being/ where I grew up really did play a role. Like a really big part of the way I grew up."[48-59]*

Jade appears to story racism through sanitised language, that perhaps constructs other's actions towards her as almost imperceptible in contrast to the visceral felt pain and perhaps shame of othering she graphically stories later in her narrative. As such, she constructs a narrative characterising her felt sense of everyday othering through the behaviours of others she came into daily contact with. However, this behaviour appeared to be simultaneously unnoticeable to bystanders like her friends, who's sight was perhaps obscured by the privilege of Whiteness (Clarke & Garner, 2009). Jade's narrative in a sense appeared to make her question her own reality, perhaps a reflection of the subtly of the microaggressions by others visited upon her (Levchak, 2018a). She further stories her narrative of disconnection and loneliness through being singled out from her friends, by the security guard enacting wider social stereotypes of

untrustworthy Blackness, located within the historical, political and social meta-narrative of Whiteness (Clarke & Garner, 2009; Kirkinis et al., 2018).

Jade narrates through vivid and harrowing imagery the apparent eroding of her sense of self and perhaps consequent mental anguish she felt in response to the racism. Her narrative of scrubbing her skin with bleach in her desperation to be white *"like my best friend"*, is perhaps a powerful enactment of her sense of her cultural identity being stripped away by the actions visited upon her living in white majority spaces (Barn et al., 2005). Jade appears to constructs a narrative of the isolating nature of racism, making causal statements that allude to a link between her subjugated status "playing a part" in her not knowing who she was (Jensen et al., 2021; Nelson et al., 2018).

3.3.3. Coping independently

Jade narrates the disconnect she felt from having to go "through all the teenage stuff" without the support of her sister who "was just living her life". Jade describes the loneliness she felt whilst also drawing on narratives of family responsibility to suggest her sister should have been there for her perhaps to protect her from the worst of the othering, and then perhaps she would not have become unwell.

> *"I have basically like went through my whole teenage years without her. It does make me a bit a bit sad because I feel like it would have been different if she still was with me in the house to like teach me these things and stuff like that. But yeah (…)"* [64-67]
> *"(…) And then I went to college. (…)I think in college that's when I grew up the most because. Like I. I got ill like um. I just got really bad like depression and anxiety and yeah I don't know. Then it just led to me like becoming really (...) I don't know like socially awkward. so like/. And then I dropped out of college. I didn't enjoy that. And then (...) I didn't know what I wanted to do. And then I thought I'm going to try and go through uni again. But this is for the first time actually. I went and I applied and I didn't get in. And (...) I don't know (…) I was just so sad so I thought I'm just going to work for a bit and then that's really when I felt a sense of freedom. Like I*

had my own money. I then like I started driving. I got a car and I really like/ I could do what I wanted really like. There was nothing/ I didn't need to ask my mom to go out. I didn't need to say when I was coming in because I could drive home. And yeah, work and having money and financial freedom."[17-27]

Jade's storying of growing up appears to be a function of the disappointment and pain she may have had to go through alone. Jade's stories in quick succession, so many pivotal but challenging life events perhaps communicating an accumulation of stress that is building to the breaking point of unsuccessfully applying to university and the disappointment she may feel due to failure and perhaps associated shame. However, she appears to contrasts this with the success of finding work and with it financial freedom that means she perhaps no longer needs to feel vulnerable to others she feels she cannot rely on. Jade narrates freedom through financial independence which then opened the doors to the next phase of her life.

3.3.4. Learning to love myself

Jade appears to constructs her reclaiming of a more positive sense of self, through narratives of cultural membership and family connection (Harding et al., 2015) that seem to prompt her to imagine and make decisions towards a more purposeful adult future. Jade's seemingly locates her story in wider political macro narratives of activism and resistance, Whiteness and cultural representation, as she stories the shifting political climate of activism and representation that has perhaps led to her being able to see herself positively reflected in accessible mainstream social media (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cote & Bynner, 2008; Sinclair & Milner, 2005).

"I guess like the difference the change. (…) came more about like. (…) I don't know. I started praying and. Started really believing in God and that really helped. (…) Things like Instagram like? People with curly hair/. Like Instagram became like a place where you could actually just see everybody. There are so many different types of people and just made me (…) um think I wasn't like the only person um I wasn't the only person that

had hair like this or did this. And coming up to um to see the family and stuff like that all just really helped" [151-161.

Jade seems to tentatively constructs her story of reclaiming, perhaps unsure of what has led to the change in her sense of self-image or perhaps unsure of how her spiritual identity will be received (Schwartz et al., 2005). Her emphasis of "*really"* suggests Jade is trying to perhaps story a sense that her prayers were not out of desperation but may have been strengthening and transformational in some way (Cote, 2014; Hassan et al., 2019; Hill et al., 2015).

Jade draws on social narratives of activism and representation, to perhaps narrate the shift she has seen over the last few years in the representation of minority ethnic groups and community membership. The wider narratives of representation may intersect with her personal narratives of belonging and she begins to story her reclaiming of her Blackness and perhaps beginning to rebuild a more positive cultural identity in which she feels pride (Sinclair & Milner, 2005). In the last decade social media platforms have increasingly been used to create more positive and accessible spaces to openly share and discuss Black experiences and culture, from haircare as Jade stories, to fashion, art and innovation. These kinds of spaces have not been seen in previous years. Jade stories the nourishing effect of more frequently seeing positive images of herself reflected publicly through the gaze of the diaspora, vs primarily through the majority gaze of Whiteness (Du Bois & Edwards, 2007). Her narrative may to speaks to the lack of visible cultural and ethnic identities present in her physical environment, let alone positive ones. She draws on macro narratives around political action sparking positive change to perhaps story that a social climate of increasing public everyday activism and Black representation, has may have also led to changes in her interactions with her White friends (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

"Like my friends, they they didn't know they would be like mortified to know. But I don't know (…) Sometimes things that they did. Like they didn't mean to do it, but like in summer they'd be like 'oh I'm almost as black as you' and stuff like that. They would never say stuff that now but. Just like stuff like that and the looks" [line162-165]

Through her narrative, Jade seems to stories an underlying conscious awareness of the everyday othering she narrated enduring at their hands. But also perhaps a process of reflective consciousness raising on their part too (Freire & Freire, 2007).

3.4. Jess' Story

Jess is 20 years old and identified as an first generation (European Commission, n.d.) Irish/British, Black Nigerian cis female. She was born in Ireland and moved to England with her family before the age of 10. At the time of the interview, Jess was a full-time university student, studying an undergraduate degree and living in student accommodation in England. Jess did not talk about an artefact she felt represented her story of becoming an adult during the interview.

Jess' story of becoming an adult was interpreted to be constructed of three chapters "*I had to grow up fast at a young age"*, "*I went from not knowing about anything", "becoming my own person"*. A time line of her life chapters and related key events is presented in Figure 4. .

Figure 4

Life chapter and key events that construct Jess' story of becoming an adult

3.4.1. "I had to grow up fast at young age"

This initial chapter details Jess' telling of salient experiences of racism and family financial stress during her childhood. She appears to locates these hardships in Ireland where she lived until the age of nine years old, before her family moved to England. During her childhood in the late 2000s, approximately a tenth of the

population identified as Black or Black Irish (Ireland, 2007), and the country was experiencing a severe economic downturn with mass unemployment as a result of the financial recession. As with the other participants, it appeared necessary for her to story her childhood as part of storying her transition to adulthood. Doing so contextualised her telling of later key events, her relationship to adulthood and values.

Jess stories the assignment of increasing responsibilities by her parents, that perhaps gave her sense of maturity and adult status. This occurs consequent to the birth of her her younger brothers who take her position as the youngest child in the family

> *"I would also say when my little brothers were born as well. I would say that kind of made me um age a little bit as well because I kind of had to like look after them as well. So I went from being the youngest to not being the youngest anymore. So I had some additional responsibilities as my mom and dad would go to work at different times. So, me and my brother would sometimes like have to look after them"* [line 65-70]

Jess' use of "*age*" usually associated with becoming an older adult, suggests she may have felt a large increase in her parents' expectations of her and her brother's new social family obligations, relative to their ages. Additionally, Jess' narration suggests that perhaps this had happened very quickly and unexpectedly for her. . Jess goes on to story cultural narratives of family expectation that are associated with being an older child, she takes up to support her working parents appropriate to her age and position in the family.

> *"My big brother was raised to be a lot more independent. We sort of had to not really fend for ourselves but kind of fend for ourselves at such a young age. Just because my mom, dad would have to leave earlier because they had to travel, obviously to work. It was a lot more difficult. We didn't really see them growing up as much as we would have obviously wanted to because my mom used to work like day shifts. So she'd leave at like 7:00 AM in the morning and my dad would work night shifts so it would be just*

conflicting schedules. So I would either have one of them and not the other and just not see them as often as I would obviously want to." [Line 114-125]

Jess appears to story her family's script around reponsibilities and independence, through the scarcity of employment during Ireland's economic crisis in 2008. She narrates employment struggles taking her parents further afield and perhaps limiting family connection and time spent together. Migration narratives perhaps form Jess' causal statements about the eventual reason why her family, along with other Irish nationals "*moved over here to the UK".* Her narration appears to lament her parents' *"conflicting schedules"* and may be how their limited presence shaped her and her older brothers' more independent upbringing and consequent premature adultification [7] (Burton, 2007).

Jess initially seems to situates her narrative of racism in Ireland where she was born and lived for the first 9 years of her life. In doing so she appears to stories a self, shaped by racism enacted by other children.

"Ok. Yeah, I would say in, in Ireland I experienced a lot of like racism, so I was kind of like exposed to, um a lot of things early on, which I really shouldn't have been exposed to but um that kind of made me/ made me just a bit more um I don't know. I've been more mature in that sense/ because I kind of understood what was going on really at that time. [Line 46-50]

Jess appears to draw on social narratives of appropriate child versus adult experiences and knowledge, to perhaps story her forced maturing and the loss of her childhood innocence (Epstein et al., 2017). Her telling seems to express her implicit, at least, partial understanding of racism or how others may judge and

[7] Childhood adultification can be conceptualised as the social, developmental and contextual processes through which children and young people may be prematurely and inappropriately, be positioned into adult roles and responsibilities and subject to adult knowledge within their family networks(Burton, 2007). Is has also been defined as a social process that occurs as a function of structural racism, where Black and minority ethnic youth are positioned as adults, perceived as more responsible and intentioned than their White counterparts (Epstein et al., 2017).

perceived her as "*unlikeable"* or *"less than",* in relation to themselves . Jess' appears to narrate the sobering realisation as a child, that racism is perhaps not just within the realm of adults, but something other children including her friends will enact against her. Jess seem to stories that even in play she and her brother are not safe, and so perhaps must cope together with the unspoken pain of being othered. She perhaps appears to co-constructs a sense of *them* and *us* by contrasting the peril of the majority White context of Ireland, with the safety and solace of the Black community in multicultural England. Seeking comfort and solidarity in the company of those who looked like her and who she deems to have similar lived experiences of oppression, may allowed Jess to feel inclusion and solidarity in comparison to the exclusion she perhaps previously felt at the hands of her White friends (Cote & Bynner, 2008; Sinclair & Milner, 2005).

> *[…] in terms of like the racism I experienced in Ireland, it was um just very difficult really to be honest with you. because I lived in an area which was mostly, Caucasian people. So it was like literally just me and like two more black families in my estate really. Um so there were several situations I could give you an example of a time where me and my brother were out playing with like some of our friends that lived in the area and they were white, and they must have said made a comment like they're white chocolate and we're dark chocolate and people don't usually like dark chocolate. So things like that that just kinda made me grow up a bit quicker."* [Line 58-65]

Jess seems to communicate a sense of othering that was frequent, "*difficult"* to live with and perhaps that she was powerlessness to avoid, positioning it as a normal part of her every day. Jess' tentative language (e.g. *"exposed"*, *"things")*, appears to sanitise her narrative of othering throughout her story, by perhaps minimising the emotion and obscuring the active others doing the racism. Jess' use of "*which"*, alongside her subsequent narration of more recent "*things*" that she "*construed as racism"* later on in her narrative*,* suggests a desire to perhaps ensure her telling of oppression she has "*always grown up dealing with*", is palatable for her audience and thus perhaps more acceptable and undeniable.

Jess stories her experiences of living in the majority "*Caucasian*" space of Ireland, seemingly placing emphasis on the scarcity of other people who looked like her, appearing to draw on sub-narratives of hegemonic society to perhaps infer and comprehend the incidental nature of her experiences of racism.

> *"Um it definitely made me feel obviously a bit better because it's always nice to look around and see people who look just like you. You just feel a bit more included really. Even though race has got nothing to do with anything but um you, just you just tend to feel a bit more kind of comfortable when you're in an environment around people that you know are similar to you in a sense."* [Line153-157]

Jess later contrasts this to the more "*diverse*" context of England, where even her school was a "*black school*" and she perhaps felt "*a bit more included"*. Her use of "you" takes her storying of comfort in the company of "*people who look just like you"* from the personal to the general, perhaps inferring my shared understanding of this and may be alluding to the incidental nature of her consequent bias for other Black people storied later on.

3.4.2. "I went from not knowing anything about…"

Jess stories suddenly and perhaps unexpectedly being faced with having to learn to look after herself when she moved out of her parents' home and into university accomodation. She appears to draw on developmental narratives of learning, to story her rapid acquisition of pragmatic skills and knowledge through socialisation during her transition to university, that she constructs as signifying her adult status (Dunham et al., 1986; Markstrom, 2011).

> *"OK. I um, so I would say I (...) started/. I felt like I was/ became an adult when I came to uni, when I was 18. So erm, I think that was more/. It was a very abrupt change. I would say in terms um/. I went from not knowing anything about bills or erm like credit card and finances and stuff like that. I wasn't really too educated in terms of that because I never had to be. So um going to uni and um I started to live by myself and I had to cook my food, which is*

something I never did when I was living at home. And it was/. That sort of became a time when I felt like I was an adult to say." [Line 25-31]

Jess appears to story her transformation from non-adult to adult through *"basically Googling it all myself" in her* new self-directed, independent learning context of university. She constructs her previous state of not knowing as a function of having her needs completely met, seemingly by her parents within her family context.

However, this is in contrast to the story she constructs from her previous life chapter of being positioned in the role of mini parent, sharing the caring responsibilities of her younger brothers, as part of her life under financial pressure in Ireland (Burton, 2007). Jess' narration suggests, in England, the structural family roles of parent and child were restored, in the context of relative financial stability so that Jess could perhaps regain some of childlike innocence through her relinquishing of all pragmatic everyday tasks highlighting the her nonlinear trajectory of becoming an adult (Burton, 2007).
Her move to the independent learning environment of university from her family home perhaps made parental care and support environmentally less accessible. Conversely, motivated by the norms of her new environment she may have wanted to independently acquire the skills and knowledge to *"feel like an adult"*. Jess' narration of her parents' care also appears to be constructed around narratives of traditional gendered roles. In narrating her embodied sense of adultness as she *"educated"* herself in her parents' skills and knowledge, she appears to be narrating a process constructing her adult social role through socialisation around cultural skills, knowledge and practices in the context of collaborative social interaction with her parents (Dunham et al., 1986; Markstrom, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). Jess revisits this narrative again later on in her storying of the strengthening shift in her relationship with her mother.

Thus she appears to be storying that the strategies she uses to acquire knowledge and skills are variable between contexts as too are the ways she engages with them in her construction of her adult self (Dunham et al., 1986; Markstrom et al., 1998; Vygotsky, 1978).This is a stark

3.4.3. Becoming “my own person”

Jess narrates how the move to university and away from her family, friends and the culture through whom she perhaps passively constructed her identity, created the space for her to discover and develop her sense of self.

