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Westminster

Sociology Anthology

A Collection of Innovative and Outstanding Dissertation Work

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Front cover by Dr Francis Ray White

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Introduction

This is the fifth edition of the annual Westminster Sociology Dissertation Anthology, which showcases some of the outstanding and innovative research produced by final year students on the Sociology and Sociology/Criminology degrees at the University of Westminster. The six dissertations collected here were selected from a shortlist nominated by the Sociology teaching team, who were asked to select particularly interesting projects (not necessarily those that have been awarded the highest marks).

The aim of this anthology is to reward good dissertations, to provide an example of quality work for future dissertation students, and to promote more widely the achievements of our students in Sociology at Westminster.

This year's anthology begins with the work of Kate Salmon, who conducted an in-depth qualitative study on women's perspectives of stranger harassment in public space. Identifying a gap in the existing literature, Kate's project explores the variable of age, exploring differences in the attitudes and experiences of women from their 20s to their 80s.

Iqra Bi's dissertation research explores how South Asian women who are University graduates navigate their social realms and negotiate the dichotomy of modern and traditional 'good Muslim women' ideals. She finds that the objective of gaining respect and independence is tactically used to deconstruct traditional gender ideals in marriage, while their religious identity allows them to rightfully be *different* from a majority British culture.

Sadia Haque asks 'who gets labelled a "terrorist"'? in a discourse analysis of online news articles covering two terrorist attacks. Her research highlights the ways in which racism is still prevalent within the media, identifying how ethnic minorities are depicted in a more negative light compared to white

perpetrators who have committed terrorist acts. Sadia's findings highlight some discrepancies from her initial hypothesis, and she produces a nuanced analysis of her chosen topic.

Isabelle Jackson's project explores the ways young heterosexual people in contemporary British society learn about sexual practices and pleasure. Her innovative study focuses on the marketing of sex toys in high street sex shops, and finds that that sex toys are not currently a significant part of the learning vocabulary of young adult life.

Chloe Mead has conducted survey research on the drinking cultures of British University students. Her study draws on both lifecycle and life course theories to evaluate their applicability to intoxication, providing insights into the complexity of leisure through the transitions that occur with age, social roles and context.

Finally, Sazkar Kaka Rhsh's project investigates the marital life experiences of Iraqi-Kurdish women in the UK. In-depth interviews provide Sazkar with a means of exploring 'traditional' cultural expectations of women's roles, and how these come to be negotiated, modified and challenged in the migrant experience.

While these six projects are incredibly diverse, they all have qualities that make them distinctive of the kind of work our students produce in Sociology at Westminster: they engage creatively and passionately with some of the urgent issues of our time, they use a finely tuned sociological imagination to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, and they are motivated by a desire to understand and challenge social inequalities.

Kate, Iqra, Sadia, Isabelle, Chloe, and Sazkar are not alone in producing great dissertation projects. The Sociology team had the pleasure to read some really excellent work. In particular, we would like to commend Brooklyn Stevens who collected some amazing, rich and fabulous data on the gentrification of Brixton and how it effects everyday lives and communities.

Well done to all our third year students – we are very proud of you all!

Dr Ben Pitcher, on behalf of the Sociology team, June 2019.

‘Well where’s the harm?’ An in-depth exploration of intergenerational women's perspectives of stranger harassment in public space

Kate Salmon

Abstract

Despite awareness surrounding gender-specific street harassment beginning to grow, there remains a lack of literature that focuses on the age of women as a significant variable that contributes to the subjective experience of being victimised in public space. Through feminist methodology and standpoint theory, the following research unpacks standardised discourse surrounding gender hierarchy and male power within the public domain. An in-depth qualitative study of nine women from a range of age groups establishes critical understanding of a marginal difference in the perception of stranger harassment. The data collected reveals that women of proportionate age ranges disagree upon the intent and severity of street harassment. A consensus, however, is demonstrated through the shared belief that education of younger generations is the way in which to tackle the issue of inequality within gendered space.

This study therefore contributes towards an evolving narrative of women's attitudes towards manifestations of gender-specific harm in everyday life and the effects that this had upon female autonomy.

Introduction

The concept of street harassment lies upon a spectrum for women, which is contradictory and entirely subjective. On the one hand, some forms of behaviour by men regarding a woman's appearance are deemed flattering and uplifting, an occurrence which consequently makes a woman feel confident and 'seen' in public space. On the other end of the spectrum, however, there is significant frustration of such behaviour being classified as complimentary or "a trivial annoyance" (Kearl, 2010, p5). The reality is that "being harassed is a part of everyday life for many women" (Mellgren, et al, 2018, p271) and a movement to challenge this behaviour is underway.

Exasperated with being silenced and frustrated, British writer Laura Bates began the Everyday Sexism Project on her Facebook page; the aim being to create a virtual space for women to share and document their experiences of gender inequality and sexual harassment in everyday life and support one another. Within weeks of launching in April 2012, the project soon transitioned into a movement across multiple platforms, collecting thousands of stories from women around the world and close to 300,000 followers on Twitter, as well as advising policy within parliaments in a multitude of countries. Furthermore, the Everyday Sexism Project has contributed to British Transport Police's Project Guardian initiative, which encourages victims to report sexual offences or harassment they have experienced while travelling on public transport in London, while challenging perspectives of normalisation. One month after introduction in 2013, the movement saw a 20% increase in the reporting of offences and 15 arrests in one week alone (Bates, 2014, p176). Multiple online campaigns, alongside anti-harassment organisations such as Hollaback! and Stop Street Harassment encourage women to speak out about their experience and emotions tied with stranger harassment while in public space and assess the way in which this issue is treated within society. The role of social media has supported the spreading awareness surrounding the topic, with a YouTube video titled '10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman' showing the volume of street harassment that one women faces in one day alone. As of mid-2019, the video has over 48 million views. The harassment that women endure can range from catcalling and leering, through to outright physical touch and unwanted sexual attention. Victims, activists and academics concur that this form of harassment is an "extortion of power, dominance and control in public spaces, an area of our culture traditionally dominate by men" (Kearl, 2010). Therefore the examining of such gender relations are key to establishing equality and safety for all who frequent public space, as the threat of harassment limits the ability of women to travel as freely and as safely as men do.

In 2016, the instigating of a punishable hate crime based purely upon misogyny propelled the topic of street harassment into the forefront of gender politics in British society. Nottinghamshire Police and Nottingham's Women's Centre are examining the response and effectiveness of the initiative before considering a national wide approach to gender-specific harassment. The Nottingham Misogyny Hate Crime evaluation survey (2018) found that three-quarter of respondents had been impacted by street harassment and felt positively about the recognition of such harmful behaviour in the context of the law. However, the movement remains decisive as the misrepresentation regarding the scale and harmfulness of street harassment has yet to be appreciated to a full extent.

While the literature thus far has aimed to produce a more widespread understanding of the severity of gender-specific harassment, research has taken a focused approach towards the different ways in which there is a varying view of the issue through the perspectives of different genders. However, while age has continuously been found to have an impact on the way in which women feel and respond to street harassment, it is never been explored fully. A gap in the existing research has ultimately been identified. Therefore the aim of this research study is to produce a contribution towards the understanding of the effect that age has upon perspectives of street harassment. While this phenomena is a clear manifestation of unbalanced and damaging power dynamics, the acknowledgment that such behaviour is detrimental to women's fight for equality is key to establishing how it should be addressed.

The qualitative method of focus groups will be utilised to form an open dialogue between researcher and participants, creating a narrative in which experiences of harassment can be shared from women of all ages and opinions compared. Furthermore, this research study will aim to address four vital aims:

- Does age affect women perspective of the severity of street harassment?
- Does age affect a woman's classification of what entails 'harassment'?
- Has women's perspective of the issue changed over time, with age?
- Does attribution theory apply? Is there consistency/similarity with age?

The thesis will begin with a literature review exploring past work on this topic, identifying where in further research could benefit activism and the wider social perspective. Following this, the thesis will then explore and justify methodological theory and standpoint to achieve an enriched collection of data that will explore women's attitudes towards the topic. Finally, the data will be

segregated due to theme, to establish where in which similarities and disparities exist within age groups.

Literature Review

This chapter will review the literature that has explored and contributed to a growing understanding of the issue of stranger harassment in public space. To begin, definitions of what exactly this form of harassment entails and theories surrounding perspectives will be examined. Influential factors that may contribute towards perception such as cultural and societal norms will be explored, as well as possible motives of harassment. Furthermore, studies of women's fear of crime and consequential planning in the hope to avoid harassment in everyday life will be reviewed, as well as issues of criminality and representation of street harassment within the criminal justice system. The exploration of existing literature is crucial to identify where further research could be considered and carried out. Therefore, this chapter will assess and provide critical analysis surrounding theoretical and analytical framework that has been applied to previous studies, illustrating the approaches that are deemed most beneficial for the research of gaining an understanding of the complexities of generational perspectives towards stranger harassment in public space.

The Invisible Problem

The issue with sexism, Bates asserts, is that it is "an invisible problem" as it so often "manifests in situations where the only witnesses present are victim and perpetrator" (2014, p23). This results in a detrimental lack of understanding or recognition of the harassment that women face in daily life, ultimately sustaining a delusion that the issues of inequality no longer exist surrounding women's access to public space. Bates therefore describes street harassment as "perhaps the clearest manifestation on the spectrum of sexism within our society" which may start out small, but "allowing these minor transgressions gives licence to the more serious ones, and eventually to all out abuse" (2014, p161). Street harassment is described when one or more unknown men "accost one or more women in a public place that is not the woman's worksite… through looks, words or gestures, the man asserts his right to intrude on the woman's attention, defining her as a sexual object and forcing her to interact with him" (Leonardo, 1981, cited in Kearl, 2010, p5). Bowman elaborates this definition, explaining that harassment includes "both verbal and nonverbal behaviour such as wolf whistles, leers, winks, grabs, pinches, catcalling and street remarks, frequently sexual in nature and comment evaluatively on a woman's physical appearance or on her presence in public" (1993, p519-523).

Furthermore, Bowman identified particular characteristics which contribute to identifying street harassment as a specific gender-based harm;

- the targets are female;
- the harassers are male;
- the harassers are unacquainted with their targets;
- the encounter is face to face;
- a public setting, such as a street, bus station, or other place to which the public generally has access;
- content of any speech, is not intended as public discourse…. "rather, the remarks are aimed at the individual (although the harasser may intend that they be overheard by comrades or passers-by), and they are objectively degrading, objectifying, humiliating, and frequently threatening in nature" (1993, p.523-524).

Bowman specifies in this instance that the definition is applicable to specific gender-based harassment and is therefore not universal. However multiple fellow definitions are restrictive and outdated, oblivious to the magnitude of public harassment which transcends a top down hierarchy of male to female. It is now acknowledged that while it may be milder, women publicly harass too. Gardner states that this is more often based on discrimination due to "race, ethnicity, sexual preference or disability", as oppose to motives based simply on gender alone (1995, p9). Nor are women's comments situated in the same place of power as are men's (Davis, 1994, p139). Men especially suffer from street harassment in instances of defying heteronormative gender roles of masculinity. Harassment can therefore be multi-faceted and due to an array of factors surrounding one's identity, alongside a presence in public space. Global children's charity Plan International UK found this to be true in 2018 after conducting analysis of 31 women between the ages of 14 to 28, exploring experiences of street harassment. Qualitative data obtained through focus groups found that "lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and Black, Asian or another Ethnic Minority (BAME) participants talked about the dual discrimination of being harassed both for their ethnicity or sexual orientation, as well as their gender" (Plan International UK, 2018). However, Kearl argues that "while the recognition of harassment motivated by racism, homophobia, transphobia or classism and male targets is recognised as socially unacceptable behaviour, mens harassment of women motivated by gender and sexism is not" (2010, p5). Therefore, in the interest of the exploring these

imbalances further through empirical research, theory surrounding female specific gender-based harm and the perspectives of female victims will be the primary focus of this particular study.

When considering the context of stranger harassment in public space, the concept of an invisible harm is oxymoronic and complex. A fundamental aspect of street harassment, after all, is that most offences take place in an open and observable environment. As previously stated by Bowman, the harasser may actually desire for their actions be noticed by others around them (1993, p.524). Despite this, however, street harassment is considered an "under-investigated branch of sexual harassment" and identified as less relevant in comparison to other forms of sexual harassment (Kearl, 2010, p5). West suggests that the obscurity of the matter is because the "uniquely gendered suffering" of women due to the actions of men is "outside the realm of male experience and perception … producing separate realities wherein men generally don't see women harassed on the street and don't see women harassed at work" (1987, cited in Tuerkheimer, 1997, p172). This indifference contributes to the difficulty in achieving widespread acknowledgment of such a harm's existence, when "women's injuries remain largely invisible and embedded within a gender hierarchy wherein the problem is not simply that men don't understand, it is that this lack of understanding is rooted in a larger context in which men possess power to define our injuries and to remedy the harm, or not" (Tuerkheimer, 1997, p172). Therefore the lack of male recognition surrounding the prevalence of the issue and the danger of such behaviour only serves further as a "mechanism of power that reinforces men's dominant position over women" (Mellgren, C. et al, 2018, p263). The feminist standpoint of West and Tuerkheimer's "gender specific" theory expresses that the approach for women to overcome internalised norms and reduce trivialisation of male-enforced harm, as well as improve visibility, is to "speak of street harassment for ourselves, to validate our experiences and enhance our understanding of the gendered nature of our own oppression" (1997, p175). Through conversation with other women about their experiences of street harassment and "communicating the nature of these experiences to those who do not share them, the magnitude of the issue is articulated and accessible to male culture" and ultimately rendered legitimate and in need of challenging (Tuerkheimer, 1997, p175). Feminist standpoint theory is therefore to be utilised in the framework for this study upon street harassment perspectives, wherein emphasis on subjective and shared experiences is key to the progression of inclusive attitudes and the defiance of power domination and gender hierarchy.

Varying Perceptions and Influences

While activism continues to establish street harassment as a valid issue that effects women in a multitude of ways, research undertaken in the past two decades is formulating the knowledge required to understand and evolve current attitudes surrounding other forms of sexual harassment. Empirical studies have since discovered a profound difference in the perception of sexual harassment between genders. A lower level of tolerance towards sexual harassment among women in comparison to men may possibly be related to the fact that "men tend to be the perpetrators, whereas women are the victims" (Hyde, 1991, cited in Ford and Donis, 1996, p630). A meta-analyses conducted by Blumenthal found that women are more likely to identify a broader range of behaviour as sexual harassment in comparison to men, and that these perspectives appeared stable across participant variables such "age, culture and professional status" (1998). However, a limitation of this study was that while it established a relationship between the perspective of harassment and age, there was a lack of representation, as the age of participants only reached as high as 44 years old (Blumenthal, 1998, p35). Therefore exploration of this contributing factor has been overlooked and theories surrounding such perspectives remain "unclear" (Blumenthal, 1998, p44). Ohse and Stockdale address these concerns, arguing that while age may be a commonly included characteristic of samples within sexual harassment studies, it is "rarely the focus of such research" which instead relies on differing perceptions based on gender (2008, p240). An example of this is a study conducted by Frazier et al., which directly compared the difference in gender perceptions of sexual harassment between younger, student samples and older, employee samples (1995, cited in Ohse and Stockdale, 2008, p245). While such examination found that younger women are more sensitive to sexual harassment than men, attention is again directed towards the difference in gender perception and profession, and not as to why the younger percentage of the sample feel this way compared to participants of a higher age. Ford and Donis expand upon this research further by examining age and gender perceptions solely within the workplace, holding focus groups to explore attitudes towards sexual harassment (1996, p628). A mixture of 240 male and female employees participated in the study, which was divided into the following age groups: 18-24 years old, 25-30 years old, 31-40 years old, 41-50 years old, and older than 50 years. The researchers had previously hypothesised that regardless of gender, a difference in age would "correlate with attitude towards harassment, the gender of the offender and the gender of the victim", (Ford and Donis, 1996, p628-629). A further hypothesis suggested that there would be an increased level of tolerance of harassment among male respondents possibly due to male-centric power in the workplace, such as "economic power, status/role-based power, and gender-based power" (Ford and Donis, 1996,

p629). The study found that women are significantly less tolerant of sexual harassment than men, however there was a negative correlation between tolerance and the age of female respondents after the age of 50. The implications of this discovery are incredibly intriguing and provide fruitful basis for further research, wherein the disparity among women regarding views of harassment can be explored. Ford and Donis provide theorisation surrounding this possible correlation, such as low levels of tolerance of women under 40 may be due to the prevalence of being a target themselves, and have therefore constructed a negative view of harassment (1996, p630). Ohse and Sockdale also suggest that while positive correlation exists between age and conservative stances on many social issues, "gender-related social attitudes are complex and often confounded with generational changes" (2008, p244). These outcomes of the existing research indicate that there is a significant relationship between age and perspective, and that this worth exploring further. Therefore, this research project will incorporate aspects of Ford and Donis's (1996) study and explore the attitudes of a women from a range of ages and backgrounds, to evaluate their feelings towards street harassment.

Evidently the topic of sexual harassment is of significant value to researchers and provides a greater understanding of how power relations are incorporated within everyday interactions between men and women. However, the majority of research surrounding gender-specific harassment examines how this behaviour is tolerated within the workplace from known harassers. Therefore there is a lack of similar studies regarding perception of street harassment from strangers. In fact, only in recent years has street harassment begun to take significant place in scholarly literature. Alongside female perspectives, researchers are concerned with influential and contextual factors which contribute to the way women make sense of harassment, as well as theories surrounding the motive for offenders. While women continuously express their disdain and frustration towards being harassed in public, Fairchild's examination of contextual influence has suggested that such behaviour is not loathed by every woman, and it is "likely that the context of the situation in which the harassing behaviour occurs can alter the perception and perspective of the target" (2010, p.192). Fairchild discovered that three major contextual factors surrounding the perpetrator and victim can "alter the interpretation of the situation: attractiveness, age, and being alone or with friends" (2010, p214). Further factors such as location and time of day may also determine either positive or negative outcomes of the interaction. Fairchild's research demonstrates that the experience of harassment is highly subjective, further attesting as to how the standpoints of women are key for influential and significant research. Terpstra and Baker argue that the "perception of the behaviour is what determines the response to and outcomes of the behaviour

more so than the actual behaviour itself" and determine that attribution theory is applicable to sexual harassment (1986, cited in Fairchild, 2010, p194). Attribution theory is determined as the way in which "people interpret behaviour in terms of its causes and that these interpretations play an important role in determining reactions to the behaviour" (Kelley and Michela, 1980, p 458). The findings of Reilly et al. reiterate this, stating that a perpetrators "age and marital status also seem to contribute to the perception of sexual harassment […] when social-sexual behaviours are performed by older married actors they are viewed as more harassing than the same behaviours performed by younger single actors" (Reilly et al., 1982, cited in Pyror, 1985, p264). Therefore the interpretative nature of stranger harassment may be dependent on an array of variables, such as age, attractiveness and job status. Fairchild however, argues that while attribution theory provides meaning to characteristics and their effect upon interpretation of the victim, this is not necessarily viable in the context to stranger harassment (2010, p193). Estimation of age and subjective attractiveness may be determinable by a target of harassment, however the nature of these occurrences in public space are often fleeting and unexpected. Therefore the process of acknowledging certain attributes of a harasser while internalising and deciphering their behaviour, is unrealistic in every day context. However, the research to be undertaken in this study will also address these issues. As the power of contextual elements encourage women to respond to stranger harassment in either a more positive or negative nature, the age of victims may be of a contributing factor. Furthermore, the subjective nature of harassment will be be recognised with exploration of the spectrum of what exactly is classified as harassment, as the experience evidently differs between individuals.

Women's Fear of Crime

Despite contextual influences, Fairchild discovered that women still report feelings of fear surrounding stranger harassment and adopt coping mechanisms as a result, in multiple situations and regardless of taking the harassment as complimentary. Sexual harassment therefore maintains a culture of fear, connected to gender, "that symbolises the presence of potential offenders rather than potential guardians in particular social contexts" (Macmillan et al, 2000, p309). Using data from the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey, Macmillan et al. (2000) conducted a two-stage empirical research study regarding the effect of stranger harassment on perceptions of safety among women. The survey found that 85% of the 12,300 respondents had experienced stranger harassment, such as catcalls, leering and whistling. The results showed that respondents who have been a victim of stranger harassment feel less safe in the variety of social contexts. Therefore, stranger

harassment consistently "exhibits strongest effects on perceptions of safety" (Macmillan et al, 2000, p316). Fairchild explores the concept of coping strategies that women adopt to protect their sense of safety. Using a modified version of Fitzgeralds (1990, cited in Fairchild, 2010) Coping with Harassment Questionnaire, two types of coping strategy are identified; an active response through addressing the harasser and a passive response, by ignoring the situation (p198). Such coping strategies are utilised to help ease feelings of fear or frustration while experiencing harassment in public space. Davis, however, suggests that "responding even with "thank you" is unacceptable, as this creates a dialogue between two subjects" (1994, p138). This dialogue therefore places women in a "subjective" role, and outside of the objectified role the harasser intended to place her in through his behaviour (Davis, 1994, p139). From this standpoint, it can be argued that the motive of harassers is undisputedly negative and far from complimentary, wherein the approach of a woman and verbal or non-verbal action is fundamentally an exercise of power. Tuerkheimer is in agreement of this approach, stating that street harassment constructs women as objects for male pleasure, where these "complimentary comments" are based on a superficial value of women (1997, p184). The complete discourse of street harassment therefore defies and contests multiple societal norms of the expected behaviour while in public space. Goffman's theory of civil inattention emphasises that the there is specific etiquette of stranger interaction while in shared spaces, and interpersonal rituals are constantly regulated (1963, p84). Such remarks by men are therefore a violation of norms and anything but complimentary, especially when women are accosted for responding positively. Bowman therefore theorises that women may perform an avoidance ritual (or coping strategy) when confronted with the intrusion of harassment (1993, p526).

Plan International UK found this to be true in 2018 after conducting analysis of 31 women between the ages of 14 to 28, exploring experiences of street harassment. Qualitative data obtained through focus groups found that "lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and Black, Asian or another Ethnic Minority (BAME) participants talked about the dual discrimination of being harassed both for their ethnicity or sexual orientation, as well as their gender" (Plan International UK, 2018). This research plans to use this study as a basis for research through focus groups, applying a similar methodology which focuses upon women's experiences, but within a larger age range of participants. The data collected by Plan International UK (2018) regarding street harassment is incredibly rich and informative, therefore it it the belief of this study that such focus should be widespread to women of all ages.

Following Davis's (1994) theorising of harassment motives, enquiry as to why men harass is a growing branch of research and fundamental for understanding

how to tackle the issue. Empirical studies such as Wesselmann and Kelly's (2010) explore factors which may influence and encourage street harassment, particularly among male students. Findings showed that such behaviour is more likely to occur when men are in groups together as oppose to being alone (Wesselmann and Kelly's, 2010, p454). Further studies have found group norms to be of vital importance when evaluating the likelihood of harassing behaviour. Pryor et al. (1993) argue that a group mentality facilitates and the perceived acceptable behaviour of harassment, as well as bonding between members. Therefore such behaviour is arguably perpetuated by masculine culture wherein objectification of women is not only deemed normal, but encouraged. Such behaviour may also be found to be increasingly aggressive when the sole perpetrator or group have enhance anonymity. Deindividuation theory therefore suggests a transgression of social norms through manipulation of anonymity (Postmes and Spears, 1998). Exploration of women's views as to why men harass will be introduced in the research method of this study, in an effort to understand the motives of behaviour. These views can then be cross-examined in relation to women's attitudes surrounding the nature of street harassment, inquiring as to whether there is relationship between age and the view of men's intention.

Methodology

In accordance with the research previously conducted surrounding the topic of harassment in public space, the qualitative method of focus groups was selected for this study, wherein groups of participants partake in the discussion about a particular topic (Smithson, 2007, p357). The same method was used by Ford and Donis (1996) in their research regarding age and gender perceptions surrounding sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as Plan International UK (2018). Both studies have provided the basis in which this research project is hoping to develop further, through the use of feminist standpoint theory. Tuerkheimer states that this approach is an integral piece of feminist methodology (1997, p175) as articulating and giving meaning to the harms that women face is crucial to overcoming power relations and perceived norms of gendered space. Focus groups are therefore an essential method of collecting qualitative and purposeful data wherein the experiences of women can provide insight of the harm that street harassment ensues and challenge the issue itself. Rose argues that focus groups could be seen as one of the appropriate methods for use in feminist research, especially for the researching of experiences and empowerment of marginalised groups (2001, cited in Biber, 2014, p233). Furthermore, the "uniqueness of such methodology is the ability to generate data based on the synergy of the group interaction" (Green et al., 2003, cited in Rabiee, 2004, p656).

Prior to the main sessions which would constitute the key research material for this study, a pilot focus group was conducted. Teijlingen and Hundley state than an advantage of conducting a pilot study is that it could "give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated" (2001, np). The two participants had both experienced instances of harassment in public, as it was important to maintain consistency and ensure that those involved in the pilot study shared similarities with the target population of participants for the fundamental research groups. Morgan and Krueger reiterate this, stating that "questions should be reviewed by people similar to your target audience to make sure the language is clear" (1998, p4). The objective supporting this was that pilot participants would therefore be able to respond honestly and give constructive feedback of their interpretation of the research design. However, such participants were not requested to partake in the main study. This was due to the concern that "those who have already been exposed to an intervention may

respond differently from those who have not previously experienced it" (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001, np). This could therefore result in high quality data occurring in the pilot study but unfortunately being made unusable for the ultimate findings of the research project as it cannot reliably be repeated. The data from this pilot study was therefore not recorded and has not been transcribed or contributed towards the research findings and analysis.

Conducting a pilot focus group proved to be very beneficial and of useful input towards the structure and method of the final research. It was an opportunity to practice moderating a focus group for the first time, as this methodology had not been undertaken by the researcher prior to the session. Furthermore, it was encouraging that feedback was especially positive surrounding the provided participant stimuli and questions of memory recall, as it produced stimulating discussions and eased elements of tension in an unfamiliar setting. On the other hand, however, the session highlighted areas wherein the question guide needed to be broadened, as new topics surfaced during the discussion. Therefore further planning was given to the research material to ideally fulfil the aims of the study to greater success. New themes were introduced into the question guide, such as exploring whether the topic of street harassment was something that was discussed between women. This question was included as it introduced the theme of solidarity and awareness on a micro-scale, while encouraging interaction between group participants through the comparing and contrasting of experiences with other women in their lives surrounding the topic.

A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants for the study. A bulletin was posted on a social media group accessed by residents in the village in which the researcher is from, advertising the research topic and aims of the study as well as the criteria of participating. This was to be exclusively female participants only and of all ages. Participants with an interest in the topic and willing to share their experiences were encouraged to make contact with the researcher. A total of nine participants were recruited and ultimately took part in the study. As the experiences of street harassment had been found to be incredibly subjective, it was essential to plan the research accordingly and provide the appropriate means for women to express their honest opinions of the topic while reflecting on their own experiences. The focus groups were held in a local church, as this was a convenient and secure space which reduced travelling distances for participants. In an effort to ease with issues of childcare and employment, two independent sessions were offered on the same day, providing an option for volunteers to attend which suited their schedule best. To ensure an intimate and in-depth research session wherein participants could discuss their opinions and memories of harassment

with others who may have had shared experiences, small groups of up to four participants were held at one time. Biber states that smaller focus groups or "mini-groups", are advantageous as they provide "greater opportunity for all participants to speak and fully express their views" (2014, p249), therefore creating a richer degree of data to collect. The first of the two groups consisted of two participants, one aged under 25 and one between 25-40. The second consisted of four participants, one aged under 25, two between 25-40 and one aged 41-60. Due to unforeseen circumstances and conflicting schedules, three participants were unable to make the sessions on the day. Wanting to maintain their involvement in the study due to the belief that all experiences and opinions are valuable to the research, the researcher instead travelled to their homes and to conduct three in-depth interviews. One interviewee was between the ages of 25 and 40, and two interviewees were over 80. These interviews proved to be incredibly worthwhile and beneficial, as they provided even wider perspectives on the topics at hand as well as a larger range of ages involved.

The grouping of ages into categories within focus groups was adapted from Ford and Donis's (1996) research which took a similar approach. However, their highest specified category was 'over 50'. Therefore in this study which is focused on age , the highest category is 'over 80' to clearly demonstrate contrasting generational standpoints. While the initial research design planned to place participants in homogenous grouping due to age, this was amended in the hope of producing multi-faceted and diverse conversation, as well as exploring the exchange of views between participants who may feel differently regarding certain topics. Smithson states that heterogenous groups can challenge typical discourse through interesting discussion (2000, cited in Smithson, 2007, p358).

For the consideration of ethical procedure, a detailed plan of the research and methodology design was submitted to the University's ethics committee before to the recruitment of volunteers.

Prior to every conversation for this study, a participant information sheet and consent form were provided to each respondent and all participants gave consent to have their first name used within the study. Respondents have permission to be recorded on a password-locked phone belonging to the transcriber, which would be deleted after transcription. The sessions began with the use of external stimuli provided to the participants to read and then give their feedback on. Stimuli such as a visual object "serves as catalyst for the group discussion that follows" (Greenbaum, 2000, np), therefore beginning an immediate conversation around the central topic at hand. This tactic also established perspectives early on, highlighting areas in which participants

agreed or not and their opinions as to why the felt this way. The particular image and quote used was of a viewpoint stated by 73 year old British actress Joanna Lumley. Her perspective of harassment, specifically wolf-whistling, as being harmless cause a difference of opinion among participants. While admittedly this is a form of harassment on the milder end of a very broad spectrum of damaging manifestations of gender-specific harms, this is objectifying and targeted behaviour nonetheless, which contributes to feelings of frustration and shame among victims. In the interest of the research aims, this provided high-quality and reliable data which demonstrated that there is in fact a disparity among female age groups regarding the severity of street harassment. These findings will be explored in detail in the next chapter of the thesis.

Following the initial discussion of the session, participants were asked what exactly was included in their personal definition of street harassment. This was adapted from Plan International's study, where participants began by listing the words and phrases that they associate with the topic (2018). This was included in accordance with the research aim of whether age has a profound affect as to what women classify as harassment. Following this, an adaption of Haug's (2008) feminist memory work was utilised. This method encourages the retelling of memories and unpacking of the emotions associate, with the belief that "collective memories, personal experience and personal testimonies can provide fertile sources of evidence about women's lives […] as remembered narratives provide a window into, or a bridge between, the personal and political (Michell et al, 2017, np). This method was implemented to explore the research aim of whether women's attitudes and responses to harassment had evolved with time and the ageing process. Therefore respondents were asked to recall and verbally share both their earliest and their most recent memory of experienced harassment in public space, as well as reflection on their response to the incidents. This framework was most definition successful in not only encouraging a comfortable dynamic within the group, but also for establishing perspectives on the topics. Furthermore, Michell et al. state that "the sharing of collective experiences and participation in the interpretation of data they produce, can induce feelings of solidarity and empowerment for participants within the group" (2017, np). As a researcher, it is impossible to determine if this was verifiable for participants of these sessions. However observant interpretation suggests that the sharing of memories produced feelings of validation and encouragement between respondents. Within the in-depth interviews, memory work provided an opportunity for insightful detail surrounding the reminiscence of past events. Furthermore, interview participants appeared to go into greater depth regarding their memories and their feelings towards them in hindsight.