> *“Yeah yeah. I think being living on my own as um allowed me to have time to like think about my own opinions and just um like formulate my own opinions and my own ideas. Um instead of just kind of following what the people around me would like say or would think. Like I feel like I’m more um individualised maybe that’s not the right word. Like I’, more like my own person now that makes sense.”* [Line 266-270]

Jess narrates a sense of previously having relinquished or lost her autonomy and maybe with it her sense of self. She seems to perhaps story a willingness to allow herself to become obscured by family, community and friends, to perhaps maintain her position within the refuge of the protective “united front” she spoke of elsewhere. Jess communicates a sense that at the time that way of being served her well and provided comfort following her early experiences of racism in the majority White spaces of Ireland (Cote & Bynner, 2008; Sinclair & Milner, 2005). However, in her repetition of “*independence”* she appears to be distinguishing between the public performative independence of perhaps being able to move around and go where she wanted, and the private and embodied freedom, of being able to “*formulate my own opinions and my own ideas”* and not having to answer to anyone else.

> *“I didn't really have a choice really [going to university]. But not that I wanted to do anything else. But um it was just the norm to go to uni. It's just the norm to go to in my culture. I um I've always wanted to be a doctor, so/. Obviously, that’s the only route I can take to get there. So yeah, I've just I always wanted to go uni anyways. Um you/ I wanted the independence. I had a lot of independence growing up, like obviously as I said, even at home. In terms of like freedom and like going out and things like that. But I still wanted that extra bit of, you know, independence. Not*

having to tell anyone when I'm leaving. Or just being able to make my own food? Or do you know, my own just stuff in general. Just like looking after myself for myself? because um I feel like me coming to uni as opposed to like living at home compared to living in my own like flat and it's just a huge change because um I feel like now I live by myself I know what I like. Um I know what I want to do".[160-172]

Here, Jess' appears to story desire for autonomy over social cohesion, drawing on wider social and political narratives of individualisation (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) which she narrates as subsequent to the move from her parents' home to university. Jess uses this narrative to perhaps assert that the distance created by moving to university, permitted her a new perspective maybe through a sense of choice that she did not previously have and thus the ability to cultivate her own sense of self. This seemingly occurs through the everyday pragmatic decisions and knowledge acquisition she storied earlier, of picking and cooking food she wants to eat, how and where she wants to spend her money. But also seems to extends to the people she chooses to call friends as opposed to acquaintances. Jess appears to construct an image of increasing self-efficacy and self-determination with every successive decision she makes. She seems stories in turn this self-confidence enables her (re-)discovery of incremental aspects of her sense of self at the centre of her cultural, family, racialised, ethnic identity (Schwartz & Unger, 2010; Sinclair & Milner, 2005).

As Jess stories becoming her *"own person",* she also seems to construct becoming an adult as perhaps developing more inclusive beliefs and learning to walk her own value-directed path instead of colluding with certain aspects of aspects of her cultural ideology (Schwartz & Unger, 2010; Sinclair & Milner, 2005).

3.5. Storied Commonalities and differences

This section suggests some broad but salient commonalities and differences noted across the presented narratives of the four participants (Etherington, 2020). Consideration will be given to the themes in the context of the literature reviewed

above. As such, they may provide context or indicate something of about Black and minority ethnic youths stories of becoming adults in the UK.

3.5.1. Betwixt and in-between: A position of not knowing

A theme that was present across participants' stories was the ambiguity of adult identity. This appeared to be linked to how adult status was defined and assigned in the multiple social and cultural contexts in which participants lives, in line with sociological ideas of the idiosyncratic and contextualised nature of adulthood (Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007). Constructions of adult status appeared to be embodied through a felt sense of inhabiting the space of adulthood (Arnett, 2004), located in performative social tasks (e.g. parenthood, financial independence; Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007), characterised by the generational cohorts that young people were born into and grew up in (the cultural, political, economic context; Blatterer, 2007), and the acquisition of skills and knowledge (e.g. judicious decision making;(Markstrom et al., 1998).

Participant's narratives also highlighted conceptualisation of adulthood within age-stage framework. However, cultural socialisation to adult roles in line with Vygotsky's social cultural theory and rites of passage literature (Brookins, 1996; Dunham et al., 1986; Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; Markstrom, 2011), whereby a collaborative relationship with a significant more knowing other is positioned as a guide to scaffold becoming an adult, featured frequently in variable ways across participants narratives. Thus it appears participants used a variety of ways to construct and make sense of becoming an adult suggesting an idiosyncratic understand located in the British minority youths' multiple and varying context would be most helpful.

Constructing adulthood in this multidimensional and multicontextual way, had various effects including participants could be positioned within an adult social role in one context but as adolescent in another cooccurring context. Additionally, different aspects of adultness may be acquired over different trajectories and this seems to be shaped by their social context and environment, e.g. experiences of racism resulting in loss of childhood innocence due to the emotional labour and

participants increased awareness of how they must behave and present themselves to other children/ young people.

Within participant's narratives the trajectory of becoming an adult was not liner. Adult status also could be reversed as in the case of Jess's narrative of adultification in the context of family financial insecurity and then the resumption of her child role and position when the family's situation changed (3.4.1) . In the literature increasing variation in the chronology of becoming an adult, has been attributed to increasing importance of individualisation as a pivotal concept of social change within Western societies (Brannen & Nilsen, 2002).

Participants' constructed narratives did not appear to align with Arnette's theory of emerging adulthood. Their conceptualisations did not seem to be characteristic of any of the salient themes of Arnett's theory and three out of four participant attended university, the supposed playground of the emerging adult (Arnett, 2011; Syed, 2015). Instead, the boundaries of becoming an adult appeared to be defined in relation to childhood or salient contextualising events. While these were different for all participants events often included experiences characterised in the literature as adversity (Scottish Government, 2018). This may have been indicative of a need to create retrospective distance in order to be able to reflect on the events of their life unfolding, and tell the apparent chaos and uncertainty of becoming an adult. Conversely, this maybe have been a function of not having reflected on their story of becoming and adult before and so not having assumed the language to construct it (Schwartz et al., 2005).

3.5.2. Adultification

Across all participant's narratives the concept of adultification and the loss of childhood innocence feature in one of two ways(Burton, 2007; Epstein et al., 2017). Jess and Yusuf construct a sense of adultification in the context of childhood financial adversity which results in them being positioned in adult social roles and assigned associated responsibilities, (e.g. mini parent, man of the house) within their family contexts (Burton, 2007).

Conversely adultification also feature in the context of early experiences of structural and community racism in the case of Jess, Ben and Jade. They

construct narratives of a loss of childhood innocence as a function of the storied emotional labour and intelligence required to overcome othering in the majority white spaces in which they lived. Across their narratives of becoming adults, experiences of early racism, sometimes at the hands of other children, socialise them to their subjugated positions within society (Du Bois & Edwards, 2007). Additionally, the narrate developing a continued awareness of how they must behave and present themselves to other children/ young people, adults and the normalisation and explaining away they must do to make life liveable and palatable.

3.5.3. Othering in the Context of Ethnicity

Othering was present as a theme across all participants' narratives. And while storied in different ways seemed to occur in relation to aspects of their identity. Within participants' narratives, othering located in race and ethnicity were perhaps narrated in one of two explicit ways and appeared to be linked to participant's lived context. Racism seemed to be narrated relationally within interactions in participants' meso contexts - their local community, employment and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These community or group narratives intersected with participants' organising macro contexts – gender, educational curriculum, history, national context and micro narratives, where they storied their response (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Racism was communicated as social structure within their narratives that was present and interacted with their cultural identity at different points in their life.

In society racism is conceptualised as an issue that is unusual and out of the ordinary. However for the three participants who constructed their experiences as part of their narrative, racism seemed to be characterised as an accepted norm and featured as explicit acts and more commonly frequent microaggression that were insidious and unseen by majority White British other (Levchak, 2018a). However, while participants may have narrated the injustice, pain and anger and perhaps they felt, they also appeared to construct racism as a habitual norm that took the form of microaggressions, verbal abuse and *"looks"* (Jade, 3.3.2). For Jade and Jess in particular, this process of normalisation seemed to stem from a

more tentative use of language in conceptualising the subtleties in the actions of others, (e.g. Jess: *“exposed”*, *“things”; Jade: “looks”)*. This may have reflected gendered norms around expression of difficult things, socialisation to culturally accepted norms of their minority ethnic status within society, or merely difficulty of narrating painful experiences they may not have spoken about. For Jess her minimisation appeared to sanitise her emotional response and for Jade perhaps obscured and at times neutralised the active others doing the racism, particular when storying the actions of her friends. For Jade, Ben and Jess minimisation of their experience was a common linguistic device they employed at different stages of their storying for communicating oppression, Racism also appeared to be storied as part of or perhaps in relation to narratives of adversity.

Participants seemed to characterise the sense of seeing themselves through an oppressive gaze within the white majority spaces they lived in, narrating varying outcomes for their mental health, developing identity and wellbeing constructed in social (macro) and community (meso) narratives of belonging, overcoming and resistance (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Du Bois & Edwards, 2007; National Institute for & Mental Health in England, 2003).

In contrast, Yusuf perhaps appeared to draw on and enact cultural othering through a narrative of the legitimacy and value of minority ethnic knowledge specifically Pakistani versus British. Cultural othering seemed to be narrated relationally within his interactions with his meso - family and micro - self, but also may have intersected with his macro context through gender norms, economic status contexts, and employment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As with racism, the literature suggests cultural othering is constructed in Whiteness and may be seen as a reflection of the othering that had previously been visited upon Yusuf perhaps by individual or structural others.

In this way participants appeared to story experiences of othering and respond through narratives of resistance, acceptance, overcoming or reclaiming. How othering was storied within their accounts differed, perhaps as a function of the narratives’ social and psychological purpose as it was co-constructed within the story teller- audience dynamic. The narratives may have served as resources for

creating distance from the pain and emotion of their stories of structural oppression and appeared to be more effective when they perhaps could access nourishing resources for belonging – positive facilitators of connection with their developing construction of cultural identity. These factors seemed to serve as sources of strength and protection from the felt violence of othering. However, if these resources for belonging were not readily available, the opposite may have been true particularly when positioned as a minority navigating majority white spaces. Socialisation as part of participants' constructed cultural identity was likely important and may have allowed them to see positive representations of themselves reflected in the world. As such, the participants appeared to dynamically story their experience of and response to everyday othering.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Overview

This chapter will discuss the implications of this study in relation to the research questions, drawing links to the literature to highlight new insights constructed about becoming an adult for racialised British youth that may inform mental health settings. The strengths and limitations of the research will then be considered, alongside researcher reflexivity, concluding with pertinent recommendations for theory, practice, policy and the direction of possible future research.

4.2. Revisiting the aims of the Research

The aims of this study were to gain a multi-contextual understanding of British Black and minority ethnic youth's intersectional experiences of becoming an adults in the UK. Dominant narratives of the developmental psychosocial process are historically and culturally ethnocentric and located in Euro-American neoliberal notions of independence and exploration of identity (Arnett, 2015; Cote & Bynner, 2008; Greenfield & Cocking, 2014). This literature spoke to some of the psychosocial and economic challenges that might make becoming an adult more difficult for young people in the current context . However, largely obscured the cultural structural complexities that racialised youth may also have to navigate during the transition to adulthood as a result of their minority ethnic identities (Barn et al., 2005). By centring usually underrepresented and marginalised voices in the literature using narrative methodology, this research is the only UK based narrative project that explores Black and minority ethnic youths' experiences of becoming adults in the context of their lived experiences. The study sought to readdress the power imbalance and explore how the intersection between ethnicity, culture, identity and adversity, might inform alternative conceptualisations of the journey to adulthood by racialised British youths' (Crossley, 2007; Riessman, 2008).

Analysis of the findings in the previous chapter, addressed these aims by presenting the individual narratives co-constructed around adulthood, culture and

identity and experiences of hardship and adversity by four British, Black and minority ethic young people as they told their stories of becoming adults. Storied commonalities and differences identified from looking across participant's individual narratives were also presented as a summary of the main findings and discussed in the context of the literature.

4.3. Implications for Policy and Practice

The current findings point to a number of implications for our understanding and provision of mental health care for British young people, specifically racialised youth as they become adults. These suggestions bring together the interlinked areas of research, clinical practice, service delivery and policy and as such should be considered as reciprocally influencing areas of change at other levels of mental health and multiagency provision (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

4.3.1. Theory and Research

The findings suggest, the dominant ethnocentric developmental conceptualisations used within clinical psychology to inform our understanding of becoming an adult in the current context of UK, do not adequately or inclusively capture the varying experiences of racialised British youth. This appears to be a function of methodological approaches traditionally used within psychology to explore transitions to adulthood, that do not appropriately consider the how the multiple intersecting contexts that shape the relational processes of development for ethnically minoritised youth living in majority White spaces (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; Syed & Juang, 2014). Therefore an approach to research that is more inclusive of methodologies that acknowledge and foreground young people's relational and contextually variable experiences of becoming adults within a relativist epistemology would be beneficial. This would generate a richer more meaningful understanding of the cultural influences and psychological processes of becoming an adult for ethnically minority youth living in the ethnically majority context of the UK. Drawing on and incorporating narrative, sociological and ethnographic methods of enquiry alongside

psychological traditions can serve to centre the subjugated voices of marginalised youth as co-constructors of knowledge within the complex historical, political and cultural systems in which minority youth live and in which we conduct research would also beneficially mitigate the inherent power dynamics within psychological enquiry (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Fernando, 2017; Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; N. Patel, 2003b).

4.3.2. Clinical Practice

As Clinical Psychology professionals we have a duty of care to reduce psychological distress and promote psychological well-being (British Psychological Society, 2018). The findings suggest how the British Black and minority ethnic youth in this study construct and talk about their experiences of becoming adults is relational. As such the process is shaped by their socialisation into the adult role within the multiple intersecting family, ethnocultural community and wider historical socio-political and economic contexts they inhabit over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Greenfield & Cocking, 2014; Syed & Juang, 2014). It is postulated that the reported ambiguity of their felt sense of adult status, reflects the changeable and multidimensional indicators they draw on to both relationally position themselves intersecting with how they are positioned by others within the diffuse social context of the UK (Schwartz et al., 2005).

Legal narratives that intersect with ethnic identity and govern the culpability and criminality of Black and minority ethnic youths was shown to shape the construction of the boundaries of adulthood in this study (Epstein et al., 2017; Goff et al., 2014). Additionally, racism and experiences of being othered that intersect with adversity, were seen to be a habitual and accepted experiences that the racialised youth in this study were socialised to in different ways in the multiple intersecting levels of family, culture, and wider social contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Within their social and structural contexts this may take the form of direct experiences of microaggressions, explicit racist acts from others, institutional racism governing their likelihood of educational, health or employment outcomes and structural racism reflecting dominant stereotypes or narratives about their ethnic, religious or cultural identity through the media and

government policy. (Epstein et al., 2017; Fernando, 2017; Grob, 2001; Levchak, 2018a; Majors et al., 2020). Within family or community contexts, socialisation may include the processing and problem-solving from more knowledgeable others, about how to mitigate the detrimental impact of racism on their physical, legal, educational and social wellbeing whilst also attempting to preserve their mental health perhaps through preparation for how they may be perceived and will be treated by others as a result of the minoritised status in majority societies (Epstein et al., 2017; Fernando, 2017; Grob, 2001; Levchak, 2018a; Majors et al., 2020).

Therapeutic narratives around working with children and young people, like the theory used to inform this work, has traditionally obscured Black and minority ethnic youth (Fernando, 2017; Malek, 2011; Street et al., 2005). As such they do not acknowledge and address that while racialised youth may experience the difficulties common to majority ethnic youth as they become adults, they also experience challenges specific to the context of their race, ethnicity and culture (Malek, 2011; Street et al., 2005). In addition to racism, culture specific stigma and adultification, a barrier to accessing effective, timely and sensitive mental health support should they require may include professionals that lack the cultural competence, skills, resources and reflexivity to provide them with culturally relevant support (Henderson et al., 2018; Malek, 2011; National Institute for & Mental Health in England, 2003).

The findings also suggested that cultural and community belonging promote positive psychosocial outcomes, that may mitigate against aspects of racial distress(Cote & Bynner, 2008; Sinclair & Milner, 2005). Clinical practice should endeavour to promote, accommodate and facilitate this as part of professional training of the workforce, through direct therapeutic work with young people and their families, during consultation and partnership working with other agencies that also serve young people.

Development, implementation and evaluation of interventions aimed at processing and making sense of the complex emotional responses racialised youth may experiences as a result of racism, othering and adversity in addition

the challenges of becoming an adult should be prioritised. Arguably if these therapies are developed with the assumption that the experiences of British youth are the heterogeneous experiences o are developed flexibly to consider the contextual and varying experiences of experiences of strengthening intersectional cultural identity and a sense of belong through socialisation as a way to improve mental health and other psychosocial outcomes for young people are needed (Afuape, 2012)

The findings show that young people are looking for belonging and connection to other young people, to family and community context, and through this belonging and socialisation they feel better supported in their becoming adults. As such clinical psychologists need to think about how we can start to accommodate interventions that support young people in community settings to feel connection and belonging in ways that allow them to develop full and nourished personal, cultural and ethnic identities.

Staff development should include regular training around cultural competence and development of formal and informal reflective team practices to increase our critical awareness of the assumptions we hold and how they manifest in our work and interaction with colleagues, and service user (Henderson et al., 2018; Levchak, 2018b).

4.3.3. Service Level

Double consciousness is the conflict felt by subjugated people in an oppressive society (Du Bois & Edwards, 2007). As services we need to re-evaluate the messages transmitted to marginalised groups through strategy and service delivery about their value or place within the service. Policies like for example Prevent (Great Britain & Home Office, 2011) can promote practices and ethnocentric assumptions that promote suspicion, social segregation that can impact on racialised youth's therapeutic experiences of services.

Black and minority ethnic youth are under presented in CAMHS services, suggesting current services do not appropriately meet their needs. However,

there is also often a lack of robust and accurate data gathering systems and information about ethnicity and community belonging are often not consistently recorded (Majors et al., 2020). Additionally generic collective terms such as ‘African’, ‘Asian’ or ‘BAME’ obscure the ethnocentric identities of racialised young people and their psychosocial needs and how services engage with young people and their families to address their needs. (Majors et al., 2020).

In order to develop service that meet the needs of young people from Black and minority ethnic communities, the co-production of services with local communities and young people needs to occur (The Mental Health Taskforce, 2016; NHS England, 2015). How do we do we get buy in to participation?

The literature proposes the education system is an important organising structure for the transition to adulthood with the study findings suggesting young people’s identity construction and connection to their ethnocultural identities during this stage of development can be complex (Dunham et al., 1986; Wright et al., 2005). Mental health provision in schools could be extended outside of the management of anxiety and low mood to acknowledge and creatively address the links between cultural identity, belonging and good mental health (Department for Education, 2020; Department of Health & Social Care & Department for Education, 2017). Psychosocial interventions that join up with the curriculum and give permission for all students to talk about their cultural and social identity as part of the preparation to becoming an adult could be beneficial .

4.3.4. Organisational and Policy Level

The findings of this research show that young people do not feel like adults at the age of 18yrs and continue to require support from their parents, financially, emotionally and socially for a long time. Specialist mental health services tailored to the psychosocial need of young people up to the age of 25 have been explicitly recommended in Government policy since the publication of the Futures in Mind Paper (Department of Health & NHS England, 2015). Focus should continue to be placed on facilitating the commissioning and provision of these services to ensure better joined up working with other agencies who come into contact with

young people and can link them into to timely and appropriate mental health support, (Majors et al., 2020; NHS England & DoHaS, 2016). Development of these services should be informed by multidisciplinary that considers the complex

4.4. Recommendations for Future Research

Further research that elaborates on the current findings of how Black and minority ethnic youth's make sense of their identity and respond to becoming adults in the context of their lived experiences in the UK is required.

Cultural identity and belonging were identified a social mitigators of the impact of racism but participant's narratives also suggested a range of psychological tools for managing and perhaps resisting the impact of structural adversity. Further research that explored the psychological and social tools young people used to cope in the face of ethnically mediated adversity and hardship would be beneficial for informing how mental health services might engage with youths from subjugated communities.

Experiences of racism can bring up complex and difficult emotions that have implications for mental health support. The findings suggested shame related to their subjugated identities and specifically the silencing of their ethnocultural identities in the context of racism and othering may likely racialised young people. But is largely absent from the literature around becoming an adult. Exploration of minority ethnic youth's experiences of shame in the context of othering could provide valuable insights for mental health provision and recommendations for types of therapy recommended for use adolescents and young people.

Further exploration across a range of intersectional subjugated groups would be helpful for understanding more about the transition to adulthood for these young people, as a way of bringing their narratives into the light. These could include but are not limited to, minority ethnic youth from across the diaspora, minority ethnic youth with disabilities who are often excluded from the literature, ethnically marginalised queer youth.

4.5. Critical Evaluation

Critical evaluation of the this research draws on the notion of Trustworthiness in relation to narrative research as discussed by Polkinghorne (2007) and Riessman (1993).

4.5.1. Transparency

The transparency of this research was addressed by detailing the procedure of my analytic approach Appendix J and evidencing my interpretative analysis through the inclusion of direct extracts of participants 'transcripts and excerpts of coding Appendix K along with a section of my research journal Appendix L to enable factors shaping my analysis and interpretation of stories in line with narrative methodologies.

4.5.2. Plausibility

Plausibility was attended to by choosing excerpts from the data best believed to illustrate the narratives presented. The data was iteratively grounded in the transcripts and research question as part of an inductive process of adapted systematic narrative analysis (Crossley, 2007; Fraser, 2004)

4.5.3. Coherence

The coherence of the research was addressed by ensuring methodological consistency, that is that the research aims, critical realist epistemology and adapted systematic thematic narrative analysis approach methodology, were best suited to exploring the central constructs of Adulthood, ethnicity, and adversity (2.2). Peer supervision was used to explore my interpretations of participants' narratives and my my retelling of participants' authored stories was presented and discussed through the temporal unfolding of the key events narrated in order to locate interpretive meaning within the entire account (Riessman, 2008).

4.6. Strengths

4.6.1. Addresses a Gap in the literature

To the best of the researcher's knowledge this study is unique in that it is the first UK based narrative project that explores Black and minority ethnic youths'

experiences of becoming adults in the context of their lived experiences. As such it centres the voices of a subjugated and underrepresented youth in the literature and providing novel findings including the ways in which British racialised minority ethnic youth dynamically construct their experiences of adulthood in the context of the spaces they occupy. The research identifies clear implication for clinical psychology practice, research, training service provision and policy with actionable suggestions.

4.6.2. Consultation

By consulting groups of potential stakeholders, including an expert by experience, psychotherapy clinicians and young people, meaningful collaborative decisions about the ethical relevance and focus of the study design could occur (2.3.1; Kalathil, 2013; Rose & Kalathil, 2019).

4.7. Limitations

4.7.1. Context of Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 Pandemic impacted the data in terms of the content of participants' stories, the recruitment strategy and the data collection strategy.
Following the closure of youth spaces, through which I initially intended to recruit participants, I began to predominantly advertise the research study on social media platforms and through personal and professional networks.

The interviews were carried out via video-conferencing software, instead of face-to face with the option of a telephone interview on a research specific number if the young person preferred. Participation in the interview also required participants organising their own private space. Whilst every practicably reasonable effort was made to accommodate prospective participants' accessibility needs, the recruitment strategy and data collection methods, may have inadvertently excluded some technologically disadvantaged young people consequent to their covid-related inaccessibility to suitable resources. This reflects structural disparities as discussed in the research that limit young people's inclusion. This may have introduced the possibility of responder bias (Lavrakas, 2008) as a result of Social media algorithms that present users with information in line with their existing interests. Additionally, word of mouth

referrals of participants with shared life experiences, cultural contexts, views and beliefs. However, all participants appeared to have relatively diverse ethnic backgrounds and demographic features.

The global covid-19 pandemic, changed the course of participants' lives and how they engaged with this research and the world around them, the effects of which were storied in their accounts (3). As the narrative analytic approach utilised was concerned with the stories of becoming adults participant's construct in context (Riessman, 2008) this content reflected their storied realities and so contributed to the data.

4.7.2. Inclusion Criteria

Initially, the inclusion criteria experience of hardship specified individuals having accessed psychological therapies, education, housing, employment, sexual health, drug and alcohol services as the literature states that these interrelated areas are determinants of mental health issues in young people and may result from adversities experienced by individuals in childhood (Schilling et al., 2007a; World Health Organisation, 2013). Therefore, it was believed to follow that young people accessing these services for support would be more likely to have also experienced adversity and analysis of their stories would also speak to the research questions. However, further exploration of how to engage with the target population following challenges in recruitment as a result of Covid-19, led me to revisit the literature which highlighted that while experiences of adversity were often interrelated with experiences of mental health, for a number of reasons, including perhaps that young people may not formally pathologises these experiences themselves, young people are often less likely to access support for difficulties in a timely way (Kessler et al., 2005), and young people from marginalised and racialised groups even less so (Young Minds, 2014). Therefore, the clinical specificity of this criterion was reduced to reflect this, as was the recruitment strategy.

4.7.3. Sample Size

As previously discussed (2.3.4) recruitment proved difficult in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and as a result fewer participants than planned (four) were

recruited to the study. Narrative methods are concerned with the processes through which individuals make sense of their experiences. The aim is for the storyteller (participant) and listener (researcher) to co-construct data that allows the complexities of the social phenomenon in question to be fully appreciated and understood at multiple levels of context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Crossley, 2007). As a result, the assumption is not that the sample is likely to be typical of a particular population for which broad generalisations can be made but that they are an individual in context whose story will be a product of their experiences and context over time (Riessman, 2008). Narrative methodologies often use case study approaches to gathering data and with sample sizes often indicated by the approach, type of data to be gathered, and the research aims central to the study (Crossley, 2007; K. Etherington, 2011; Riessman, 1993).

While a sample of four can be at risk of homogeneity, the narrative interviews lasting on average over one hour, facilitated the generation of rich data that provided complex and novel insights in young people's stories of becoming adults.

Within the sample two participants were distantly known to me , as they were friends of a family acquaintance and so we had met many years ago at a limited number of social occasions. Conducting qualitative data in the context of prior relationships can prove difficult to navigate as the narrative interview aims to generate rich data that may include sensitive and difficult experiences, emotional states, and opinions (K. Etherington, 2011). Within narrative approaches the researcher aims to take up a position of not knowing however, the participant may assume they already know specific information and the researcher may be guided by presumptions, shaping the way they both communicate during with the interview process and thus the data co-constructed (Mcdermid et al., 2014). As such my engagement in researcher reflexivity (4.8) and auditing data quality was of even greater importance. Factors such interview location and communication that could compromise participants' privacy in the context of prior relationships, were also considered and the existing measures in place were deemed to be appropriate (Mcdermid et al., 2014).

4.7.4. Heterogeneity of the sample

On the surface, this research appears to have gathered the small sample of participants up into a hegemonic group of 'non-White others'. However, in utilising a narrative methodology, the research does not treat participants as a collective with identical narratives but looks at their subjective individual stories to explore how they constructed and responded to their experiences of becoming adults in their context of their lived experiences. Additionally, despite the small participant sample (N=4) there was relative heterogeneity (0) within the group However, all were in contact with the further or higher education systems and only one was in employment. Given that education systems are the dominant structural organiser of the process of transitioning to adulthood, it may have been beneficial to have a more educationally varied as a way of better understanding participants potentially related narratives.

It is important to emphasise that the hermeneutics of what we understand in the UK about peoples collectively racialised as 'Black' or 'Asian', is different to those who identify as British Nigerian, British Ghanaian, British Jamaicans or British Barbadians for example, in the same way that White British is not the same as Welsh, Northern Irish, Scottish or English. Each demographic descriptor is linked to nuanced historical, political, cultural, and hermeneutical differences that determine how individuals and communities defined as such experience the world (Akala, 2018). Throughout the research, I was guided by participants' self-expressions of 'ethnicity' (an individual's self-determined and contextually constructed racial, ancestral and cultural identity; Fernando, 2017). In doing so I hoped to minimise the mislabelling of participants by emphasising their intersectional identities and navigate how the merging of an individual's multiple political and social identities result in privilege and discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991).

4.7.5. Gathering the Data

4.7.5.1. Use of artefacts: This research was concerned with centring participants as co-constructors of knowledge in an attempt to mitigate the power disparities inherent within research. Therefore my aim was to facilitate participants' voice entitlement through multiple modes of communication (Boyd,

2010). Participants were offered the option of bringing an artefact of their choice with them to the interview. It was felt it might serve as a way to trigger exploration of the narratives of becoming an adult and allow them to share a familiar physical representation (Keats, 2009). When the interview time and date was arranged with participants, they were offered the option of bringing for discussion, an artefact they felt represented or spoke to their experience of becoming an adult. Providing multiple ways for participants could choose to author their preferred stories of the transition to adulthood would contribute to centring their voices and limit the power disparities within the conversation (Afuape & Krause, 2016; Lyons & Chamberlain, 2017).

During the narrative interview participants were firstly invited to talk about their artefact if they bought one with them and then share their story of becoming an adult. At interview, none of the participants opted to bring an artifact for discussion. However one of the participants when asked, did discuss a book they felt supported their transition to adulthood. No participants chose to bring an artefact, but one participant chose to discuss an object they had in mind and this discussion was in included in their transcript as part of their storying. This may have been due to preconceived notions that a research interview was governed by a question and answer format and participants possibly not having thought about how to symbolically represent their complex experience of becoming an adult. .

4.7.5.2. *Narrative interview*: Unstructured interviews were chosen following the consultation process, to better facilitate participants' self-directed telling of their stories . However, each participant engaged in the interview process guided by their pre-existing expectations about how to "perform" an interview (e.g. question an answer). Despite discussion of the unstructured process prior to the interview, most participants very quickly invited me to perform semi structured interview with them perhaps as a result of not knowing how to share their stories, (Frank, 2013; Schwartz et al., 2005) or due to preoccupation with being helpful to the aims of the study and providing useful information. As such, generating opportunities for these narratives to emerge requires a slightly different approach to the more conversational question and response style of a semi-structured

interview (Riessman, 2008). This requires the listener/ researcher to relinquish control of their research focus and the fixed frame of the interview schedule in favour of an unstructured approach guided by the participant/ narrator, who then has the freedom to share the stories important to them (Elliott, 2005).

4.8. Researcher Reflexivity

A narrative methodology was chosen as I felt it would facilitate the centring of participant voices and stories within their cultural context. I also hoped it would facilitate a more decolonised position as the stories around culture that were constructed by Ps with me would be contextualised. However, this created a research paradigms as my training and the fact that I was conducting and writing this research to pass the doctorate using the training and expertise developed within the professional setting of clinical psychology, developed and built on colonising patriarchal principles and currently commodified within neoliberal political structures of our society. As such, knowledges and narratives that may be revealed by another researcher who has not grown up within this setting or using truly decolonised approaches are lost.

My prior acquaintance with some of the participants was important to consider throughout the recruitment, data collection and analysis processes however as I had not been contact with them for some time, was not familiar with their recent history and was interested in centring their storied perspectives of their social reality of becoming an adult, I felt able to engage with each participant from a position of curiosity and not knowing (K. Etherington, 2020).

My visible shared identity with participants, as an ethnic minority occupying majority White spaces both personally and professional, made me an ingroup member within this research. I was conscious that consequently, participants might assume shared narratives of becoming an adult and so tell abridged stories with the presumption that I would fill in the gaps (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). I tried to remain alert to these moment during the interviews, making further enquiries about participants' narratives to co-construct rich stories. This appeared to allow participant's to be more vulnerable and narrate honest, personal and at times painful stories of their lives. Equally, I also tried to remain alert to when the

opposite was true and found myself storying my own experiences through participants' narratives. I addressed this by keeping reflective process notes across the different stages of the research to enable me to explore when my contextually grounded interpretations might be losing sight of the participants' narratives.