To ensure that core themes would be covered during the sessions, a focus-group question guide was created. This therefore provided a semi-structured framework for the running of the session and touched upon a wide variety of concepts that had been identified through the literature review. However, additional themes that arose were discussed also. As previously mentioned, the question guide was amended and expanded upon throughout the research process to provide a greater means of extracting information and stimulating discussion, as well as addressing of the research aims. As a focus group is a social experience, it was important that questions were deemed conversational, to "create and maintain an informal environment" (Morgan and Krueger, 1998, p3). Therefore, especially in the largest focus group, participants were able to channel and direct the discussion following each question. This stance was taken by the researcher to provide a session which was informative and engaging for all respondents, rather than a simple question-answer method. After the collection of data through focus groups and interviews, the recordings of the sessions were transcribed. Following Krueger's systematic framework of interpreting coded data, the transcriptions were carefully examined for reoccurring themes which related to the examined literature and organised by these themes for analysis (1994, cited in Rabiee, 2004, p657-8).

Findings and Analysis

Research aims

- Does age affect women perspective of street harassment?
- Does age affect a woman's classification of what entails 'harassment'?
- Has women's subjective perspectives and response to harassment changed?
- Do women plan and amend their life to avoid harassment?

Participants:

Georgia *(Under 25)*
Daisy (*Under 25)*
Laura *(25-40)*
Emma *(25-40)*
Abigail *(25-40)*
Jennifer *(25-40)*
Alison *(41-60)*
Ruth *(Over 80)*
Janice *(Over 80)*

Attitudes and Perception

The findings of this study successfully address and answer the first two of the four research aims. It is determined that there is a clear disparity between the age groups of women when examining the issue of street harassment and correlation exists between age groups and this subjective criteria of what exactly such harassment entails. Georgia acknowledged this disparity by expressing that "women perceive it in different ways… some people might think of it as a compliment and some women don't". This was expressed in relation to the external stimuli, wherein Ruth stated that she did "agree, definitely" with Joanna Lumley (2016), as did Janice who said "I agree with all of that, definitely". This was the beginning of similar standpoints from both participants over 80. Alison also expressed her agreement with the statements, explaining that this was due to the way in which she was raised, wherein "people would whistle and things like that and it was a laugh and banter, it wasn't taken seriously and it makes you feel good about yourself". Ruth reiterate this, expressing how a whistle from somebody would be seen as a compliment and does not mean any harm, as "it was a laugh and I would just walk past and think "oh I must look quite nice, for him to have done that". Janice agreed, suggested that "comments on the street, men shouting, that's

just part of day to day". Therefore this expressed that Janice personal tolerance of harassing behaviour is beyond that of wolf-whistling, to catcalling also. Alison, however, stated that "if someones vulgar and they're shouting something like "get your knockers out" or I don't know, something like that, that to me is a cross is a line that you shouldn't be crossing because that to me is wrong". This shows that there already is a difference in boundaries for older women and those slightly younger, which transcends age group further towards the younger participants of the study. There begins to be negative correlation between age and tolerance of street harassment, wherein participants of a younger age showed a higher level of frustration towards this behaviour, from women under 25 up until 25-40. These findings are consistent with Ford and Donis's study (1996), which found that older women have a higher tolerance of this behaviour. Neither participant under 25 agreed with Joanna Lumley, nor did Abigail and Laura. Emma, however, expresses "I'm a bit partial to be honest, I used to quite like wolf whistling, I thought it was a compliment but actually now it can become harassment, so I don't actually agree with most of what she says, but I do think that we have become more sensitive and people are more offended so I do think she's right". This is especially interesting as it exhibits the conflicting nature of internalised value of male comments, wherein a conditioned response is to take the behaviour as positive reinforcement for simply existing in public space. Emma's age is also an important factor in her honest response of how acts such as wolf-whistling would once boost her self esteem. While participants of similar ages express severe negative associations with all forms street harassment and Alison indicates her clear boundaries of such behaviour, Emma is distancing from a passive stance to an objective one. This shows an expanding visibility of the prevalence and damaging nature that something viewed as minor can eventually lead to. This directly goes against the findings of Ford and Donis (1996), which theorise that a tolerance of male harassment steadily increases with age. Emma shows however that this is not always the case and can in fact progress in a different direction. However, this could be due to the changing attitudes that have come about within the time period fo 25-40 year olds live so far. Where those over 80 and 41-60 to an extent have grown up with the connotations of street harassment as a normal and overlooked element of everyday life as a women who travels through public space, under 25's are not necessarily being taught these narratives of such inevitabilities. Therefore Emma is arguably within an age group that is challenged to unravel taught discourse of gender hierarchy.

This data addresses the third research aim: have women's subjective perspectives and responses to harassment changed over time? Alongside

Emma's reflection of her changing attitudes towards the topic, Laura expresses similar experiences. She states that "I actually do think that peoples' perceptions of it have changed, so I've gone with that maybe, but I've always been quite a strong feminist and so I've always been the one who tells people that it's not acceptable but now I've got to the point where I take it one step further, like stopping the guy on the street, to actually proactively try and stop it and I don't think I would have ever have done that when I was younger… I wouldn't have had the confidence, and actually it was probably stupid in hindsight because he followed me, so like… you know, I should have just reported it but…". Laura's comments highlight the complexity of self-blame when an incident occurs. Ruth expresses similar feelings, having recounted an incident wherein a male propositioned her while on a moving train. She states that this "partly it would have been my fault because I used to speak to everybody and anybody, I never saw any problem in doing that, so you know if I was on a train opposite to somebody I would speak to them, which they might see as an invitation, of course… in my naivety, I didn't". These experiences highlight how issues of responsibility and self-blame are not exclusive to age. Plan International UK (2018) have found that while girls experience of adult reinforcement of personal responsibility regarding safety (Both Janice and Ruth state that they received instructions similar), these messages of safety remain for the duration of women's lives, and serve as a a reminder of that women should take responsibility regarding their safety, rather than the stance that women's safety should not even be questioned.

As explained by Georgia when asked about the changing awareness of this issue, she states that **"**Maybe because specifically this generation, there has been more awareness… but I don't know if that would have been the same say sixty years ago, young girls then would have still felt uncomfortable about it or if it was just that time in general where women felt okay, or if it is just as you get older and you want the compliments more and you don't feel as objectified by it… I don't know if it's an age or a generational thing". When the same questions is asked in the second focus group, Jennifer concurs and explains her view of growing awareness; "I think it's the whole 'girl power' thing, I mean we're getting more rights and we're being heard and I think that's the main thing and even if it's just flirtatious and not the word 'harassment' which is negative, we don't want to be patronised for being women, we want to be treated equally as women and that's why… also I think it's as you said before ….] it was socially acceptable before, like other subjects which are not socially acceptable now which everyone knew that were going on with kids fifty years ago, in churches, with celebrities, and people knew it was going on, but it was normal, but now it's wrong, we all know it's wrong and people have more courage to talk about it". Ruth agrees that that the bid for equality has peaked

interest in forms of suppression even on a micro scale ("Well women are becoming more independent I suppose, and I mean we never spoke about equal terms when I went to work… I suppose it is to do with women feeling they should be on equal terms and simply not liking that sort of thing"). Bowman theories, however, that movements of 1970's and 1980's Second Wave feminism resulted in a significant increase of harassment in the streets, stating that as women ventured outside of the home and into the workplace, there became an escalation of street harassment due to women frequenting public spaces on a greater scale and unaccompanied (1993, p526). Subsequent resistance has been slow and steady, but appears to now be having an impact on the way in which women internalise their harassment. Participants concurred that the influence and power of social media also plays a part. This is certainly feasible when considering the growth of movements such as Hollaback! and Everyday Sexism, both of which began in the virtual space. Daisy explains how she believes that "maybe for the social media generation, because we're so bummed about it and we're influenced by what we hear and if we hear "it's bad, it's bad, we have to fight against it, it's bad" and you have to be influenced… like just with talking about examples, how we were discussing it and we spoke about public transport so we were influencing each other in our ideas, so I think that there's a really strong influence generational, historical and cultural". Abigail agrees that generational difference is most defiantly a factor in the way that society makes sense of cultural issues, ("I think that goes for a lot of things, like racism, homophobia… a generational difference, because that's how it was then, and in fifty, sixty years we might say "well thats how it was then", you know, things change so yeah I think it probably is quite different with generations"). Therefore current attitudes towards issues such as stranger harassment are repeated and encouraged as the correct way of treatment of such topics, particularly through internet culture. Lea suggests that "it's also something culturally […] partly because we see a domination of men and women in this [topic] and because we're trying to free ourselves from that sort of dominant vision then we cant accept those sort of things anymore, but it definitely has something to do with the societies we're in right now and because we're allowed to have social media". Internet culture spreads messages and influences surrounding what is deemed acceptable. Therefore in relation to perspectives based on age, it can arguably be deduced while women have the capacity to evolve their viewpoints, embedded attitudes form last perspectives of cultural topics. This is why, therefore, the encouragement of sharing and increased understanding of standpoints is crucial to greater awareness regardless of age or gender.

Cultural Impacts

Abigail explains that when "looking back to the 1960's, loads has changed since then […] just because it happened in the sixties and they were okay with it at the time, doesn't mean we should be ago with it now because that was a long time ago… and I wouldn't say that if you're offended by wolf whistling then you're a "sensitive flower", that's a bit unfair to say because some people don't like the attention, that doesn't make them sensitive, it just means that they don't like the attention being drawn to them out on the street or whatever… I think the fact that it was so long ago doesn't make it right, that they were okay with it then, because times change, don't they?". This standpoint acknowledges the broad and subjective nature of attitudes towards street harassment, making it a difficult variable to both predict and measure. As the array of responses to the external stimuli show, women's feelings are understandably complex. Laura theorises that age may affect women's sense of validity, by expressing that "I would agree that it is generational, erm my mum said similar things … she actually said once 'well when you're my age you'll appreciate it' or something like that, and I thought that was a really strange comment to make". Comments such as these are parallel with standpoints of feminists such as Davis, wherein "woman are objectified and reduced to her body parts" and consequential self value is place upon the recognition of this (1994, p138-40). However, both Janice and Ruth they revealed a growing change in the nature of their acknowledgement by others within public space. Janice states "I mean actually, since I've been old, they've all been nice and offering me a seat and you know, things like that…". Ruth has also has similar experiences, explaining that in her current residence, "I've only met kindness around here, I must admit…". These findings show that it is not necessarily that women become invisible as they age, but that the boundaries and norms of male behaviour towards them evolves into something platonic. When asked about recent instances of harassment in public space, Laura expressed a similar situation since becoming a mother; "when I was younger it used to be constant, but not so much now and definitely not since I've had a child, I mean that just wouldn't happen now, so that's quite interesting…. not even a look… so that makes you wonder what they're doing it for, because if they're in the van with their mate and they shout at someone with a child, even if they were like "yummy mummy" or something like that, which wouldn't be particularly offensive, but it's still harassment, I don't whether they would… I don't know, that wouldn't be a a bravado thing would it, I don't know… you know maybe there is a boundary and they don't think that's appropriate, I don't know". This is a crucial finding when examining why men harass, and particularly links to Wesselmann and Kelly's study (2010) of male norms and likelihood of harassment. Application of this theory to the participants experiences suggests that there is understanding within masculine cultures of

the treatment of visible mothers, women of an older age and women who are pregnant. Therefore the lack of harassment towards these groups goes without saying among males. Further exploration within the research uncovered that cultural norms are possibly a reason why men harass. As Jennifer is Columbian, she was able to provide an insightful comparison of the prevalence of harassment that women experience while in public space. she was able to provide an insightful comparison of the prevalence of harassment that women experience while in public space in "a very masculine dominated country, as in masculine mentality". Jennifer explains that coming from a different country "where whistling and hooting from the car is normal, I grew up with it… any pair of legs in the street, they're gonna hoot, you just ignore it… when I go back home, it's pretty normal, you ignore it, it's not rude and I think it wouldn't pass from that, you know a whistle in the street, a hoot in the car and that's it… it's nothing more than that". Cultural norms therefore permeate the normality of this behaviour and ingrain the unremarkable and dismissal nature of such a common occurrence. Furthermore, Jennifer suggests that male harassment is due to the ability to blend into busy spaces. This provided parallel links to Postemes and Spears deindividuation theory, wherein anonymity provides means for undetectable harassment. Jennifer states "I also think, when there's a lot of people, everyone is so much in their own world, these weirdos out there get empowered by being covered, by being in a crowd … they feel invisible and everyone is on their phones with earphones in… nobody sees and nobody hears anything that is happening in public, and I think they just, they hide in these crowds, so yeah being around other people is quite common".

The two participants under the age of 25 were also able to give a comparative account of cultural difference. Daisy is French and from Paris, while Georgia is a British study abroad student living in Paris too. Both participants gave insight into the increased prevalence of street harassment that occurs in the French city, despite laws having been instigated that result in on-the-spot fines for men caught committing such acts. Georgia states that she believes "in Paris there is no shame, it is just everywhere and yeah, there's nowhere I think, apart from maybe some smaller districts where there's more families, I really feel like there it could happen anywhere". When questioned as to why this could be, she states "Well I haven't really lived anywhere else other than Paris but maybe they don't actually realise it's wrong, and again I'm not sure why that is, but again I don't think they think it's a problem at all, and if you pulled them up on it, they'd be like "what am I doing wrong?". Daisy expands upon this, explaining that "there's something cultural and I mean I don't have the English experience to tell you, but the French experience I have… because we had a lot of colonies in North Africa so we have a lot of North Africans in Paris, and in their cultures sometimes its a compliment, a way of flirting, if you get a ladies

attention from whistling, or even if you tap her on the shoulder from behind, its not offensive at all… but if you do that to someone who's native French then they would find it offensive, so it's more a cultural point of view as well".

Planning

Plan International UK found that girls affected by street harassment take preventative strategies, and are "likely to change their lives, activities or behaviour in some way as a result of their experiences, meaning they often feel unsafe in public spaces and on public transport" (2018). Emma explained that she would want to change her route to work, due to the harassment she would experience from men on a building site close to her work. The data collected in the focus groups of this study found this to be a major reoccurring theme, as well as the harassment occurring most on public transport. All respondents but one tell of an occurrence in which they have felt intimated or been approached while on a train. The planning and avoidance of harassment in every day life therefore takes precedent in many forms. When asked of her experience of taking preventative measure, Georgia states "Every single day… I mean I think, and again I'm talking about Paris here, […] I've turned down going out because I'd be the only one going and some of my friends live in the same building so I'd only really go out when we can come home together or I think "okay are the trains gonna be running because I don't want to be waiting around for a taxi"… like every day I think "am I too overexposed in what I'm wearing?", always always thinking about it, it's like a daily thing". The use of public transport Laura said that she too would be aware of her surroundings and dress, in an attempt to avoid harassment. This synthesises with a view that dress can play a substantial role in the treatment of women in public space. However as interesting aspects to this fact is that Daisy did not agree and found that she does not amend her lifestyle to accommodate for the risk of harassment. This shows a disparity between younger women, with some anticipating harassment and therefore planning accordingly, such as avoiding walking alone at night, while others exercise autonomy in spite of risk.

Conclusion

Overall this research study succeeded in establishing that there are intact disparities between younger and older women regarding their attitudes towards stranger harassment. The data shows that older women do in fact have a higher tolerance of sexual harassment, as Ford and Donis (1996) had previously theorised. This tolerance manifests itself in the form of overlooking smaller scale actions of street harassment, while younger women tend to fight back to such behaviour or produce their own coping mechanisms.

Furthermore, this research established that older women have different concerns surrounding crime when in public, rather than sexual objectification. Instead, women over the age of 80 projected their feelings of concerns surrounding their health and wellbeing while in public space, and the treatment that they receive from all members of the public, as opposed to just men. Younger women under 40, however, expressed concern over the behaviour of men that they experience while in public space and voiced their legitimate fears, and the ways in which this impacts their everyday movements, whether while travelling on public transport or walking in between locations.

On the other hand, there was consensus among all ages that women feel the education of men is a critical solution to evolving the standardised normalisation of street harassment and therefore decreasing its prevalence.

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Reflective Womanhood: British South Asian Muslim Women, Higher Education and Marriage

Iqra Bi

Abstract

This dissertation comprises qualitative data on eight South Asian Higher Education attendees or recent alumni, exploring how these women navigate their social realms and negotiate the dichotomy of modern and traditional 'good Muslim women' ideals. Maintaining that these women are navigating set boundaries in a socio-political discourse. An analysis focusing on the motivations these women have upon entering higher education and how these effectively give them a leverage to manage their identities as British, Muslim and Woman in contemporary society. The objective of gaining respect and independence is tactically used to deconstruct traditional gender ideals in marriage and their religious assertion allows them to rightfully be *different* than the majority. A midway negotiation so they are able to manage pressure from familial ideals which value the maintenance of a distinct identity to the West.

Introduction

The aim of this study is to discover whether education and employment post-compulsory education influences a shifting outlook on SA Muslim women's preferences and expectations of marriage. These women are prescribed cultural ideals within a dichotomy of religion and British culture. Therefore this study explores the impact imposed boundaries, within both of these settings, have upon these women and their social identities. Analysing how they are creating new gender identities as they navigate these set ideals.
The focus of the study pertains to the following three questions:

> Do education and employment aspirations affect the women's marriage prospects?
> Are south Asian Women finding new gender standards, as they manage the dichotomy of traditional and modern social realms?
> Are these women religiously and culturally assertive and do they negotiate expectations in a collective or individualistic manner?

This study demonstrate how SA Muslim women negotiate and modify their gender identities as they reflect on their subjection. Focusing on marriage as it is a salient site wherein traditional heterosexual gender roles are initiated (Mehrotra, 2016). The study highlights how Islamic rulings sustains the practice of marriage in the UK, where there are multiple other formations of relationships. Based on existing literature, education is believed to provide women with the agency enabling them to choose and distinguish their own identities (Ahmed 2001, Shain 2000). The attainment of a HE qualification opens opportunities for these women as they are enabled to be professionally active, independent and thereby empowered. Therefore, this study analyses the motivations and influences upon entering HE and then uncovers the confines of cultural ideals which have been adopted from tradition and still affect these women in their contemporary endeavours.
To understand these women introspective identities, the method of research employed was in-depth interviews. This study is coherently organised by first presenting a literature review contextualising this study. Following with a discussion of the methodology used to collect the data. Then finally presenting a discussion of the main findings cross tabulated with the preliminary literature.

Literature Review

The employment and education patterns of South Asian (SA) Muslim women post-compulsory education have become more of a focal point in recent research. Within these studies, it is found that the motives for participation in education and the workforce are affected by the cultural shift along generations of migrants and how women come to terms and negotiate their belonging to two different cultures. The pathway of education and/or employment has provided positive and emancipatory qualities therefore appealing to young women however participation is affected by cultural norms (parental expectations) for daughters to maintain SA traditional ideals. Therefore, studies highlight the interpersonal negotiations SA Muslim women are making with the familial expectations and their need or desires to improve their social mobility and class. The route of education and employment then poses further inspection into how the agency proposed to these individuals then affects their life choices; particularly marriage. Questions such as, are women who are employed or educated (post compulsory) more likely to assimilate with western cultural ideals of marriage and what is their understanding of SA marriages? Do these women have more agency in choosing their spouse and what are their views on arranged marriage? Also, does having an education/career affect their views on the organisation of the household and what are their own expectations for life after marriage?

Identity

Since the late 1970s there has been an increase in the presence of SA women in higher education (Bagguley and Hussain, 2016, p44) therefore, researchers have investigated the reasons for the rise. There is a change from traditional normative patterns and women are re-negotiating and making life choices and in doing so perhaps creating new gender identities within education and marriage. Studying this generational shift will uncover the aims of young SA Muslim women who are taking the pathway of education and employment. Majority of the literature inclines to the idea that Muslim women's identities are rooted in the stereotypical ideas of SA Muslim. Though the notion of these women as 'passive', 'timid' and 'shy' are part of a broader cultural hegemony (Shain, 2000, p160, Abu-Lughod 2002). Embedded in a racist rhetoric, preconceived notions of SA girls leave them marginalised in school, teachers assuming they will get married and that there is no religious value for education thereby having lower standards for them (Basit, 1996, p238-239, Mirza and Meetoo, 2017, p229). Shain (2000) concluded from her study that young

women negotiate the multiplicity of factors that affects their life choices with alternative systems of meaning and in doing so they are resisting culture that constrains them. Finding those girls who study and do well are processing and negotiating their own will against the passive stereotype, this then alludes to the agency of these girls in creating new ideals of SA womanhood and life choices (such as marriage). Conversely, Archer (2002) notes educational attainment was an independent motive for women as they formulated and negotiated choice within a British Muslim context (p372).

The Postmodern feminist Judith Butler (1990) suggests the variability of gender is dependent on the social environment so multiple social factors including 'racial, ethnic and regional modalities' situate women in society (p3). In SA communities, marriage is a central aspect to the identity of womanhood due to the hegemonic heterosexual discourse inferred through a 'cultural script' where women are expected to marry within their ethno-religious community, being marriageable on terms of looks or being a good daughter in law, or generally a 'pressure' to get married from the family and community (Mehrotra, 2016). Butler's concept can be applied to this study and the negotiations women make to subvert the appropriate 'good Muslim women' concept. Hussain et al (2017) suggest the academic route provides a chance to resist and negotiate the expectations of a 'good Muslim women' and to distance oneself from the homogenisation of Muslim women which 'is associated with caring qualities, being a mother, domestic roles, religious honour (izzat) and appropriate appearance' (Siraj 2012, cited in Hussain et al, 2017, p414). The *agency* and partaking in HE allows these women to form new gender identities and they do so within a contemporary social framework important social influences include modernity, family and religion therefore this literature review focuses on these ahead.

Modern culture

The binary of 'traditional and modern culture' or 'South Asian culture and Western culture' is where the reworking of these women's identities are situated. The process of assimilating into the British way of life requires these women to make advantageous negotiations that are suited to both aspects of their identity. 'In their pursuit of the opportunities of higher education, they '*reflexively select, suppress and supplement* aspects of their parental cultures and religion' (Archer 2007). Accordingly, the 'meta-reflexivity' actioned enables these women to 'suppress or at least defer expectations about marriage or plans for arranged marriages' as they critically manage ideals (cited in Bagguley and Hussain, 2016, p47). Ahmed (2012) research on the attitudes towards marriage and relationships among university educated students found university was an aide to young women to choose a compatible partner for

marriage; as a means of social mobility (p194). Finding their own partner shows the intergenerational shift; there is also the suggestion that parents are supportive of their daughters gaining a HE as it will 'attract suitors of a similar status or above' (p145). The 'ecology of choice' these women have, and the 'endogamy' parents persist on their daughters is salient to their tradition keeping. Accordingly, Basit (1997) found the cultural acceptance of love *after* marriage removed the girl's emphasis on modern concepts of romance and boyfriends (p77). Bhopal (2000) found those women who choose to deny tradition-keeping such as arranged marriage were considered 'sexually promiscuous' and this would affect the family's social reputation and 'izzat'(p41). However, these young women can 'architect' their choice to their individualised selves (Illouz, 2012). These young girls are in the process of integrating and assimilating with wider British culture as they enter and learn in the higher education field (Bhopal, 1998, 2008).

Family aspirations

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) note how the expansion of education has emancipated women 'allowing abstraction and reflection' on the restrictive social environment they live in therefore allowing for activism and in doing so the 'bonds to family life have loosened' (p37). According, to Archer (2012) HE students process reflexivity by 'critically detaching' as they 'strive for 'otherness', to embrace opportunity and gain upward social mobility (cited in Baker, 2018, p7). Education was found to be important for parents as it would provide their child's 'social advancement'; the intergenerational change of university attendance could attend to this 'value of education' (Dale et al, 2002, p962). As parental support signifies the social adaptation that is being made by immigrant parents; in the western world restricting an individual's opportunity to study is objected and out of the norm (Ahmed, 2012, p145 Basit, 1997, p79). Dale et al (2002) note, there is a cautious approach to the women's educational advancement to ensure she does so without 'jeopardising the family honour' therefore it requires negotiating and renegotiating with the parents (p962). 'Izzat' is salient in the custom of keeping the SA tradition, denying parental advice is disrespectful and the family is considered dishonourable in the community (Becher, 2008, p41).

Parents expect their child will prosper and aspire to careers such as 'doctors, nurses, lawyers' all which will be 'well-respected' titles, these ambitions are then internalised by the children (Becher, 2008, p49). SA parental expectations for marriage were also internalised by the children in Becher's study; marriage and motherhood are considered a natural progression for SA and young girls anticipate following their grandmothers' footsteps (Owen et al, 2008). A more recent study by Zaidi and Shuraydi (2002), explores the view of Pakistani

women in the western hemisphere on arranged marriages, finding a need for 'modification', wanting more influence in the process and a need for interaction with the prospective spouse prior to any agreement (p506). Views on love for second-generation migrants were individualistic compared to their parents and they are adopting the idea that they need to know and love someone before committing to marriage comparable to the idea of cohabiting as a 'trial marriage' (Modood et al, 1997, p75). Pande (2015) examines arranged marriage under a post-colonial feminist scope finding the women's aspirations and agency allow her to shape her own marriage.

Basit (1997) noted a difference in aspirations for daughters in comparison with sons, with higher career expectancies for males in the family. As traditionally males are expected to fulfil the breadwinner role and sequentially provide for their own parents in their old age, whilst women take a housewife/caring role after marriage (p79). But these women show a desire for upward mobility, the 'status reward' of the job is more crucial than intrinsic satisfaction also conclusive of the 'migrant effect' (p140). Similarly, Modood (2004) found the rising presence of ethnic minorities at university is because of the added 'cultural social capital' to their identities. Ahmed (2012) found educated women married later in age as finding a partner with the same education level is difficult; reflecting gender and class issues. Highlighting the notions of the double-bind as although she pursues her career she is still expected to be a housewife and if she does not get a 'respectable career' (white collar or profession) she can then fall back as a good-wife (Basit 1997, p165). On the other hand, women were still encouraged to gain a degree because it would provide them the ability to have an insurance against violation in their marriage and women who are divorcees can be economically independent (Brown, 2006, Basit, 1996). SA women in the UK with HE qualifications delay marriage however when they do marry they are willing to marry someone from overseas just like those who do not have a degree (Dale and Ahmed, p914). The social independence education provides, results in women no longer relying upon men, also the reflexivity afforded by education to these women enables them to challenge gender inequality within traditional marriage ideals (Qureshi et al, 2014, Bhopal, 2011). This significant adaptation to a new gender identity was found to be perceptible by parents who were aware that traditional marriage practices were a 'risky' route to be imposed upon their daughters (Qureshi, et al, 2014, p275-276). Education provides a respectable social capital, so parents are encouraging education, so their children may better their social opportunities for the future generation (Modood, 2004, p102). SA girls of a working class have middle class career aspirations and want to achieve a better economic position in society (Ahmed, 2001, Basit 1996, 1997, Bhopal, 2008, Pande, 2015). Similarly, Ahmed (2001) notes how parents want to establish

social respectability by distancing themselves from negative stigma of gender inequality in the community, so they are willing to let their daughters get an education.

Cultural and religious assertion

Ijaz and Abbas (2010) study of Pakistani parents' perceptions on their daughter's education concluded that there is a process of 'Islamisation' among the different generations of Muslim parents in the UK. Stating that structuralist implications such as racism and Islamophobia and culturalist implications such as the idea these women accept their oppression and want to be different affect their experiences of education (p315). The first generation were undertaking 'cultural traditionalism' whereas the second generation were enacting 'religious conservatism' (p313). Maintaining cultural tradition such as family unity to protect them from 'corrupted' 'western values'. Whereas, the latter have a religious prerogative; the education of girls is considered a right with reference to religion. They were also critical of their parents' culture as it created a 'double standard' and gender inequality which was believed to contribute to structural racism and discrimination in British society (p323). Basit (1997) found parents push their Muslim daughters to prioritise education over recreational activities (p134) also noting that maturity in the girls views on boyfriends finding that regardless of wanting to be like the indigenous group they were aware of religion and culture so' eschewed such friendships' (p169). The Muslim population stands at 2.7million of which two-thirds (68%) are South Asian (ONS, 2013). Racism in the UK was found more appropriately identified with religion as racial discrimination is protected by law but protesting religion is allowed. The anti-Muslim rhetoric provides a 'loop-hole' for far-right movements to propagate an 'anti-Asian rhetoric' (Allen, 2005, Marranci, 2006). Since 9/11 racism has accentuated in the UK and being the majority of British Muslims derived from south Asia, there cultural traditions have been discriminated against as religious and cultural distinction is thin in this demographic (p49). Marranci (2006) discusses that Islamophobia is a defence against 'real multi-culturalism', stating that Europe expects Muslims to integrate and become European Muslims but it also 'others' them as Muslims in Europe (p12).

To overcome the racism against a culture there needs to be a distinction made between religion and tradition. A recent study by Scandone (2018) with young Bangladeshi undergraduate women, notes that these women went through a process of 'self-distancing' to escape the negative discourse related with Muslims in the UK. Potentially to overcome discrimination in their immediate environment as Dwyer (1999) discusses the dichotomy of Asian/English wherein Asian clothing or the headscarf can be considered 'backwards'.

Arranged marriage has been considered a strand of patriarchal backward societies and is often conflated with forced marriage, therefore it has become as 'exotic racist category' (Sharma et al, 1996 cited in Pande, 2015, p174). However, after HE experiences and with the middle-class social and cultural capital acquired, girls were enabled the reflexivity to be culturally assertive therefore 're-claiming' their cultural identity (Scandone, 2018, p15). Reflexivity allows for a 'rights-centred' identity wherein the women are forming new or adaptive gender identities (Brown 2006). To do so they are using religious scriptures to challenge traditional culture and forced marriage. Feldman (2012) notes, Islam is an avenue that empowers Muslims in the UK 'as a source of agency' and acts as a 'moral compass' (p271). Mir-Hosseini (2006) made a similar analysis of Muslim feminism, suggestive findings were that the use of religion and the sacred to gain equality is an effective strategy as it would deconstruct the interpreted religious justification *('sharia-fiqh')* being used to disseminate inequality and patriarchal practices. Mir-Hosseini also notes that women's aspirations for equality can be reached as the polarities between 'east' and 'west' are destroyed, consequently overcoming the 'dichotomy of 'Muslim and feminism'. Finally, Mir-Hosseini claims that if the elite and highly educated Muslim women challenge the patriarchy then this would provide women from all walks of life the chance to make 'dignified choices' (p644-645).