As researcher, whilst I was mindful of coming alongside the participants and centring their stories of becoming adults, I was also concerned with exploring the research aims, how culture and hardship featured within their stories. Whilst I tried to explore all aspects of participant stories to facilitate the richness of the narratives they shared, I also acknowledge that how I, drew to aspects of race and culture within participants' stories in my questioning , may have shaped how they co-constructed these narratives within their stories of becoming an adult.

4.9. Dissemination

A brief summary of this research will be made available to participants who requested a copy. I also hope to publish the research in a relevant academic journal and, or disseminate across appropriate clinical and academic settings.

4.10. Conclusions

This research is an attempted to meaningfully contribute to the existing literature on how British Black and minority ethnic youth construct their intersectional stories of becoming adults in the context of their experiences. Participants' narratives illustrated the nonlinear trajectory of becoming an adult and the dynamic and varying ways in which their context shaped how they drew on social and psychological resources to construct their developing adult identities. Racism and othering are integral structural constructs within the stories of British racialised youth, and intersect with their personal narratives of ethnicity and related adversity to shape their constructions of adulthood (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Syed & Juang, 2014). Conversely, for minority ethnic young living in majority White spaces, cultural socialisation at personal, community and wider social levels could facilitate a sense of belonging and empowerment through the dynamic claiming and integration of their multiple ethnocultural identities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; S. Schwartz & Unger, 2010). Additionally, this sense of

ethnocentric belonging seemed to offer some mitigation from the influence of structural racism and be beneficial to their psychological wellbeing (Sinclair & Milner, 2005).

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Scoping review

An initial search, was carried out using combinations of the search terms

“emerging adult” OR “Adult*” AND “ethnic minority” OR “BAME” OR “BME” AND “UK” which produced 1 relevant study.

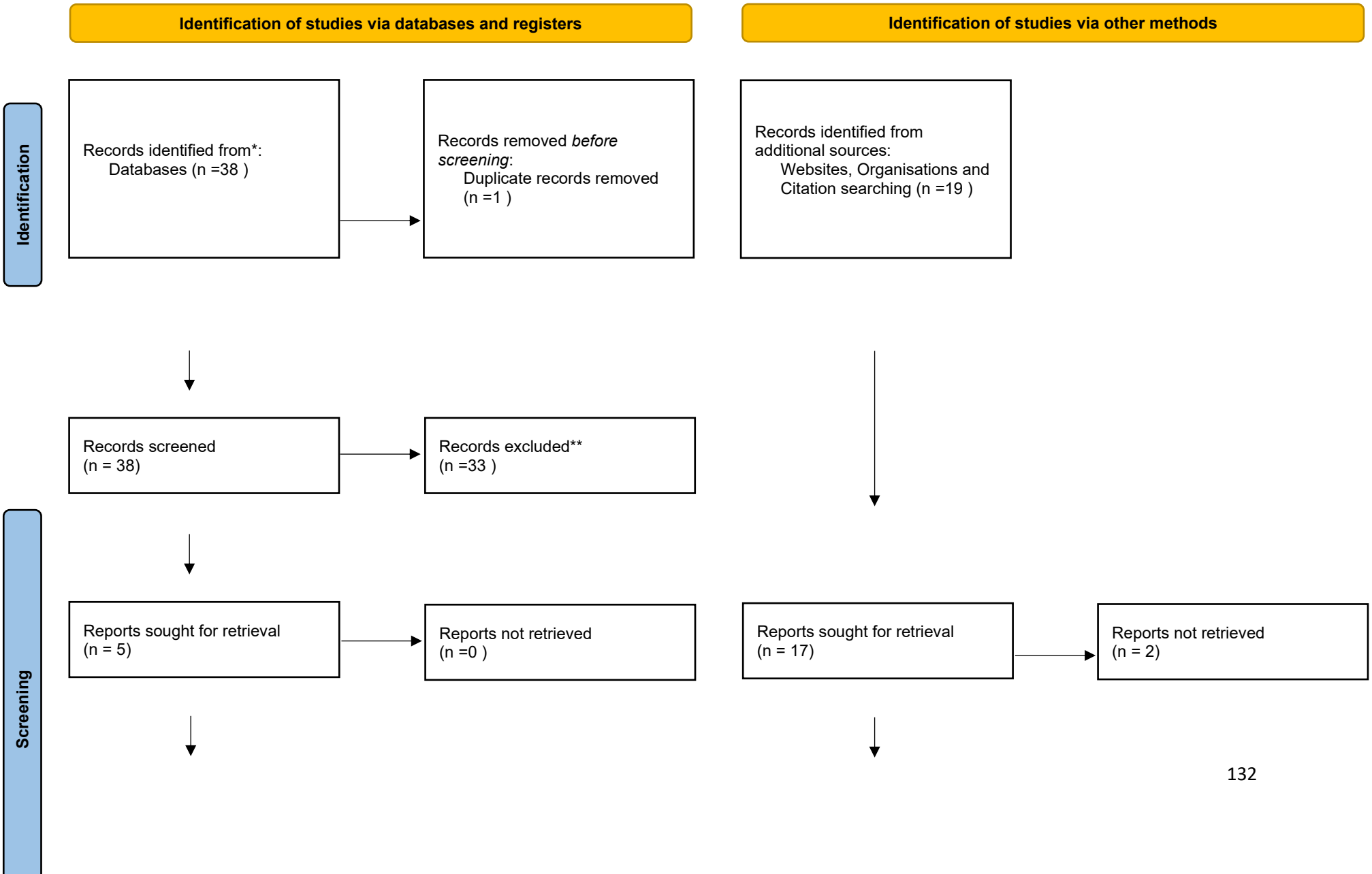
Following this, searches of CINHAHL Plus, PsychINFO, Psycharticles, Sage, Science Direct, and PubMed, were carried out using the following search terms: (“bame” OR “bme” or “black” or “ethnic minority” or “Asian” or “cultur*” OR diversity) AND (“emerging adults” or “young adulthood” or “18-25 years”) AND (“united kingdom” OR “uk” or “England” or “Britain”).

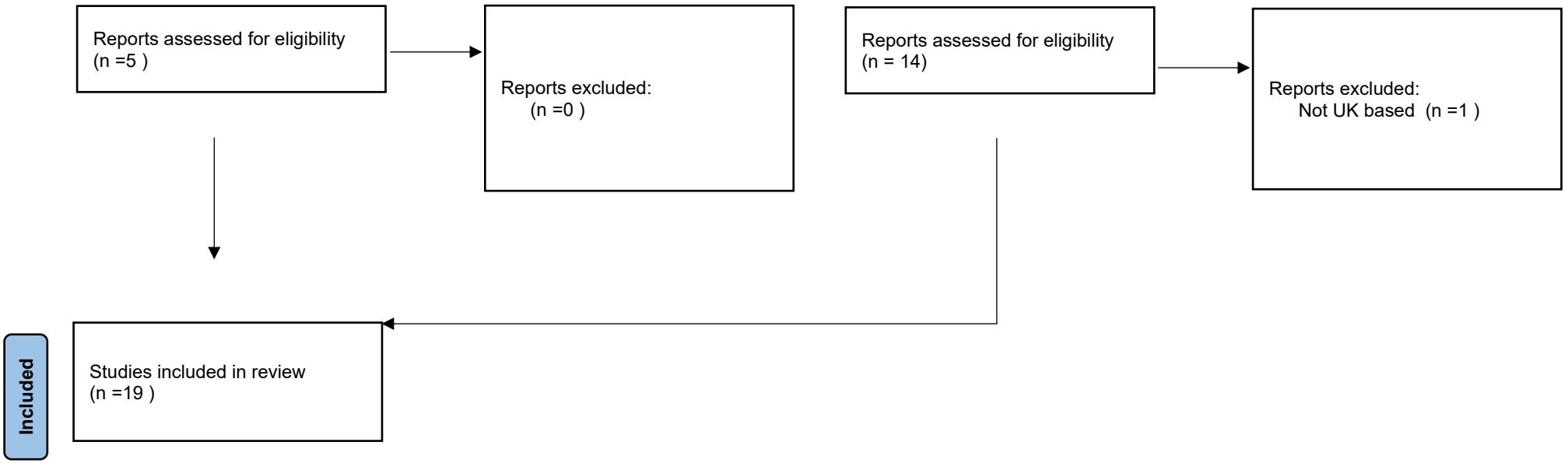
Search dates: 11.03.2021 and 13.03.2021

The main aim of the literature was to explore the literature on Black and minority ethnic youth’s transitions to adulthood

- Conceptualisations of the transition to adulthood
- Factors influencing the transition to adulthood
- Qualitative or mixed methodology literature

Appendix B: Scoping review Search Results

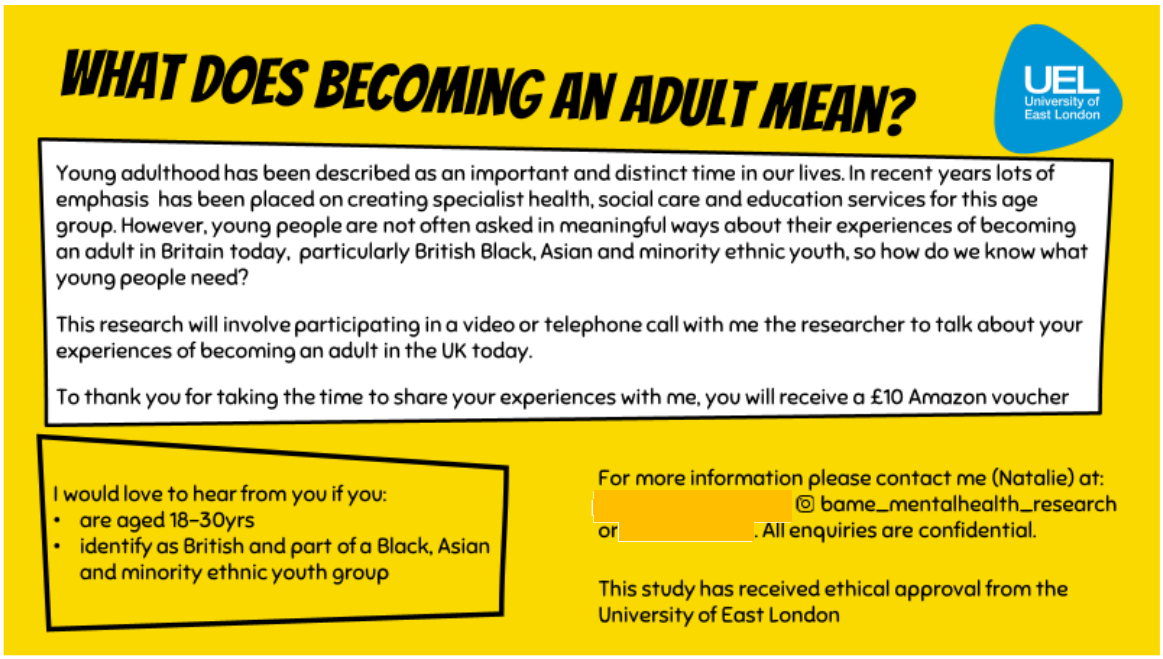



Reports assessed for eligibility
(n =5)
Reports excluded:
(n =0)
Reports assessed for eligibility
(n = 14)
Reports excluded:
Not UK based (n =1)
Included
Studies included in review
(n =19)

Appendix C: Recruitment Advert

Figure 5

Advert Used to Recruit Participants on Social Media



Appendix D: Email sent to Prospective Young People's Services

Dear X,

I am contacting you to ask if you would be able to share my research advert looking for participants for my doctoral thesis research with the young people who access your service. I am conducting research into young, British, Black, Asian and other minority ethnic peoples' stories of becoming adults as part of my Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of East London.

Existing research has described young adulthood as an important stage of development but also a time in which the first onset of adult mental health difficulties most often occurs. Additionally, on average young people access help 10 years after the first onset of symptoms, with poorer outcomes and increased barriers to appropriate support for young people from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups. As a result, in recent years a lot of emphasis has been placed on creating specialist health, social care and education services for young people up to the age of 25years old. However, young people's voices continue to be underrepresented in this process and they are rarely asked in meaningful ways about their experiences of becoming an adult in Britain today.

I am carrying out this study to better understand you people's stories of becoming an adult and how hardships and culture feature within them. The hope is that this knowledge will build on the existing information that informs how services work with young people, by better understanding what is important to them, some of the challenges they may face and how this might relate to their cultural and socioeconomic context.

I am interviewing young people for approximately one hour and asking them to share their stories as part of an informal one-to-one discussion with me. As there are many ways to share a story, each young person will also have the choice of bringing an object, song, photo, film, etc. that helps them communicate their story of becoming an adult to help start our conversations off.

The interviews will be undertaken via video or telephone call in line with the young person's preference and all participants will be offered a £10 Amazon shopping voucher for their contribution.

I am looking for participants that meet the following criteria:

- Young people aged 18-30yrs
- identify as British and part of a Black, Asian and other minority ethnic group
- Speak English fluently for the purposes of the interview.

I would be very grateful if you would consider supporting the recruitment of people to the study. If you are interested or have questions and would like to discuss the research further, please contact me on the email address or telephone number below.

Natalie Roswess – Bruce, Trainee Clinical Psychologist,
Email:

Supervised by Dr Ken Gannon, K.N.Gannon@uel.ac.uk

I look forward to hearing from you

Best Wishes

Natalie

Appendix E: Participant Invitation and Information Letter

Participant Invitation and Information letter

You are being invited to participate in the following research study.

Becoming an Adult Through Adversity: Young People's Stories of The Transition to Adulthood

This letter will give you the information you need to understand what participation will involve so that you can decide whether to take part. The current Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter/ antiracism movements are understandably causing a lot of change and distress for many people; therefore I am really grateful that you are thinking about taking part in this study at such a difficult and unusual time. Please take some time to read the following the information carefully. You may also find it helpful to talk this through with a caregiver, friend, or someone you trust.

Who am I?

My name is Natalie Roswess – Bruce and I am contacting you to invite you to participate in a research project as part of my postgraduate studies for a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of East London.

What is the research?

The research project will explore young people's experiences of become an adult. The aim of this research is to explore what becoming an adult means to young people and how difficult experiences and culture may influence this.

The hope is that this knowledge will build on existing information that informs how services work with young people, by better understanding what is important to you and some of the challenges you may face.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Why are you contacting me?

I am looking to involve young people aged between 18 and 30 years, who may have experienced difficult life events (e.g. bullying, parents separating, or the illness of a family member, etc.) and who see themselves as British and belonging to a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic group (BAME for short).

You are an expert because you will have more recent knowledge of what becoming an adult is like, including some of the things that can make becoming an adult challenging but also things that might make it easier.

What will I have to do?

Participation will involve an informal one-to-one discussion where you share your stories of becoming an adult with me. You can start wherever you like and talk about or share with me anything that feels important to you. So, if there is an object, song, photo, film, etc. that represents your story of what becoming an adult has been like for you, please feel free to bring it along.

Our discussion will not be like the ones that might take place during therapy. I am interested in hearing what you want to share and will listen to your stories with respect and without judgement. I may also ask you questions about what you share.

Interviews will take place via telephone or video call using Microsoft Teams at a time and date that we agree together. It will last up to 1 hour and will be audio

recorded. I am the only person who will have access to the recording of our discussion and no one from any services will be involved in the research.

Can I choose to stop the interview or take a break?

During our discussion things might come up that feel difficult to talk about. If this happens, you do not have to answer these questions. We can change the subject or take a break. You can also choose to stop the session at any time. If I notice that a particular topic feels difficult to talk about, I will check in with you to see how you are and if you feel ok to continue our discussion and what that might look like.

What if I do not want people to know I took part?

If you choose to take part, I will ask you to pick an alternative name as your alias. I will use this when speaking to you during the interview and when referring to any information you may share with me in the final report, to keep your identity confidential.

During our discussion we will agree not to refer to others by name, but if we do so by accident, I will remove any identifying information when I type it up and write the report.

What will you do with the information I tell you?

After our discussion, I will type up our conversation from the recording without your name or any identifiable information, so it is anonymous. I will look at the interviews of all participants together to identify any shared common themes discussed in relation to becoming an adult. These findings will be written up in the form of a research report which will be submitted for marking by the university as part of my degree. This report will also be publicly available on University of East London Research Repository. The research findings and anonymised illustrative quotes may also be published in a journal and shared with professionals who work with young people once I have completed the doctorate. No one will be able to identify you from the data that is included in the write-up.

Only I will have access to your personal contact information which will be kept in a password protected document separate from the recording and typed conversation on my UEL H: Drive. Once the written report has been marked and I have achieved my degree this data will be deleted.
The recordings of our discussions and the anonymised typed conversation will be labelled as your alias, encrypted, and stored securely in separate locations on a password protected computer and backed up on the secure electronically encrypted university server (OneDrive). Only I will have access to the recordings of our discussions and once transcribed, these will be deleted. The anonymised transcripts will be accessed by myself and my supervisor during analysis of the data. Anonymised illustrative extracts of the transcripts will also be included in the final written report submitted for examination and then publicly available on the University of East London Research Repository. On achieving my degree the anonymised transcripts of the interview will be stored solely on an encrypted external hard drive in a locked cabinet at my private property for five years and then destroyed in keeping with data management procedures and for purposes of publication.

If you would like, I can also send you a summarised version of the report via email. To receive a copy please let me know during the interview process.

Participants will receive a £10 Amazon voucher for recognition of time spent sharing their stories to help develop knowledge and understanding of the research topic. This will be an electronic voucher provided by email and will involve completion of a participant voucher claim form.

What if I change my mind about taking part?
Participating in this research is voluntary and will not affect your current or future access to any services.

If you agree to take part and then change your mind before or during the interview, you can withdraw from the research at any time by emailing me at the address below with no questions asked.

If you change your mind after we have finished the interview, you can contact me up to 3 weeks after and request to withdraw your data (I will give you the date at the interview). I will delete the recording of our discussion and any related information no questions asked. After 3 weeks data analysis will begin, and I will be unable to withdraw it.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Name: Natalie Roswess – Bruce, Trainee Clinical Psychology
Email:

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor
Name: Dr Kenneth Gannon, School of Psychology, University of East London.
Email: K.N.Gannon@UEL.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee:
Name: Dr Trishna Patel, School of Psychology, University of East London.
Email: t.patel@uel.ac.uk

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent To Participate In A Research Study

Becoming an Adult Through Adversity: Young People's Stories of The Transition to Adulthood

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep.

☐ Yes ☐ No

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.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

☐ Yes ☐ No

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.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me.

☐ Yes ☐ No

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.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I also understand that should I withdraw more than 3 weeks after the interview, the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data after analysis of the data has begun.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that anonymised extracts of my interview data will be included in a written thesis report and submitted for examination of the researcher's degree. I also understand and consent to the thesis report being published and publicly available on the University of East London Research Repository.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I consent to extracts of my anonymised research data being disseminated in journals and shared with relevant professionals as part of presentations of the study.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I would like to receive a summary of the study findings and consent to be contacted following completion of the interview process in order to receive this information.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…….

Participant’s Signature……..

Date: ……..…….

Researcher’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Researcher’s Signature ……

Date: ……..…….

Appendix G: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

The following is a guide to the areas that may be covered in the interviews. The direction each interview takes will be guided by the participant in conversation with the researcher and any questions below are examples of ways to open up avenues and ways of exploring and co-constructing participants' stories (K. Etherington, 2020).

Introductions, confidentiality and consent

- Reintroductions and acknowledgement of participation
- Housekeeping – Safe private space, taking a break if they need to
- Purpose of the interview
- Re-visit consent and their right to withdraw
- Reiterate confidentiality confirming the pseudonym by which the wish to be known for the duration of the research.

Demographics and hopes

- What would you like me to call you?
- How old are you?
- How would you describe your cultural/ethnic background?
- Participation in the interview can be daunting. Have you any hopes or concerns for taking part in the interview

[Begin recording the interview.]

Becoming an Adult

Artefact

- When we arranged this meeting, I invited you to bring something with you that represented what becoming was like for you if you wanted to. If you did bring something, please feel free to tell me about this?
    - Is there anything you wish you had bought with you that you were unable to?

No artefact

- Please tell me your story of becoming an adult. You can start wherever you feel comfortable. And share whatever you would like me to know. Initially I might not ask many questions as I am really interested in hearing what you have to say and so I want to give you space to do that in your own words uninterrupted.

- Why/ how/when did you know?
- you mentioned… what was that like for you?
- How/ what felt/ was different/like previous times in your life?
- …how might that relate to
- think/say
- Why was/is that important to you?
- Would you be able to tell me a little…?
- Earlier you spoke about…….. can you tell a bit more about that?
- What was that like for you?

Ending the interview

- Are there any questions you expected me to ask or topics you expected to talk about that have not come up as part of our discussion?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with me about becoming an adult?

Debrief questions

- How did you find talking about this today?
- How did you find taking part in the interview/ research?
    - Is there anything you would have liked to have been different?

Go through debrief form.

Appendix H: Participant Debrief Letter

PARTICIPANT DEBRIEF LETTER

Thank you for participating in my research study into Young People's stories of the transition to adulthood.

This letter offers information that may be relevant in light of you having now taken part.

What I am going to do with the information you have shared with me?

- To carry out this interview you provided me with basic contact details including your name and telephone number/email address. To protect your data, I have stored this information in an encrypted document, on my personal UEL H: Drive. Only I have access to this information.

- I will transfer the recording of our conversation onto my password protected computer and save it as an encrypted file labelled by your alias. This will be backed up on the secure electronically encrypted university server (OneDrive). Only I will have access to this data. I will then delete the recording of our conversation from the original recording device/ location.

- I will type up our conversation from the recording without any identifiable information, to keep your identity confidential within 4 weeks of our interview and then delete the recording. The anonymised typed interview will be labelled as your alias and stored on my password protected computer and backed up on the secure electronically encrypted university

server (OneDrive). This anonymous data will be used alongside that of the other participants to identify themes in relation to becoming an adult.

- I will share some of this anonymous data with my research supervisor when we are looking at the findings of the research. I will write up these finding in the form of a research report which will include short anonymous quotes to illustrate the themes. This research report will be submitted for marking by university examiners as part of my degree.

- The findings may also be published and shared with professionals who work with young people to help them think about the support they provide in the future.

- If you would like a full or summarised version of the report, you can let me know today or you can email me to request your preference.

What if you change your mind about taking part?

Participating in this research is voluntary and will not affect your current or future access to any services.

If you change your mind, Please email me by _____ (within 3 weeks) and request to withdraw your data. I will delete the recording of our discussion and any related information no questions asked. After this date analysis of the data will have started, I will be unable to withdraw it.

Our conversation has not left me feeling great…

It is not anticipated that you will be negatively affected by taking part in this research, and all reasonable steps have been taken to minimise any potential harm. Nevertheless, it is possible that during, or after our discussion things might come up that are difficult or distressing in some way.

If you have been affected in any of those ways, you may find the following resources or services helpful in relation to obtaining information and support:

- Get advice from 111 or ask for an urgent GP appointment if you feel you do not need emergency assistance but are worried about your mental health and safety or someone else's. Use the NHS 111 online service https://111.nhs.uk/, or call 111, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Your GP** can signpost you to relevant mental health and social care services in your area.

- **NHS Go** NHS app with confidential health advice and support for 16–25 year olds. nhsgo.uk

- **The Mix** provide support and advice for under 25s, including a helpline: 0808 808 4994, crisis messenger service: text THEMIX to 85258, and webchat: themix.org.uk

- **Shout** provide a 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It is a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help. Text "SHOUT" to 85258 or text "YM" if you are under 19.

- **Samaritans** has a free to call service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you want to talk to someone in confidence call them on 116 123. They also offer email support jo@samaritans.org with a response within 24hrs. For more information you can visit their website https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/

- **Young Minds** provides information and advice on looking after yourself and available support specifically for young people. You can access more information online: https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/
  Text the free Young Minds Crisis Messenger (YM to 85258), for free 24/7 support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors

- **Mind** provides information on mental health and support. You can access more information online: https://www.mind.org.uk/, or by telephone: 0300 123 3393, or text: 86463

- **Youth Access** provide advice and counselling network for young people, including details of free local services. For more information go to their website https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/

You are also very welcome to contact me or my supervisor 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.

Name: Natalie Roswess – Bruce, Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Email:

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor:

Name: Dr Kenneth Gannon, School of Psychology, University of East London.

Email: K.N.Gannon@UEL.ac.uk

Or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee:

Name: Dr Trishna Patel, School of Psychology, University of East London.

Email: t.patel@uel.ac.uk

Appendix I: Transcription Conventions

Table 1

Transcription Conventions – Adapted from (Dresing & Pehl, 2015)

Symbols	Description
(.)	Short Pause
(…)	
[Inaudible]	Inaudible
[…]	Text removed, (less than 20 words, in excepts only)
[-ing]	Researcher insertion for clarity
[Laugh] [cough]	non-verbal utterances
Ba/	Discontinued word
/.	Discontinued sentence/ phrase
[12-13]	Transcript line numbers (in excerpts only

Appendix J: Narrative Analysis Procedure

Analysis Procedures based on Crossleys's Systematic Approach (2000) and Bronfenbrenner (1979), Fraser (2004)

Interview	Following each interview, I recorded initial impressions of the participants' stories. reflected on the emotions expressed and what they elicited in me throughout our conversation in my research journal
Transcribing the Interviews	I transcribed each participant's interview verbatim, including repetitions unfinished sentences, silences and pauses, anonymising the information to maintain confidentiality. Punctuation was used to facilitate clarity and readability whilst maintaining sentence structure and units of meaning
Reading and Familiarising	I repeatedly read through the transcript to get a sense of prominent and common narratives and sub narratives developing an initial narrative map of individual participants' stories
Phase 4 Interpretation of individual transcripts	I analysed participants' individual transcripts systematically looking specifically at: The mini stories they told about becoming an adult the themes of these including key events, people, contexts and motivators the imagery and language use to convey their messages a. **Tone**: conveyed through the content of what is said and how the story is told and signifies the point of view of the writer. Device used to establish the mood (the atmosphere of the story and its overall feeling or vibe) and transfer this to the audience both throughout and at different points. Speaks to the narrator's attitude to the subject matter and to the audience, and may reflect personal attitude or opinion or those of 'other voices'/characters – Mood and tone do not always align

	i. Figurative language – simile, metaphor, hyperbole contribute to the imagery (mood) ii. Dialogue and descriptions (tone) iii. Conveys Points of view, attitudes and feelings that might otherwise be limited through just a few words iv. Word choice v. Punctuation, pauses vi. Sentence structure vii. McAdams(1993) attachment is a formative influence on narrative tone viii. common examples of tone used by writers to convey feeling: (https://literarydevices.net/tone/) ix. nostalgic x. regretful xi. joyful xii. envious xiii. persuasive xiv. dry xv. playful xvi. assertive xvii. pessimistic xviii. petulant

	xix. facetious xx. inspirational xxi. sympathetic xxii. ironic xxiii. conflicted xxiv. fearful xxv. reverent xxvi. nervous xxvii. anticipating xxviii. derisive b. **Imagery**: was we use images to make sense of who we are – dependent on the ideas/ language available to our culture (**family background, dominant narratives (morals, values, belief systems**) – tapping into shared experiences help audience relate understand a point/ message. i. Allows the narrator to show the audience rather than tell by making them draw on their own experiences. ii. Language used to describe and characterise life events and key elements of stories iii. Personally, meaningful image, symbols and metaphors – like identities imagery is discovered and made c. **Themes**: patterns in motivations and important things

	i. **What is driving Ps at different stages in the story**? ii. **Power (agency)** and **love (connection)** are the two most important/common in stories as they are fundamental human drives and often these needs become more apparent in relation to identity crisis – adolescence, illness, bereavement etc. iii. We become to notice more inconsistences between who we were and who we are/ becoming iv. Begin to ask self questions may never have asked before – who is the real me, who am I and these provide clues to underlying drivers and motivation d. These are not mutually exclusive (e.g. imagery contributes to the tone) and interact to create the whole narrative
Scanning across the domains of experience	To avoid analysis that focused on one dimension of participants' lives, I looked at how the narratives featured in participants stories related to their different ecological contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979): Micro - personal, Meso – groups: family, cultural, friends community Macro - structural features of participants' personal narratives - gender, recession, Brexit, health/mental health, education church/religion

Linking the personal with the political	In examining how dominant narratives could be used contextualise and understand participants' stories, I thought about participants' stories related to dominant existing narratives around becoming an adult and the impact of culture and adversity. I also thought about how their stories might relate to some of the literature of becoming an adult.
Commonalities and differences among participants	I also looked for similarities and differences in the content, style and tone the stories participants told to identify and shared or contrasting narratives that gave social context to their stories or indicate something about their stories of becoming adults.
Weaving the analysis together: Personal story to academic narratives	Using the interpretative working map of each participant's individual story, I began to construct my written analysis, reflexively revisited their stories and my research questions to check the coherence and validity and acknowledge of the subjectivity of my interpretations.
Write up	a. Reflection b. What we're trying to achieve c. Issues that arose – methodological and theoretical Qs related to narrative analysis e.g. link between personal and cultural narratives, familial and social environment i. How might the kind of narrative produced, and the autobiographical technique used endorse certain assumptions about the nature of the self and identity? E.g. turn inwards to inner/core self through exploration past and memories of childhood etc.

	d. Validity of Narrative Research i. Data influenced by the researcher ii. Parts of the participants' identities can only be understood in relation to the whole iii. Well-grounded and supportable (Polkinghorne, 1988)

Appendix K: Sample of coding, narrative development and story construction

Table 2

Sample of Initial Coding Following Familiarisation with the Transcript

Key events (mini stories)	• Living with her sister • Sister moving out • Being different/ othered • Becoming ill and dropping out of college • Finding financial independence • Becoming an Auntie and finding my purpose • Going to university
Significant people	• Sister • Mum • Friends
Future script	Wanting to become a teacher be successful and financially self sufficient Felling more confident and socially resilient
Current stresses and Problems	• Asking for help • Social battery • Isolation

Personal Ideology	Faith
Life Theme	Growing up as coping/overcoming/ learning to be self sufficient

Table 3

Sample of Narrative development

Chapters	**Extract from the Transcript**	**Narratives, (Personal, Community / group, societal/ political/ historical)**	**Sub-narratives**	**Imagery**	**Themes**	**Narrative Tone**	**Interpretation**
	Yeah. I'd say I think for me when I look back I think of like friendships and school and that. For me that was like a really big and important part of growing up. For me all my friends were older than me as well, so I felt like I was always the youngest, so I	Belonging (Personal)	Adulthood as aspirational and something look forward to a positive		Friendships School as an organising structure? Adultness as desired Motivator: fitting in		Wanting to fit in with friends and be the same as. desire to be older as a logical result of her situation of being the youngest - incidental Friendships and connection are important

	was always trying to be more grown up as well.						Needing to look back to make sense of becoming an adult – perhaps becoming an adult does not happen overnight but it is a gradual and developing process the beginning of which is blurry and cannot be quantified? Indicator of narrative voice - me now looking at me then - there has been a change of something that she has an awareness of as a function of the

							retrospective capacity that comes with the passage of time?
	Uhm (…) But yeah in school (…) hmm yeah I don't really know. It's weird because when I look ba- when I think back, I can't really think of (...) a lot apart from like school memories. I can remember my sister coming to pick me up from school. Um and then I can think of when I was old enough I would go to my friend's house before school and after school. And then my sister moved	Loss – personal Individualisation - wider	Loss of childhood Loss or care Loss of control. power	transition and growing up as people falling away until she is alone. a small child left to be grown up	Sister Mom School Age opening possibilities Loneliness Separation and isolation from Motivator/stressor: connection and isolation Powerlessness		Loss of childhood but also the loss of the care that is expected with family connection There is an absence of something/ the other dimensions of the child life that is unsaid in the contrast to the dominion of school and a sense of life revolving around that or of school being of great importance or

	out. And then it was very much just me and my mom. And then I was just by myself and (…). Yeah.						perhaps of least distress. Other things outside of this are lost and cannot be remembered Also the absence of a father not spoken about This opening story appears to set the scene for Jade's entire narrative which appears to be one of loss facilitating becoming an adult. Sense of being done to, incidental and have no control over it, things just happen but without

							explanation - perhaps indicative of reflective nature and ability to make links to triggers or resistance to think about the difficult aspects of her life, journey of processing and talking about these difficult experiences.
	(…) And then I went to college. (…)I think in college that's when I grew up the most because. Like I. I got ill like um. I just got really bad like depression and anxiety and yeah I don't know. Then it just led		Growing up as learning to survive the struggles Adulthood as not having to		Mental health Loss of organising structure of education system		Internal narrative: - direct thoughts at the time highlighting decision making but only what not why or how or who may have helped her

	to me like becoming really (...) I don't know like socially awkward. so like/. And then I dropped out of college. I didn't enjoy that. And then (...) I didn't know what I wanted to do. And then I thought I'm going to try and go through uni again. But this is for the first time actually. I went and I applied and I didn't get in. And (...) I don't know (…) I was just so sad so I thought I'm just going to work for a bit and then that's really when I felt a sense of freedom. Like I had my own money. I then like I started driving. I got a		being accountable to anyone. Financial independence as key to autonomy		Independence and self sufficiency Employment Financial independence as turning point Motivator: independence and autonomy		come to that conclusion. The beginning of something new. Of starting to feel different in some way more hopeful perhaps less sad, definitely more freedom and maybe feeling like life was less dependent less vulnerable to the decisions of others

	car and I really like/ I could do what I wanted really like. There was nothing/ I didn't need to ask my mom to go out. I didn't need to say when I was coming in because I could drive home. And yeah, work and having money and financial freedom.						
	And then I've come to uni and this is a whole new sense of freedom. I do my own washing and do my own food shopping and cooking for myself. Uhm I very much feel grown. But then I also feel very reliant on other people where I don't have a job right now.	Adultness as self-sufficiency			University limiting adultness		Going to university as both arresting and progressing development in different ways. A give and take of different opportunities.