Though Mir-Hosseini's research attends to Muslim feminism in Iran, the view is essential for British Muslims as they are situated in both Islam and secular society. Afshar (2008) supports the discourse of Muslim feminism, 'what is certain is that it is no longer possible to ask of educated believers to submit blindly to the rule of a male caliph or jurisconsuls' (p423). I want to determine how my participants negotiate culture and how religion affects their aspirations for a career with the traditional conjugal family roles?

Marriage in the UK

Marriage is regarded highly in society which applies to a multitude of ethnicities and places all over the world. However, in the UK there is a rise in co-habitation, the rate of marriage is decreasing overtime, a more significant statistic shows since 2006 marriage rates for men under 20 have fallen by 50% and for women under 20 the rate has fallen by 61% (ONS, 2019). There is a new sequencing of life events as couples cohabit and have children before getting married, Berrington et al (2015) found that regardless of the individualised theory of modern society, marriage is still considered 'an ideal' in the UK, by comparing 'highly', and 'low educated' participants, and their views on different relationship dynamics. The HE participants had traditional life event ordering expectancies for themselves however they held liberal attitudes towards non-marital relations and child-rearing practices as they were

considered normal and acceptable in society. On the other hand, those from a low-income family found marriage was 'an ideal' but a wedding was unaffordable therefore committing to a co-habiting relationship is the 'achievable' option. The external, public image pressure on couples to have a wedding ceremony results in marriage becoming a distant priority in comparison with other financial commitments therefore cohabiting has become stronger in adaptation to social and structural influences. The secularisation of society has created the appropriation of cohabiting, the rise in civil marriages and the LGBTQ and feminist movement dismantling the conjugal family and the status of the marriage institution in the UK. Islam along with many other religions promotes marriage as a basis to form a family. In Islam marriage (nikkah) is regarded highly significant as a scriptural ruling. Sexual intercourse is considered haram (forbidden) before marriage accordingly co-habiting is also haram (Bhopal, 1997, Basit 1997). Divorce is considered one of the most hated permissible decrees in the eyes of God, so, to protect their children parents choose an arranged marriage as a securer option, which daughter consent to as loyalty to their parents (Basit, 1997, p73). However they do so by negotiating the demands of modernity such as romantic love and agency (Pande, 2016, p380). Consanguineous marriages are considered with prejudice, due to ideas of incest, or due to possibility of inherited diseases (Basit, 1997, p81). Inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriages were found to cause conflict with family and extended family so avoided by respondents in Basit's (1997) study, and parents were anxious inter-marriages will lead to their children's complete separation from culture (p86-88).

SA wedding ceremonies can last up to '5 days or more', a tradition from the subcontinent that Asian migrants have also executed in the UK. SA Muslim parents often choose their daughters spouse quite overtly in comparison to the majority in the UK (Feldman, 2012, p271, also Basit, 1997, p167).Anwar (1998) records, the subcontinental family is salient in Asian ceremonies in the UK either through invites, a celebration in the subcontinent or by sharing a wedding film (p116). Gathering from this, family and the public declaration of marriage is integral to the cultural context of marriage and relationships. For the SA community, marriage is a site of cultural and religious identity maintenance, mixing with those alike with oneself to not lose one's future generation to the host society (Basit, 1997, Bhopal 1997). Living in a multi-cultural society there is a chance of intercultural intimacies and the Islamic scriptural guidance disallows marriage to non-Muslims however it has been interpreted unequally for both genders. Disallowing Muslim women from marrying a non-Muslim whereas, men can marry a non-Muslim woman so long as she is from the 'people of the book' (Christian or Jew) (Basit, 1997, p87).

The implications of this patriarchal interpretation include an increased surveillance of young SA Muslim girls; the main parental concern being the family 'izzat' (honour) (Zaidi and Shuraydi, 2002, p507). There is an instilment of 'foreboding' as noted by Ahmed (2001), parents' encouragements of girls to study is still preoccupied with the 'anglicising' effects of university life (p146). But education is seen as a positive liberalising force by parents providing opportunities, still their main objective is to nurture their daughters to become British 'without losing their Islamic identity' (p436). There is a cultural script imposing an expectant stage of marriage. Relatively this study will explore whether the women are abiding these scripts or if they have new found gender identities that have created more self-fulfilling ideas for marriage.

Methodology

Qualitative interviews

Studying the self-perceived expectations British SA Muslim women had for marriage required an exploration of their lived experiences. Therefore, the practical method to attain authentic data was semi-structured qualitative interviews. In-depth interviews have the advantage to delve into the meaning and association each individual's experience provides, a flexible approach as such provides 'subjectivity' and 'voice' conveying 'authenticity' (Silverman, 2013, p6). The interpretivist method gave the interviewer an ability to alter questions catering to a less pressured conversation (Jones, 2004, p258). Gaining an insight into the cultural experiences of the women in this study through the conversational method provided rich data that would be used to analyse the broader aims of the study. Also corresponding other researchers mentioned in the literature review who have studied the perception of SA women including Ahmed (2001, 2012), Bhopal (1997, 2012) and Basit (1996, 1997). All of whom studied the lived experiences and perceptions of SA women exploring their self-identities.

To ensure the data collected was relevant and effective an interview topic guide (see appendix 9) was created informed by preliminary literature (Timulak, 2014, p487, p488). The interview topic guide was created by conducting a literature review and noting specific themes in the research such as identity, education, marriage, culture and religion which influenced my topic of British SA Muslim women's gender identities relative to their views on marriage. The interview guide was an 'aid' which ensured loosely all interviews had a similar discursive focus as the interviewer had a reference point to maintain an effective conversation (Seale, 1998, p206). The interview guide provided a 'planned flexibility' as it was not used sequentially (Silverman, 2013, p182) and the interviewer held a 'non-directive' role by allowing the conversation to flow by using semi-verbal cues such as 'uh-huh' or interventions such as 'yes I see' which encourage the interviewee to expand their point providing rich data for analysis (Seale, 1998, p207).

Sample

The participants were recruited through a 'non-probability' sampling method of 'convenience sampling' and 'snowball sampling' as it was a student research project, and this was the easiest selection process (Seale and Filmer, 1998, p139; Robson and McCarton, 2016, p280, 281). Seidman (2006) noted this as

an appropriate method to ensure ease in conducting research due to the familiarity (p40). Some of the interviewees were familiar to the interviewer and some were recruited by asking the former interviewees to share the research study with any suitable (SA Muslim) friends from their university asking for their participation. This proved to save time as using a 'non-random sampling method' ensured the participants fitted the sample requirements (Seale and Filmer, 1998, p138). Initially the plan was to interview 10 participants as agreed with the supervisor of this research project but due to the strain of university deadlines a few participants did not have the time to co-operate. So, the sample size fell to 7 but as one volunteer who contacted the interviewer was a recent post-graduate which would not affect the aims of this research the total sample size was 8 (Matthews and Ross, 2014, p164, p171). The purpose of such a study is to gain a 'comprehensive understanding of a phenomena' therefore it is not expected to be a generalisable study (Timulak, 2014, p492). For this small-scale project the main purpose of using in-depth interviews was to gain data that was representative of reality therefore this sample provided data that conferred individual 'truths' (Seale and Filmer, 1998, p134). Robson and McCarton (2016) note how the external validity of the research is threatened if the findings are specific to the group studied (p110). Certain findings corroborated with the preliminary research studies, making it reasonable for the findings to be generalisable to research of similar groups as it is grounded in the 'conceptual framework' surrounding the study of women who are Asian, Muslim and in the West therefore this study did have a high validity (Robson and McCarton, 2016, p111)

Having a familiarity with the participant gave an element of trust and similarity therefore allowing more open conversations to commence as the researcher was also a SA Muslim woman. This also attends to reducing feelings of observer judgment on sensitive issues (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002). Throughout most of the interviews, the interviewees tended to require a recognition of this similarity by asking questions such as 'do you see what I mean?' or 'do you get it?. So, if the researcher was not to nod or use semi-verbal cues of 'uh-hum' in approval this could have hindered a more elaborative discussion (Seidman, 2006, p42). This method was comparable to 'feminist methodology' wherein as Stanley and Wise (1983) state feminist research is 'on, by and for women' (p17 cited in Brunskell, 1998, p39). To establish the aims of this research study it required critical engagement with gender identity politics therefore the subject position of the researcher was significant to build transformative research.

Practicalities of method

The interview took place at two different university institutions (unnamed for confidentiality) depending where the interviewee studied; the interview with the participant who had finished with her studies took place at the interviewer's home where only the two were present. The aim was to provide comfort an effective space with confidentiality to have a more open conversation (Byrne, 2018, p230). All interviewees were offered hot or cold drink and as a few interviews took place over lunch, prior to their meeting; the interviewer offered to buy food for the interviewees. The interviews at university took place in pre-booked quiet rooms, which were booked by the interviewees on their own accord, or they took place in class rooms where nobody else was present. The practical concern of timing was managed by keeping contact with the participants providing them with the interviewer's availability and arranging a time that suits them. Three of the interviewees also collected data for their research projects so the exchange ensured participation. Ensuring participants were happily proceeding with the interview and it suited their availability ensured compliance with the British Sociological Association ethical guidelines (BSA, 2017).

Ethical procedure

Before any research was conducted the approval of the ethics form (see appendix 12) was obtained, this regulated the project as legally ethical to minimise any harm to the participants (BSA, 2017). The BSA (2017) guidelines also required transparency with the participants, by providing the participant with an information sheet (see appendix 10) and obtaining signed consent (see appendix 11) prior to the interviews (BSA, 2017). Along with the aims of the project the participant was made aware they could refuse, stop or leave the study at any time (BSA, 2017). Debriefing the participant of the research aims could have also created the 'Hawthorne effect' wherein the participants were aware of the research aims so were tending to those rather than producing more in-depth truth that could provide the study with new themes (Payne and Payne, 2004).

The information sheet also clarified the process and handling of the participants data with information on accessibility, recording and the storage of the data. *Accessibility*: only the researcher and examiners will read through study and then it may be read by future students but confirming no direct link to the participants is made. *Recording*: informing the interviewee that the data shall be voice recorded on the interviewer's private mobile phone. The recording will be deleted once transcribed as it would no longer be a required to keep. The interviewee was made aware the transcription is a word for word write up of the interview and that this would be read by the examiners though

pseudonyms (e.g. R1) will be active in these scripts, so the participants' identities are kept confident. *Storage of study and time span of study*: the study will remain a property at the university of Westminster and the consent form and dissertation shall be kept separate ensuring 'anonymity and confidentiality', handling the participants information under the 1998 Data Protection Act (BSA, 2017).

Thematic Analysis

The interviews were swiftly transcribed after they were conducted to commentate as accurately as possible (Seidman, 2006). Transcribing the data then allowed a more effective analysis, the data was coded by the themes generated in the interview prompt and the preliminary research. Then the data was coded, and a thematic analysis formatted the grounded theory of this study (Bryman 2012, p568). The axial codes contextualised each individual respondent's case, through which a concise structured analysis is presented. Being able to link the data with other studies and theories shows that SA Muslim Women in education are going through social processes that affect their marriage ideals. A possible improvement found was the study could have employed British SA Muslim women who have not entered post-compulsory education; which would have provided more valuable and assertive findings about the effects of HE on the gender identities of these young women providing a comparative analysis.

Participants' profile

The demographic of the sample was of the eight participants, there was 4 Pakistani, 2 Bengali, 1 Indian and 1 Pakistani-Indian. All participants were British Nationals and were either attending a British University or had previously attended a British university. The participant age ranged from 20 years to 26years old. One participant graduated recently with a Masters award, this participant was in full time work between a retail job and a job in the field of her HE studies. Of the remaining seven students four were in part-time paid-work alongside their studies and only one of the respondents was a current post-graduate student.

Findings and Analysis

The themes identified in the interviews were *gender, identity, education, marriage, culture and religion*. It became clearer that identity is interwoven in all the other aspects so it is less prominently found in the coding of a few interviews. To analyse the data and answer the aims of this project this chapter has been divided into 4 main sections; firstly analysing the motives for participation in HE, the second section explores how HE affects marriage ideals. Following with an analysis of cultural and religious factors and how they affect the gender identities of these women. The last section analyses the differing marriage practices relative to traditional and modern social terms. In conclusion the discussion will be summarised to clearly answer the research questions.

Motives to enter Higher Education

SA women are participating in HE studies and although the motivations for each student differ based upon their social environment their motivations are contingent on their agency and ability to negotiate their own choices and values. Living in a secular and multi-cultural society, these respondents are subsumed in modern British society (Archer 2002). When asked 'why is education important to them?' the respondent shared a similar reasoning, it can be argued these women have new found gender identities as they are building an 'independent women' rhetoric. For example as Respondent 1 said:

> "*education is really important, […], it empowers you to get jobs in the future it empowers you as an individual because it is something that you've achieved and something that no one can take it away from you and it is something that can make you happy that you've done well in life and you're independent*".

Coinciding with the findings of Bhopal (2011) and Qureshi et al (2014) in which both noted education results in independency. The respondents also compare themselves with their own mothers, for example R7 notes:

> "*And you know I want to be able to have good career, so I can support my own children to do well, it's not that my mum hasn't supported me, but I can learn from her not working, […]*"

R7 is creating a new gender identity as she wants her own children to be inspired by her, this notes she wants the next generation in her family to be

accustomed to university as a natural stage of progression. The reflection on their own mother's experience of not studying motivates the women in this study to do well. Relative to Modood (2004), SA women were setting new "empowering" standards for the future British SA Muslim women.

R2 notes her sister is a divorcee who has returned to university to complete her HE, highlighting the individual social gain. Comparable to Brown (2006) and Basit (1996) who found educated women were considered protected against violation or divorce in their future.

Another shared discourse between the respondents was of the status of a HE student; present in the discussion of attaining a 'respectable career'. In particular Respondent 3's career ambition highlights the value of education. When discussing her career pathway she says:

> *"well I do really enjoy makeup but I'm studying English, so that I can go into teaching if I want, I think I'd enjoy that as well, but yeah university just gives you better leverage, people tend to think 'all Asian girls' are like 'Instagram MUAs' these days so I think this degree will give me that chance to have a respectable career or even if I stay in makeup it will not be looked at like the 'easy option' if you know what I mean. [Air quoted*]".

This example is reiterative of Basit (1997) finding on the 'status reward' of the job. But also elucidates a possible difficulty in gaining a HE qualification which transpires a negative stigma onto those who do not study. Relatively R2 noted

> "*Coming from a school in which I was in bottom set, I guess it was like ok you need a miracle (R2) or you're going to be a housewife or stuck in a retail job"*.

This shows that these girls are actively seeking to change their prospects, highlighting Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) theory of individualisation. One could have added a social class theme to explore this in depth and uncover the effects of economic class.

Parental influence

Parental influence ranged from, encouraging, supportive to conflicting, the expectations parents have for the child are based upon differing values and experiences. For example, R2 notes, though her parents have been supportive of her participation in HE, her father did not show any keen interest in her studies "*he's not like education education education I guess there are other factors you know, like getting a job"*. It seems from this response and

respondent 4 that employment without HE is accepted quite straightforwardly, when discussing why her parents accepted her paid employment R4 notes:

> "I think it is because of my cousins, [...] I remember telling my dad that I had got the job and he was actually very proud of me, so I think it's just normal to start earning money".

This normality expressed is something R4 believes her parents became accustomed to as more women went into paid employment in the family, so, she also presumes they will change their perceptions on HE when it will reap her benefits in the future. R4's parents were not so supportive of her decision to study but rather it was a process of negotiation "of course they came round to it", to clarify their views she says:

> *"I think now my parents might see it as an issue or struggle but then they will understand and they will be proud of me and they will realise how important it is for me, in order for me to do well and get a good job".*

This perception is indicative of Dale et al (2002) and Modood (2004) who found parents were encouraging their child's education as a means to 'social advancement' for the future generation. R4 also notes there is a stigma wherein her family are considered *"backwards"* influencing her desire to change this negative perception by attaining HE qualifications. A possible inference attained from this is that her choice is situated within a British Muslim context and she's negotiating both familiarities (Archer 2012). Also, the idea they will come to see these benefits highlights parents adaptation to western models to disassociate with gender inequality idea (Ahmed, 2001).

On the other hand, R8 discusses education as a 'passion' referring to herself as a 'nerd', her Dad's attainment as a surgeon has inspired her studies, and being the only child she found family around her expected her to follow is his footsteps.

> "*People expect I will do well like family, I was given private tuition throughout my school years, we had a party when I got into grammar school, and then at GCSE's too so I don't want to let my dad down you know".*

The coercive effect of this pressure is tangled with her own desire to become successful. R7 similarly states *"My dad always called me a lawyer when I was younger, so I think that's why I was into that, but I think accounting is just as good*". This response observes Becher (2008) finding where SA parents'

expectation of 'well respected' occupational outcomes for their child are internalised by the child.

Social and Religious influence

Shain (2000) and Abu-Lughod (2002) highlighted the impact of a cultural hegemony that affects Muslim women in their social environment. The idea that these women are passive and obedient, inadvertently rouses their desire to do well. For example, R2 notes a Pakistani teacher would say "*if you fail you're going to go Pakistan and we all know what's going to happen then, he wasn't malicious it was a banter and joke and no one would be offended*" this could drive the desire for a "respectable career". Comparing to Basit (1997) and Mirza and Meetoo (2017) research where teachers had lower expectations of SA Muslim girls, believing that their religion and culture does not value education thereby overlooking them. R2 states her teacher's aim was that he "wanted us to understand reality and motivate us to do well".

Only one respondent expressed a religious prerogative to gain HE and to gain a career. R4 showed a religiously assertive motive:

> *"A career will get me that respect and people who think Muslim women are forced by their men that's not true. In Islam, the prophet's first wife was a working woman when he married her, and his last wife was a teacher. There's so much to gain from that insight, to change how Muslim women are treated and view themselves everywhere*".

This could be indicative of 'Muslim-feminism' as noted by Mir-Hosseini (2006) and Afshar (2008), wherein educated women are using religion to justify their choices and create a discourse of a dignified Muslim women.

Education and Marriage

R2 is an engaged student who has planned to marry after completion of her undergraduate studies, R3 has obtained an Islamic marriage (Nikkah), but is planning to have a Walima celebration before they move in together which would be in 3 years in 2021 after her studies. Likewise, R8 is in a platonic relationship, with an expectation to marry her boyfriend in the near future. All in all, regardless of their relationship status the respondents express a prioritisation of education over marriage. As R5 says *"I think I would prefer to get married after I complete my degree first"*, one could reason this is shaped by the shared discourse of *independence*, for instance R1 states *"an education stays with you after marriage"*. Also, being the first in her family to attend university she also hopes to inspire her younger sisters to go to university.

Additionally, one found there is also an influence wherein their mothers' disadvantage of not having an education and getting married has affected some of the respondents desire for an education, for example R3 says: *"I've seen my mum struggle to get a job because she left school and got married and her parents didn't see this day. So, I've learnt from that and I want to be an inspiration for my own children in the future"*. Similarly, R6 says her influence was her aunties who are working mummies, advice from one of them was:

> *"go to Uni R6, like she felt regret that she didn't do it sooner when she left college, she actually wants to go back into education to do nursing once her youngest is in secondary school. So I thought I'm going to do this because I have the opportunity now so I did and now I've got a nice car and I'm able to do things because I deserve it, there is a certain content knowing I don't have to struggle for anything or depend on anyone in my future".*

R5 also notes that her mother got married at 17 not having the *"chance"* to get the education she needed so had recently decided to go back into education. This arrangement of education before marriage could be in attendance to the 'cultural script' Mehrotra (2016) discusses. Wherein once these women get married there are standards that need to be accomplished, therefore, it can be argued that by participating in education these women are creating new gender identities. This is attentive to Hussain et al (2017) findings of the resistance and negotiation of the 'good Muslim women' homogenous ideals; provided if these women use their agency and partake in education prior to marriage so they will not be burdened with relationship responsibilities. Also these responses highlight the influence women have upon one another in their families as a shared understanding of the value of education can be found within the family in a gendered dynamic. Archer (2007) notes there is a process of 'meta-reflexivity', (cited in Bagguley and Hussain, 2016) as these women are not rejecting marriage ideals but rather are critically negotiating their participation in education whilst maintaining the expectant ideal of getting married (Owen et al, 2008).

The attractive graduate and negotiating traditional marriage roles

In this meta-reflexive mode these respondents are able to defer plans for marriage but it also allows them to 'architect' their choice in a partner (Illouz, 2012). When asked what qualities they preferred in a possible husband R1 notes: "someone with a degree" which was also reiterated by a few others but however not so explicitly rather they were in preference of someone who is financially "stable". As R2's fiancé is a graduate it was asked whether that was important in accepting the proposal to which she said *"No not so long as he*

was financially stable then I was fine". R3 also notes the "*ability to provide a secure stable future"* as a preference in choosing her husband. Similarly R5 says:

> *"Someone with a plan, a direction, we are more likely to be successful, a good income, stable life, financially and emotionally, be able to reach out and do things that maybe we would be more restricted to doing if there isn't a good enough financial income"*

These preferences corroborate Ahmed (2012) research findings wherein she found SA Muslim women with HE qualification are aiming for social mobility so aspire for compatibility in their relationship. As R4 states *"I think you can't expect something without being able to give something back"*. So it could be argued that although these women are forming new gender identities there is still a certain expectation for the man to fulfil the role of provision.

However this could be because they've internalised their parent's expectation (Becher, 2008). An example, is when R5 states:

> *"I feel like my parents would want me to marry someone who knows what they're doing with their life, not someone who has no plan. They've stressed how important education is in my life, so they'd want someone with a respectable education and career. Also like I think my parents would want me to marry a Pakistani, because they're quite traditional like that".*

It could be argued this is indicative of a variable cultural script wherein parents are adapting to modern social norms as stated by Ahmed (2012) an analysis which will be explored in-depth in the next section. Focusing on the traditional roles, parents have a perception that if their daughter does not gain a respectable career she can still suffice the 'good wife' traditional ideals (Ahmed, 2012). The double-bind is salient as the respondents in this study have high ambitions inferred through their discussions of being self-sufficient as discussed above, so their participation in education is their rejection of these standards that persist a gender inequality corresponding to Qureshi et al (2014) and Bhopal (2011) discoveries in their studies. An exemplary example of how gaining a HE affects the attitudes towards the household roles, is R6 who has recently left the institution of education with her master's in law, she states:

> *"Overall I think their views are quite similar to mine [...] but [...] there is the whole idea of my husband to be the financial provider, […] that idea is there and is very strong because […] it's just so normal in most Asian*

> *families and I personally would not agree with that, because I have worked and earned my right as equally to be a financial provider, why must he have that as his label automatically, so if say in the future I'm in paid work, he'd get the credit whilst I'd have to juggle everything home and work, so I think that mentality needs to change".*

R6 states she is very "proud" of her educational accomplishments and therefore does not want to be overshadowed by her partner, contradicting the expressed preference for a male breadwinner scenario. Instead she desires a shared approach and appreciation of both roles. Similarly R2 states *"I think they're isn't enough recognition for housewives so by sharing the job I think it'll make more sense and* bring us closer". These women are definitely desiring a more pragmatic ideal of an equally operated household. The differing views situated the individuals in their own social realities for examples, R1 discusses how her father did not accomplish the breadwinner role leaving her mum to be the sole provider in their home. So it may be she desires what she thinks her mum should have had. "*He has to obviously be able to fund the family, because that's in the Islamic terms and the cultural terms that it is his responsibility".* So, it could be gathered these variating views are situated in the differing practicalities of the women's social environments.

Culture and Religious Assertion

Analysing the theme of culture, it is apparent that there are certain western cultural norms which a few of these women do not want to participate in. For example, R2 notes:

> "*I think living in a diverse society people are quite open-minded and everyone is more bothered about themselves rather than others but in Pakistani communities you're expected to practice religion in a said way which is limiting for women. But then again other things like going out, partying, certain clothes they're not compatible with my religious values".*

Or, as R1 said, she would not attend Christmas parties due to alcohol consumption at these parties in such a space she feels she would be judged as a hijab wearing Muslim". These responses are indicative of women who are religiously assertive correlating to the 'Islamisation' theory of Ijaz and Abbas (2010). These women are enacting a 'religious conservatism'. Also in reference to R2's response quoted above, this religious approach is instigating a critical attitude of the gendered 'double standard' contingent on their parents' culture as found in Ijaz and Abbas (2010) research as well.

However, R8 notes her own parents are quite liberal as they allow her to dress in a western fashion, but her uncle is quite conservative, mentioning that through her upbringing she has been taught to respect her uncle like her father. *"I couldn't be like my Dad lets me what's it to you? My dad would go mad"*, this is again tending towards the maintenance of traditional culture. Similarly, R1 notes her grandparents live close by so interrogate her university timetable, something she says her mum does not inquire into. Both participants indicate they are not comfortable with this intrusion into their lives. The interference of extended family is found congruent with the findings of Zaidi and Shuraydi (2002) in which they found there is a 'surveillance' of SA Muslim girls in keeping with the traditional concept of 'izzat' within the community.

All of the respondents identified as religious, noting how it was an important preference in choosing a marriage partner. However, it was not just their individual choice but rather it was situated in the endogamy persisted by parents as a means to tradition-keeping and protecting their daughters from 'corrupt western values'. This also sheds light on the salience of izzat or honour as noted by Dale et al (2002) and Becher (2008), wherein denying their parents' choice has an impact on the family's reputation in the community. Though there is adaptation and distancing from the negative discourse as noted by Ahmed (2001), it can be seen that parents are accepting their daughter's desire for an education to emanate a discourse wherein they are viewed as progressive. Therefore, it can be assessed these women are having to meet standards from differing factors in their social realms, as they process and negotiate these factors they encounter certain expulsions from the traditional cultural realm as analysed next.

Effects of pushing Boundaries

Though these women are earning the ability to reflect upon their subjection in society so able themselves to critically reflect on religion and culture to assert new gender identities, they are still prescribed a cultural script where there is unnegotiable ideals. As a significant appearance of stigma and stereotyping is present as a consequence of not meeting certain ideals. These negative consequences could be triggered by the attempt parents make to protect their daughters from the 'anglicising effects of university' as this concept makes public spaces such as university viewed as the *other*. The pressure on these women to meet traditional cultural standards whilst also being British is hard touching as it is possibly proposing the idea that those women who do not maintain culture and religion are 'sexually promiscuous' akin with Bhopal's (2000) concluded consequence to the denial of parental command. For example when discussing relationships with the opposite gender R1 states:

> "*When you're a Muslim woman in a headscarf people expect you to be a certain way […] I'd probably get called an undercover slag or something, but men don't have to worry about tarnishing [air quotes] their reputation*".

This illustration demonstrates a cultural stigmatism and a gender bias at play, the surveillance of women possibly results in it becoming harder for them to find a partner. The respondents were asked whether they found it difficult to find somebody to marry, and there was a repetition of a 'desperate women' type of idea.

R4 said "*I'm not desperate*", equally, R1 notes:

> "*In most Muslim cultures is that the man asks for the girl's hand, if a girl's parents went and asked a guy's family to take their daughter in marriage they would seem desperate and like their getting rid of her so it's not attractive, so I think that's the same kind of thing nowadays. […] if it wasn't culture I would still wait for it*"

So, it can be gathered that traditional scripts have maybe adapted to modern society as this shame narrative has dispensed through culture. Therefore to maintain a dignified reputation these women are negotiating premarital relationships ensuring they are not negatively categorised. Significantly, the gender bias mentioned by R1 indicates why women are having to negotiate their active involvement in British society as British Muslim women, stating:

> "*as a guy you can spend several hours outside […] wouldn't even get questioned about it, Whereas as a girl if you spend a few hours in a library you would get questioned about it, […] in a relation to that as a girl if you were to go out and have sex it would be very negative and really downgrading for her but as a guy it doesn't impact their reputation and they would not be considered impure*"

So it can be argued, these women are forced to prove their pureness within these Asian familial cultural realms if they partake in pre-martial relationships. R8 who is in a relationship notes that there is a difference in dating cultures between Muslims and non-Muslims:

> "*For non-Muslims in that dating culture someone mentioning marriage is too serious and in ours it's the other side of the coin, if he wants to be your boyfriend then you ask yourself is this even serious*".

*S*he states her partner and her never discussed the boyfriend and girlfriend dynamic rather they have an *"unsaid respectable boundary*". The respondents make a distinction that the stigma around purity affects women rather than men, and this is not just present in the narrative of premarital relations but also divorced women. For example R2 says:

> *"it's perceived that it's harder for a woman to get married again, […] because it's considered she is no longer pure, or she could be infertile. So basically, they think we don't want someone who is already used oh my god that's so rude [pulls head back] [[awkward laugh]"*

Though she is talking about this in general terms this highlights how significant sexual purity is within the culture. However she does specify that within the community there are rumours her sister was "must've been a bad wife and bad daughter-in-law". Overall, these women are having to progress through these demands routed in the cultural script wherein there is a pressured ideal of the 'good Muslim women' narrative found by Mehrotra (2016). These standards pressure women to be responsible for their own and their families' reputation. As R5 states "*there is a risk of my Dad disowning me, because I've ruined his reputation*", the risk of not meeting parental standards evidently restrains these women from being able to revolutionise this outlook at a great deal. The respondents all have differing social situations, for example R8 is in a pre-marital relationship but in negotiating this with her parents, she said she has informed her mother *"telling mum relived me of the guilt that I am doing something wrong"*, asked why she has not told her Dad she says *"as he would be disappointed in me that I've betrayed him and the freedom he's given me"*. The dichotomy of traditional and modern social realms demonstrates that these women are actively creating new gender identities however the interjection of family is salient as they are overseeing these women and their choices.

Culture and Marriage

Britain is multi-cultural often described secular society, therefore these educated Muslim women were asked what their views were on cohabiting, gay marriages and child-rearing before marriage. R2 believed marriage was not a priority for non-Muslims rather they "*tend to marry when they are going to settle down and have kids I think, before, they focus on their career*", also noting that choosing co-habiting is maybe economically motivated *"I think people think why spend all the money and go through the effort"*. Which can be linked with Berrington et al's (2015) theory of weddings, wherein marriage is an ideal but not a priority, so if one must then they prioritise other necessities over a wedding celebration. However regardless of it being the practical

option, marriage is prescribed upon Muslims so instead R2 notes she and her fiancé have decided to cut any excessive SA customs. "*We've opted for a small do, were going to have a Nikkah and a Walima, because that is all that is religiously necessary*". This highlights how these young adults have negotiated the external pressures of a big Asian wedding to more practical arrangements suiting their own financial situation.

A few respondents viewed same-sex marriages as unnatural, these views were interrogated further to understand what influenced them. R1 and R5 both displayed a religious say-so wherein R1 said "*as long as I'm not doing or a Muslim isn't doing it I'm fine with it like obviously you have to respect it and that's their own choice*". R5 also shared this perception saying "I would accept and respect anyone who is not a Muslim's preferences", explaining her view she says *"well you cannot reproduce in a same-sex couple can you?"*. The rhetoric used here could be based on the comfort dynamic of interviewee and interviewer due to their similar identities. Religious assertion is evident in these response; for instance R5 *states "Islamically it is a duty to get married and create a family". Similarly R7 says "my ideal age to get married would be 26, like marriage is an important life step in Islam, so I want to settle down and be prepared"*. So it can be assessed that the significance of religion is why these women express a distancing with western marriage or relationship practices. As they are wanting *"a serious"* relationship that prioritises marriage as analysed above in R8's perspective on pre-marital relations.