	It's kind of like going forward and backwards at the same time because I don't have a job. I don't have my car. But then I'm also independent and in like a new place with new people. So it's a/ it's a/. It's a difficult/. I still feel like I've um got a lot more growing up to do. But I don't know.						
	I was also I grew up in a very like white community. Like there was like 10 black people in my school. I think that that played a part like. Even in my history classes when it was like about slavery or	Narratives of Everyday Othering /racialised existence	Internalised narratives of Whiteness Loss of innocence		Seeing myself through the eyes of Whiteness Solidarity through		Played a part in what? (MH?) - something is inferred and there appears to be an expectation that the listener will make the link to something that has

	something. People would just be looking at me or/. Luckily I had another black person in my history class so they're looking at us and it was just so awkward. Erm and then like walking through town people always look. People always just (…) I don't know but it was a very different reaction to me than it was to my friends. (…) Yeah I'm trying think of what else.	Self sufficient Alone	Narratives of worth and representation Narratives of Survival Narratives of		shared oppression Microaggressions Acceptance and normalcy of oppressed position		already been said perhaps or know what is not being spoken about. - because of indicators of a shared identity - black, female?
Figuring out where I belong in the world/	*It's like I didn't really notice it when I was younger. And then it would be small stuff like going into shops and like the security guard*	Whiteness Belonging (Personal)	Everyday Othering belonging	Cleansing expunging something away something	Seeing myself through the eyes of Whiteness		Navigating a racialised existence in an environment where the behaviours of others

	would come follow me but not my friends and stuff like that. Or just people just giving me looks because where I live it's a lot of like older White White middle class people. So just give me a lot of looks Um I don't know it doesn't really bother me now. But I think I used to get bothered about it actually. In fact I definitely did used to get bothered about it. There was one point where I think I was just/. I didn't really know (…) who (…) I was or (…) anything like that. So like to really like love myself.		Double consciousness Racialised stereotypes	that was dirty, a dirty or disgusting part of the self. Emotional pain being manifest as a physical pain through the scrubbing. Purifying, purging, decontaminating	Othering Acceptance and normalcy of oppressed position Mental health Identity Loss of innocence Belonging Motivator: fitting in Stressors: being othered Control		signal to you that you are different to them and the painful impact of that on her sense of self/ identity. when sharing things remain unsaid but allow the listener/ audience to make inferences about what else people would do. Comfort/ importance of having a partner/ally to share the experience/ load/ burden of being othered.

	So I really wanted to be white. There was just this point where I like literally got bleach from under the cupboard and was like really like scrubbing my skin. I really just wanted to be white. I wanted to be like my best friend. (…) I don't even know what changed from that because I love myself now. I don't know. I felt like that being/ where I grew up really did play a role. Like a really big part of the way I grew up and. Yeah I don't know. I'm just gonna have a drink quick.[48-60]						racism/discrimination has been sanitised to 'looking' too risky to talk about in an explicit way - something so innocuous but also so visceral - look appears to be a palatable code or perhaps is indicative of the can't quite put a finger on itness/ hard to describeness of the experience of everyday othering that makes it easy for those on the otherside to think

							nothing of it/notice the effect of their actions.
Backstory??	*"Yeah. And also, like my sister moving out. Um like we we've got a seven year age gaps so she moved out like basically when she was like 17 and then I was by myself. So I was like nine ten something like that. I have basically like went through my whole teenage years without her. It does make me a bit a bit sad because I feel like it would have been different*	Loss (personal) Connection (personal)	Childhood loss of an important caregiver/guide Roles of older siblings – to pave the way and lead you along			Often talks about what perhaps appear to be quite difficult things in a detached and factual	Adulthood as being responsible, accountable so someone other than yourself - motivator for growing up - values? living for others having to be better for others you now have to and want to answer to.

	if she still was with me in the house to like teach me these things and stuff like that. But yeah (…)"		Need to learn how to be an adult from others Socialisation into the role			way. other than the words sad in referenc e to her current reflectio ns of the past very few/ little emotion al languag e is used through	

						the story. However in creating an absence of feelings the teller draws the listener in to infer those the absence of those	

						experiences or the loss of those experiences might have been like without having to get in contact with what might be very difficult feelings.	

						Creates an air of a story teller who understands that others have to live their lives and perhaps speaks to a sense of wanting to not be	

						depend ent but at the same time creates an air of melanch olic regret and a desire for what could have/ might have been if things had	

						been different .	

Figure 7

Narrative Structure and Story Development: Version 1

Figure 6

Narrative Structure and Story Development: Version 2

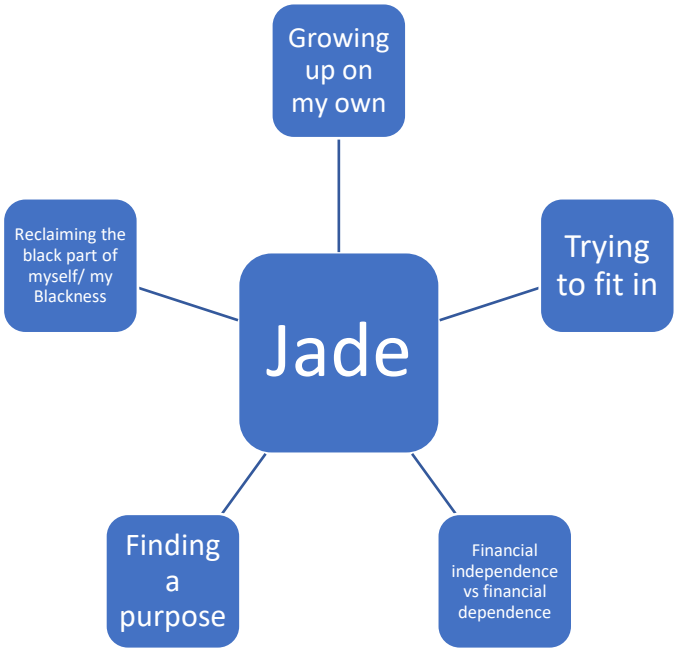
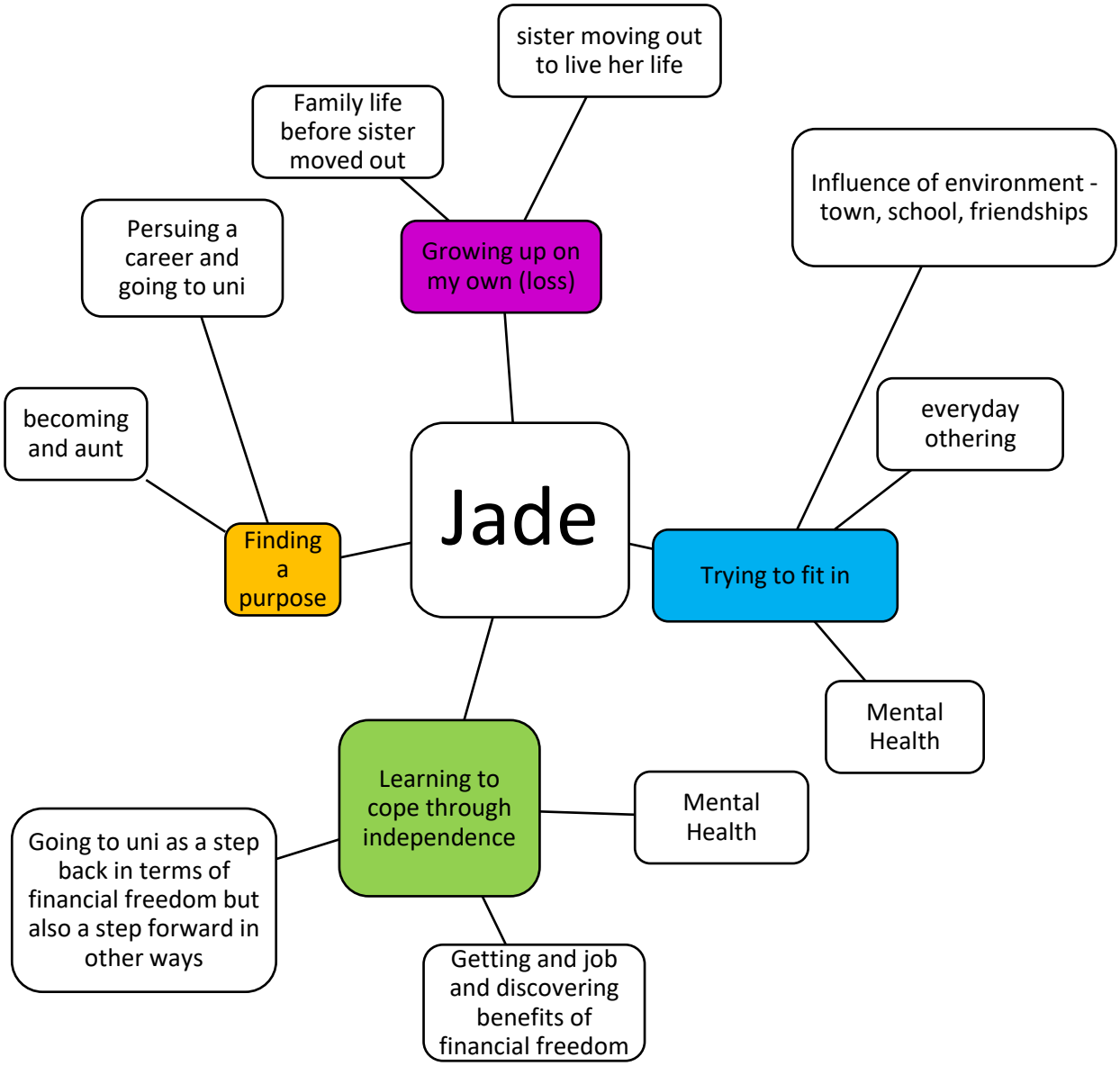


Figure 8

Narrative Structure and Story Development: Version 3



Appendix L: Research Journal Excerpt

Post Interview B

Intellectualising as defence? Seemed really confident in a lot of ways but then at some points unsure lot of historical/political social narrative, slavery etc – knowledge in power – cultural – if you know everything there is to know you can't be tripped up??

Experience of MH as well – Double consciousness?

Blackness in Britain

Rebellion (teenage) against strictness of upbringing

Humorous at times and quite insightful

Gendered roles – reproduction as adult status??

Post interview Ja

Melancholy

So much sadness and loneliness which made me feel so sad for her

Was probably therapizing her a bit – reflective summarising instead of just mirroring or asking what happened next question. Felt like there was a bit of process going at some points. Probably wasn't as thorough and took a gently gently approach

Slightly shorter interview but more emotive – bleach – Double consciousness+++++++

Reread paper and mixed heritage identity

Story/narrative arc check with the group - sense of reclaiming – thinks are looking up, work in progress but feeling more culturally connected- to family, sister, nephews

Compiling narrative structure and selecting quotes

I feel quite tentative about presenting some elements of the stories due to how they may be perceived or how I feel my interpretations might be feeding into disparaging stereotypes. As I started selecting quotes for the retellings of their accounts I realised that I was doing a sort of protective censoring in order to present the most acceptable part of them – had to check myself and realise that actually participants told me these things perhaps because they wanted them to be known and I don't have the right, needs to sensor if that is what the contextual

narrative says particularly if it relates to marginalised experiences or internalise othering. It relates to their experience in context. If only I'd was allowed to go back to them and check. I also feel like I might have done some of them a disservice. – perhaps it suggests I need to go back to the transcripts and do some re re re-structuring and check in with the group. Or is this just my stuff, worries about how my work will be received – likely.

Appendix M: Ethics Application Form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
(Updated October 2019)

FOR BSc RESEARCH
FOR MSc/MA RESEARCH
FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE RESEARCH IN CLINICAL, COUNSELLING & EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Completing the application

1.1 Before completing this application please familiarise yourself with the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) and the UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics (2015-16). Please tick to confirm that you have read and understood these codes: [X]

1.2 Email your supervisor the completed application and all attachments as ONE WORD DOCUMENT. Your supervisor will then look over your application.

1.3 When your application demonstrates sound ethical protocol, your supervisor will submit it for review. By submitting the application, the supervisor is confirming that they have reviewed all parts of this application, and consider it of sufficient quality for submission to the SREC committee for review. It is the responsibility of students to check that the supervisor has checked the application and sent it for review.

1.4 Your supervisor will let you know the outcome of your application. Recruitment and data collection must NOT commence until your ethics application has been approved, along with other research ethics approvals that may be necessary (see section 8).

1.5 Please tick to confirm that the following appendices have been completed. Note: templates for these are included at the end of the form.

- The participant invitation letter [X]

- The participant consent form [X]

- The participant debrief letter [X]

1.6 The following attachments should be included if appropriate. In each case, please tick to either confirm that you have included the relevant attachment, or confirm that it is not required for this application.

- A participant advert, i.e., any text (e.g., email) or document (e.g., poster) designed to recruit potential participants.

  Included [x] or

  Not required (because no participation adverts will be u[ ])

- A general risk assessment form for research conducted off campus (see section 6).

  Included [x] or

  Not required (because the research takes place solely on campus or online) [ ]

- A country-specific risk assessment form for research conducted abroad (see section 6).

Included [ ] or

Not required (because the researcher will be based solely in the UK) [x]

- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate (see section 7).

Included [ ] or

Not required (because the research does not involve children aged 16 or under or vulnerable adults) [x]

- Ethical clearance or permission from an external organisation (see section 8).

Included [ ] or

Not required (because no external organisations are involved in the research) [x]

- Original and/or pre-existing questionnaire(s) and test(s) you intend to use.

Included [ ] or

Not required (because you are not using pre-existing questionnaires or tests) [x]

- Interview questions for qualitative studies.