There is a shared discourse by all respondents relative to the value of marriage in Islam. These views are subject to a 'cultural script', in this cultural sense marriage is a milestone that all are expected to reach (Mehrotra, 2016). Feldman (2012) highlights, parents are significant in the approval of the marriage of two people thus, the respondents want a like-minded partner but they also want someone their parents will approve of. A few respondents shared a preference for their partner to be "respectful towards their parents" (see R1, R2, and R4) there was also a desire for compatible identity. For example R2 stated "*religion and cultural similarity, I expected him to be practicing and I wanted him to have good character and be respectful, yeah respectful to my family his own family and respectful to women". Likewise R4 says:*

> *"I expect someone who is respectful of my family, […] although I am saying that you know I had to fight with them in order to get my way in terms of education, but in marriage it is someone I have to spend the rest of my life with[…], but as well as just having someone who I can really*

get along with and we are kind of on the same path, and oh of course a practicing Muslim like myself, with the same beliefs and values as I have.

Desire for religious similarity in marriage was present throughout all interviews, this response is indicative of the cultural script and religious rules as Muslim women are only allowed to marry a Muslim man, similar to those responses found by Basit (1997) in his study. Parents' views cannot be directly assessed but the views shared by their daughters incline to Basit's finding that parents are defensively anxious of inter-marriages so Western customs do not infiltrate their daughters' religiousness or pride in culture.

The respondents shared an acceptance of the cultural practice of arranged marriages, they were considered easier in the sense they know their parents would already approve. Due to the difficulty in finding somebody themselves, which was to protect themselves from either cultural stigma or to keep their parents trust. Arranged marriages were doable but they stressed the importance of getting to know the other person prior to any agreement. This was found in Zaidi and Shuraydi (2002) study as well, as these women enact upon agency and modify this traditional process. These women are accepting this traditional practice but at their own terms, which is also distinguishing arranged marriage from forced marriages. As R2 has partaken in such a prospect she shares that discussing it with her friends was difficult and they were anxious that she was being compliant.

Views on consanguineous marriages were different, respondents were not open to these types of marriages considering there abnormality in Britain. The views of these respondent were similar to those found in Basit's (1997) study. For example R2 said her friend was bullied and called an "inbred" she notes people in the community are "embarrassed" of these marriage. Also R3 notes "it's wrong" and "unfair" on the children "why risk disabilities". These women note that young SA Muslims are against this cultural practice, this disagreement also attends to a hindsight; so the future generation are not stigmatised. These practices pertain cultural maintenance, R2 is quite defensive noting how her friend had "nothing wrong with her" this is due to her being in such as arrangement. It could be found she is defending herself from this negative view and but also the fact that most of the interviews shared the idea it was "wrong" reasons that R2 has accepted this proposal as denying parental choice does lead to women being considered disrespectful (Becher 2008).

Even though there is the cultural script, the respondents note their parents want them to be happy, for example R3 notes her mums approval of her husband was based upon him being able to look after her rather than the

cultural script; "I don't think it would matter about his caste or culture so long as he's a Muslim", likewise R6 notes she's grateful her parents did not interrupt her studies with marriage arrangements, also stating "*marriage […], I knew it was never going to be something I had to rush into".* These responses resonate with Pande (2015) who noted that SA women with aspirations are able to shape their own marriage. Parents are accepting their children's choice in partner rather than enforcing an arranged marriage as they are aware there is still risk of divorce as noted by Qureshi et al, (2014).

Conclusion

Firstly, in assessing the motives for participating in HE it is clear these women desire independence, respect and upward mobility. This study highlights the significance of religious assertion in these women's understandings and expectancies from marriage. Marriage is a salient milestone in the life of these women and their presence in HE is changing their prospects, as they are reflexively negotiating cultural ideals from both British and familial culture.

An education provides these women the chance to challenge traditional gender standards, as their high aspirations demand more than just a housewife role. Delaying marriage for an education so obtaining a rightful leverage to be independent and empowered. The attractive graduate is considered a reciprocal concept, these women express preference for compatibility. The conflation between arranged and forced marriage is also managed by these women as they share an acceptance of such a practice in their culture so long as there is communication and an opportunity to get to know the other. Parallel to the dating scene, however, parents are salient enforcers of a cultural script in which they impose the maintenance of South Asian Muslim identity. Therefore, these women are scrutinised in their social realms; being at the peril of family respect and honour, these women preserve themselves as dissimilar from mainstream British culture in relation to pre-marital practices. However, they do not do so merely, rather these women are religiously inclined to value pre-marital relationships differently in comparison to secular 'dating' practices. Religious assertion is an important avenue for these women, as they use it to negotiate their aspirations and marriage preferences under an Islamic rights-centred identity. The negotiations these women make are situated in a collective manner in regard to their responsible representation of their families and of Muslim women, the consequences are compellingly impactful on others rather than just the women.

For the purpose of further research, a similar study should be conducted with young South Asian Women of the same age range, who have not had the opportunity to participate in HE. To explore their expectations of marriage and how they are affected by social ideals and boundaries to make comparison with the results of this study.

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Who gets labelled a “terrorist”: comparing news media portrayals of the Westminster Bridge and Finsbury Park Attacks

Sadia Haque

Abstract

In recent decades, violent crimes, particularly terrorism, have been perceived by the news media as being affiliated with a certain ethnic and religious group. This research will highlight this social issue by specifically applying discourse analysis on online news articles, that covered two terrorist events, the Westminster Bridge Attack and the Finsbury Park Attack. This is because they were committed by two ethnically different perpetrators, thus allowing a comparison to be formulated over how they were portrayed. The research aim is to highlight that racism is still prevalent within the media, by identifying how ethnic minorities are depicted in a more negative light compared to white perpetrators, when committing the same act of crime. To prove such hypothesis, it specifically focused on the different vocabulary and terminology used. This will be reflected in the literature review, which describes how the perceived racial and religious background of individuals determines how they are depicted and stereotyped, particularly in relation to crime and violence. This feeds into the methodology, by showing how discourse analysis can identify such depictions within the news media. The findings and analysis will show how such depictions were far more complex than anticipated.

Introduction

News media platforms play a large role in constructing identities of individuals. This is especially in relation to crime, as 'most people's picture of a 'typical criminal' would not be a middle-class, old, white woman' (Marsh and Melville, 2014, p78). This is because news reports tend to depict ethnic minorities as criminals (Surette, 2014, p60). Such racism within the news media has been prevalent in society for many decades, whereby ethnic minorities have become prone to being negatively labelled and stereotyped. This links to Said's study on the discourse of orientalism, which 'represented the prejudices and stereotypes that Westerners held about "Orientals"' (2018, p64). Marsh and Melville argue that 'when looking at media reporting of crime and their role in establishing stereotypical pictures of different ethnic criminal groups is that the media can and do exaggerate stories' (2009, p89). This is particularly the case with terrorism, whereby after 9/11 and several other bombing incidents, during the years 2005-2011, the media associated 'individual political violence and terrorism with a particular ethnic and religious group' (Webster, 2018, p24). Webster's findings suggest that social and cultural context determines who becomes stereotyped, which in this case is Muslims.

Such research on the portrayals of Muslims and ethnic minorities as criminals, highlights the problem that there is a lack of research on how a white perpetrator is portrayed when committing the same type of crime that an ethnic minority is perceived to normally commit. Such gap in the literature, therefore, relates to my argument and the aim of my research, which was to show that inequality, racism, and islamophobia still exists within media discourse, by stereotyping an ethnic group as criminals when anyone can commit such crimes. Reducing the explanation of individuals' actions down to their perceived ethnic background was also acknowledged by Weber, who 'attacks racialists and nationalists for whom all causal explanations of human action originate either in ethnic identity or country of origin' (Antonio and Sica, 2011, pxx). Thus, this research aimed to investigate how an ethnic minority is portrayed in a negative light in the news compared to a white individual, despite having committed a similar act, by focusing on the vocabulary and terminology used to describe the perpetrators. I specifically chose to conduct discourse analysis on online news articles that covered the Westminster Bridge Attack and the Finsbury Park Attack, because, by considering the context, terrorist incidents have become a recurring topic within the news, especially associating such incidents with Muslims. This is supported by Bednarek and Caple, who highlighted a common news value, which is that aspects 'of a story

become newsworthy if they tie in with the stereotypes that people hold' (2012, p43).

By acknowledging that news organisations have their own news values and ethos to adhere to, when analyzing such articles, 'it takes us into the social and cultural settings of language use to help us to understand particular language choices' (Paltridge, 2012, p12). Thus, helping to form a comparison over how such organizations portrayed one perpetrator compared to the other. It is important to consider the context of which such depictions are influenced by, as 'an understanding of both communicative and socio-historical contexts enables researchers to explore in more detail the highly complex relationship between them' (Bednarek and Caple, 2012, p37) This is because they not only exist to inform their readers, but to also serve political and economic interests, which is discussed further in the literature review.

In addition to explaining why such depictions exist, the literature review also builds up the context relating to news media representations of ethnic groups in relation to crime, particularly terrorism, by showing how such groups are subject to negative portrayals, and what type of terminology is used to describe them. The methodology outlines the sampling process, which explains the rationale for the chosen terrorist events and the news organizations that covered it. Furthermore, it explains how a qualitative method, such as, discourse analysis, is suitable for this particular project, to show the discrepancies of linguistic features used to depict the perpetrators. The findings and analysis starts by outlining the themes that emerged, and how there were similarities and differences in the language used in relation to such themes. The chapter shows results that supports my hypothesis and research aim, but also shows that there were several anomalies and themes encountered that not only contradicted my argument, but were also not anticipated to emerge. This is concluded with a summary of how such findings matched or contradicted the aims of the research, highlighting the limitations of the project and method of analysis. There is a final recommendation to resolve the issues of bias towards presenting white criminals in a neutral light.

Literature review

The news media is known for depicting events in a way that will ensure to capture their audiences' attention, by choosing 'what it will cover, how and when it will cover it, and the amount of space or air time it will allot for coverage' (Muraskin and Domash, 2007, p45). Within such decision-making, there are certain methods involved that will aid in making their stories stand out. For example, Chibnall argues that 'good reporting involves 'pruning down' the reality of a situation, trimming its rough edges and moulding its shape to fit the pre-existing forms of news' (1977, p30). This can involve a variety of techniques, such as, using numbers as emphasis, which Van Dijk refers to as the 'number game' (no date, cited in Hesmondhalgh, 2006, p133). Thus, this could mean disregarding the complete story and lead to exaggerating the facts.

The discourse used that influences such depictions and techniques may differ according to the type of news outlet, as it 'is addressed at different kinds of target audience who we can classify according to a number of social factors, such as education, political views, age, gender' (Bednarek and Caple, 2012, p26). As well as considering their target audience, journalists make other decisions when they are reporting, as they are 'seeking, evaluating, selecting, writing and presenting "facts", which are all subjective relative to the person who is writing the story and the medium in which the story is reported' (Terzis, 2014, p100). Subjectivity affects the way stories will be presented, particularly, the individuals being written about, where their perceived background becomes a factor that determines how their identity will be portrayed, and how it will represent others that share a similar background. This is specifically referring to violent criminals, such as terrorists, and how their perceived racial and/or religious background affects the way in which they will be portrayed in the news. The sources chosen shows how powerful and influential the media can be in relation to how they depict crime news, that simultaneously reinforces racial stereotypes.

Crime

Regarding the coverage of crime related events, Jerin and Fields argue that the 'media, more than any other source, has the greatest "influence on the perception on crime and criminality"' (2005, cited in Muraskin and Domash, 2007, p7). Therefore, the way in which the news presents stories about crime can influence people's views and beliefs about it. The way the media heavily focuses on crime, was identified by Jewkes, who states that 'it tends to be acts of violence that have a strong visual impact […] that are most likely to receive

extensive media coverage' (2015, p65). Such coverage means that even if 'there is no discernible relevance to the target audience, a story has to be commensurately bigger and more dramatic in order to be regarded as newsworthy' (Jewkes, 2015, p61). However, it is important to consider that not all news outlets portray a story the same way, as Jewkes argues that 'the news values of The Sun are likely to be somewhat different from those of The Independent and different again from those of the BBC' (2015, p48). Therefore, the language and information presented in their articles may vary across the different news platforms.

Racial stereotyping

Such language presented in news reporting can be seen in relation to how journalists racially stereotype ethnic minority groups. Such groups are portrayed according to how the writers perceive them. Mason found that research 'indicates that the mass media play a critical role in producing and reproducing negative stereotypes of minority ethnic groups, in caricaturing their beliefs and cultures' (2000, p114). This is particularly in relation to crime, as Allen found that, in a review of large-scale studies, 'the most common nouns associated with Islam and Muslims were 'terrorist', 'extremist, 'Islamist', 'suicide bomber' and 'militant'' (2012, cited in Khan and Mythen, 2018, p94). This can be explained by Westin, who found that the 'language changed to become more informal, but also more precise and compact, […] as well as more varied and specific vocabulary' (2002, cited in Bednarek and Caple, 2012, p9). Philo and Beattie, for example, show how 'tabloids also deployed the terminology of natural disasters, calamities and war, to project Britain as 'victim' of 'floods', 'invasions' and 'tidal waves' of asylum seekers' (1999, cited in Bhatia, 2018, p187). This relates to Geis's argument that 'journalists influence the definitions of political issues with the language they use' (1987, cited in Hacker, 1996, p42). Therefore, such journalists can use certain words and phrases to describe their perceptions of certain events and groups of people. This then conveys a them vs us ideology, as highlighted by Van Dijk, who argued that there is a social conflict that is 'reproduced by derogating, demonizing, and excluding the Others from the community of Us, the Civilized' (2008, p362).

Jewkes used the dominant ideology approach to explain such depictions of ethnic minorities, by arguing that 'dominant groups impose patterns of belief and behaviour which conflict with those of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities' (2015, p25). Such beliefs consist of 'the norms established by a white, male, heterosexual, educationally privileged élite' (Jewkes, 2015, p24). This can be seen within the media, as Hesmondhalgh argued that the 'British daily newspapers are owned and staffed almost entirely by white people, but concern themselves a great deal with the representation of various non-white

groups' (2006, p130). Therefore, by producing cultural norms that differs from those of other ethnic and religious minorities, it can explain how ethnic minorities are deemed as deviant by the dominant groups. This links with the labelling theory, 'which posits that crime and deviance are not the product of either a 'sick individual' or a 'sick society' but that deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label' (Becker, 1963, cited in Jewkes, 2015, p22).

However, it is not just necessarily ethnic minority criminals that are subject to negative labels, but in general, certain groups of people are portrayed stereotypically. For example,

> sufferers of mental illness can be portrayed as potential murderers; asylum seekers as potential terrorists; gun club members become potential spree killers and, most insidiously, children and young people come to be seen as 'evil monsters' with no hope of rehabilitation (Jewkes, 2015, p52).

Such negative labelling is then used to describe the social actor's behaviour and personality to explain their actions, whereby a 'criminal is usually described as being 'impulsive, a loner, maladjusted, irrational, animal-like, aggressive and violent' (Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001, cited in Jewkes, 2015, p53). However, Blackman and Walkerdine disregard how these terms and labels depend on the type of perpetrator and their perceived racial and/or religious background.

Terrorism

One of the main violent crimes that receives extensive coverage by the news is terrorism, which is a 'term being used to describe a wide range of violence' (Englund, et al., 2017, p1). A 'terrorist act is the ultimate 'pseudo-event' – a politically and militarily meaningless act unless it receives recognition and coverage in the news media' (McNair, 1998, cited in Jewkes, 2015, p33). One of the most notorious terrorist incidents was 9/11, where the style of coverage was articulated in a way that emphasised nationalism, i.e. 'those who perpetrate acts of terror on the USA and her allies become constructed as cartoon baddies or evil automatons, with little or no discussion of their histories and motivations' (Jewkes, 2015, p52). Over recent years, there have been many terrorist acts, that have led to news outlets regularly publicising the events, which even includes 'drawing on reservoirs of familiar stories to cue readers' (Norris et al., 2003, p11). Therefore, such cases are prone to capture national attention, but this is only due to how it has been portrayed and whether or not it fits the preferred definition of terrorism.

Terrorism can be argued as a social construction, as it 'can indeed be whatever one says it is and that it therefore comes down to who has the power to define or who 'is heard the loudest'' (Richards, 2015, p8). For example, Donald Trump 'refused to denounce an apparent deliberate white supremacist killing perpetrated by driving a car into pedestrians as any form of terrorism' (Bhatia et al., 2018, p5). Therefore, by not classifying the incident as an act of terrorism, it shows that there are certain factors to consider before applying the term. This could then determine whether or not journalists also describe such incidents as an act of terrorism. However, Norris et al., stated that some ''facts' about any terrorist event may be relatively neutral (such as the specific timing)' (2003, p13). Nevertheless, there is also the issue with who the term is applied to, for example, Stampnitzky states that

> critiques of the conceptualization of terrorism in the media tend to highlight inconsistencies in the use of the term – particularly – pointing out seeming double standards where the term is applied to one set of actors, but not another, engaging in similar acts (2017, p14).

This suggests that it may not necessarily be about how much violence was caused, but rather more about the type of perpetrators that determine whether or not it should be defined as a terrorist attack.

With further regards to terrorism, Richards argues that while 'there has been little interest in understanding it, however, there has nevertheless been plenty of interest in using it' (2015, p3). This is evident with how the term tends to be associated with Muslims, whereby their beliefs often get mistaken with the ideologies of extreme Islamists, which stems from their 'cultural interpretations of Qur'anic edicts that carry the potential to be translated into violent action' (Macey, 2011, p39). This subsequently leads to regular Muslims being frequently discriminated by many institutions. Spalek supports this by arguing that 'negative stereotyping of Muslims and gross misunderstandings and representations of Islam have been pervasive in western political and social arenas' (2011, p12). This can especially be seen within the media, where 'they portray negative stereotypes of Muslims (particularly in relation to terrorist attacks and violence)' (Smiljanic, 2011, p120). However, a study on how Muslims were depicted in British newspaper headlines during 2001 to 2012, found that during 'the majority of years between 2001 and 2012, there were more positive than negative headlines about Muslims' (Bleich et al., 2015, np). However, this was not the case with their sample of right-wing tabloids, as their headlines were found to be more negative when depicting Muslims, suggesting that such depictions are dependent on the political beliefs of the news organisations.

Nevertheless, such depictions are also dependent on the context, and not necessarily about the perceived racial or religious identity of the perpetrator. This is supported by Van Dijk, who argued that context can also affect the power relations between such groups (2008, p357). The importance of context is further evident with cases in other countries. For example, in Norway, with the case of Anders Breivik, the 'initial speculation centred on the possibility of home-grown fundamentalist Muslims being responsible, reflecting a global media preoccupation with a threat of a terrorist attack' (Jewkes, 2015, p72). Yet, Terzis found that even 'after Breivik was caught, The New York Times was still trying to link Breivik to al-Qaeda' (2014, p101). This suggests that news outlets believe that they must be part of an Islamist terrorist organisation in order to cause such harm. Therefore, it is not just the British press that associate terrorism with Muslims. This is further evident when Breivik's background was identified, as the focus then went towards his mental health, 'where his complex personality disorders were presented as psychosis or schizophrenia' (Jewkes, 2015, p71). This, however, was not the case with Richard Reid, the 'Shoe Bomber', who converted to Islam, as Terzis noted that 'never once was there mention of performing psychological tests on him' (2014, p101). Therefore, terrorist acts committed by Muslims are rarely explained or justified as a psychological matter.

Such stereotyping is an example of Islamophobia, which is defined as

> unfounded hostility towards Islam. It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslims and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs (Conway, 1997, cited in Spalek, 2011, p9).

In addition, the terms Asian and Muslim are seen to be used interchangeably, as many Asian countries and diasporic communities follow Islam. However, this cannot be generalised to all Asian people as the 'classification groups together people who may have very little in common in terms of religion' (Spalek, 2011, 57). This suggests that those from an Asian background that follow a different religion, may also be subject to negative portrayals. Such generalisations about religion is supported by Bleich et al. who argued that the audience are 'exposed to fewer toned messages about Jews and Christians: these groups are simply not as frequently identified in either positive or negative terms compared to Muslims' (2015, np).

Such beliefs about Muslims and Asians, have consequently led to the heightened paranoia about the increasing number of potential terrorists. For

example, 'the Mirror […] used a quote to highlight the fears of the police and the 'growing numbers' of 'jihadi terrorists' that could be 'hiding' and 'lurking' amongst the 'thousands' of 'British-bound refugees' in Calais' (Bhatia, 2018, p201). However, due to the concept of terrorism being socially constructed to be associated with Muslims and the assumption that they tend to be of South Asian heritage, violence committed by white perpetrators, particularly terrorism, are disregarded. This was highlighted by West and Lloyd, who found that 'when these acts are carried out by White non-Muslims, they tend not to be referred to as terrorism' (2017, np). Instead, they are explained as an individual problem. For example, newspapers labelled the Las Vegas mass shooter as 'a "lone wolf" who "doesn't fit [the] mass shooter profile"' (Ruiz-Grossman, 2017, np). This is because 'News outlets often choose to run headlines that exhibit an air of disbelief at an alleged white killer's supposed actions' (Wing, 2017, np). Wing further adds that occasionally, news reports 'boost the suspect's character, carrying quotes from relatives or acquaintances that often paint even alleged murderers in a positive light' (2017, np). However, as the media fail to acknowledge the labels that they associate with criminality, i.e. mental illness, muggers, and terrorists, cannot be reduced to certain ethnic groups, as statistics show that it can be applied to anyone. For example, white suspects 'accounted for 38 per cent of terror-related arrests, followed by those of Asian appearance on 37 per cent and black suspects on 9 per cent' (Dearden, 2018, np). Yet, this may not be reflected in news reporting, as 'the particular types of crime on which journalists disproportionately focus, is selective and unrepresentative' (Greer, 2007, p36).

Causes

An explanation as to why the media report in the way they do can be explained by Richardson, who argued that 'capitalism, and the want for profit in particular, drive newspapers to change their discourses – both linguistic and visual – in order to appeal to affluent target readers' (2008, cited in Bednarek and Caple, 2012, p33). Thus, they are inclined to use any means necessary to ensure their stories will capture their attention enough to generate profit. However, Murdock and Golding argued that '"the overall tone is likely to become politically blander and less sectional in order to avoid offending audience groups necessary to the maintenance of revenue"' (1974, cited in Chibnall, 1977, p6). However, as the source is outdated, it is no longer the case, as previous sources have shown, news outlets do present negative portrayals of certain groups. Furthermore, in today's digital age, the internet gives the news outlets an additional platform to utilise, in order to reach and widen their audience.

It is also important to consider that it is not just the media that aid in creating such stories, but representations of certain ethnic minorities as criminals are also based on what other institutions, such as law enforcement, perceive about race and ethnicity (Webster, 2018, p12). This highlights how 'what appears in the 'news' is 'second-hand', for example, based on interviews, agency copy […] or press releases' (Bednarek and Caple, 2012, p21). Chibnall further argued that news outlets are heavily reliant on their news sources who 'are typically elite personalities such as M.P.s or members of powerful organizations such as the police' (1977, p78). However, the reliability of news sources is questionable, some authority figures may be 'primarily interested in disseminating news that is 'helpful' rather than news which is true' (Chibnall, 1977, p175). This could mean that they provide information that will only benefit them. In addition, when 'fresh angles are scarce but desperately sought is […] the time when the careful 'planting' of stories by informants is the easiest' (Chibnall, 1977, p101). Therefore, implying how the news media can portray inaccurate or over exaggerated representations of certain events and individuals. However, such depictions may also be due to 'the denial of information' (Chibnall, 1977, p179). Therefore, with regards to the portrayals of terrorists in relation to their perceived racial background, this could suggest that the information that is and isn't provided may lead to reinforcing the stereotypes.

Overall, most of these sources have implied how unreliable the news media can be when depicting certain events and individuals. This is especially the case with Chibnall, where even though his book was published over 40 years ago, some of the information is still relevant today. Specifically focusing on ethnic minorities, these sources have emphasised how they are subject to labels made by the news media that depict them in a negative way, that suggests they are inevitably criminal. However, there is a lack of literature regarding criminals, and, in particular, terrorists from a white background and the types of portrayals they are subject to. Nevertheless, portrayals of terrorists are still prevalent, but may not be the same for all news outlets, as Jewkes argued how they have different news values. But this is also dependent on the context and the information they receive from other cultural institutions.

Methodology

Stemming from Foucault, discourse can be defined as 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic' (Hall, p86). This can be found within the media, particularly with the news, by looking at how 'such discourse […] is actually put to use and how it contributes to the construction of news' (Bednarek and Caple, 2012, p2). However, news discourse, as implied by the literature review, consists of ethnic minorities being subject to negative and racist portrayals, compared to the dominant white group, particularly in relation to crime. This was my rationale for my research project, as my aim was to show that such portrayals are still prevalent within the news media. Firth argues that 'in order to understand what a person says or writes we need to know something about the situational and cultural context in which it is located' (no date, cited in Paltridge, 2012, p3). Such context in this case is at a time of increased islamophobia, whereby Muslims are prone to negative depictions. Therefore, in order to show how the news media utilises a particular type of discourse and depicts certain groups of people, I chose to conduct discourse analysis. This is because it involves studying discourse, whereby through 'the analysis of language and language use, the researcher therefore builds up a picture of society and how it functions' (Taylor, 2013, p3).

However, looking at how the news presents crimes, that are committed by ethnic minorities, would have been too broad. Therefore, I narrowed the type of crime down to terrorism, by choosing two terrorist events, the Westminster Bridge attack and the Finsbury Park attack. The former occurred on the 22nd March 2017, whereby Khalid Masood drove a car into a group of pedestrians along Westminster Bridge. This was followed by crashing the car into fence surrounding the palace of Westminster and stabbing a police officer. The latter occurred several months later, on 19th June 2017, whereby similarly to Masood, Darren Osborne drove a van into a group of pedestrians, near the Finsbury Park Mosque. Thus, due to the similarity between both of the events, in terms of using a vehicle as a weapon to attack a group of pedestrians, I decided to conduct discourse analysis on the news portrayals of Masood and Osborne. This is because it will show how the news portrays such criminals differently depending on their perceived racial and religious backgrounds, despite committing the same type of crime with a similar weapon. 'Social identities, then, are not pre-given, but are formed in the use of language and various other ways we display who we are, what we think, value and feel, etc' (Paltridge, 2012, p10). This is why a qualitative method was suitable as it is 'not

about how often something occurs in language […] but about why or how it occurs' (Johnstone, 2018, p18). Additional rationales for choosing those incidents were that they both occurred in London, and within a similar time frame. During that time frame, there was another terrorist attack at London Bridge, however, this was not chosen because this event involved more than one perpetrator. Additionally, I did not include writing about how Masood stabbed a police officer because this cannot be compared to Osborne.

Choosing what to research can be value laden, but, interpretivist, Weber argues that 'values will influence what is researched but should not influence how it is done' (Pryke, 2013, p129). In terms of sampling which news organisations to choose from, I had to ensure that the ones I chose covered both events. I chose five organisations; *The Independent, BBC News, The Guardian, The Sun*, and *The Daily Mail*. The rationales for selecting such organisations are not only because they wrote articles covering both events, but they have different news values, political views, and target audiences, of which their choice of language caters to. This will take 'us into the social and cultural settings of language use to help us to understand particular language choices' (Paltridge, 2012, p12*).* Therefore, this is likely to aid in showing whether or not there is a significant amount of difference in discourse between how the two perpetrators were described. This relates to how discourse analysis generally involves critical reading, which 'almost inevitably leads to […] questions about power and inequality' (Johnstone, 2018, p25). Regarding this project, the intention was to highlight such inequality by analyzing the way in which journalists and writers use their occupational power to depict certain ethnic minorities in a negative light. Thus, aiming to highlight the reality of racism. What was interpreted from this research links to Hesmondhalgh's argument that analysing written documents 'deals with the way in which texts may be said to reinforce inequality, for example, stereotyping' (2006, p2). This relates to the project as the aim was to find negative depictions and interpretations.

To highlight the racism, two articles from each of the chosen news organisations were selected, one that covered the Westminster Bridge attack and another one that covered the Finsbury Park attack. This is because using the same organizations for the coverage of both events will help explore how such organisations depicted Masood compared to Osborne. This links to Richardson's argument, regarding what is relevant when analysing news texts, which is 'the choice of words used to represent more directly the values and characteristics of social actors' (2007, p52). This is what I intended to seek, in terms of the different ways the writers described the perpetrators and how they referred to them. To aid in narrowing down the selection process of the articles,

I chose the ones that were published within the first few days after the events took place, which was beneficial for me as a researcher, as it would have allowed the writers enough time to accumulate a sufficient amount of information to help write about what the events and the perpetrators. Furthermore, the news articles that were chosen were the ones that focused on the perpetrators, as well as the event itself, which included headlines that described the identification of the suspect.

Reading through the articles enabled me to identify the meanings the writers have attached to the actions of others. This is explained by Paltridge, who argues that the method 'examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations' (2006, p2). Such examination of language may lead to different interpretations, but it may still be valid, as Tracy notes that although a 'right interpretation does not exist', an interpretation that is well explained is more likely to occur (1999, p187). This is supported by Potter and Wetherell, who argued that it can still be valid in terms of fruitfulness, as 'the focus is on the explanatory potential of the analytical framework including its ability to provide new explanations' (1987, cited in Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p125).

Using secondary data, specifically online news articles, meant that they were easily accessible and there were no ethical issues to consider. As the articles were written by public news outlets, it highlights its authenticity, in terms of who wrote it, but regarding how the information is presented, the credibility can be questioned, which relates to the research aim, that there may be biases in the way in which the perpetrators are being depicted (Scott, 1990, cited in David and Sutton, 2004, p118). However, the language used to present such information can imply the ethos of the organisation (Bryman, 2015, p560). Nevertheless, there are other factors to consider when explaining why there may be negative depictions of one perpetrator compared to the other. For example, Atkinson and Coffey argue 'that documents should be examined in terms of […] the context in which they were produced and […] their implied readership' (2011, cited in Bryman, 2015, p560). Therefore, by considering the credibility and context, utilising this method has allowed me to be reflexive.

Findings and Analysis

To conduct this research, certain sentences and phrases were picked out from all of the articles, due to its similar vocabulary, terminology, and meaning, as it helped to formulate several themes. These include: how they referred to the perpetrators, how they described the event and their actions, how they described their characters, how they described their identities and family background, the inclusion of other previous attacks or convictions, how they described their motivations for their actions, the inclusion and comparison of similar past terrorist attacks, and the aftermath of the events in terms of the reactions received. The results show that there were several similarities and differences between the depictions of both perpetrators that support my argument, however there were also unexpected anomalies that contradicted my argument. It is important to remember there may be other factors that explains such anomalies, such as, the context, as Van Dijk notes that it is the context that influences the power relations between the groups (2008, p357).

How they referred to them

The most common theme that emerged was the way in which the writers referred to the perpetrators, as they were ascribed certain labels, which was particularly noticeable in the headlines. For example, most of the articles generally referred to Masood as 'terror attacker', or just 'attacker', 'The terrorist', and 'killer'. *The Daily Mail* and *The Sun* also added 'lone wolf', 'maniac', 'extremist', and 'knifeman'. This supports Allen's findings 'that the most common nouns associated with Islam and Muslims were 'terrorist', 'extremist, 'Islamist' (2012, cited in Khan and Mythen, 2018, p94). However, this argument is also contradicted to an extent, as there were neutral terms found. For example, all of the articles also referred to him by his name, and *BBC News* and *The Daily Mail* also referred to him as 'the man'. Nevertheless, these neutral terms were found further down the articles, and were not in the headlines or subheadings. Furthermore, the theory that the label of 'lone wolf' is normally applied to white terrorists, as argued by Ruiz-Grossman, is in this case, not viable, as the same label was also attached to Masood by several of the articles.

There were several negative labels that were also ascribed to Osborne, as *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* referred to Osbourne as 'terror suspect', along with 'lone wolf attacker' and 'van attacker'. However, the remaining articles referred to him as a 'suspect' in their headlines. With most of the articles referring to Osborne as a 'suspect', rather than a 'terror suspect', supports Wing's

argument that news outlets choose to write headlines that imply a level of disbelief over the alleged white perpetrator's supposed actions (2017, np). This supports the idea that referring to an individual as a 'terrorist' is a social construct, as implied by Richards's argument that it 'can indeed be whatever one says it is and that it therefore comes down to who has the power to define or who 'is heard the loudest'' (2015, p8). This is further reinforced by Stampnitzky, who argued that the term is only applied to certain groups of people, despite the similar nature of the acts (2017, p14). This is further evident with *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail*, and *The Independent* referring to him as a 'van driver' or just a 'driver'. In addition, similarly to Masood, they also generally referred to him by his name and mostly as 'The man' or 'A man'. Therefore, as the articles mainly assigned neutral labels to Osborne, it supports the study conducted by Bleich et al., who found that readers tend to be exposed to fewer toned messages about Jews and Christians: these groups are simply not as frequently identified in either positive or negative terms compared to Muslims (2015, np).

How they described the event and their actions

Such labels ascribed was also followed by the way in which the articles described the perpetrators' actions. As the crimes that both Masood and Osborne committed were acts of terrorism, it then fits in with McNair's definition of a terrorist act, because their actions were not deemed as 'politically and militarily meaningless', as they both did receive 'recognition and coverage in the news media' (1998, cited in Jewkes, 2015, p33). However, the way in which such articles described what both perpetrators did were not necessarily in the same manner as one another, as West and Lloyd found that 'when these acts are carried out by White non-Muslims, they tend not to be referred to as terrorism' (2017, np).

The way in which the articles described Masood's actions was through the use of metaphors, i.e. how he 'mowed down' and/or 'ploughed' a group of people. This shows how the articles are attempting to imply how violent and aggressively he acted, particularly by describing the event as a 'rampage' and the 'deadliest attack in Britain since 2005'. This was further conveyed by *The Sun*, by including the victims in some of the metaphors, such as, 'left a trail of destruction' and 'bodies of victims littering Westminster bridge'. This relates to Philo and Beattie's findings on how tabloids tend to use certain terminologies to describe a particular event, which in this case, the terms 'destruction', 'mowed', 'ploughed', and 'littering' were used to imply destroying or disposing of something in large numbers. This then contradicts Murdock and Golding's argument that the news media's tone is 'politically blander' (1974, cited in Chibnall, 1977, p6). However, throughout most of the

articles, the tones do change, with more neutral terms and descriptions presented. For example, *BBC News* and *The Daily Mail* wrote 'drove into pedestrians' and 'run down pedestrians'.

However, with regards to Osborne, the articles utilised a different lexicon, as they mainly wrote how he was 'driving a van' or 'drove a van' and then how the victims were hit, such as: 'driven at', 'crashed into', 'struck', 'ran down pedestrians', and 'ran over crowds'. Therefore, despite, the similar M.O. as Masood, the articles generally described Osborne's actions in a more neutral manner. This supports how Philo and Beattie's findings are not applicable to white perpetrators and Geis's argument that 'journalists influence the definitions of political issues' (1987, cited in Hacker, 1996, p42). Compared to the coverage on Masood, only *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* used the same metaphor, 'mowed'/'mowing' and 'ploughed into', to describe Osborne's actions, and only *The Independent* used terror-related terminology to label the event, by describing it as a 'terror attack'. Such language used to describe what occurred, for both events, relates to Westin's findings, that news outlets use informal language with restrictions on the types of vocabulary they use (2002, cited in Bednarek and Caple, 2012, p10).

How they described their character

In order to gain an idea of what their personalities and characters are like, as it may help the readers to gain an understanding of whether or not it explains their actions, the articles used statements from those that were familiar with the perpetrators, describing how they personally perceived them. This relates to Bednarek and Caple's findings 'that much of what appears in the 'news' is 'second-hand', for example, based on interviews, agency copy […] or press releases' (2012, p21). Therefore, it is not in the writers' own words, but nevertheless, they are choosing which statements to include that will ensure to fit in with the way they aim to portray the perpetrators based on the organisation's news values and discourse.

The way they described Masood's character contradicts my aim and the arguments made in the literature review, as most of the statements from his acquaintances described him as "nice", "friendly", liked to take "care of his garden". *The Independent* further described him as the 'perfect suburban neighbour' and how helpful he was, as a neighbour stated that he "taught us how to play football" and "helped me jump start my car". This highlights Chibnall's limitation of his arguments, as this shows that news outlets do not just rely on those that hold power in society for information regarding the perpetrators, but they also look to friends, family, and other acquaintances to gain further details. Nevertheless, these inclusions of these statements

contradicts the arguments made in the literature review, regarding how Muslims tend to be portrayed in a negative light. However, what does support my argument, is that *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* also included statements that suggests the opposite, such as, someone "you wouldn't want to mess with" and "had a beard and big eyes" respectively.

Whereas, with regards to Osborne, they tended to construct him as a bad character, using statements such as: "aggressive", "strange", a "fighter", would '"flip" when he drank too much', "complex", and "a strong guy. A big man". This supports Blackman and Walkerdine's findings who found that there is a tendency to describe their behaviour and personality to explain their actions, where 'the criminal is usually described as being 'impulsive, a loner, maladjusted, irrational, animal-like, aggressive and violent' (2001, cited in Jewkes, 2015, p53). However, in this case, it seems to apply more to Osborne, rather than Masood. But this could be because the news organisation may have felt that Masood doesn't need to be demonized any further because being a Muslim already implicitly offers justification for his actions. However, Wing's argument that news reports can sometimes use quotes from those familiar with the perpetrator to portray a positive image of them (2017, np), is evident with the article written by *BBC News.* This is because they added statements, such as: "If I ever needed anything he would come", "been so normal", "singing with his kids", and "seemed polite and pleasant". In addition, despite 'drunkenly cursing Muslims', one of the articles included family members defending him, for example his Mum 'insists her son is not a racist' and that he 'had no interest in politics'. What has been identified is that *BBC News*, however, did not include any statements about Masood's character in their article and there were also no statements from any of Masood's family who could have also defended him. Although this could imply that they are excluding information to their readers, as it won't fit the way they want to portray the actor, it could also be the case of such family members simply refusing to give any statements.

How they described their Identities and family background

As well as their character, there seemed to be further information regarding their social background and history, particularly in relation to their identities and families, which again, could also be due to the news outlets' aim of trying to explain to their readers why the perpetrators committed such acts. This was especially the case for Masood, as the articles suggested that his identity is questionable, by pointing out how; he was known by several 'aliases', he was born as 'Adrian Kelms', and how he claimed he was an 'English teacher', from which the articles added that there was no proof of. In addition, *The Sun* and *The Independent* mentioned his conversion to Islam. Regarding his family,

some of the articles deemed them as suspicious, as they included statements, such as, "thought it was a normal family" / "seemed like a normal family" and "keep themselves to themselves"/ "very reserved family". The writers were therefore implying how there seemed to be a lack of personal relationship with their neighbours, especially seeing how they rarely conversed with each other, for example, "but it would just be a 'hello' and a 'how are you'". This depiction of such suspicious behaviour also included describing how the family moved out 'suddenly'.

With regards to Osborne, the articles presented a typical family home, i.e. that there was a 'Dogs Trust charity sticker', a 'wheelbarrow', and a 'child's toy in the front garden'. Simultaneously, however, they described the poor social situation he was in, prior to the incident, i.e. that he was 'sleeping in a van', and one of the neighbours 'smelled alcohol on his breath'. This suggests a more sympathetic way of portraying Osborne. Nevertheless, this was explained as possible personal or family problems, for example, one of the articles wrote that some of the neighbours 'said he was jobless', and most of the articles mentioned the relationship with his partner and family, i.e. how he would 'often shout at her and his children', and that he 'split from his partner'. Yet, this was also written in a way to suggest that it may have been Osborne's own behaviour and/or actions to blame for the situation he was in. This is because they implied that his partner no longer wanted to him to live with her, i.e. he has 'recently been kicked out by girlfriend' and was 'forced to live in a tent'. This suggests that the articles are attempting to imply that Osborne must have acted or behaved immorally that lead to him being homeless. Therefore, the news outlets highlighted how they acted with their families in a suspicious or deviant manner for both perpetrators. However, there was a lack of literature regarding how news discourse can involve including the social background of the terrorists.

Previous attacks and/or convictions

As well as presenting the current crime they committed, any previous convictions and deviant acts were also raised in the articles. All of the articles highlighted Masood's criminal history, for example, that he had 'previous convictions', 'offences spanning 20 years', and a 'long list of crimes', which tended to be followed by stating what his first and last convictions were. The main one they emphasised was heavily exaggerated, which was referring to where he stabbed an individual, that was written as 'stabbed a man in the face, leaving him needing cosmetic surgery' and 'once stabbed a man in the FACE'. The former was exaggerated because it included the effects of his actions and the latter was exaggerated, as not only was this repeated but it was also in capital letters. Yet, later on, it became more specific as to where he stabbed

the victim, as *The Daily Mail* wrote 'stabbing a man in the nose'. This inclusion of deviancy, criminal history, and even the label 'criminal', relates to Surette's findings that minorities 'are frequently portrayed as the criminal predators in news reports' (2014, p60). This is further reinforced by Mason's argument that 'examples of crime committed by minority ethnic citizens were widely reported by the press in ways that helped to reinforce such stereotypes' (2000, p112). Simultaneously, all of the articles included that he had 'not been convicted of any terrorism offences', which may suggest that they were expecting otherwise. They added that he was investigated for any possible links with terrorism but then most of them wrote how he was seen as "peripheral", which was stated by the Prime Minister. This relates to Chibnall's argument, that news organisations rely on the powerful members of society (1977, p78), as such information, regarding criminal history, would have only been known to the government. Nevertheless, it suggests that the articles are questioning the adequacy of the security forces, as they did not view him as capable of causing such harm.

For Osborne, however, it was only *The Guardian* that wrote about any previous deviant acts. The author included how Osborne 'called a 12-year-old Muslim neighbour an "inbred"', which was repeated further down the article, and that he was '"cursing Muslims and saying he would do some damage"' in a pub. However, what has been identified is that the statements included in the article written by *BBC News*, who described Osbourne as a good character, was from the young neighbour's mother, yet there was no mention of the "inbred" comment in the article. This could relate to the 'denial of information' (Chibnall, 1977, p179) for some of the news outlets, but nevertheless, it could be the case of such outlets choosing not to include certain information, as it may affect the way they want to portray the perpetrator.

What was unexpected was that most of the articles wrote about whether or not both perpetrators were on the intelligence watch list or even known to the security service, as for Osborne, most of the articles wrote how he was 'not known to security services' or 'unknown'. This suggests that they deem both events as high profile, as such type of criminals tend to be monitored by the security forces. Those that referred to him as just 'suspect' in the headline, wrote how he was facing charges for 'instigation of terrorism'/ 'alleged terror offences' further down the articles. Those that referred to him as 'terror suspect' wrote how he was arrested for suspicion of murder and terror charges. Therefore, there is a collective acknowledgment that they have deemed his actions as terror related.

Motives and political affiliations

As news items tend to mention any affiliations with a particular political or terrorist group when it comes to acts of terrorism, this was evident with the portrayals of both Masood and Osborne. Despite acknowledging that Masood had no prior terror-related charges, the writers emphasized how we was a Muslim convert and his possible links to terrorist organisations, particularly ISIS. This relates to Terzis's findings, who found that The New York Times still attempted to link Breivik with al-Qaeda (2014, p101). This suggests that news outlets believe that such crimes can only be committed by Islamist terrorist organisations. Such beliefs were evident in several of the articles, who claimed Masood was 'inspired' by terrorism, with *The Sun* adding he was 'SEDUCED BY ISIS' and *The Daily Mail* calling him a 'British-born-jihadi'. Most of them even added how ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack and that 'ISIS supporters celebrated the horror on social media'. Yet, *The Independent* added that 'No video has yet surfaced of him pledging adherence to Isis'. Therefore, although the articles included statements that described Masood's character in a way that contradicts the argument, associating him with ISIS, because he was a Muslim, reinforces Spalek's and Smiljanic's argument, regarding how the negative stereotyping of Muslims, particularly after a terrorist attack occurs, is still very much prevalent within society's cultural institutions. This association with ISIS was further highlighted in *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail,* as they added these statements; "Masood is unusual in that only a minority become radicalised over the age of 30", his "criminal record is unsurprising" because most "jihadists have had prior convictions", and that it is "exceptionally hard to understand who will become a terrorist". This suggests how news outlets tend to add in facts by professionals that imply there are other factors, other than religion, that may determine who will become a terrorist.

For Osborne, however, only *The Independent* and *The Guardian* have mentioned whether or not he had any affiliations with any extremist groups, whereby they added statements that he was not associated with "far-right extremism" or 'a far right organisation' respectively. However, *The Guardian* further added that he has a non-active twitter account following two 'leaders of the far right party Britain First'. But, *The Sun* and *The Guardian* included "aware of a rise in the far right". Therefore, it is not just mainly ethnic minorities that are usually portrayed as having links to extremist groups, which contradicts my argument. This is further evident with *The Sun* claiming that he was 'motivated by islamophobia', similarly to how the articles implied how Masood was influenced by ISIS. Yet, the difference was that most of the articles described how Osborne 'acted alone', which was rarely the case for Masood.

Similar past events

This theme, correlates with Norris et al and their argument that news platforms tend to draw 'on reservoirs of familiar stories to cue readers' (2003, p11). As several terror related incidents have occurred over recent years, they seemed to have been raised in the articles as a way of comparing the similarities with the current terrorist acts that they were covering at the time. This was especially the case with Masood, as several of the articles included similar past events: 'on the anniversary of the Brussels airport attack', 'similarities with atrocities in Nice and Berlin', 'took place on the first anniversary of attacks that killed 32 people in Brussels', 'resembled Isis-inspired attacks in France and Germany where vehicles were driven into crowds', 'exactly a year after the Brussels airport atrocity', 'echoes of the atrocities in Nice and Berlin when trucks ploughed into crowds of people'. However, there was no mention of such incidents with Osborne, despite the similarity of the crime and the weapon used. This suggests that they only deem it as similar because they were perpetrated by members of ISIS. This relates to Norris et al's argument that some ''facts' about any terrorist event may be relatively neutral (such as the specific timing)' (2003, p13). This reference to time relates to Bleich et al's findings on how most of the 'years between 2001 and 2012, there were more positive than negative headlines about Muslims in our sample' (2015, np). Therefore, such depictions are dependent on the context, because as there were several previous attacks mentioned, that occurred after 2012, which could explain the negative portrayal.

With regards to Osborne, similar attacks, in terms of Muslims being the targets, were mentioned only in *The Independent*, who wrote about Islamophobia and hate crimes, after previous attacks 'reported surge in hate crime against Muslims'. Therefore, as it was only *The Independent* that mentioned such crimes, there seems to be more focus on previous attacks by ISIS, but a lack of mention of previous terror attacks committed by white perpetrators or from a far-right group. This lack of inclusion about far-right/white supremacist terrorism, suggests that it is less understood as a newsworthy cultural phenomenon. This means that newspapers are inadequate at explaining the contexts of far-right terrorism, and are likely to encourage interpretations of these events as unexpected deviations, compared to Islamist terrorism. As Russell-Brown argued that there is a lack of research on street crime committed by white offenders, as it seems to be mainly committed by black offenders (2009, p134), it may also be a similar case with terrorism as there has not been many terrorist attacks committed by a white perpetrator. Therefore, this may explain the limited research and literature about how white non-Muslim terrorists are portrayed in the news media. This could be because most of the major terror-related incidents were committed by Muslims of which the

research was based on. This may be due to news outlets not covering terror related events that were committed by white perpetrators. This is evident with Dearden's statistic that the percentage of terror-related acts committed by white perpetrators was higher than those from any other ethnic background (2018, np). Thus, this suggests that such acts committed by white perpetrators do not always necessarily make the headlines.

However, although they did not compare Osborne's actions to the events described above, they still seemed to classify it under the same category. For example, *The Sun* and *The Independent* called it 'the third such atrocity', and *The Daily Mail* wrote 'another senseless attack' and 'another maniac'. This suggests they are not separating this event from the Westminster Bridge attack, as they are still classifying it as an attack, despite who the perpetrators are. Furthermore, there were comparisons with other terrorist attacks but had different M.O.s, for example, there was a mention of Lee Rigby, for both perpetrators, and a statement that said "like the terrible attacks in Manchester, Westminster and London Bridge". Therefore, including the incident in Manchester suggests they are comparing it to other types of terrorist attacks, as this one involved a bomb, and thus not just ones where vehicles were used as a weapon. Thus, by acknowledging that Osborne's actions are an act of terrorism, it contradicts the sources in the literature review, which implied that terrorist acts are only defined as such by the media when it is perceived to have been committed by a Muslim.

Aftermath of the events and reactions

The final theme that was identified, was how the articles wrote about certain people's reactions and also how the government and the public are treating the event. After the incident at Westminster Bridge, the articles included information about how the police further investigated the incident. They described that several 'raids' were carried out, and rarely using the word 'search'. This shows how they are portraying this event as serious and that there may be further threats, which was particularly conveyed by *The Daily Mail*, writing about how the police would 'mount a huge investigation' and that 'Scotland Yard, rather than West Midlands Police, is behind the raid'. *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* included what this would involve, as the police force said they were "focused on his motivation, his preparation and associates", and that the 'raids' were an 'attempt to find any associates', despite describing him as a 'lone wolf'. Several articles further added that during the 'raids', they added that neighbours saw "helicopters", "forensic outfits", police carrying "MP5s" and "ammunition magazines". This paranoia that there are possible further threats and associates, relates to Bhatia's findings on how the newspapers, such as, The Mirror, tend to emphasise the fears of the police (2018, p201). *The*

Daily Mail further added 'police who patrol areas "known to be of interest to terrorists" should carry a weapon for personal protection'. However, this suggests that they view such areas that are only of interest to particular types of terrorists, as the attack outside Finsbury Park Mosque may not have been considered as one of those areas. This could be because Westminster Bridge is located in a popular tourist area, whereby many people would be constantly present and subject to harm, whereas the Finsbury Park Attack occurred in an area that was less populated.

The Finsbury Park attack was also portrayed as a serious event, but in a subtler manner, as the word 'raid' was rarely used compared to 'search'. *The Independent* and *BBC News* added how there would be extra "police resources" and "patrols" implemented, and that despite believing he acted alone, they wrote how the police said that they were 'investigating all circumstances leading up to the attack'. Even though Masood acted alone, the articles deemed as though there were more likely to be other people involved, which links with the arguments regarding how the news media tends to associate an ethnic minority with a certain group, but for Osborne, who also acted alone, there were no mention of the police intending to find any other associates.

In terms of the public's reaction, most articles described how people were shocked or surprised by Masood's actions, suggesting how it was not expected. This does not correlate with the literature review, as the sources suggested that Muslims and other ethnic minorities are perceived as normally committing violent crimes. Similarly to Masood, they also tended to use the word 'shock' to describe the reactions of the Finsbury Park attack. *The Independent* further added how 'Community groups and charities have condemned the attack', where they oppose violence from the far right as well as Islamists. This, again shows that they are regarding Osborne's actions as similar to the actions of Islamists.

Although this didn't occur for Masood, as he died during the incident, the articles added what Osborne said and how he acted after the incident. This included statements about how he wanted to "kill all Muslims", which was then implied as mission orientated, by several articles, as they included how he stated "I've done my job" and "I did the job". There was also the implication that he seemed proud of his actions, viewing himself as a hero, as they wrote 'making victory signs and cheering', 'waved to the gathered crowd, and 'blowing kisses'. This was followed by highlighting how he lacked compassion, suggesting a psychopathic trait, as they described how he showed no remorse, i.e. 'with no shred of mercy', which was evident with some of the witnesses'

statements included, such as, he "didn't care" and that he was "desensitized". Such focus on his behaviour during and after the incident may explain how *The Sun* wrote 'A mental health assessment would follow'. This correlates with Jewkes's findings regarding the news coverage of Anders Breivik, whereby he found that the news shifted their focus from the perpetrator potentially being an Islamic fundamentalist, to his mental health, after they identified who he was (2015, p71). Yet this was not the case for Masood, which relates to Terzis findings, who noted how there were no mention of Richard Reid, the "shoe bomber", who also converted to Islam, and his mental state as a way to explain his actions (2014, p101). In addition, even though most of the articles wrote how Masood was 'shot dead' by the police, in Osborne's case, it was conveyed as though he became a victim due to the way the articles described how the bystanders reacted towards his actions. This is because they wrote how the bystanders 'attacked' him, and that he was "pinned down to the floor". This was followed by describing an Imam as though he was Osborne's saviour, i.e. 'Imam shielding him from angry crowds' and 'formed a protective ring', which was under the Imam's orders. Therefore, shifting the focus away from his terrorist actions.

Conclusion

Overall, several of the themes that emerged supported my aims and arguments that there is a difference in language when portraying terrorists based on their perceived ethnicity.

This is particularly the case regarding the vocabulary used to label the perpetrators, whereby Masood tended to be more subject to negative labels, such as 'terrorist' or 'terror attacker', in contrast to Osborne, who received mainly neutral labels or labels that weren't associated with terrorism, such as 'suspect' or 'van driver'. This was further reinforced by the way in which the writers described their actions, whereby the metaphors used to emphasise how aggressive and violent their actions were, i.e. 'mowed down' or 'ploughed', were mainly applied to Masood. For Osborne, however, there was more use of 'drove a van' and 'ran over crowds'. This supports my hypothesis and research aim that certain labels are determined by the perceived ethnicity of the perpetrator, whereby ethnic minorities are more prone to negative labels. Such difference in vocabulary was further applied where the articles wrote how the police looked into their homes, whereby, the word 'raid' or 'raided' was commonly used in the coverage of Masood, and 'search' for Osborne. This suggests that Masood's actions were portrayed as having more serious and negative consequences compared to Osborne. Furthermore, as the literature review described and explained how ethnic minorities are subject to criminal portrayals, this was reflected in the findings, whereby the articles emphasized Masood's criminal history, outlining several of the crimes he committed. Criminal portrayals were further enhanced when past similar events were raised, whereby Masood's actions were compared to several other terrorist incidents committed by ISIS. This was similarly the case with Osborne, but his actions were also more subtly compared to such incidents, by stating his actions as 'another attack'.

However, there were different linguistic characteristics identified that does not support my argument, as the description of their actions contradicts the way in which their characters were described. This is because the articles tended to include positive statements regarding Masood's character. Whereas for Osborne, more negative statements, particularly regarding his aggressive behaviour, before and after the incident, and implying possible psychological problems. Thus, such findings contradict my argument and aims, as the initial assumption was that ethnic minorities would be depicted as possessing negative characteristics.

Some linguistic features appeared for the coverage of both perpetrators, which were not anticipated. Firstly, their identities, in relation to their occupation and family, were described an implied in a suspicious or deviant way, i.e. highlighting how Masood's profession as an English tutor is not verifiable and how his family were "reserved", and how Osborne would shout at his children and girlfriend. Secondly, in terms of the reaction received, there were similarities, as the coverage on both events tended to use the word 'shock'. This perceived unexpectedness does not correlate with the aim and literature review, as the sources argues that ethnic minorities are perceived to be criminally inclined. Therefore, the use of the word 'shock' contradicts such arguments. Thirdly, the articles wrote about whether or not both perpetrators were known to the security services. However, this was not anticipated for Osborne, suggesting that the writers are implying that Osborne's actions were similar to Masood's. Lastly, in terms of their motives and political affiliations, there seemed to be an emphasis on linking Masood to Islamist terrorist groups, such as ISIS, which relates to the literature review, regarding the stereotypical portrayals of Muslims being affiliated with terrorism. As the initial assumption was that white perpetrators' actions tend to be regarded as an individual action, it contrasts with the findings, as there were mentions of whether or not Osborne was also affiliated with any extremist groups.

Such discrepancies and contradictions identified in the findings may be due to the structural context of the news organisations. Not only is considering the context, in relation to the news organisations' news values and ethos, is important, as it can explain what and how they wrote, but also in terms of the cultural context and other researchers' values. This links with the limitations of the method, particularly regarding the issue with subjectivity as the 'same discourse, thus, can be understood differently by different language users as well as understood differently in different contexts' (Van Dijk, 2011, cited in Paltridge, 2012, p2-3). Such subjective interpretations not only involve deciding which words and sentences to include in the analysis, but also deciding which ones to exclude (Johnstone, 2018, p17). In relation to my project, there were information from the articles that I excluded, as I believed that it would have not been relevant to my research aim. Yet, another researcher may believe otherwise, thus affecting the validity. This means that, discourse analysis does not just lack reliability in terms of subjectivity, but it is also not reliable as other researchers cannot replicate the research at another time because of the changing context, as depictions of ethnic minorities and terrorists may change overtime. This is supported by Cameron and Kulick, who argued that 'we must bear in mind that discourse shifts and changes constantly, which is why arguments about words and their meanings are never settled once and for all'

(2003, cited in Paltridge, 2012, p9). Thus, racism within news media discourse is not fixed and does not provide the whole picture. There may be other factors involved in the reproduction of racism and Islamophobia, such as other cultural institutions. Nevertheless, there still needs to be more research within this field, so such issues can be addressed to ensure that the news media portray the actions of social actors fairly, despite their perceived ethnic background.

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How do we learn about sexual practices through sexual technologies?

Isabelle Jackson

Abstract

This research project explores the ways young heterosexual people learn about sexual practices and pleasure in current society. The study investigates through observation of high street sex shops, sex toys and content analysis. How and where young people can go to learn about their sexuality and how to learn pleasure through a variety of sources which I discuss. An examination into the marketing of sex toys to see to what extent they are aimed at young people to use them as a tool for their personal sexual exploration. Also, reviewing sex advice websites that were aimed at young people to see what themes are prevalent and how the information was presented to young people about sexual activities, such as masturbation. This project also researches into what young people are given through the means of sex education in schools and then, from what sex education lacks, what is available to them to learn for themselves.

Introduction

This dissertation explores how young people learn about their sexuality and pleasure in terms of masturbation, sexual practices and sex toys. I have chosen to focus on heterosexuality as, being the societal norm, there has been a lack of research on it. As part of sexual technologies, pornography can be a tool for learning, whether this is negative or positive. This has been widely documented by previous research as well, with the moral panic associated with it (Cohen, 2011). The choice of using young people is due to an interest in how sexuality and pleasures are learnt. How society reacts to young people establishing their sexuality is something most will experience at some point, but it is usually ignored or dismissed. There are only a few accepted channels of learning about sex, such as, sex education. Even though sex education is available and somewhat compulsory for young people, it is heavily lacking in everything apart from the biological focus. This can leave young people searching for answers from different sources of information to fill this gap. From this I have developed a question to research: how do we learn about sexual practices through sexual technologies?

It is argued in this thesis that sex toys need to become part of the sexual learning vocabulary instead of merely being for those that are sexually confident and experienced. In terms of young people, sex toys should become an element of learning about pleasure and what can provide pleasure. The need to change the associations and assumptions made with sex toys, that instead of being a sexual assistant to married couples or for women who are sexually confident and experienced, they could be available for young people and become central to sexual learning.

One of the key findings is the lack of sexual assistance young people get from using sex shops and trying to buy and use sex toys, as part of masturbation or sexual intercourse. Also, even if they did attempt to go into a sex shop to purchase a sex toy for themselves, they are legally restricted as they are not even allowed into sex shops which then completely rejects the idea of young people trying to learn pleasure from the use of sex toys. From this we can see the extent to which sex shops function in a pedagogical sense or not. The questions posed here are what their role is in enabling users to learn about pleasure and how to pleasure parts of their body. In addition to sex toys, I have chosen to look into websites that are aimed at young people that provide information about sexual practices- these have a range of aims in order to assist young people learn. The research that has been conducted to look into this, is observation of different types of sex shops and how the marketing of sex toys

reflects the idea of its consumers and how open it is to young people who are new to using sex toys.

Literature Review

Sex Education

Despite significant alarm about the role of the internet in teaching young people about sex, (Sun et al., 2014, p1). learning through our education system remains just as contested. One area in which sex education is criticised most is the concept of pleasure being nearly completely forgotten or more worryingly, ignored, by educators, who mainly focus on the biological discourse. Hirst argues,

> that pleasure education responds to young people's expressed needs and calls to widen sex education beyond a negative, biologically-based model and centre instead on skills development and widening sexual repertoires that can help protect sexual and emotional health and negotiate respectful relationships (2014; 35).

For young people, sex education is not fully supplying them with information that allows them to explore their evolving sexual identity and merely focuses on the scientific instead of pleasure and other discourses as discussed within Fine's (1988) findings. The focus being on the development of sexual practices for the heterosexual youth within sex education (McNeil, 2013). More recently a new policy has been passed meaning by 2020 it will be compulsory for the inclusion of topics such as consent, domestic violence, online safety, and more LGBT inclusive (Long, 2019).

Whilst this is a positive change, there is a clause to this as parents still have a legal right to remove their child from any of these lessons if they disagree with the teachings "section 405 of the Education Act 1996 enables parents to withdraw their children from sex education other than the sex education that is in the National Curriculum (such as the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction that are essential elements of National Curriculum Science)" (Long, 2019, p4). This uncovers the problem that some parents simply do not want young people to learn about sex at all (Libby, 1970) preventing them from being educated about it other than the biological basics, deeming it to be inappropriate. Other critical debates like how sex education is taught to young people, the views of teachers and if they are more than adequately trained in teaching sex education (Alldred and David, 2007, p50-72), how the curriculum deals with sex and relationship education and recognising that sex education does not focus on other sexual concepts that young people will come across as they progress into their sexual adulthood (Allen, 2004, p152).