Included [x] or

Not required (because you are not conducting qualitative interviews) [ ]

- Visual material(s) you intend showing participants.

Included [ ] or

Not required (because you are not using any visual materials) [x]

Your details

1.7 Your name: Natalie Roswess - Bruce

1.8 Your supervisor's name: Dr Nicholas Wood

1.9 Title of your programme: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

1.10 UEL assignment submission date (stating both the initial date and the resit date):

Initial date: May 2021, resit date: May 2022

Your research

Please give as much detail as necessary for a reviewer to be able to fully understand the nature and details of your proposed research.

1.11 The title of your study:

Becoming an Adult Through Adversity: Young People's Perspectives Of The Transition To Adulthood

1.12 Your research question:

1. What does becoming an adult mean to participants who identify as non-white British?
2. How might experiences of adversity influence participant's meaning making of becoming an adult?
3. How might culture influence participants' meaning making of becoming an adult?

1.13 Design of the research:

As this is an exploratory piece of research, a qualitative approach will be taken. The data will be gathered via semi structured interviews with participants, conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform, WhatsApp or telephone, in agreement with participants and in accordance with current government guidance around Covid-19. Individual interviews were chosen over a focus group to maintain participants' confidentiality should sensitive information come up during discussion and to offer a space where participants felt free to talk openly and frankly with the interviewer. The data produced from this interview will be analysed using narrative thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008).

1.14 Participants:

Participants inclusion criteria

- Aged 18-25 years old*
- Identify as non-white British,
- Have accessed psychological therapies, education, housing, employment, sexual health, drug and alcohol services**

*The age range Arnett, (2000, 2004) defined as emerging adulthood
** The literature states that these interrelated areas are determinants of mental health issues in young people and may result from adversities experienced by individuals in childhood (Schilling et al., 2007a; World Health Organisation, 2013). Therefore, young people accessing these services for support are more likely to have also experienced adversity and analysis of their testimonies will also speak to the research questions.

1.15 Recruitment:

Participants will be purposefully recruited through voluntary sector organisations supporting young people around education, employment, housing, sexual health, substance misuse and health and wellbeing. The following organisations have initially been identified to support the

recruitment of participants, although this is not an extensive and final list, given participant recruitment may prove difficult as a result of covid-19:

- Steps Ahead,
- Lift,
- The Change Foundation: London Futures,
- FWD Drug and Alcohol Service.
- Carers First
- Step Forward
- MAC-UK

A research advert (**Error! Reference source not found.**) will be disseminated to potential participants via consenting charitable organisations inviting them to take part in the research project. Interested eligible prospective participants will be invited to opt-in and find out more information by contacting the researcher via a secure email address or text message. The researcher will purchase a separate sim card which will be used in a password protected mobile phone separate to the researcher's usual mobile device and used for the purposes of research only. No one other than the researcher will have access to this device. The involvement of charitable organisations in the research will end here.

The researcher will contact prospective participants who opt-in to arrange a time to discuss the research and participation in more detail either over the phone, or via Microsoft Teams or WhatsApp, in line with their preference and resources. The participant invitation and information sheet (**Error! Reference source not found.**) will also be provided via email or WhatsApp so prospective participants can look over this, as part of their conversation with the researcher about consenting to participate. If the prospective participant agrees to take part in the research, they will be asked to sign a consent form (**Error! Reference source not found.**) and the researcher will arrange a time with them on a later date to carry out the semi-structured interview either via Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp or telephone.

If recruitment proves challenging, the research advert will also be posted on the researcher's social media sites and other voluntary sector organisations with a national reach, or engaging potentially marginalised young people in leisure, sport or creative interests will be approached. Such organisations may include

- The Mouth that Roars
- Hackney Quest
- Voluntary Centre Hackney
- Young Minds

Narrative analysis focuses on exploring the processes through which individuals make sense of their experiences as opposed to seeking to make generalisations across populations. Therefore, the approach does not typically use a statistical sampling method (Mishler, 1996). Narrative analysis typically includes small samples of 5-6 participants to facilitate in-depth engagement with the narratives (Frank, 2012; Gilbert, 2002). Based on this, sample size of between 8-10 participants has been chosen to allow for varying interview quality, attrition, and unforeseen difficulties with recruitment (Mason, 2010).

1.16 Measures, materials or equipment:

The study will require the following materials:

- Interview schedule (**Error! Reference source not found.**)
- Research Advert (**Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.**)
- Invite and information sheet (**Error! Reference source not found.**)
- Consent form (**Error! Reference source not found.**)
- Participant debrief sheet (**Error! Reference source not found.**)
- Microsoft Teams
- Digital Dictaphone to record interviews
- Gift vouchers for participation in the research
- Password protected mobile telephone and sim card

- Word for the transcription of interview recordings
- NVivo for analysis of the data
- Secure password protected computer with access to the secure electronically encrypted university server (OneDrive) and the researcher's encrypted UEL H: Drive

1.17 Data collection:

The data will be gathered via semi structured interviews with participants. Due to the current context regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews will take place either via Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform, WhatsApp or telephone, in line with government guidance and as dictated by the resources of the participant. Microsoft Teams has been promoted by UEL as a secure platform to be used for all university-related communications and research.

Each interview may last up to an hour and be conducted by the researcher, facilitated by an interview schedule (**Error! Reference source not found.**) with questions compiled with reference to previous research and with attention paid to allowing participants space within which to share their experiences. To aid engagement and initiate the discussion on the topic during the interview, at the point of scheduling, each participant will also be offered the opportunity to bring for discussion a photo or object they feel relates to transitioning to adulthood.

The interviews will be audio recorded using either the function on Microsoft Teams with the participants' cameras switched off, or a Dictaphone as appropriate. The recording will be transcribed verbatim within 4 weeks and anonymised by the researcher onto their password protected computer and backed up on the secure electronically encrypted university server (OneDrive). The original interview recordings will be stored separately to transcripts (e.g. on Microsoft teams or the researcher's UEL H drive), depending on the method of recording used.

1.18 Data analysis:

Data gathered will be analysed using narrative thematic analysis to explore how participants' stories of their transitions to adulthood are described (Riessman, 2008). NVivo will be used to facilitate the analysis of data.

Confidentiality and security

It is vital that data are handled carefully, particularly the details about participants. For information in this area, please see the UEL guidance on data protection, and also the UK government guide to data protection regulations.

1.19 Will participants data be gathered anonymously?

No, data will be gathered through interviews conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams or WhatsApp with participants' camera turned off, or telephone call. Interviews will be audio recorded either by Dictaphone or the recording facility on Microsoft Teams. Participants may therefore be identified by their voice. The audio recorded data will be anonymised at the point of transcription, with all identifying information removed. Participant identifiable data (e.g. consent forms, audio recordings) will be stored separately to transcripts on the UEL H-drive until conferment of the researcher degree when they will be deleted.

1.20 If not (e.g., in qualitative interviews), what steps will you take to ensure their anonymity in the subsequent steps (e.g., data analysis and dissemination)?

Following interviews, the recordings of participants' data will be immediately transferred to the researcher's UEL H drive from the Dictaphone (if used) and then deleted from the password-protected audio-recording device. The data will be anonymised at the point of transcription, and transcripts will be stored in password-protected files on a password-

protected laptop computer. The laptop is a personal, non-networked, laptop with a password known only to the researcher.

1.21 How will you ensure participants details will be kept confidential?

While participants may be recruited through dissemination of adverts through charities, no members of staff will have direct involvement in the research, access to identifiable participant data, (e.g. completed consent forms, audio/video recordings of the interviews) or anonymised participant data other than excerpts included as part of the final research report.

Confidentiality of participant's data will be ensured by anonymising their data using their chosen pseudonyms during the transcription of recorded interviews and in reference to any extracts included in the final thesis and any resulting publications.

The researcher will ensure separation of personal, identifying data (e.g. consent forms, audio recordings, list of pseudonyms) from pseudonymised data (e.g. transcripts) by storing participants' personal identifying data in a separate location (i.e. their encrypted UEL H: Drive only) from their pseudonymised data. Only the researcher will have access to participant's personally identifying information.

Whilst participants will ne be asked to discuss difficult experienced in detail, disclosure of information that gives the researcher cause to believe someone may be at risk of harm may be a possibility. Participants will be informed prior to the interview that in the event of a disclosure of this kind, confidentially may be broken for the purpose of safeguarding and they will speak to their university research supervisor and potentially other agencies in order to ensure their safety or the safety of others.

1.22 How will the data be securely stored?

The names, contact details and participants' chosen pseudonyms will be stored in an encrypted password protected folder on the researcher's UEL H: Drive.

The audio recordings will be stored in an encrypted password protected folder on the researcher's password protected computer and backed up in an encrypted password protected folder on the researcher's UEL H: Drive. These recordings will be transcribed and anonymised within 4 week of the interviews. The recordings will be deleted from the researcher's password protected computer on conferment of the researcher's degree.

The transcript data will be stored in an encrypted password protected folder on the researcher's personal password protected computer and backed up on the secure electronically encrypted university server (OneDrive). Codes will be produced from analysis of the transcripts using NVIVO software and stored within the programme.

Following conferment of the researcher's degree. the transcript data backed up on the secure electronically encrypted university server (OneDrive) will be erased as they will no longer have access to this storage. At this time, an encrypted copy of the anonymised transcript data will be stored on an encrypted external hard drive in a locked cabinet on the researcher's private property. Only the researcher will have access to it. This anonymised transcript data will be retained for five years following conferment of the researcher's degree in keeping with data management procedures and for purposes of publication and then erased.

1.23 Who will have access to the data?

Only the researcher will have access to identifiable participant data (e.g. consent forms, recordings of the interviews). Only anonymised data will be shared with the research supervisor when necessary for the purposes of analysis or writing of the research report.

1.24 How long will data be retained for?

The consent forms including contact details for the purpose of arranging interviews, (names and contact telephone number and or email address), demographic data (age, gender, ethnicity, employment status,) and audio/video recordings of the interviews will be retained until conferment of the researcher's degree then they will be erased.

The anonymised transcript data will be retained for five years following conferment of the researcher's degree in keeping with data management procedures for purposes of publication and then erased.

Informing participants

Please confirm that your information letter includes the following details:

1.25 Your research title: X

1.26 Your research question: X

1.27 The purpose of the research: X

1.28 The exact nature of their participation. This includes location, duration, the tasks etc. involved: X

1.29 That participation is strictly voluntary: X

1.30 What are the potential risks to taking part: X

1.31 What are the potential advantages to taking part: X

1.32 Their right to withdraw participation (i.e., to withdraw involvement at any point, no questions asked): X

1.33 Their right to withdraw data (usually within a three-week window from the time of their participation): X

1.34 How long their data will be retained for X

1.35 How their information will be kept confidential. X

1.36 How their data will be securely stored X

1.37 What will happen to the results/analysis. X

1.38 Your UEL contact details. X

1.39 The UEL contact details of your supervisor X

Please also confirm whether:

1.40 Are you engaging in deception? If so, what will participants be told about the nature of the research, and how will you inform them about its real nature.

No

1.41 Will the data be gathered anonymously? If NO what steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of participants?

No, the researcher will ensure they follow Covid-19 and lone working NHS Trust guidance as appropriate, and inform their supervisor of scheduled interviews, the location/ mode and time of the interview and will agree to text them before and within a specified time after the interview as deemed appropriate to let the supervisor know they are safe. When carrying out remote participant interviews via video/ telephone, the researcher will try to ensure that they are in a private, quiet space in the researcher's home with no other people present to overhear participant responses. The researcher will also check that participants are also in their own remote space that

they feel is private, with minimal likelihood of being disturbed by others before beginning the recorded interview. Recording of interviews will not begin until after introductions, confidentiality and consent have been discussed and confirmed with participants (see guidance in interview schedule, Appendix D). At this point participants taking part over Microsoft Teams or WhatsApp, will be asked to turn off their video so only audio recordings of the interview are made to minimise the number of ways on which participants may be identified.

Confidentiality of participant's data will be ensured by anonymising their data using their chosen pseudonyms during the transcription of recorded interviews and in reference to extracts included in the final thesis and any resulting publications.

The researcher will ensure separation of personal, identifying data (e.g. consent forms, audio recordings, list of pseudonyms) from pseudonymised data (e.g. transcripts) by storing participants' personal identifying data in a separate location (i.e. their encrypted UEL H: Drive only) from their pseudonymised data. Only the researcher will have access to participant's personally identifying information.

1.42 Will participants be paid or reimbursed? If so, this must be in the form of redeemable vouchers, not cash. If yes, why is it necessary and how much will it be worth?

Participants will be offered a redeemable £10 voucher as reimbursement for their time spent participating in the semi-structured interviews as part of the research. This compensation is not large enough to be considered an inducement to participate. It is a small acknowledgement of the intrinsic value of participant's time and to thank them for their voluntary contributions to the research project.

Risk Assessment

Please note: If you have serious concerns about the safety of a participant, or others, during the course of your research please see your supervisor as soon as possible. If there is any unexpected occurrence while you are collecting your data (e.g. a participant or the researcher injures themselves), please report this to your supervisor as soon as possible.

1.43 Are there any potential physical or psychological risks to participants related to taking part? If so, what are these, and how can they be minimised?

Whilst the researcher will not be asking participants to speak in depth about their experience of adverse events, sensitive topics may come up during discussion that could cause distress or feel difficult talking about. The researcher has been trained to assess and manage disclosure of difficult information and will look out for signs of participant distress or that they may be finding a line or enquiry or discussion upsetting. If this occurs the researcher will check in with the participant, acknowledge their experience and ask them how they would like to continue, e.g. (take a break, switch to a different topic, etc). Participants will also be given time at the end of the interview to reflect on their experience of taking part and answering the questions asked by the researcher. They will also be able to ask questions they may have and will be reminded of their right to withdraw from the research and what will happen next in relation to the data. Following the interview participants will be given a debrief letter (**Error! Reference source not found.**) which will include the researchers contact email address alongside statutory and voluntary sources of support should they wish to contact the researcher to discuss options for support during the month following the interview.

1.44 Are there any potential physical or psychological risks to you as a researcher? If so, what are these, and how can they be minimised?

Participants will not be asked directly about difficult experiences but during discussion, emotive topics may arise or participants may disclose difficult

or distressing experiences. The researcher will discuss this with their supervisor as necessary, maintaining the participant's anonymity unless a disclosure prompts safeguarding processes.

There are no associated physical risks as participant interviews will be conducted remotely from the researcher's home via Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp or telephone.

1.45 Have appropriate support services been identified in the debrief letter? If so, what are these, and why are they relevant?

Yes, statutory, and non-statutory mental health services have been provided including GP, NHS services, and voluntary sector organisations aimed specifically at providing support, information and advice to young people. Many of these services are nationwide, with the option of signposting to services local to participants, where they can self-refer if necessary and be seen by a service that is better able to meet their specific age-related needs.

1.46 Does the research take place outside the UEL campus? If so, where?

Yes, interviews will take place remotely either via WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform or telephone call. The researcher will be at their home and participants at a location of their choosing (e.g. their home or another safe, private space). Due to the government restrictions around the Covid-19 pandemic the interviews will not take place face-to-face.