Foucault recognised that “sex education is considered to have an important role in the regulation of society: it is a technique of 'governance' (1979, cited in Measor et al., 2000, p7). He argues sex education informs and then becomes heavily involved in the political and cultural specifics of the time in question as this is heavily influential in what youths learn and, most importantly, what is missing. Sex education can enable young people’s sexual identity to evolve, meaning it has the power to “constitute our notions of 'intimate citizenship'” (Plummer, 1996, cited in Measor et al., 2000, p7). Overall, “Sex education is a site for modern forms of monitoring, regulating and the 'disciplining' of society (Thorogood, 1992 cited in Measor et al., 2000, p7). Due to issues with current sex education, young people have a need to access information that allows for them to become responsible sexual ‘intimate citizens’ (Plummer, 1996) later on in life. If sexual education in schools is not giving that to young people, there is an important gap in which young men and women’s sexual knowledge is missing, which is problematic.

Other ways in which young people learn about sexual practices is pornography. In Quinlivan’s (2014) study of using participant observation of a secondary school, the teacher was asked by a student “What’s wrong with looking at porn?” [challengingly]”, to which the teacher blatantly ignored, demonstrating how young people are engaged and curious about sex and how they learn about this is vital. If educators refuse to acknowledge this and the language can negatively impact young people’s sex education (Willig, 1998). It may result in young people being left to learn about sexual practices through other avenues, “her question recognises that looking at porn is now a common, accessible, and increasingly ‘acceptable’ way to learn about sexualities for young men and for some young women” (Quinlivan, 2014, p81). Young people are engaging with pornography with it now being so easily accessible. Sun et al.’s research highlights how young people are engaging with porn possibly as a form of education since their sexual curiosities are being rejected from the current education system as mentioned above. Although, it has been widely researched how pornography can distort young people’s views on sex (Owen et al., 2012). Hald’s research on young people, found that the consumption of pornography by young people and how this can differ depending on gender in as much as:

> Large gender differences in preferences in pornographic themes were found. Men were found to prefer to watch anal intercourse, oral sex, group sex (one man—more women), lesbian sex, and amateurs sex significantly more than women. In turn, women were found to prefer watching softcore pornography and group sex (one woman—more men)

> significantly more than men […] In addition, we found that pornography was involved 53.8% of the time when men were having sexual activity on their own, but only 16.8% of the time when women were having sexual activity on their own. (Hald, 2006, p580-3).

This indicates how sexual technologies are being used differently as they are highly gendered and the interactions with these sexual technologies is very telling of how young people are learning or have learnt about sex. The gender norms play a huge role in what heterosexual men and women find a sexual turn-on, influencing their sexual practices. Rogow and Haberland explain this as,

> gender norms and power disparities negatively affect both girls' and boys' sexual attitudes, practices and health. Ample research from both developed and developing country settings documents this relationship (2005; 1).

With Hald's findings showing that women are using pornography less when providing one's self with sexual gratification, this questions what women use as a sexual stimulus, whether virtual or physical, when learning about sexual practices and identity, which links directly to my research.

Sexual Identity

The problems and limitation that come from sex education may have a direct impact on someone discovering their sexual identity. For example, Section 28 which meant that schools could not promote homosexuality and so furthering the heteronormative society (Epstein, 2000, Stacey, 1991). It should be noted that "heterosexual identity development often goes unexamined and ignored" (Morgan and Thompson, 2011, p1). The lack of focus towards heterosexuality is due to the gender norms which even with an ever changing social and cultural background, still remains predominantly unchanged. Previously research has allowed a

> neglect to probe for information regarding processes of sexual identity development and personal sexual histories, often rendering heterosexuality invisible. When (hetero)sexual behaviour is examined, it is surrounded by discussions of risk, especially in a "hook-up" culture (Morgan and Thompson, 2011, p1).

Currently, the lack of research about heterosexuality compared to other sexualities which has previously been marginalised, such as the LGBT+ community (Ng et al. 2019). When heterosexuality is researched, there is overall negative outlook on it and the main focuses are based on the riskier side of

heterosexuality. There has been substantial research on sex work and the use of prostitution, such as the work of Sanders (2004) and Brewis and Linstead (2000), or other risks as like the negative use of porn in young people mentioned by Carroll et al. (2008) and Štulhofer et al. (2008), finding the "institutionalized, normative heterosexuality regulates those kept within its boundaries as well as marginalizing and sanctioning those outside them" (Jackson, 2006, p105) The social policing around heterosexuality means that it is veiled from the glare of sociologists and this inherent social policing of those who do not fit the regulations of heteronormative society and stunting the sexual identities of those who do not conform.

Therefore, the problem is that there seems to be an idea that heterosexuality is singular which is not the case. As heterosexual sex is lumbered with the gendered norms and so "When either men or women breach heteronormative conventions, however, they are equally susceptible to being defined by, reduced to, their sexuality" (Jackson, 2006, p115). These assumptions are problematic and simply ignore the concept of having sex for pleasure in a positive way without focusing on risk. With sex toys being one of the most normalised forms of sexual technologies that were originally designed for couples and now being a "23.7 billion USD in 2017" (Wood, 2018, np). As described by Durex sex toys were and still to an extent are made to be for couples who wants to explore sexually,

> experimenting with sex toys could be one of the most instantly gratifying and potentially most fun ways to spice up your relationship. […] introduce new ways to reach orgasm; and make it easier to climax […] for both men and women alike (Durex, no date, np)

Previous research shows how the marketing of sex toys could merely perpetuate this as sex mainly acts tool of creating this gendered singular approach to heterosexual sex (Byrne, 2000). My research questions whether if this was introduced to young people at an earlier age and sex is more than biological discourses, it would encourage a change in culture about heterosexual sex to be around pleasure and be more sex positive. This links sexual technologies and sexual identity which allows for their sexual appetite to grow and be more open to trying new technology which can give sexual satisfaction. The problem is that pleasure is so severely misunderstood or downright ignored, shown through the lack of research (Coveney and Bunton, 2003). With heterosexuality there is an assumption of penetrative sex, but in reality, this may not be the case as the majority start with masturbation (Arafat and Cotton, 1974), as it's the easiest ways for people to access their first sexual experience and have sex with themselves instead of someone else.

> "Sex positive theorists have hoped to find evidence that masturbation could be a tool in reducing unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. However, the role of masturbation in sexual health appears to be more complex than a simple substitute for risky sexual activity" (Kaestle and Allen, 2011, p984).

This begins to show how we have a hidden appreciation for masturbation as it can almost distract young people from persisting on to other sexual activities that involves risks. Whereas masturbation for young people can see this as the start of the problem; from this young peoples' sexual needs and desires can snowball so they quickly move on to more sexual activities which can include more risk. This relates back to the importance of masturbation being used as a tool for young people alongside sexual technologies to explore their sexuality before moving on to having sex with a partner.

Sex toys

The use of sex toys can be key to a persons' sex life and the concepts as mentioned previously that are overlooked by sex education. The idea of young people using sex toys does create tension as these are restricted to certain adult environments and to be used by those who are sexually experienced. There is an idea that young people do have this need to explore their sexuality and see if the use of sex toys are a sexual turn-on for them. Hogarth and Ingham have found,

> little research has been conducted into sexual self-exploration and, in particular, masturbation among young people, and this has generally been concerned merely with its prevalence. Little is known about the potential role of masturbation in relation to young people's developing sexuality, especially among young women (2009; np).

This is problematic in a society which bombards us with notions of sex and pleasure, aided alongside the sex industry.

The fact that "artefacts for sexual stimulation have long been a staple in human life. Dildos have been found in ancient cultures" (Danaher, 2017, p3). So even without our current technologies there has always been a demand for sexual apparatus. Due to the social taboo, the way in which sex toys, such as vibrators, were presented to the public was very different to how we might see them currently, initially being seen as a medical instrument only be used by physicians to medical treat conditions such as hysteria.

> Because vibrators had a distinctly medical purpose in the nineteenth century, it took several decades […] to "see" vibrators as mechanisms that induce sexual pleasure. In the 1930s, women's magazines advertised "massagers" in non-sexual terms instead of "vibrators," (Fahs and Swank, 2013, np).

This shows how discourses have changed and impacted sex toys. Particularly from a western perspective there's a definite misleading for the purpose of sex toys according to which discourse you look into historically. How sex toys have changed to being something simply medical, to now openly inducing sexual pleasures, whether it's alone or with a partner. Sex toys were also seen to be marital aids, previously made for couples to spice up their sex life (Watson et al, 2016), or seen to be for bored housewives who have given up on receiving pleasure from their partner so would use these toys to reach orgasm. This is seen to have been the purpose of using a sex toy instead of enhancing your sex life with a partner or become a replacement for them. Sex toys were projected and marketed to the public as,

> 'Marital Aids', appeared in November 1973 and depicted male and female gender symbols in black on a shocking pink background. […] This colourful presentation of sexual commodities as enhancements for women's sexual pleasure within marriage (Wood, 2015, p30).

This is problematic, as sex toys can be seen as highly gendered and to be used when someone's sexual desires are not being fulfilled but with the help of a marital aids this would become "an object that might support pleasurable heterosexual sexual relationships" (Wood, 2015, p23). So this indicates that sex toys were seen to be used as a tool for sexual orgasm between a heterosexual couples. Nowadays sex toys are often marketed for single people whilst masturbating but can still be used to achieve orgasm if a partner doesn't sexually satisfy them. Arguably, not much has changed in the search for the female pleasure just the wat in which it is been marketed allows for it viewed differently in the public domain.

As Opperman et al. study finds, for young people the outcome being "orgasm is a 'goal' of much sexual activity, and a source of potentially intense pleasure and fulfilment" (2014; np) that one must reach. This demonstrates how society presents the sexual goal is to achieve orgasm. In reality, a better goal would be to learn about one's self. The outcome of sex is to learn pleasure not just let it become a performance for others due to pressures from a partner or a wider influence such as porn. It is best placed when there is a sense of discovery

of a person's sexual pleasure and learning how to treat yourself and others, like using communication when doing sexual practices (Kleinplatz et al., 2009).

Feminism has been prevalent in the creation of what we now see as sexual technologies. As some feminists have been split in their outlook on sex toys and technologies, through the sex-wars (Hirsch and Keller, 1990) there has been a splintering (Chancer, 1996) and so there are many different voices within the discussion, many of which conflict with each other. Whilst these issues are still continuing to be argued by pro-sex or anti-sex feminists, this allows us to see the problems that one might encounter whilst trying to identify with their own sexual identity. As sex positive feminists have discussed masturbation and the ways in which, "sex toys can represent a positive aspect of women's lives—they allow for more efficient masturbation for some, exploration for others, and fun and quirkiness for still others" (Fahs, 2014, p282).

The question which becomes apparent from the literature is, how the gendering of the sexual technologies can have an impact, on how people can educate themselves as they practice heterosexuality. Some feminists heavily critiqued the use of pornography as it was seen to be an outwardly sexual way of the patriarchy portrayal of women, and so it was made by men for men whilst promoting the male gaze through porn (MacKinnon, 1989, p315). In opposition to this, pro-sex feminists who attack pornography as a way of restraining the way we can learn about our sexuality. Also, the highly gendered usage of sex toys as it is seen that as the majority of pornography is made for men and so that young males would learn about sex through that. Whereas young women don't use porn as much (Sun et al., 2014) but instead make use sex toys, as many articles explain what the other half is missing out on,

> we shouldn't need to make it 'okay' for men to buy sex toys by making them super masculine, and anyone of any gender identity shouldn't feel excluded from the potential joy of a great sex toy. When we divide our sex toys by gender, we limit what's 'acceptable' for people to use to pleasure themselves (Scott, 2017, np).

With the pro-sex movement this has been a bigger awareness of sex being for someone's own sexual pleasure both physically and mentally. Bringing especially female masturbation into the open and making it less taboo so others may be able to learn from it such as, *The Playbook for Women and Sex* (1975). This was,

> filled with exercises designed to dispel common myths and increase women's sexual self-esteem, The Playbook encouraged women to look

> at their bodies and to list the things they liked and disliked about them. […] asked about their experience with masturbation, including how old they were when they first masturbated, how often they did it, and in what ways (Comella, 2017, p49).

Comella questions their first masturbation experiences, this relates back to my research as this can be directly linked to how we learn about sex. Whether it was manually done or with the help of sexual technologies. This is relevant as this directly problematizes the ways in which sex toys have been seen over recent decades. Showing how by not opening up the sex toy industry restricts young people, who are learning about their sexual needs and practices through the use of sex toys.

Pleasure

The importance of sexual pleasure within society cannot be understated. It is prevalent throughout time and cultures, "what counts as sex, how it is socially regulated, and what people do in sex varies greatly between cultures and over historical time. The study of sex is thus largely a study of social behaviour" (Richters, 2001, p7). So whilst any research conducted may give a snapshot of sex and sexual practices for that particular time and culture, it leaves a gap in the present and the current meaning for individuals of sexual practices and how these might be influenced by the present sexual technologies.

As Cook states, "the potential utility of pleasure, and of the human propensity to seek it out, was being explored by theorists of politics and society in a variety of ways" (2009; 451-2), when pleasure is being experienced as an emotion for a person due to a sexual technology or practices. Jaggar argues, "emotions are simultaneously made possible and limited by the conceptual and linguistic resources of a society" (1989; 157). As emotions being a social construction depending on the time, culture and location in which the emotion is examined. When it comes to pleasure that is derived from sexual practices there are a multitude of definitions that could be applied to be including, "sexual pleasure may result from a variety of activities that involve sexual arousal, genital stimulation and/or orgasm" (Abramsom and Pinkerton, 1995 cited in Rye and Meaney, 2007, p30). There have been multiple research projects on female sexual pleasure gained from sex toys such as Davis et al. (1996) study on women who gain sexual pleasure and attempt orgasm from the use of vibrators. As also can be seen in Coveney and Bunton's (2003) work regarding the types of pleasure in which they have identified which correlate with social and cultural norms. This relates back to my research as how people use sexual technologies in how they choose to perform sexual activities regardless of the possible stigma showing how now, too many, pleasure comes first.

There is a significant lack of research done on the role of sex toys, sexual pleasure and heterosexual males. In regards to heterosexual males and sex toys, these are seen as a threat to masculinity with using phallic-shaped instruments which may be able to do more than their own penis such as vibrate, rotate and stimulate multiple areas at once. As mentioned above, that due to the gendering of sex toys there is a lack of male sex toys which may put males on the back foot as they can lack this extra influence, as there may be the assumption that men just learn from pornography. This means that within heterosexuality's idea of sexual ability, there is a biological knowing of what is required from men and their ability to easily sexually satisfy themselves. This is highly culturally sensitive and dependent on what time, location and culture. Now whilst this is relevant to the topic when researching, this goes beyond the scope of the thesis so I shall not be focusing on this further on.

Methodology

Aims

As argued in the literature review, the conversation that concerns heterosexual young people and masturbation is often left out of academic research and discussions. The literature review shows that although how young people learn pleasure is vital, its impact is not yet fully acknowledged. The use of sex toys has been explored within the ideas of sexual pleasure but it does not go as far as its importance to one's "'intimate citizenship" (Plummer, 1996, cited in Measor et al., 2000, p7). Also the gendering of sex toys and sexual technologies is seen to be a given, and this would obviously go on to how men and women perceive and practice the cultural norms of heterosexuality. Men seem to be left with the means of pornography as a sexual stimulus whereas women are given sex toys such as rabbits and (phallic-shaped) dildos to use to reach an orgasm. Out of this, the aim of this research is to understand how the marketing of sex toys frames and recognises the sexual development of young people.

Questions

In order to address this, the following questions have been developed:

1. What are the ways in which sex toys are marketed in high street stores?
2. How do youth websites deal with and discuss young people, sex toys and masturbation?
3. What sort of toys are there for young people and how do they fit within some sense of learning pleasure?
4. How do the stores recognise beginners to sex toys?
5. How are the toys gendered?

To answer these questions, the following methods were developed, the chosen methods for this research project are content analysis and observational analysis. With these methods all being a qualitative method of research which can be used to investigate the how in society there are many methods which come under the term of qualitative meaning that the researcher has the flexibility to look into social phenomena that take place within a group of people's behaviour (Saldana, 2011). These types of analysis are an "approach to the study of text and talk, emerging from critical linguistics, critical semiotics and in general from a socio-politically conscious and oppositional way of investigating language, discourse and communication" (Van Dijk, 1995, p17).

As noted above, my research has incorporated the issues found from looking into previous research, these include the lack of many key concepts from the current form of sex education. The chosen methods show how the marketing of sex toys, and its importance in the discussion of young people and masturbation. Along with other sexual practices is being squashed as the focus on those who are already sexually confident beings. From the literature review I have identified many problems and from this have my research has attempted to shed some more light on these issues.

Content Analysis

The use of content analysis means to,

> try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them. And, importantly, by seeing the variety of ways in which it is possible to interpret reality (McKee, 2003, p1).

The way that I implemented this in my research was by looking at the following websites:

1. Scarleteen,
2. The NHS's Sexual health section and
3. Lovehoney's e-book, Uni:sex – the ultimate guide to incredible sex for students

I chose to examine the NHS's website because it is the official government discourse. Lovehoney's e-book from their blog was chosen to give an insight into the manufacturing and marketing of sex toys. The use of Scarleteen shows and explains the youth side of how one might learn about sex and their learning of sexual norms and development.

These are aimed at young people and addressed the issue of sexual activities such as intercourse and masturbation. Before and whilst looking at the websites I had my research criteria that I had created which would guide me to ensure that all material is examined in the same ways. Along with this, I looked at the sex toys packaging to see what language is used to sell sex toys and what assumptions a company may make about its target market and how the sex toy itself is being framed and the possible gendered presentation of the toys and websites. From these sources of information, I shall then be analysing them to look for themes found in the literature review.

Observation

The use of observation within my research, observation is "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (Marshall and Rossman, 1989, p79). Before I went out to complete my research I created a research criterion which gave me a set of ideas that I would look out for whilst looking at the sex shops and websites. This wasn't a rigid set of criteria instead more of a foundation, meaning all research material collected was examined with the same ideas. If new ideas did crop up, then they would be noted.

I did the observation in the following ways, I went to three stores:

- Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium- Pitfield Street, Shoreditch
- Ann Summers- Oxford Street
- Harmony- Oxford Street

I want to give myself a better scope at the sex shops and industry. I chose to visit Sh! as it is a small independent women's pleasure-focused sex shop which is off the high street unlike the other two. Ann Summers is a commercial national brand which has one hundred and seven stores nationwide which is one of the biggest in the UK. As the reader will recall question four above, about how stores recognise inexperienced or newbies to the usage of sex toys, and this is more accessible for young people. I chose Harmony as it is a smaller more niche company but still stocks a variety of brands and addresses a variety of sexual preferences and fetishes. In all of the stores, I spent one to two hours looking at products, taking photos of the packaging, branding and the store's atmosphere. I did this in order to answer question three. Before and whilst observing the stores, I had my research criteria that I had created, which would guide me to ensure that all material was examined in the same ways. After observation of the store and the sex toys, I then went on to conduct unstructured interviews with the staff of the sex shops as I wanted to know and further answer question four.

Analysis

From my research then comes the analysis. After the material was collected, I used four themes to code my findings. I did the analysis mindful of the discourse analysis because I wanted to know from my research how sex stores either accept or reject the discourses around sex, young people and sex toys which will help find the answers to my questions. The themes that I have chosen to code my research material are language, marketing, framing and audience. These themes are based on the literature review and how they were apparent in the observation and content analysis. To find these themes I have looked

over all my photos of products and the shops and over the information and language used from the websites to find overlapping concepts which some or all of the research could be included in.

From these patterns, I have coded these and applied them to the theme(s). For the sex toys, I have specifically chosen some products which mostly agree or disagree with the themes for whatever reason. For the websites, I have again picked out pages or key terms and from that I have identified the common themes of the websites Scarleteen and the NHS sexual health section. For the Lovehoney e-book I have printed it out and looked out for the language used and framing of sex toys and activities mentioned in the e-book as this is set out a little differently to the two websites, but still has a purpose within this research and I have identified common themes and coded appropriately where needed.

Ethics

As with any piece of research that is conducted, it must be ethical and so when researching one must take this into consideration. When conducting my own research this shall be taken into account and the appropriate action will be taken to ensure any ethical issues are avoided. When researching any topic, there is a need to gain consent from all participants who have taken part in the research. As stated by the BSA's Statement of ethical practice

> In some situations, access to a research setting is gained via a ´gatekeeper´. In these situations members should adhere to the principle of obtaining informed consent directly from the research participants to whom access is required, while at the same time taking account of the gatekeepers´ interest (2017; 5).

From my own research there were not any participants involved, although I did ask for permission to have a look around the sex shops and to take photos of their products. I sent emails to the store managers or head office of the companies a few days before I started my research, one of the stores got back to me and gave approval on the condition that I make myself known to the staff on the day, which I did. The other two stores did not get back to me promptly so when I went into the stores immediately I asked to speak to the store manager or a manager on duty, and asked permission to do my research in the store, which both agreed to me doing.

Another ethical issue that has been taken into consideration whilst conducting my research is anonymity. To ensure that there has been no violation of this, this means that none of the photos taken are to include anyone in them. The shops were all semi-public spaces and I visited them in daylight hours and so

there was no threat to me as an observer.

Any researcher knows that there is no study that can be conducted will ever be completely objective, although, I have taken this on board when planning my research and have made every effort to be as objective as possible. One of the ways in which I can do this is by taking into account my own positionality. This refers to how,

> identities come into play via our perceptions, not only of others, but of the ways in which we expect others will perceive us. Our own biases shape the research process, serving as checkpoints along the way. Through recognition of our biases, we presume to gain insights into how we might approach a research setting (Bourke, 2014, p1).

How my own identities intersect with one another has an importance on the level of objectivity of my research, as a young, white, middle-class female who was being catered for whilst researching and visiting the sex shops. As Kezar notes, "within positionality theory, it is acknowledged that people have multiple overlapping identities. Thus, people make meaning from various aspects of their identity" (2002; 96). My own positionality helped me understand as a twenty-one-year-old how I would be interpolated within the advertisements and marketing and answer question one. As well as my own positionality, I have ensured that whilst researching sex shops to look at which were both commercial and non-commercial, I have later checked that the shop's websites match the company's ethos and would corroborate with my findings from my observation.

Findings and Analysis

What are the ways in which sex toys are marketed in high street stores?

As mentioned in the literature review the marketing of sex toys has changed along with the also changing discourses for sex toys as a move from the medical discourse to one of pleasure and sex. The environment of high street stores is one of the most accessible ways to purchase sex toys for all, including young people. From my research criteria, one part of the store and products was to see how the stores displayed the sex toys and how these were framed to entice customers. The main three ways in which that sex shops framed were either for pleasure, health or comedy. For example, in Sh! the Lelo Smart Wand All-Over Body Massager which was a similar shape to the famous Hitachi Magic wand but being framed as a being a sex toy vibrator to bring pleasure for erogenous zones on the body.

This was not the only product that was framed as being for the consumer's health benefit instead for pleasure, the Smartballs Duo, which is similar to the

Figure 1: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

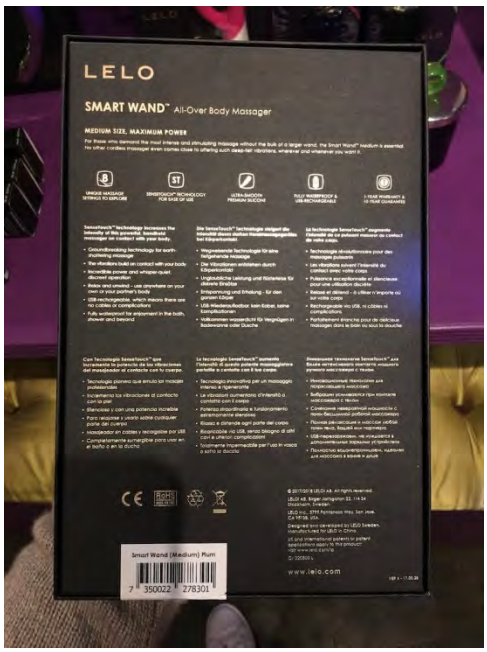

Figure 2: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

Ben Wa Balls. Now these do have some health purpose to improve pelvic muscles but they can also have sexual benefits such as, more sexual sensations.

Figure 73: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

Figure 4: Ann Summers, Author's own, 2019

Now whilst this framing can be helpful to those more sexually experienced and confident, if you are a young person who may not have that wealth of knowledge about sex toys to know what is for what and where on the body to sexually stimulate. With this health framing comes almost a denial in the sexual side of sex toys and pleasure, which can lead to confusion for a young person exploring sex toys. In all three stores, there was a surprisingly small amount of comedic framing. The biggest section that I found was in Ann Summers which is pictured underneath, this is a small display by the tills which I'd imagine that this was meant to be an easy add-on item to someone's purchase. Being a national brand, Ann Summers has the widest audience range so has to cater for this. The humorous items were not near the sex toys so it was not

attempting to link the two which was encouraging. There needs to be a clear separation between the two one, as phallic-shaped penises or candy nipple tassels may not help young people get better acquainted with what may give them pleasure and assist them to learn about sexual activities. It must be noted that the other two stores did have a few comedic toys but these were simply dotted around, whereas Ann Summers had them all together.

In Sh! with every product there were a very short explanation of the toys or sexual accessorises in store, next to each rabbit vibrator. These are helpful from a customer's perspective especially if one may be a little shy and not want to pick up the displayed toys and see how they feel. For example, the one closest to the camera states "rotating beads for toe-curling stimulation, specially curves for G-spot tip for enhanced pleasure and powerful rabbit ears for clitoral stimulation… *swoon* £80". The downfall with this is that these little notes are sales-focused meaning that regardless of what may or may not be a good toy for young people to try and use is irrelevant and is merely motivated for profit which is understandable as at the end of the day it is a business, not a sexual-educating space.

Figure 5: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

In Sh! unlike the other sex shops, they do not only sell sex toys such as rabbits, dildos and anal plugs, they also sold dilating sets and creating awareness around vaginismus which is "body's automatic reaction to the fear of some or all types of vaginal penetration. Whenever penetration is attempted, your vaginal muscles tighten up on their own. You have no control over it" (NHS, 2018, np). Now this does not mean that all young women may suffer from it but just creating the sign behind the dilators that give awareness that penetrative sex should not be painful. This can be beneficial in easily teaching young people about sex in a way which is often left out of sex education. Though can lead young women to feeling that there's something physically wrong with them, but this shows that there is some treatment for this condition, however, there are other treatments available for vaginismus that are not mentioned.

Figure 6: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

The ways in which marketing and branding differs in the stores was how the instructions were given on the packaging to the buyer to assist them on using the toy to give pleasure and orgasms. The level of detail varies as some, such as the Ruby Glow Pleasure for the seated lady, has a few paragraphs on the side of the box to explain the uses of toy and what each part can do for a woman with a diagram. This comes with a description with the possibilities of use:

> many people will enjoy the Ruby Glow from women at their desks indulging in hot internet chats, people with mobility issues, ladies who can't use penetrative sex aids, experimenting couples, to anyone in a seated position or otherwise who feels the need for pleasure! (Rayne, no date, np).

This creates an inclusive atmosphere for young people or those inexperienced with the toy, also showing that there is more than one way to use a sex toy and that it can be down to the user.

However, not all the toys which I observed were as informative. In Harmony, some toys had very little instruction, or none at all, instead the use of symbols which can be seen in the G-wave Rechargeable U-shaped Dual Rabbit Vibrator. This is more the sex toy manufacturer's concern instead of the sex shop. Although, this means that there is a sexual experience and confidence assumed of those buying and using these sex toys. Instead of allowing for sex toys to be a way of letting young people learn and give full instructions or suggestions there is a lack of this given the idea that those using the toys already know what provides sexual pleasure and if not then there is a lacking of information for what one could use to help you achieve orgasm or pleasure.

In answer to the question, the ways in which sex toys are framed within the stores does vary to an extent. The majority of toys are framed within the context of pleasure. The other framings such as comedic and health can be applied but to a small amount of toys within the three stores. This is positive for young people as when they start exploring sexual practices through the means of sex toys. With the majority of sex toys being within that so their first impression of sex toys can be a positive as the change in marketing indicates that there's no longer a stigma around pleasure and helping one's self, as they are being empowered through the products.

Figure 7: Harmony, Author's own, 2019

Figure 8: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

Are there sex toys for young people?

Now that I have explored the space in which sex toys inhabit as mentioned previously. Now to see how audiences for sex toys are specified, whether or not they are aimed or not at young heterosexual people. It must be noted that when I discuss the idea of being inexperienced, I am focusing on young people. Even though an older man or woman could be inexperienced when it comes to sex toys, in this research the primary focus is on young people's lack of experience with sex toys. From the observation in the sex shops, I found that there were very few toys that were aimed at beginners. The only shop that had any reference to beginners was Ann Summers.

This set includes four vibrators for internal and external use. This is good as it can allow for someone inexperienced to play around with what they find pleasurable. In regards, to the only set being found in Ann Summers, due to them being a national brand meaning that they have the widest audience of the three stores. Being so well known means that they should have toys that appeal to all consumers not just those who are experienced. This may be one of the first stores that young people try and attempt to purchase a sex toy only once they've turned eighteen. When inside of the shops the unstructured interviews I had with the staff in all three shops were all helpful to some extent when I asked "what is a good toy for a beginner?" They all then recommended toys but none specifically made for young sexually-inexperienced people. However, all of these women are sales people not specialists in sex toys. So they have no qualifications or background in sex toys to back up their recommendations and have the purpose to sell someone toys instead of focusing on what may be best for them when masturbating. As mentioned above, also the marketing and language used in sex toys have an assumed

Figure 9: Ann Summers, Author's own, 2019

sense of experience with consumers. In answer to the question, there are barely any sex toys that are targeted towards the beginner's market for young people, meaning that sex toy brands manufacturers are excluding young people from trialling sex toys in their pursuit for pleasure and learning sexual practices.

How do the stores recognise beginners to sex toys?

As can be seen above the I have discussed how high street sex shops present sex toys. What is also important is how they can encourage young people into include sex toys to be part of their sexual journey. The main problem is that young people under the age of eighteen young people cannot enter a sex shop, let alone purchase a sex toy to learn pleasure with. This means that there is gap of potentially years where sex toys are restricted to young people whilst they start learning their bodies and pleasure through masturbation and sexual practices. As I have mentioned above, when doing the unstructured interviews with the shops' staff, they all suggested products that they thought would be good for beginners such as, bullet vibrators. However, none of the staff in any of the stores mentioned the use of lube alongside sex toys, which can be essential for masturbation. This demonstrates that when buying a sex there is an assumed knowledge about one's self and knowing what gives them pleasure and what does not. Only in Sh! when the sale assistant asked after my own personal usage of sex toys did she mention the use of lube. When young people go into sex shops to finally explore the use of sex toys in finding pleasure, there is no real help available for them and what might be right for them. Essentially, it is very easy to get the sense of the blind leading the blind for those who are inexperienced trying to get a grasp of sex toys, as none of the staff are there in an educational capacity.