If so, a 'general risk assessment form' must be completed. This is included below as **Error! Reference source not found.**. Note: if the research is on campus, or is online only (e.g., a Qualtrix survey), then a risk assessment form is not needed, and this appendix can be deleted. If a general risk

X

assessment form is required for this research, please tick to confirm that this has been completed:

1.47 Does the research take place outside the UK? If so, where?
No

If so, in addition to the 'general risk assessment form', a 'country-specific risk assessment form' must be also completed (available in the Ethics folder in the Psychology Noticeboard), and included as an appendix. [Please note: a country-specific risk assessment form is not needed if the research is online only (e.g., a Qualtrix su), regardless of the location of the researcher or the participants.] If a 'country-specific risk assessment form' *is* needed, please tick to confirm that this has been included:

However, please also note:

- For assistance in completing the risk assessment, please use the AIG Travel Guard website to ascertain risk levels. Click on 'sign in' and then 'register here' using policy # 0015865161. Please also consult the Foreign Office travel advice website for further guidance.
- For *on campus* students, once the ethics application has been approved by a reviewer, all risk assessments for research abroad must then be signed by the Head of School (who may escalate it up to the Vice Chancellor).
- For *distance learning* students conducting research abroad in the country where they currently reside, a risk assessment must be also carried out. To minimise risk, it is recommended that such students only conduct data collection on-line. If the project is deemed low risk, then it is not necessary for the risk assessments to be signed by the Head of School. However, if not deemed low risk, it must be signed by the Head of School (or potentially the Vice Chancellor).
- Undergraduate and M-level students are not explicitly prohibited from conducting research abroad. However, it is discouraged because of the

inexperience of the students and the time constraints they have to complete their degree.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates

1.48 Does your research involve working with children (aged 16 or under) or vulnerable adults (*see below for definition)?
NO

1.49 If so, you will need a current DBS certificate (i.e., not older than six months), ☐
and to include this as an appendix. Please tick to confirm that you have included this:

Alternatively, if necessary for reasons of confidentiality, you may email a copy directly to the Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee. Please tick if you have done this instead: ☐

Also alternatively if you have an Enhanced DBS clearance (one you pay a monthly fee to maintain) then the number of your Enhanced DBS clearance will suffice. Please tick if you have included this instead: ☐

1.50 If participants are under 16, you need 2 separate information letters, consent form, and debrief form (one for the participant, and one for their parent/guardian). Please tick to confirm that you have included these: ☐

1.51 If participants are under 16, their information letters consent f ☐
and debrief form need to be written in age-appropriate language. Please tick to confirm that you have done this

* You are required to have DBS clearance if your participant group involves (1) children and young people who are 16 years of age or under, and (2) ‘vulnerable’

people aged 16 and over with psychiatric illnesses, people who receive domestic care, elderly people (particularly those in nursing homes), people in palliative care, and people living in institutions and sheltered accommodation, and people who have been involved in the criminal justice system, for example. Vulnerable people are understood to be persons who are not necessarily able to freely consent to participating in your research, or who may find it difficult to withhold consent. If in doubt about the extent of the vulnerability of your intended participant group, speak to your supervisor. Methods that maximise the understanding and ability of vulnerable people to give consent should be used whenever possible. For more information about ethical research involving children click here.

Other permissions

2. Is HRA approval (through IRAS) for research involving the NHS required? Note: HRA/IRAS approval is required for research that involves patients or Service Users of the NHS, their relatives or carers as well as those in receipt of services provided under contract to the NHS.

   If yes, please note:
   No, participants will be recruited from non-NHS settings (e.g. charitable organisations and social media) and will not involve contacting patients or service users through NHS services.

- You DO NOT need to apply to the School of Psychology for ethical clearance if ethical approval is sought via HRA/IRAS (please see further details here).
- However, the school *strongly discourages* BSc and MSc/MA students from designing research that requires HRA approval for research involving the NHS, as this can be a very demanding and lengthy process.
- If you work for an NHS Trust and plan to recruit colleagues from the Trust, permission from an appropriate manager at the Trust must be sought, and HRA approval will probably be needed (and hence is likewise strongly

discouraged). If the manager happens to not require HRA approval, their written letter of approval must be included as an appendix.

- IRAS approval is not required for NHS staff even if they are recruited via the NHS (UEL ethical approval is acceptable). However, an application will still need to be submitted to the HRA in order to obtain R&D approval. This is in addition to a separate approval via the R&D department of the NHS Trust involved in the research.
- IRAS approval is not required for research involving NHS employees when data collection will take place off NHS premises, and when NHS employees are not recruited directly through NHS lines of communication. This means that NHS staff can participate in research without HRA approval when a student recruits via their own social or professional networks or through a professional body like the BPS, for example.

2.1 Will the research involve NHS employees who will not be directly recruited through the NHS, and where data from NHS employees will not be collected on NHS premises?

NO

2.2 If you work for an NHS Trust and plan to recruit colleagues from the Trust, will permission from an appropriate member of staff at the Trust be sought, and will HRA be sought, and a copy of this permission (e.g., an email from the Trust) attached to this application?

N/A

2.3 Does the research involve other organisations (e.g. a school, charity, workplace, local authority, care home etc.)? If so, please give their details here.

Yes- In addition to the use of social media to advertise the research study, several charities providing services for young people (e.g. as listed above) have been contacted to disseminate information about the study and

support the recruitment process. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, these organisations are difficult to contact and not in a position to confirm in writing they are able to support the research in the way. Therefore, written consent of their involvement will be obtained once ethical approval has been gained for the research.

Furthermore, written permission is needed from such organisations if they are helping you with recruitment and/or data collection, if you are collecting data on their premises, or if you are using any material owned by the institution/organisation. If this is the case, please tick here to confirm that you have included this written permission as an appendix: ☐

In addition, before the research commences, once your ethics application has been approved, please ensure that you provide the organisation with a copy of the final, approved ethics application. Please then prepare a version of the consent form for the organisation themselves to sign. You can adapt it by replacing words such as ‘my’ or ‘I’ with ‘our organisation,’ or with the title of the organisation. This organisational consent form must be signed before the research can commence.

Finally, please note that even if the organisation has their own ethics committee and review process, a School of Psychology SREC application and approval is still required. Ethics approval from SREC can be gained before approval from another research ethics committee is obtained. However, recruitment and data collection are NOT to commence until your research has been approved by the School and other ethics committee/s as may be necessary.

Declarations

Declaration by student: I confirm that I have discussed the ethics and feasibility of this research proposal with my supervisor.

Student's name (typed name acts as a signature): Natalie Roswess - Bruce

Student's number: Date: 27/07/2020

As a supervisor, by submitting this application, I confirm that I have reviewed all parts of this application, and I consider it of sufficient quality for submission to the SREC committee.

Appendix N: Letter Confirming 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: Miha Constantinescu

SUPERVISOR: Nicholas Wood

STUDENT: Natalie Roswess - Bruce

Course: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Title of proposed study: Becoming an Adult Through Adversity: Young People's Perspectives Of The Transition To Adulthood

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 <u>BEFORE</u> THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is <u>not</u> required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made <u>before</u> 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)

1. Approved with one amendment.

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

Maybe I missed this, but do you have any exclusion criteria for your study (i.e. asking the participants if they are on medication or suffer with severe depression, etc.)? If not, please discuss with your supervisor about the need to include an exclusion criterion in your invitation letter, such as for instance the one below: "We kindly ask that participants do not take part in this research if they experience severe depression or are under any acute distress." – this way you ca avoid situations in which you need to interview someone who has suicidal thoughts.

Major amendments required *(for reviewer):*

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

I have noted the above minor amendments and discussed them with my supervisor before starting my research and collecting data.

I do not have explicit exclusion criteria, but the risk identified by the reviewer will be regularly assessed managed in the following ways:

- Through discussion of how and to whom organisations will advertise and promote the research as part of supporting the recruitment of potential participants

- During the initial discussion with young people who have opted-in about the research and what participation will involve. If it appears that the young person is obviously unwell and participation in the study would detrimentally affect their mental health and wellbeing, I will signpost them to appropriate support services and their participation in the process will end.

- During the interview as already outlined as outlined in my ethics application through regular monitoring and checking participants' wellbeing and consent to continue with the interviews.

- After the interview participants will be asked about their experience of the interview process and receive debrief information including appropriate sources of mental health support should they feel they need it.

Student's name *(Typed name to act as signature):* Natalie Roswess – Bruce
Student number:

Date: 02.10.2020

(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)

☐ LOW

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

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature)*: Dr Miha Constantinescu

Date: 25.09.2020

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 O Letter confirming Ethical approval of Amendments

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology

REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

FOR BSc, MSc/MA & TAUGHT PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS

Please complete this form if you are requesting approval for proposed amendment(s) to an ethics application that has been approved by the School of Psychology.

Note that approval must be given for significant change to research procedure that impacts on ethical protocol. If you are not sure about whether your proposed amendment warrants approval consult your supervisor or contact Dr Tim Lomas (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee. t.lomas@uel.ac.uk).

HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THE REQUEST

1. Complete the request form electronically and accurately.
2. Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (page 2).
3. When submitting this request form, ensure that all necessary documents are attached (see below).
4. Using your UEL email address, email the completed request form along with associated documents to: Dr Trishna Patel (t.patel@uel.ac.uk)
5. Your request form will be returned to you via your UEL email address with reviewer's response box completed. This will normally be within five days. Keep a copy of the approval to submit with your project/dissertation/thesis.
6. Recruitment and data collection are not to commence until your proposed amendment has been approved.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. A copy of your previously approved ethics application with proposed amendments(s) added as tracked changes.
2. Copies of updated documents that may relate to your proposed amendment(s). For example an updated recruitment notice, updated participant information letter, updated consent form etc.
3. A copy of the approval of your initial ethics application.

Name of applicant: Natalie Roswess - Bruce Programme of study: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology Title of research: Becoming an Adult Through Adversity: Young People's Perspectives of the Transition to Adulthood Name of supervisor:Dr Kenneth Gannon

Briefly outline the nature of your proposed amendment(s) and associated rationale(s) in the boxes below

Proposed amendment	**Rationale**
Slight change to the research title from Becoming an Adult Through Adversity: Young People's Perspectives of the Transition to Adulthood to Becoming an Adult Through Adversity: Young People's Stories of the Transition to Adulthood	So the title reflects to methodology of the research project
Change in the wording of the research questions from: 1. What does becoming an adult mean to participants who identify as non-white British?	This change enables the research questions to better reflect the epistemological position of the narrative methodology and approach

2. How might experiences of adversity influence participant's meaning making of becoming an adult? 3. How might culture influence participants' meaning making of becoming an adult? To: What stories do Black, Asian and minority ethnic young people tell about becoming adults? How might culture and adversity/ hardships feature within these? stories?	to analysis being used within this research project.
Participant Inclusion criteria Change in the wording and scope of the inclusion criteria from: Aged 18-25 years old Identify as non-White British, Have accessed psychological therapies, education, housing, employment, sexual health, drug and alcohol services. To: Aged 18-30 years old Identify as belonging to a Black, Asian and minority ethnic group Have experiences of hardships/adversity e.g. difficult peer/ family relationships, illness, racism, etc., or events which may have led them to access psychological	Recruitment of participants to the study through voluntary organisations and social media in the current context of Covid-19 has proven difficult. The increasing demands and changes in accessibility due the required new ways of working within services understandably has taken a priority. Young people have also been significantly affected by the restrictions and socio-economic impact of Covid-19. The initial age criterion was a pragmatic choice informed by the literature that seeks to define the construct of emerging adulthood as a developmental stage. Extending the

therapies, education, housing, employment, sexual health, drug and alcohol services.	age range, while still informed by the literature, allows inclusion of a wider participant population in the sample for ease of recruitment but may also contribute to the research questions by enable the inclusion of data that may draw on reflective perspectives from individuals who have clear and 'fresh' memories of becoming adults, but are not in the midst of that process. Changing the wording of the criterion around ethnicity/the construct of race, centres the population sample in the research linguistically and epistemologically by defining who will be included a participant as opposed to who will not. Widening the scope of the access to services criterion, facilitates inclusion of participants from a wider population who may not have accessed specialist/ additional support as a result of their experiences of adversity/ hardship. This both fits with the literature around young people's experiences of adversity but also facilitates recruitment.

Research advert Change to the inclusion criterion on the research advert from I would love to hear from you if you: are aged 18-25yrs identify as British and part of BAME group have experienced any difficult life events (e.g. family illness, difficult relationships, challenging school experiences) to: I would love to hear from you if you: are aged 18-30yrs identify as British and part of BAME group	The changes reflect the changes proposed above to the age and adversity criteria. Additionally, this also facilitates recruitment by preventing the self-exclusion of individuals who may see the advert and considered participation in the study, but not identify or label their experiences of hardship/ adversity in this way. As the research is concerned with how events socially defined as hardships/adversity may feature within young people's stories of becoming adults, widening the sample population in this way will not affect its focus.
Interview Schedule and data gathering process Change in the format of interviews from semi structured to an unstructured approach initiated with a simple open question enquiring about the artefact they may have bought with them or asking them to share their story of becoming an adult. The interview schedule will operate as a loose framework for enabling topics of interest to be considered as part of the process.	The change is in line with the epistemology and narrative methodology of the research. Participant-led, unstructured interviews allow participants the space and time to share more detailed stories and direct the focus of the discussion by choosing what they want to share using their own words (Reissman, 2008). This approach also supports the research focus of the study.

Please tick	YES	NO
Is your supervisor aware of your proposed amendment(s) and agree to them?	✓	

Student's signature (please type your name): Natalie Roswess - Bruce

Date: 09/02/2021

TO BE COMPLETED BY REVIEWER		
Amendment(s) approved	**YES**	

Comments

The requested amendments have been approved, but please ensure the following points are addressed within the study materials before you begin recruitment:

Study advert: Ensure the age range reads 18-30 years, currently still reads 18-25. Also, rather than 'BAME group', advised to write out in full. Please ensure that the telephone number inserted is for the purposes of the research only and not your personal number. If this is your personal number, please remove.

Participant Information Sheet: Tidy up typographical issues in discussion with your DoS. Only MS Teams should be used for video interviews. Insert a

new heading using language appropriate for young people about ‘wishing to stop or taking breaks’, as currently this information sits under ‘What if I do not want people to know I took part?’. Under ‘What will you do with the information I tell you?’ please explicitly list other places where you anticipate disseminating findings (e.g., presentations etc.) and that the thesis will be publicly available on ROAR. Please also include information about how long personal and research data will be stored for and how data will be stored once you leave UEL. Also include who will have access to anonymised data (e.g., supervisor, examiners). How will vouchers be given to participants – this should be clearly stated, as it may involve collecting additional personal information. Update the information and contact details of the Ethics Chair.

Consent form: Explicitly insert a statement to gain consent for contacting participants following completion of the study to share a summary of study findings if they wish to receive this information. Also, insert a statement which gains consent for a) disseminating in journals etc. and b) the thesis being publicly available on ROAR.

Interview schedule: This is more of a comment, but seems semi-structured rather than unstructured.

Debrief sheet: Will you be able to transcribe interviews and be in a position to delete recordings 1 week after the interview? You may wish to give yourself more time here.

Reviewer: Dr Trishna Patel

Date: 22/02/2021

Appendix P: Approval of Title Change to Ethics Application

University of East London
Psychology

REQUEST FOR TITLE CHANGE TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

FOR BSc, MSc/MA & TAUGHT PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS

Please complete this form if you are requesting approval for 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 Amendments Form.

HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THE REQUEST

Complete the request form electronically and accurately.

Type your name in the ‘student’s signature’ section (page 2).
Using your UEL email address, email the completed request form along with associated documents to: Psychology.Ethics@uel.ac.uk
Your request form will be returned to you via your UEL email address with reviewer’s response box completed. This will normally be within five days. Keep a copy of the approval to submit with your project/dissertation/thesis.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

A copy of the approval of your initial ethics application.
Name of applicant: Natalie Roswess – Bruce
Programme of study: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology
Name of supervisor: Dr Kenneth Gannon

Briefly outline the nature of your proposed title change in the boxes below

Proposed amendment	**Rationale**
Old Title: Becoming an Adult Through Adversity: Young People’s Perspectives of the Transition to Adulthood	So the title better reflects to methodology of the research project
New Title: Becoming an Adult Through Adversity: Young People’s Stories of the Transition to Adulthood	

Please tick	**YES**	**NO**

Is your supervisor aware of your proposed amendment(s) and agree to them?	yes	
Does your change of title impact the process of how you collected your data/conducted your research?		no

Student's signature (please type your name): Natalie Roswess - Bruce

Date: 02/03/2021

TO BE COMPLETED BY REVIEWER		
Title changes approved	APPROVED	
Comments		

Reviewer: Glen Rooney

Date: 02/03/2021