Sh! does hold multi events and classes a month, that aim to "inspire and empower, as well as to provide classmates with practical skills, greater knowledge and inner confidence in each subject" (Sh!, 2019, np) as stated in the events and classes leaflet. These classes are held on a range of topics such as strap on and pegging, squirting and rope bondage. As positive as having classes on topics such as these are, perhaps they are too far for beginners and young people trying to engage with their sexuality. Especially, as for heterosexual young individuals who are inexperienced to most as mentioned in the literature review, gender norms still impact what people find attractive (Rogow and Haberland; 2005), especially for those wo have not explored what they find a turn-on and experiment sexually. Overall, these classes are good if you're sexually experienced and confident. With this though, it may be too much for young people who might want to explore and as it may be educational but just a step too far and overwhelm when discussing topics that they might have only have seen in pornography.

In answer to the question, stores are not equipped for young inexperienced consumers, as I have mentioned previously, when you enter a sex shop there is an assumed knowledge that one must have that enables you to know what toys

do give you pleasure when masturbating, but this is only learned through trial and error. Also the staff in any sex shop are not there to educate customers, merely to provide a service and put through sales so this all can push young people further away, as sex shops are not pedagogical spaces.

Figure 10: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

Figure 11: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

How are the toys gendered?

In what can be considered someone's most intimate moments whilst seeking out pleasure, the products that they choose to aid masturbation can by impacted by how sex toy brands choose to market their products. All of the stores had various packaging since, apart from Ann Summers, the toys were from different manufacturers and brands. In Sh! being a women's sex shop, the products that are stocked were most of a neutral palette such as, black, white and gold, that was not gendered and stereotyped with plenty of pink. The only toy that was pink was the Satisfyer Pro 2 which did have a pink packaging but this has imagery of sexual empowerment and trying to bring about the next sexual revolution. So even with the pink packaging this does not represent the

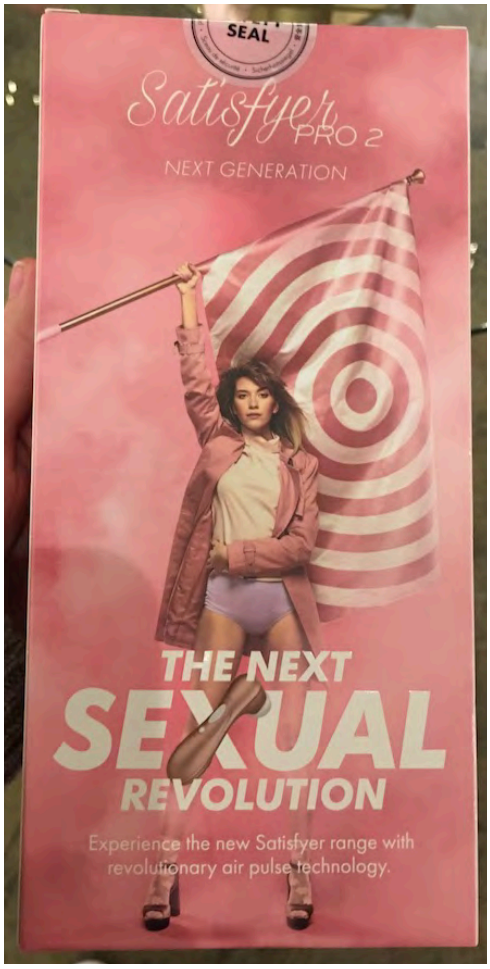

Figure 12: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

gendered pink stereotype that can be typically seen in female-orientated products.

In Ann Summers this was not the case, there were multiple products that had pink packaging. Although when speaking to one of the staff, they did mention that Ann Summers is rebranding their products so it is all black instead of pink. This is a step forward in reducing the gendering of sex toys, their recognising of this means that especially from a national brand such as Ann Summers, as sex toys are not just for women who identify as female, instead they can be used by anyone with a vulva. So they provide a space that doesn't exclude those who do not conform to the societal norms of gender.

When it came to looking for toys that were for men, this was a fraction of what was available for women. The only store that had a small section dedicated to sex toys for men was Ann Summers again- due to having the widest audience, they have to attempt to cater for most of them. Compared to the other stores which had only a few, if any, sex toys aimed at men dotted around the stores. From this, all the packaging on the toys aimed at men was black and blue, by sticking to these traditional masculine colours. This indicates that men's sex toys are not progressing away from the gendered stereotypes as much as female sex toys. This could be due to the history of sex toys as mentioned in the literature review, they were previously seen as marital aids. Sex toys were used in replacement of a sexual partner if they did not fully sexually satisfy. This previous notion of sex toys could still be affecting the marketing of male sex toys by reinforcing these traditional masculine norms through the colours and language used to remove the notion that these are female products. I asked one of the staff in Ann Summers about what is the difference between the male and female customers when shopping for sex toys. The Ann Summers sales assistant said that when women go shopping for sex toys they wander around the store, spend time looking over products, they're happy to ask questions and then make a purchase. Whereas, with male customers, they usually do some prior research into what male toys do, rush into the store quickly, pick up a toy and leave swiftly.

Figure 13: Ann Summers, Author's own, 2019

The only sex toy that was branded to be easily used by both men and women was in Sh! this was the Doppio Flexxio, which has 2 vibrators and a bendable shape which means it can turn into a penis ring as well with this being the only

toy that explicitly brands itself as being to pleasure both men and women. Compared to other toys made for couples but only focused on the female side of pleasure and then leaving the male pleasure to the imagination of the users. Overall, this is a good step forward in finding a product that suits the needs in exploration of pleasure in sexual practices both alone and with someone else.

Figure 14: Sh! Women's Erotic Emporium, Author's own, 2019

In answering the question, through the branding of the sex toys it is evident that the sex toys are gendered. When it comes to female sex toys, there seems to be a shift from the bright pink phallic-like stereotype of sex toys to being something more neutral and if there is a pink packaging this is changing from the norm of female stereotypes and instead subverting this with a message of empowering female pleasure which is a positive message for young people who are trying to explore sexually through masturbation. In terms of male sex toys, it is mostly the reverse, as instead the marketing of male sex toys is still applying those traditional masculine gender norms to appeal to them and not look as if they are buying something intended just for women.

How do youth websites deal with and discuss young people, sex toys and masturbation?

The selected websites can be a source of information for young people to use to educate themselves around masturbation and finding pleasure through sexual practices using sex toys. Due to the internet being so vast, there are websites that can be educational that provide a positive encouragement for young people trying to find pleasure and venture into their sexuality.

Scarleteen which was founded to provide education on sexuality and relationship. They state that,

> Our content and approach is original and strongly youth-driven but is also in alignment with current guidelines for comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents such as those suggested by SIECUS (US), UNESCO (International), the National Health Education Standards (US) and Sex and Relationships Education (UK) (Scarleteen, 2019, np).

This framing and centrality of young people throughout Scarleteen is key to educating people while being accessible and supportive. Whilst not prioritising risk of heterosexual sexual practices (Kaestle and Allen, 2011) over reward. The age range that Scarleteen claims to cater for is from fifteen to thirty years old. This range is beneficial as the age young people start learning about pleasure and start becoming curious about sexual practices varies. The content is supportive and easily understandable on topics such as, sex toys, masturbation and pleasure. With the interactive parts of Scarleteen of asking questions within a forum and getting them answered creates a sense of community for these sexually curious youths.

There is plenty of content available on masturbation and sex toys which are very closely related. Scarleteen has a page that focuses on masturbation called Going Solo: The Basics of Masturbation, this is a good start to introduce and educate young people on any stereotypes and negative stigmas around masturbation, "masturbation will not: Cause blindness, headaches, or vision problems […] Masturbation can: Be a source of physical and emotional relaxation" fantasy (Corinna, 2019, np). So no matter what shame or negative stereotypes young people may have heard. Scarleteen attempts to remove this and instead of just patronising young people they instead choose to readdress the benefits of masturbation. The page goes on to advise on how you can masturbate,

Masturbation is not always just about genitals. Plenty of people also incorporate touching or stimulating other parts of their bodies: […] Some people experiment with certain sexual practices alone, rather than with (or before sharing with) partners, by using new sex toys or certain types of role-play or sexual fantasy (Corinna, 2019, np).

This shows how they discuss masturbation and sex toys in a supportive manner which encourages learning whilst not setting ridged rules as to what counts as masturbation. Also, pleasure is key to it all regardless what they're doing to practice masturbation. With Scarleteen taking more of an educational perspective instead of following a medical discourse. This gives young people the understanding that there is nothing wrong with trying to find pleasure and trialling different areas of the body to whatever suits the person.

A key finding is that under eighteens cannot enter sex shops. Scarleteen recognises this and instead of just warning young people off sex toys. Instead they recognise that young people still have that curiosity about using sex toys to help with masturbating. So they then go on to recommend several household appliances that can be used as sex toys, DIY sex toys "Do-it-yourself sex toys have many potential benefits. They can be a way for you to experiment with vibration and other sensations if you don't have access to a sex toy store" (Wall and Rotman, 2016, np). These include electric toothbrushes as vibrators and toilet paper rolls with other materials to make a masturbation sleeves. These guides to creating sex toys and how to use them which is a good as this allows for trial and error in a safe space.

The second website that I chose to analyse was the NHS', as this presents the governmental discourses on sexual practices, sex toys and masturbation. This provided a different account of young people and masturbation with sex toys compared to Scarleteen. The initial reaction to NHS' advice on masturbation was that all the answers were very short and vague. They used a set of questions such as "what is ejaculation? Can you masturbate too much?" (NHS, 2018, np). The given answers that are medically based, meaning it does not account for any feeling of pleasure and emotion which is the purpose and motivation for masturbating. The NHS advice is very similar to that can be seen in sex education as it is biologically focused (Hirst, 2014) and lacks any mention of sex toys or any guides. This would be helpful for young people, whilst trying to find pleasure from their bodies. Rather than just abandoning them because it does not form part of government discourse. The NHS' writings were based upon the medical discourses, now as important as this is making young people aware of the risks of sexual practices. Although this does not mean that young people should be put off from these activities because of the risks, such as STIs. As I

have mentioned previously that young people need to be aware of so much more than just the risks which is not adequate for young people to engage with and learn from.

The final website that I analysed was Lovehoney, they have produced an e-book about how to have better sex whilst at university. With university students being the intended audience for the e-book, it has an older audience than Scarleteen, being over eighteen, so they can freely buy sex toys and may have had some sexual experience. The e-book covers a range of topics to do with sex such as non-penetrative and penetrative sex and sex toys, so this can benefit readers who may or may not have had any sexual experience. Within the chapter 'Sex Toys 101', they go through the different sex toys and their usages and a guide to the sizes of sex toys and suitable materials of sex toys. This is all helpful towards young people making a decision especially if they are contemplating buying a sex toy. Especially as from the observation that when young people enter a sex shop it can be intimidating. With the assumed sexual experience and confidence in finding a toy that can fulfil their sexual needs. Nevertheless, as Lovehoney is a sex toy manufacturer and seller there are undertones of sales. For example, wherever there are mentions of any sex toys then there was a hyperlink to a product that Lovehoney sells. This gives a sense that the advice and guides are helpful for young people but the reason behind this is merely for profit not to educate young people like Scarleteen. As mentioned in the literature review, there is an assumption that young people pursue penetrative sex (Arafat and Cotton, 1974). With a chapter focusing on non-penetrative sex which includes masturbation, the e-book then goes on to give guides and advice on all sorts of non-penetrative activities,

> Think of masturbation as a learning experience as well as instant gratification. A firm grip and vigorous pumping might mean an orgasm is a dead cert, but explore a range of techniques and you'll become an expert equipped with numerous self-pleasure methods. (Lee et al, 2018, p19).

This reinforces the idea that regardless if you are experienced or not. that masturbation is all about trial and error when finding pleasure. There is no right or wrong way to do it. Even if it does not always get you off then at least you've learned something about what you like or don't like and still sexually enjoyable.

In answer to this question, Scarleteen and Lovehoney's e-book were both a positive influence on the discussion around young people, masturbation and sex toys. These actively engaged in a supportive, inclusive and accessible way for young people to educate themselves on sexual practices whether they had

some sexual experience or not. The NHS' website was medicalised and overly vague, due to following the same government and biological discourses, as the sex education as I have mentioned previously.

Conclusion

The key finding of this study is that sex toys are not part of the learning vocabulary and that the language of them is that they are an aid or addition to sex. Sex toys are not about learning how to orgasm and achieve pleasure. These should be placed alongside the accessible avenues of learning about sexual practices, rather than only being for the sexually experienced and confident woman or if recommended for a young person, not to be seen as a last resort because they cannot get off sexually in any other way.

From the observation that I completed, going into sex shops is essentially trial and error for those who are inexperienced and you have to learn what works for the individual. The websites like Scarleteen more than the other two websites did provide helpful and supportive information for young people about sexual practices and also how to perform safe sex without being overly medicalised. This information is lacking in the sex shops, with the assumed experience of a consumer in that environment, even though lubes and condoms are available there was not any sort of information in any of the sex shops about how to use and have safe sex. From this it is quite clear that sex shops are not working to be or functioning as pedagogical spaces and their erasure from the learning journeys of young people reinforces normative heterosexuality. Sex shops currently are functioning on a level of presumed proficiency, knowledge, body confidence and body awareness rather than as spaces to learn pleasure.

Within British culture there is a lacking of willingness to recognise and accept that young people are sexual beings on some levels as they go through puberty and should have the knowledge available for them to learn about themselves and how to give themselves and others sexual pleasure and perform sexual activities if they wish to do so. Instead of leaving them to discover this information through sources, for example, pornography and a lacking sex education system a resolution to this may be to give them the resources to slowly learn about how to conquer sexual pleasure. Instead of, once they turn eighteen, leaving them to it, to explore and discover the information through any means and allowing for them to rush into trying to learn sexual activities blindly. This can be seen as under eighteens are not even allowed into sex shops, let alone able to buy any sex toys legally. You can only experience the use of sex toys well after many young people have started to explore their sexuality, meaning they are not allowed to explore how sex toys could play a part within this. The exclusion of under eighteens creates a mysteriousness

around sex shops and when finally allowed into sex shops they have and lack the experience in what would help them further their sexual experiences and practices.

Without the additional information that can come from the websites, like Scarleteen, some young people may not have any real insight about learning sex and pleasure from an educational source. Without this when they enter a sex shop, they are not being helped by the sex shop staff. With there being that assumption that you already know what you need and what will turn you on. Otherwise, it is on some levels the 'blind leading the blind' when it comes to sex shops and those who are inexperienced. As those working in the sex shop industry are not trained professionals or teachers in sexual practices. For example, lube, in my observation, not one of the staff recommended the use of lube when I asked in the unstructured interviews as to what would be a good sex toy for beginners and this could be key information to someone who want to explore the use of sex toys on themselves. In sociological terms this research demonstrates how young heterosexual people are being erased from the sex industry. By the reproducing of patterns with the continued assumed sexual knowledge and confidence, through the means of the marketing of sex toys. Therefore, through this continued pattern this disregards and erases young people from the pursuit of pleasure. This creates a vacuum of which young heterosexuals are left lacking from experiencing sexual practices using sexual technologies, like, sex toys.

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Transitions of Intoxication Amongst British University Students: An analysis of the life course and lifecycle from a leisure perspective.

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Abstract

Intoxication as a leisure activity has been vigorously studied in the social sciences. Yet it is viewed as a stand-alone subject, not often compared to life-perspectives. Therefore, this study investigates intoxication in relation to life transitions. More specifically, this study uses both lifecycle and life course theories to evaluate their applicability to intoxication. As intoxication is restricted by law, this study finds that legal implications affect intoxication in regards to the use of space and consumption, yet the leisure activity itself remains beyond the legal age. The method uses a mixture of open and closed-ended questions in an online survey; completed by UK university students. The main findings suggest that intoxication can be applied to lifecycle and life course perspectives. In addition, the study provides insight into the complexity of leisure through the transitions that occur with age, social roles and context. Furthermore, the research suggests that higher education can be a respectable phase in the life course. As the attendance of higher education provides a new sense of independence and responsibility, connoting to a specific cohort relevant to the student role. Additionally, to further this argument, the study finds that transitions of intoxication do occur within higher education, thus highlighting the role of leisure in the life course and life cycle.

Introduction

Research into young people has been a ubiquitous theme in the social sciences. However, said studies have often associated young people with problematic characteristics like irrationality, immaturity and ignorance. Subsequent to this discourse, perceptions of young people have resulted in a separation from wider 'adult' society. Thus, individuals aged 18-25 experience a stage of uncertainty where they are not taken as seriously as 'adults' as a result of their age and social role. Furthermore, the separation from adults is evident with student cohorts, who obtain a societal label that distinguishes them as a separate group. Although students often experience the same problems, rent, bills, work, etc., they are not viewed as successful 'adults', unlike non-students of a similar age who may. Therefore, tensions develop regarding the social role of a student, as the government perceives them as 'adult' yet societal perceptions do not. These problems have been amplified with contemporary society, due to the fragmentation of social roles in western culture. Preindustrial societies suggested a concrete understanding of age-related transitions, such as education until 16-18 and beginning full-time work and marriage between 18-25. Whereas today, there are no guaranteed transitions that will occur in a person's life.

Consequently, the high interest in young people within sociology has been thoroughly applied in the study of leisure, especially intoxication. Research on intoxication conducted by social sciences has often focused on the 'danger' of the activity. Research frequently provides solutions to lessening intoxication amongst young people. Although drinking is generally an acceptable form of leisure in 'adult' society, it is labelled as a problem amongst young people and students, regardless of them being of legal age to participate. Thus, this study is not focusing on the danger of drinking, as it is an enjoyable leisure that surrounds many positive aspects to a person's life. This study is attempting to instead understand transitions in relation to intoxication, and how a straight-forward activity is complex in regards to changes, motives and applicability to sociological explanations.

Overall, the aim for this research is to analyse the role of intoxication in terms of the life course and lifecycle. Whether noticeable transitions in the leisure can correlate to characteristics within theoretical understandings of transition is examined. This study will focus on students in the UK, to apply the research question to a contemporary, representable cohort in

society. Furthermore, higher education is evaluated to find whether it can be considered a respectable stage or phase in the life course, through analysing the transitions of intoxication that derive from attending university. The application of the life course and lifecycle will help explain the complexity of age and intoxication; the use of space, peers, age and intoxicant are all considered while exploring the complexity behind intoxication and leisure as a whole.

The methodology used for this study is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions in an online survey. The surveys were answered by 100 students who attended university in the UK. The questions within the survey were based on the theory analysed in the literature; themes of adulthood, intoxication at different ages and intoxication in students. In addition, the theme of the lifecycle and life course debate is used throughout the research, taking characteristics from each perspective and applying them to intoxication. The remainder of the study will be organised through a review of literature surrounding themes of age, intoxication and higher education. This will be followed by an analysis of each theme with reference to the empirical data collected.

The theme of intoxication has always interested me, yet the theme of adulthood had only recently taken my interest. Conversations between myself and peers have often surrounded being a 'real adult' and participating in something that is 'very adult' or considered oneself 'not quite adult yet'. Yet, as this thesis explores, there is no fixed definition behind this discourse.

Literature Review

Sociological Perceptions of Age, Young People and Adult

Defining young people aged 19-25 has proved difficult for theorists due to the ever-increasing fragmentation of transitional experiences in contemporary society. The ongoing lifecycle versus life course debate attempts to categorise individuals through similar characteristics, age or biological development.

Primarily, the lifecycle approach uses scientific knowledge to pin key experiences to age-related stages in the developmental process (Furlong,2013:6). Lifecycle theorist Erikson (1963 in Hunt,2005) developed an eight-stage model of the lifecycle based on biological facts surrounding age and development. Erikson concluded that each stage practiced specific social and cultural experiences; additionally, each stage experiences a certain 'crisis' specific to the developmental stage (Hunt,2005:17). Moreover, government implications can maintain the lifecycle, the legal age for purchasing alcohol being 18, for example (Hunt,2005:35). Though, it may not be as straightforward as perceived, UK policy groups 'youth' between the age 13-19, so those age 18-19 are not considered 'adult' according to policy (GOV.UK,2010). On the other hand, the British Youth Council labels youth as those aged 25 and under (British Youth Council, 2019). This highlights that individuals aged 18-25 experience a problematic understanding of where they fit within society from a lifecycle perspective.

In contrast, the life course approach emphasises individualism and argues that there are no set stages, regarding age (Elchardus and Smits, 2006:304). The life course argues that higher education becoming a mass experience for young people has changed what it means to be a 'young person', due to the new transitions of responsibility and independence (Hunt,2005:119). However, the extent of dependence from primary institutions is varied within higher education. For example, some individuals may have moved away from home, whereas some may have not, as moving away from home is perceived as an important transition in both the life course and lifecycle. Subsequently, Furlong (2013) suggests that higher education is an example of semi-dependence because most individuals often rely on family for various reasons. Therefore, university attendance has resulted in the 'studentification' of transitions, as there are no guaranteed characteristics. Arguably, higher education has become a key component for developing an individual identity, replacing pre-

industrial transitions like work which were previously perceived as key identity institutions (Hunt,2005:119). Crosnoe, Kendig and Benner (2017) highlight changes that occur during the transition to higher education; the eradication of parental control has enabled the opportunity for one to be individualised from primary resources.

A life course theory, the 'cohort effect' conceptualised by Gielle and Elder (1998 cited in Hunt, 2005) explains how people with common characteristics share linked social lives dependent on the context they were born. Furthermore, these cohorts are socially and culturally patterned in ways specific to the time period they live; life experiences are independent to the history they are born into and changes per generation (Hunt, 2005:22). Therefore, those of the same age cohort are influenced by the same economic and cultural trends and share similar attitudes. Thus, the life course stresses the importance of context when understanding young people, each life experience varies depending on the context the individual is situated. Additionally, the life course is acknowledging the influence of both internal and external environments. Another example by Kelly and Kelly (1994), used a life course framework to theorise that individuals choose and change their own self-definition through leisure whilst obtaining social roles and responsibilities, within a changing context.

An example of a lifecycle concept, emerging adulthood by Arnett (2000) is a clear stage in the lifecycle described as a period of instability and exploration representative of individuals in this age group (Arnett,2000:469). Individuals within the emerging adulthood phase have more independence than adolescence, however, they do not have the same level of independence as an 'adult' (Arnett,2000:470). Modes of independence come through economic means; the extent of financial independence is essential criteria for the emerging adulthood category. Through research, Arnett (2004) found five distinguishing features that define the phase of emerging adulthood; identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling 'in-between' and optimism. Those within emerging adulthood explore their identity through love and work; whilst the freedom from primary institutions enables the development of self and prospects (Arnett,2004:10). Instability is a reoccurring theme in sociology, as Bauman (in Swain 2017) emphasise the significant increase of instability in liquid modernity. Also, Arnett's (2004) feature of 'feeling in between' suggests how those within emerging adulthood experience issues regarding where to categorise themselves in society, as they are not treated like 'youth' nor 'adults'.

Whereas Bynner (2005), a prime critic of the emerging adulthood theory, appreciates the likeliness that those in their early twenties will have increased commitments; however, these young people do not perceive themselves as 'adult' nonetheless. This suggests the issues surrounding the cultural understanding of age. Accordingly, Côté and Bynner (2008) conducted secondary research from government data in the UK and Canada, they found that transitions to 'adulthood' have extended with late modernity due to the fragmentation of society. Compared to pre-industrial society where categorising individuals into age-related groups was simpler, young people in contemporary society have an increased ability to separate from primary identity traits and responsibilities. Furthermore, Bynner (2001) researches young British people and transitions, he denies the lifecycle and criticises this method of categorisation. Emphasising the importance of context, he describes that young people's experiences are shaped by the context in which transitions take place. Furthermore, Bynner argues for distinctive features of transitions, rather than the lifecycle. He highlights the importance of flexibility in transitions, where roles considered 'adult' or 'youth' combine and overlap, thus developing a diverse experience for young people to endure.

The Leisure of Intoxication

Intoxication in leisure is a phenomenon thoroughly studied in social science, although it was more prevalent in the 20th century. From an examination of national statistics, drinking frequency over all age groups has gradually declined from 2005-2017, especially in the 16-24 age category (60%-48%). Although, there is no evaluation of the leisure itself, therefore this study will find patterns and deviations in intoxication to contribute to understanding the leisure (ONS, 2018).

Leisure is a key aspect in forming identity and contributes to life-projects; in leisure, the primary role for the individual is who am I? (Best,2010:14). It could be argued that increasing legal restrictions to the consumption of alcohol could be culpable for the decline. Yet, Furlong (2013) argues that legality has little impact on young people's decisions regarding alcohol consumption. Although, the literature suggests that age is a socially imposed leisure constraint, from both a life course and lifecycle perspective (Best, 2010:9).

Additionally, the sociology of leisure connotes the impact of societal conditions in leisure choice. Swain (2017) applied Gramsci's concept of

the interregnum to leisure; he argues the eradication of modernity developed a new-found age of uncertainty. Accordingly, this has affected leisure, through the societal changes with globalisation, individualism and consumerism. From a postmodern perspective, leisure is perceived as a key role in ones ability to cope with uncertainties in contemporary society (Best, 2010:15). Swain (2017) uses Bauman and Fromm's theory 'negative freedom' that suggests the growth of freedom in the western world has resulted in elevated level of uncertainty. Therefore, young people may choose to drink less due to increasing prices of alcohol and general living costs, a young student must focus on their future to increase the likeliness of career opportunities (Furlong, 2013:159). Correspondingly, France (2007) recalls Giddens (1991) to suggest that today's young people are more responsible for their own 'biographical project' where they must strategically plan their future direction and seek patterns beneficial to their future.

Furthermore, lifecycle and life course theorists also consider leisure; lifecycle theorist Rapoport (1975 cited in Hunt,2005) distinguishes stages of the lifecycle that affect leisure choices, he argues that reasons behind leisure choice change with age (Hunt, 2005:162). On the other hand, Roberts (1978 cited in Hunt, 2005) uses a life course approach, he explains that leisure choice is determined by the individual, who engages in the activity when it's perceived as meaningful to themselves. Thus, leisure is chosen parallel to the symbolic, personal nature of the individual. Also, Crosnoe, Kendig and Benner (2017) used a life course framework to understand drinking amongst university students. They discuss higher education as a transitional experience in the life course; as a developmental period with new societal norms, opportunities and constraints. They believe drinking levels peak in the early twenties since the association of this age to students. Moreover, students may participate in drinking as an acceptable social behaviour that is symbolic to the 'culture'. Therefore, as cultural influences lay heavy to behaviours, it seems important to find the impact of university attendance in affecting a change in leisure.

Furthermore, drinking alcohol is a leisure activity commonly associated with young students. Webb et al (1996) were interested in finding the relationship between alcohol use and higher education through questionnaires on 3075 UK medical students. Every participant was in their second year of university, as second-years are perceived as a homogenous group. Additionally, Benwick et al (2008) found that drinking amount peaked in first year and decreased in final year. To add, Webb et al (1996) acknowledge that university life is a high-stress environment,

regardless of the course and university one studies. Yet, the overt reason for intoxication they found was pleasure. Likewise, Foster (2014) finds that drinking motives closely linked to university students are for social, coping, enhancement and conformity. While Blackman (2011) theorises that young students of all classes have increased economic income that is directed to recreational activities, due to the lack of other financial responsibilities. Moreover, Crosnoe, Kendig and Benner (2017) argue that higher education is a social context that encourages a drinking culture that can often continue in certain fields of work after graduation.

Additionally, the use of space is also prevalent in young people's drinking behaviours. Wilkinson (2018) theorises that young people are active in their leisure choices and create their own 'drinkscapes'. One focal location for the drinkscapes is public parks where young people create their own personal atmospheres. Similarly, Measham's (2004) book *Play Space* suggests the significance of licensed locations with youth drinking, whilst evaluating the changes that occur in licensed locations in correlation to the transitional changes between individuals at aged 18-20. In addition to this, Mackintosh et al (1997) emphasise the need for separation from an environment that controls alcohol consumption, like the family home. Wilkinson (2018) further suggests that transitions to adulthood amongst young people occur with relationships and the exploration of intoxication through these spaces. Additionally, these drinking events are spaces where identities can be constructed and regulated. Also, Sester et al (2012) found that public spaces were important for socialisation outside of the family home, young people interact in 'neutral' spaces to achieve individual and social development. Likewise, Mackintosh et al (1997) suggest that the transition to the public domain with intoxication is part of the progress to independent development. As well, Townshend (2013) found that drinking can start from around aged 13, and those 15-16 may become regular drinkers. He also found that from age 16 young people transition to drinking in public spaces with friends, rather than at family events prior.

Furthermore, both Pratten (2003) and Measham (2004) highlight the changes that have occurred in licensed leisure locations, such as high market pubs. They argue that developments in beverage variety have been necessary for maintaining youth interest due to the fragmentation of taste, identity and space in leisure. Correspondingly, Bisogni et al (2007 in Sester et al,2012) theorised eight context variables that affect food and drink choice; said variables contribute to the 'moment of consumption' that entices the consumer to enjoy the drink. Sester et al (2012) used an immersive approach to evaluate the importance of context with drink

choice. Their findings suggest young people use drinking events as a method to relax, and those aged 18 had more desire to visit pubs and clubs. They concluded that drinking for young people was focused on the collective, social aspect that surrounds it. To correlate, national statistics found a significant decline in drinking alone at ages 16-24, with 61% in 2014 and 44% in 2017 (ONS,2018). Furthermore, Townshend (2013) created a longitudinal quantitative study to research young people in different social spaces, to evaluate the effect of geography and alcohol consumption. He acknowledges that alcohol use amongst young people is declining but focuses on the normalised 'binge drinking' that is associated with young people. Similarly, national statistics found that those aged 16-24 have the lowest frequency of drinking, yet their consumption of alcohol in one period is higher than other ages (ONS,2018).

Moreover, Measham (2004) suggests that young people have the desire for a 'controlled loss of control', the aim of a structured yet enjoyable state of intoxication. However, Mackintosh et al (1997) found that those aged 15 endeavour a complete loss of control, which may be due to the new experience of independence and intoxication. Therefore, Measham's controlled loss of control may develop at an older age than 15, where more personal and social responsibilities progress. Although Foster (2014) found that self-control is affected by one's drinking identity, some young people adapt intoxication into their central self, therefore they are more open to a lack of control. However, the impact of drinking identity may be prohibited with new role identities that attribute to transitions within the life course (Best,2010:13). As a result of the current interregnum one is encouraged to be independent in their decision making, therefore one may feel inclined to control their intoxication with growing responsibilities (Swain,2017:812). As Mackintosh et al (1997) find, around aged 15 drink choice is entirely down to high alcohol content and low prices, at this age individuals are drinking to get drunk. Similarly, Furlong (2013) suggests that if an individual can drink alcohol to the extent of intoxication without experiencing negative consequences, they have shifted from adolescence to young adulthood, defined as 'handling their drink'. Therefore, the literature connotes a direct link between controlled intoxication and adulthood. Also, Measham (2004) suggests individuals who are involved within this culture of intoxication will be more likely to try drugs and tobacco, and pursue spaces which allow this behaviour. Additionally, Sester et al (2012) found that those who drank were more likely to smoke tobacco, although the relationship was not universal.

The prevalence of binge drinking amongst the UK has been studied vigorously, Van Wersch and Walker (2009) were interested in studying the binge drinking culture prominent in the UK (binge drinking described as drinking to get drunk). They found that British culture was associated with binge drinking, the reasons behind this were the convenience of the leisure activity. Additionally, Van Wersch and Walker (2009) found binge drinking attained social value due to its cultural associations, it has become an easy mode of socialisation. They also addressed pub culture in the UK and explain that visiting the pub is a cultural norm. Van Wersch and Walker (2009) found that the dominant reason an individual will avoid binge drinking is due to next day responsibilities, like having work the next day. They also consider the influence of negative effects like hangovers, these effects develop with age; Mackintosh et al (1997) describe that in the early stages of binge drinking young people enjoy the hangovers, for it is proof of the night before. Similarly, Kuntsche et al (2005) used a computer-assisted literature research to find motives for binge drinking. They argue that motives change accordingly with situational factors, like location, day, group, relationships and norms. They found four categories of different motives, to enhance mood, for social rewards, to attenuate negative emotions and avoid social rejection.

To summarise, suggested throughout the literature, there are issues raised about the classification of young people. Theories of the life course, lifecycle and emerging adulthood alongside the governmental definition of youth highlight how young people do not know where to situate themselves within society. Consequently, the understanding of higher education as a phase in the life course will determine whether higher education contributes to transitions. Yet, a key question raised is whether it is the attendance of higher education that causes transitions, or the characteristics included with aging (e.g. moving away from home or being of legal age). Furthermore, this study will aim to find what contributes to changes in an intoxicating leisure, whether it be a period of uncertainty, decreased economy or a cultural transition linked with becoming a student.

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Methodology

This study aims to evaluate intoxication in both a life course and lifecycle context, to see whether the transitions in the leisure can be applicable to phases/stages in these perspectives. Moreover, this study will analyse the complexity behind intoxicating leisure, and whether transitions in a person's life may influence intoxication. As a respectable example, higher education has been used to put the aims of this study into a relevant, contemporary, potential phase of the life course.

Social research often aims to analyse current theory with empirical data, to find meanings, understandings and relationships between social phenomena (Payne and Payne,2004). Hence, the literature is referenced throughout the research. Including, the literature's various characteristics that convey an 'adult', evident in question 1 *Appendix I*. Furthermore, inspired by Furlong's (2013) emphasis on 'handling their drink' and Measham (2004) 'controlled loss of control', the questions were devised to evaluate whether these statements are applicable. Also, literature surrounding alcohol in different spaces (Wilkinson,2018, Sester et al,2012) were used through question 2-4 to formulate data on the use of space in alcohol consumption. The survey focused on testing theories reviewed in the literature and is used both directly and indirectly throughout the survey. Also, Q6 and Q7 focused on drinking habits in students, to find how attending university can effect intoxication to establish the validity of the life course.

Additionally, as various literature examined alcohol use aged 15-17 (Wilkinson,2018, Furlong,2013, Kuntsche et al, 2005, Mackintosh et al,1997, Townshend,2013), the survey used comparative questions surrounding age, Q2, Q3, Q4 *Appendix I*. Throughout the literature, a variety of methods were evaluated, longitudinal methods with a large quantity of participants were frequently used. Consequently, it became evident that a large quantity of participants was needed to establish accurate findings. However, a longitudinal method was not viable for this study, therefore the questions used aged time-frames to evaluate age periods. In addition, most literature was interested in finding whether higher education plays a role in the journey to 'adulthood' (Furlong,2013, Bynner, 2001, Crosnoe, Kendig and Benner, 2017). Therefore, the survey used student-based answers throughout, to associate the research to

university, as a relevant example applicable to a large proportion of the population.

An online survey was used for collecting data, created on Survey Monkey to establish easy accessibility and anonymity. Prior to the survey going live, the intended sample for this methodology was snowball sampling; where I obtained 5 people who fit the criteria and used them to establish contact with those of a similar cohort (Bryman,2016:188). Although this was a success at first (reaching 20 respondents), there were no more individuals participating. Consequently, I used my own social network accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat) to publicise the study, the posts consisted of the criteria and the link for the survey. However, this technique only attracted an additional 16 respondents and seemed to not improve. It was clear that without personal interest or incentive in the survey, the response rate will continue to be low (May,2011:103). Thus, I used a university tool that allowed me to email the level 6 undergraduate group, these students are similarly undergoing their own studies hence their co-operativity. The response from the email led to a final 100 respondents overall.

As a result, the study used a non-probability convenience sample due to restricted time and resources (Bryman, 2016:191). Initially, the study aimed to represent groups from different geographical locations, yet only 8 out of the 85 respondents who revealed their university location were outside of London. Furthermore, this sampling technique conveyed unknown representativeness from the respondents (Hewson and Laurent,2008 in Bryman,2016:192). As a prerequisite, it is not possible to obtain a representative amount of different social factors, like gender, ethnicity etc. Hence the lack of questions regarding these aspects, as it was unlikely the sample would create a representative amount for each characteristic, thus the criteria for the survey had to be kept minimal (May,2011:104). Moreover, the literature suggests no overt change when analysing traits like gender and social class (Sester et al, 2012, Benwick et al, 2008, Mackintosh et al, 1996), therefore the overall concern was higher education, age and geography.

The overall objective of the research aimed to find patterns in alcohol consumption that change with age. As surveys are often regarded as a method to test theoretical understandings, a mixture of open and closed-ended questions used in the survey (Payne and Payne,2004:219). Through using a free website to create the survey, the questions were limited to 10. However, the use of the website enabled organised answers with access to individual responses, whilst maintaining utmost anonymity. The purpose of using quantitative data was to find patterns of behaviour that

resonate similarities upon a cohort, outside of the individual's life (Payne and Payne,2004:182). Yet, the intention of the survey was not for positivistic data, there was a higher desire for testing the theory and casual relationships in alcohol patterns (May,2011:96). However, some themes required qualitative data, as numeric data does not obtain the complexity of meanings needed for the vastly interpretable themes (Payne and Payne,2004:22); hence the use of open-ended questions for *'how would you describe an adult?'*, *'what was your favoured drink choice?'* and *'would you say you can handle your drink better than when you were 17?'*.

Similar to other contemporary methodology, the survey aimed to obtain variables defined by characteristics, the change in behaviours dependent on the context and the respondent's perspective on the subject of 'adult' (Aldridge and Levine,2001:5). May (2011) notes various considerations required devising survey questions, like avoiding bias, simplicity and avoiding the presumption of patterns. With these factors acknowledged, most of the questions in the survey used multiple response answers, which eradicated any personal bias from the survey. Furthermore, the titles of each question led the participants to answer on their own interpretation. Also, when conducting primary research one must 'take on the role of the other' (Mead cited in Aldridge and Levine,2001:3) to create successful data. Subsequently, in the creation of the survey considerations were taken to ensure the respondents would understand and enjoy the survey. Due to the theme of alcohol leisure in the survey, it seemed as though the participants enjoyed answering the questions, this conveyed how the theme of leisure and alcohol with nostalgic tendencies ensured more genuine answers from the participants.

Practically, the most prevalent consideration was the appropriate operationalisation needed for simplistic interpretation with the respondents. Once the questions were devised, a pilot survey was conducted by a personal tutor who gave feedback on the survey (Payne and Payne,2004:220). Afterward, with the corrections a second pilot was conducted with a participant who did not have any prior knowledge of the study, to ensure the survey was easily interpretable (May,2011:110). With feedback from this participant any corrections were made before the survey went live.

Ethics

Diener and Crandall (1978 in Bryman,2016) devised four main areas to be considered regarding ethics; harm, informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. This was considered whilst devising the survey, the finalised survey attended to these guidelines. Evidently, the survey did not intend to cause any harm to respondents, the questions devised were not too intrusive thus the participant's privacy was respected (Bryman,2016:133). To ensure credible ethics the necessary information was provided within the survey, informing respondents that by completing the survey they are consenting to their information being used. There was no deception used as the survey was transparent in the use of data. In addition, when requesting response through social media or email individuals were informed of the complete anonymity with their participation. All media stated that the potential participants could contact me for any further details with full access to the study once complete.

Findings

The findings will be presented with frequency tables per question.

Question 1:

Please tick the statements that apply to you

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
one[a]	I have permanently moved away from my family home	32	6.7%	32.0%
	I have temporarily moved away from home whilst studying	48	10.0%	48.0%
	I have not moved out of my family home	18	3.8%	18.0%
	I work/worked full time whilst studying	13	2.7%	13.0%
	I work/worked part-time whilst studying	68	14.2%	68.0%
	I have not worked whilst studying	8	1.7%	8.0%
	I work/worked during out of term times	50	10.4%	50.0%
	I am responsible for paying rent	45	9.4%	45.0%
	I am responsible for paying bills	46	9.6%	46.0%
	I am responsible for paying for my general living	67	14.0%	67.0%
	I rely on student loans/scholarships/bursaries to fund my living	37	7.7%	37.0%

	I rely on family/guardians to fund my living	22	4.6%	22.0%
	I rely on both student loans and family/guardians to fund my living	23	4.8%	23.0%
	I did not complete my course at University (dropped out)	3	0.6%	3.0%
Total		480	100.0%	480.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 1- Multiple response question.

Question 2: Multiple response

At age 15-17, how did you get intoxicated? Please tick the top 3 statements that apply to you.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
two[a]	Generally, I got intoxicated in unlicensed public spaces	35	11.7%	35.0%
	Generally, I got intoxicated in mine or my friends/families home	67	22.4%	67.0%
	Generally, I got intoxicated in licensed spaces	23	7.7%	23.0%
	I used to just drink alcohol	32	10.7%	32.0%
	I used to drink alcohol and smoke tobacco	23	7.7%	23.0%
	I used to drink alcohol, smoke tobacco and other substances	26	8.7%	26.0%

	Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with friends	77	25.8%	77.0%
	Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with family	9	3.0%	9.0%
	Overall, when I got intoxicated I was by myself	1	0.3%	1.0%
	I did not get intoxicated at these ages	6	2.0%	6.0%
Total		299	100.0%	299.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 3: Multiple Response

At age 18, how did you get intoxicated? Please tick the top 3 statements that apply to you.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
qthree[a]	Generally, I got intoxicated in unlicensed public spaces	4	1.2%	4.0%
	Generally, I got intoxicated in mine or my friends/families home	55	17.1%	55.0%
	Generally, I got intoxicated in licensed spaces	86	26.7%	86.0%
	I used to just drink alcohol	28	8.7%	28.0%
	I used to drink alcohol and smoke tobacco	22	6.8%	22.0%
	I used to drink alcohol, smoke tobacco and other substances	27	8.4%	27.0%

	Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with friends	77	23.9%	77.0%
	Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with family	17	5.3%	17.0%
	Overall, when I got intoxicated I was by myself	6	1.9%	6.0%
Total		322	100.0%	322.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 4: Multiple response

At ages 20/21, how did you get intoxicated? Please tick the top 3 statements that apply to you.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
qfour[a]	Generally, I got intoxicated in unlicensed public spaces	6	1.9%	6.0%
	Generally, I got intoxicated in mine or my friends/families home	50	15.8%	50.0%
	Generally, I got intoxicated in licensed spaces	80	25.3%	80.0%
	I used to just drink alcohol	25	7.9%	25.0%
	I used to drink alcohol and smoke tobacco	16	5.1%	16.0%
	I used to drink alcohol, smoke tobacco and other substances	29	9.2%	29.0%
	Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with friends	74	23.4%	74.0%

	Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with family	17	5.4%	17.0%
	Overall, when I got intoxicated I was by myself	11	3.5%	11.0%
	Not applicable/ I am not 20/21	8	2.5%	8.0%
Total		316	100.0%	316.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 5:

Do you consider yourself an adult?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
	Yes	83	83.0	83.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Question 6: Multiple response

To what extent did attending University impact your drinking habits? Please tick the statements that apply to you the most.

		Responses N	Responses Percent	Percent of Cases
qseven[a]	Whilst I was/am a student I drank a lot more than before	39	14.1%	39.0%
	Whilst I was/am a student I went out to clubs the most	23	8.3%	23.0%
	Whilst I was/am a student I went out to pubs the most	40	14.4%	40.0%

	Whilst I was/am a student I have a lot more access to venues	27	9.7%	27.0%
	Whilst I was/am a student I drank at mine or my friends home the most	30	10.8%	30.0%
	Whilst I was/am a student I would only drink on weekends	13	4.7%	13.0%
	Whilst I was/am a student I look forward to drinking more than before	38	13.7%	38.0%
	Whilst I was/am a student drinking has been used as a stress reliever	37	13.4%	37.0%
	Whilst I was/am a student I go out less than before	30	10.8%	30.0%
Total		277	100.0%	277.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 7: Multiple response

What statements are most relevant to you? Please tick

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
qeight[a]	When I have upcoming University deadlines I do not drink	49	14.2%	49.0%
	When I have work the next day I do not drink	52	15.0%	52.0%
	I feel like I am more independent now, therefore I consider the financial consequences of my drinking	57	16.5%	57.0%
	When my friends aren't drinking I also do not drink	29	8.4%	29.0%

	I drank more during my first year of University than my second and third year	46	13.3%	46.0%
	I do not go out to certain venues because the majority of people there are younger than me	41	11.8%	41.0%
	I do not go out to certain venues because the majority of people there are older than me	6	1.7%	6.0%
	I think more about my future than I did aged 18	66	19.1%	66.0%
Total		346	100.0%	346.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 8

Did the legal drinking age of 18 influence your drinking habits? Please tick the statement that applies the most to you.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I used to drink regardless of the legal age	44	44.0	44.0	44.0
	The legal age only affected me a few times, but I still drank	26	26.0	26.0	70.0
	I drank a few times before I was 18, but overall restrictions on purchasing alcohol and no service in pubs prevented me	26	26.0	26.0	96.0
	I did not drink before I was the legal age	4	4.0	4.0	100.0

	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Question 9:

To what extent do you think that being able to 'handle your drink' is part of being adult?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Disagree	11	11.0	11.0	20.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	25	25.0	25.0	45.0
	Agree	31	31.0	31.0	76.0
	Strongly agree	24	24.0	24.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Discussion

This discussion will evaluate three main themes; adulthood, patterns of intoxication and higher education. To begin, perceptions of adulthood will be analysed whilst considering adult characteristics established in the literature.

What is an Adult?

After identifying the problematic discourse of 'adult' in the literature, it seemed imperative to clarify this through a first-hand perspective from the respondents. Inspired by the lifecycle and life course debate, Q1 in the survey asked for information surrounding common characteristics of an adult, like moving from home, paying rent and work *(Q1).* To analyse this, respondents were asked '*Do you consider yourself an adult?*' which enabled a correlation to be made between those who did not consider themselves adult with their living characteristics. Interestingly, a small 17% of respondents did not consider themselves adult, contradictory to Bynner (2001) who believed the majority of young people did not. Nonetheless, there were no obvious defining features that argued for the lifecycle; the non-adults consisted of a mixture in living arrangement, working and independent financials. However, there is a slight correlation between the age the respondents started university and considering themselves adult. A total 11/17 of the non-adults started university at 18 (64.7%), 3/17 started at 19 (17.6%). Yet, there were also respondents aged 21, 22 and 26 who do not regard themselves as an adult, therefore the term cannot be completely distinguishable by age. Also, it must be considered that those aged 18 were the majority of the sample, making 46% of the respondent's *Appendix VI,* thus the significance of the relationship may not be representative.

Moreover, the results suggest that temporarily moving from home may influence one's perception of adulthood due to the existing ties to the family home, where 70% of the non-adults had temporarily moved from home. The temporary experience for students can be an example of Furlong's (2013) semi-dependence, where autonomy is not accomplished as the underlying reliance on primary institutions exists. Additionally, these results could correlate to Arnett's (2004) feature in emerging adulthood of feeling 'in between' that young people experience. However, there is also evidence of perceiving oneself adult and taking

responsibility for paying rent and bills, with a slightly larger percentage of respondents not responsible for paying rent (59%) and bills (53%) ticking 'no' for being adult. Therefore, different experiences in higher education suggest the level of flexibility in transitions for students. As Bynner (2001) argues, youth and adult roles overlap to create an unstable framework for students, the adult role of moving away from home can mix with 'youth' roles like the lack of self-financing oneself.

To find further information regarding adulthood, respondents were asked to describe an adult. There were reoccurring themes throughout the answers, 37% (*n=77)* of respondents linked adulthood to the lifecycle, restricting to a certain age (mostly 18) and to legal ages highlighted by Hunt (2005) *Appendix II*. Whereas 45% of respondents explained the need for responsibilities and being responsible for oneself. The overlapping themes prevalent in the responses suggest a lifecycle relationship between age and the independent responsibility that develops with it (Van Wersch and Walker,2009). Furthermore, Elchardus and Smits (2006) emphasise that contemporary constraints must be evaluated when considering financial independence and adulthood, due to the current economic climate. As student loans give more money to those with a lower income family, those considered within a higher income background are inclined to rely on their family for funding because they do not obtain enough funding from their student loans to independently live (GOV.UK,2018). Consequently, many students have no choice but to use primary institutions for funding, which may prohibit their journey through adulthood.

Furthermore, an interesting respondent (number 21) who did not consider themselves adult describes an adult as;

'[someone with] *certain responsibilities and commitments. Knowing your limits and when not to do certain things; like knowing you've got stuff to do the following morning so not getting intoxicated etc.'*

21 is thought-provoking as they claim to not be an adult, yet their information from Q1 would correspond with their description. This respondent is accountable for paying rent and bills, attends university and have moved from home. These are all considered 'commitments' due to regular dates for payments and deadlines. As Bynner (2005) describes, individuals in their early twenties are likely to experience commitments, but they may not consider themselves adult. This has become evident in the research since each respondent who does not consider themselves adult all have at least one shared commitment, attending higher education. Therefore, higher education may not be perceived as such an

'adult' commitment as other responsibilities like homeowning. Similar to Côté and Bynner (2008), the fragmentation of contemporary society allows young people to separate from certain responsibilities, so they can avoid becoming an adult. Nonetheless, 21 also highlights the need for controlling one's intoxication in correlation to upcoming responsibilities. Interestingly, this respondent does not restrict their drinking with upcoming university deadlines *Q7*. This could portray that 21 does not consider themselves adult because they do not adhere to deadlines, comparingly to an act of irrationality. Moreover, the data shows that 70% (*n=17)* of participants who do not consider themselves adult also do not restrict their drinking with upcoming university deadlines, in comparison to 47% (*n=83)* amongst those who considered themselves adult *Table A*. These results suggest that higher education offers the ability to become more 'adult' if a student commits to their degree in a responsible manner.

Table A

			Do you consider yourself an adult?		
			No	Yes	Total
When I have upcoming University deadlines I do not drink	No	Count	12	39	51
		% within Do you consider yourself an adult?	70.6%	47.0%	51.0%
	Yes	Count	5	44	49
		% within Do you consider yourself an adult?	29.4%	53.0%	49.0%
Total		Count	17	83	100
		% within Do you consider yourself an adult?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Regardless, the responses from 'How would you describe an adult?' created various interesting results *Appendix II*. For example, one respondent describes an adult as '[someone with] *no need to ask permission to do/buy/go anywhere'*. Although this response could be perceived as a lifecycle, age-related response, it could also be argued that their perception of an adult is one breaking away from family ties. In contemporary society, there are legal permissions to 'do/buy/go' anywhere, such as curfews, privately-owned public spaces and time (Measham, 2004). One cannot simply go for a walk in most spaces without

some inadvertent permission to do so. Possibly, this respondent is describing permission granted from parents at a younger age.

Are there noticeable patterns in intoxication specific to certain ages?

Within the survey, questions 2,3 and 4 were focused on how the participant got intoxicated at different ages (15-17,18,20/21) to explore any changes in the leisure activity through who they did it with, intoxicant and the use of space. To begin, as Wilkinson (2018) and Mackintosh et al (1997) find, young people under 18 used public spaces to form their own *drinkscapes*, where they independently create a space to drink with other individuals of a similar age-cohort. The results show a significant relationship with the use of public spaces and age *Table D*.

Table D

	Count
Generally, I got intoxicated in unlicensed public spaces (15-17)	35%
Generally, I got intoxicated in unlicensed public spaces (18)	4%
Generally, I got intoxicated in unlicensed public spaces (20/21)	6%

Table E

	Count
Generally, I got intoxicated in mine or my friends/families home (15-17)	67%
Generally, I got intoxicated in mine or my friends/families home (18)	55%
Generally, I got intoxicated in mine or my friends/families home (20/21)	50%

Table F.

	Count
Generally, I got intoxicated in licensed spaces (15-17)	23%
Generally, I got intoxicated in licensed spaces (18)	86%
Generally, I got intoxicated in licensed spaces (20/21)	80%

With over a third of participants attending unlicensed leisure locations pre-18 one can correlate Townshend (2013) findings; young people begin to make their own collective spaces with those of a similar cohort. Additionally, it also remains evident that drinking in unlicensed spaces like public parks is a space that is almost exclusive to those under 18. This could be due to the new-found legality in licensed locations. Also, intoxication in public parks may also be inadvertently 'owned' by those under 18, as space where they are freer to pursue intoxication out of view of government implications.

Although, an obvious relationship with lifecycle related influence is evident in the decrease of unlicensed locations and the significant increase of licensed locations at aged 18 *Table E.* As a consequence of becoming the legal age to attend licensed locations, 86% of the participants directed their leisure to licensed leisure spaces (defined as pubs and clubs). Yet, with 4% of the participants adhering to legal age *Q8* it is evident that it may not be the consumption that changes, but the spaces young people choose to use. Moreover, as 35% of respondents associating the achievement of adulthood with the legal age, it could be argued that one reason for the increase of licensed locations is part of the transition to adulthood. Thus, once young people become the legal age they attend these locations to explore their new level of adulthood to construct an 'adult' identity (Wilkinson,2018:151).

Although there is evidence of changing patterns with public spaces, there is consistent use of private, family and friend's home at all ages *Table F*. The peak of personal spaces at aged 15-17 is likely due to legal restraints in both licensed and unlicensed spaces. The 'cohort effect' by Gielle and Elder (1998 in Hunt, 2005) is more prevalent in those under 18 because they share the same restrictions in regards to drinking legalities and societies perception of them. Hence, the use of friend's homes could be a consequence of 'sticking together'. However, the value remains substantial at all ages, this conveys that private homes are generally desirable areas for intoxication. As Blackman (2011) notes, young people often choose private areas to drink due to societal stigmas and judgment from society. Thus, it could be possible that private homes are consistent across all ages because drinking at a person's home enables the creation of a collective atmosphere free from the public eye. Although, choosing to drink at home may also correlate to financial issues Furlong (2013) suggests that derive from intoxication. With 55% of participants considering the financial consequences of their drinking, it could be argued that individuals choose to drink at home as an attempt to lessen

the financial and future harm, a prominent concern for young people over the age of 18.

Moreover, participants were also asked whether they generally get intoxicated with friends, family or by themselves at different ages.

Table G

Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with friends (15-17)	77%
Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with friends (18)	77%
Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with friends (20/21)	74%

Table H

	Count
Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with family (15-17)	9%
Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with family (18)	17%
Overall, when I got intoxicated I was with family (20/21)	17%

Table I

	Count
Overall, when I got intoxicated I was by myself (15-17)	1%
Overall, when I got intoxicated I was by myself (18)	6%
Overall, when I got intoxicated I was by myself (20/21)	11%

Overall, drinking with friends remained the highest answer amongst all ages *Table G*. This emphasises the social and collective experience of intoxication highlighted throughout the literature (Townshend,2013, Sester et al, 2012, Wilkinson, 2018) which all suggest the importance of securing friendships and developing a personal and group identity. Established by Townshend (2013) and Mackintosh et al (1997), around aged 13 young people only drink with family at home mostly during family events, then at age 15 choose to drink separate from their family to establish a sense of autonomy from their primary institutions. The results from the survey portray this, as drinking with family is especially low at the youngest age *Table H*. Regarding these results, it can be assumed that Townshend's (2013) statement is accurate; the desire to partake in leisure away from the family is heightened at an age where independence begins to form. Furthermore, the increase at aged 18 could connote that some young people may have achieved individual and social development through drinking prior aged 18, as Sester et al (2012) describes. This would convey the occurrence of a transition regarding social development, there may not be such a need to separate oneself at age 18 because one has gained some individuality. Nevertheless, a different sense of individuality is portrayed in the percentage of those drinking on their own *Table I.* Although the results are all low, an increase by 10% from 15 to 21 connotes the increased individuality that aligns with probable life transitions like university; subsequently decreasing the need for socialising to drink. Using Foster's (2014) motives, perhaps aged 18 and under the motives surround sociability, but with increasing responsibilities and uncertainty the motive is more associable to a coping strategy.

What about the consumable itself?

Additionally Q2, Q3 and Q4 also offered respondents the opportunity to establish whether they consumed alcohol, tobacco or 'other substances' *Table J, K, L.*

Table J

	Count
I used to just drink alcohol (15-17)	32%
I used to just drink alcohol (18)	28%
I used to just drink alcohol (20/21)	25%
	Count

Table K

I used to drink alcohol and smoke tobacco (15-17)	23%
I used to drink alcohol and smoke tobacco (18)	22%
I used to drink alcohol and smoke tobacco (20/21)	16%

Table L

	Count
I used to drink alcohol, smoke tobacco and other substances (15-17)	26%
I used to drink alcohol, smoke tobacco and other substances (18)	27%
I used to drink alcohol, smoke tobacco and other substances (20/21)	29%

Those who ticked 'just alcohol' and 'alcohol, tobacco and other substances' had no significant change across the different ages. However, a crosstabulation of those who ticked substances and those who claimed they went to pubs the most as a student showed a slight increase between using substances and pub attendance. Yet, there was a significant decrease in those who attend clubs the most and use substances. Therefore, Measham (2004) who highlights a correlation between tobacco and substance use with attending pubs and clubs is slightly applicable to pub attendance. Though, Measham (2004) highlights that tobacco and substance consumers will attend spaces that inadvertently 'allow' the individuals to, thus the decrease in substance use and clubs may be restricted by the increase of strict no substance policies at clubs in contemporary society. Nevertheless, there was a slight decrease at age 20/21 with those who consumed alcohol and tobacco *Table K*. As Sester et al (2012) found, there is a relationship between smoking tobacco and alcohol, as a minimum of 45% of participants consuming tobacco (and substances) at each age group highlights the relationship that Sester et al (2012) concluded. Nonetheless, the slight decrease in tobacco use aged

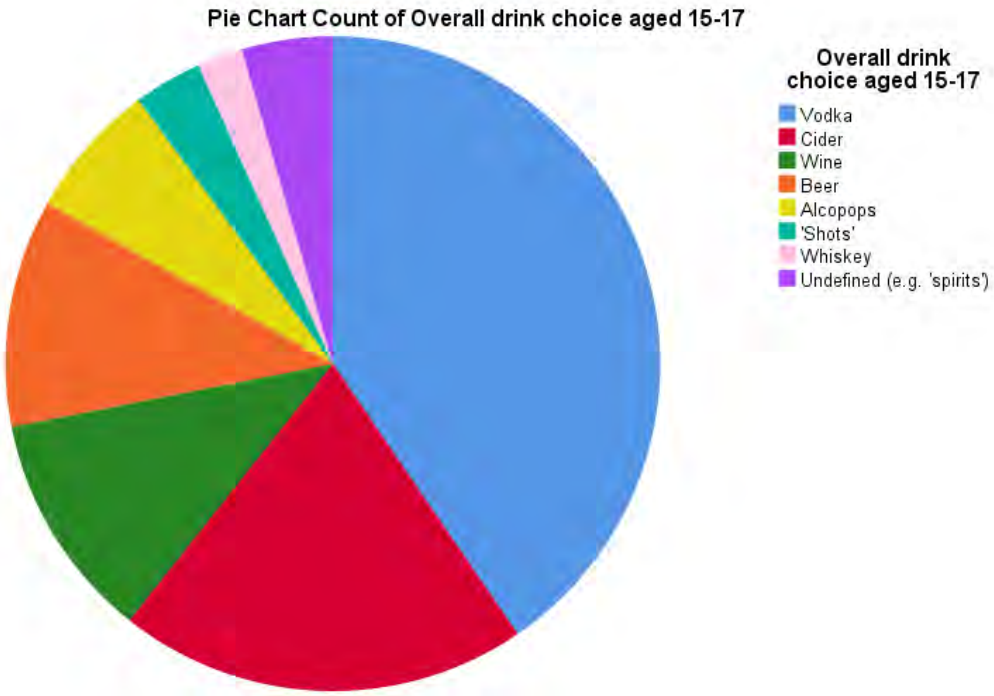
20/21 suggests a sense of awareness for one's health, where some may quit tobacco subsequent to a new sense of independence and consciousness of one's future.

Inspired by the study by Sester et al (2012) and Mackintosh et al (1997) who describe the importance of context to determine drink choice; respondents were asked their favoured drink choice in Q2, Q3 and Q4 to find any significant relationships that suggest any patterns or transitions associated with drink choice. The results show a relationship in drink choice with age, the answers for ages 20/21 show a significant development in individual choice regarding drink *Table M, N, O.* At this age respondents began to become more specific with the drink, like '*Jamaican Wray and Nephews white rum and lemonade'* and labelling specific brands they use like '*Thatchers'*. The assumed heightened independence that develops in university attendance may give more opportunity to explore one's personal tastes, a distinguishing feature of emerging adulthood by Arnett (2000) argues for this. Yet, the popularity of drinks must be considered to justify the increase in certain drinks. For example, the increase of certain drinks may be parallel to the current popular drinks like gin.

In contrast, a lower level of individuality is suggested through the drink choices aged 15-17, where fewer categories were established, and as Mackintosh et al (1997) found, vodka was the dominant drink choice followed by cider *Table M*. The literature connotes various reasons for the dominant categories of drink choice. Firstly, there were a few remarks made explaining the need for cheap alcohol in the research. As vodka and cider are predominantly associated with under-aged drinkers because of the high alcohol content and lower prices (Mackintosh et al, 1997). Furthermore, part of the drinkscapes made by 15-17 year olds focuses around creating a sense of group identity forming a new experience. During the creation of the atmosphere for the drinkscape, individuals are collective in drink choice. Subsequently, individualisation is limited as personal drink taste is not developed, and those in their early stage of drinking overcome the taste due to the excitement of the situation (Kuntsche et al, 2005). Additionally, these findings correlate to Mackintosh et al (1997), those aged 15 seek beverages that are cheap, relatively tasteless and high in alcohol content.

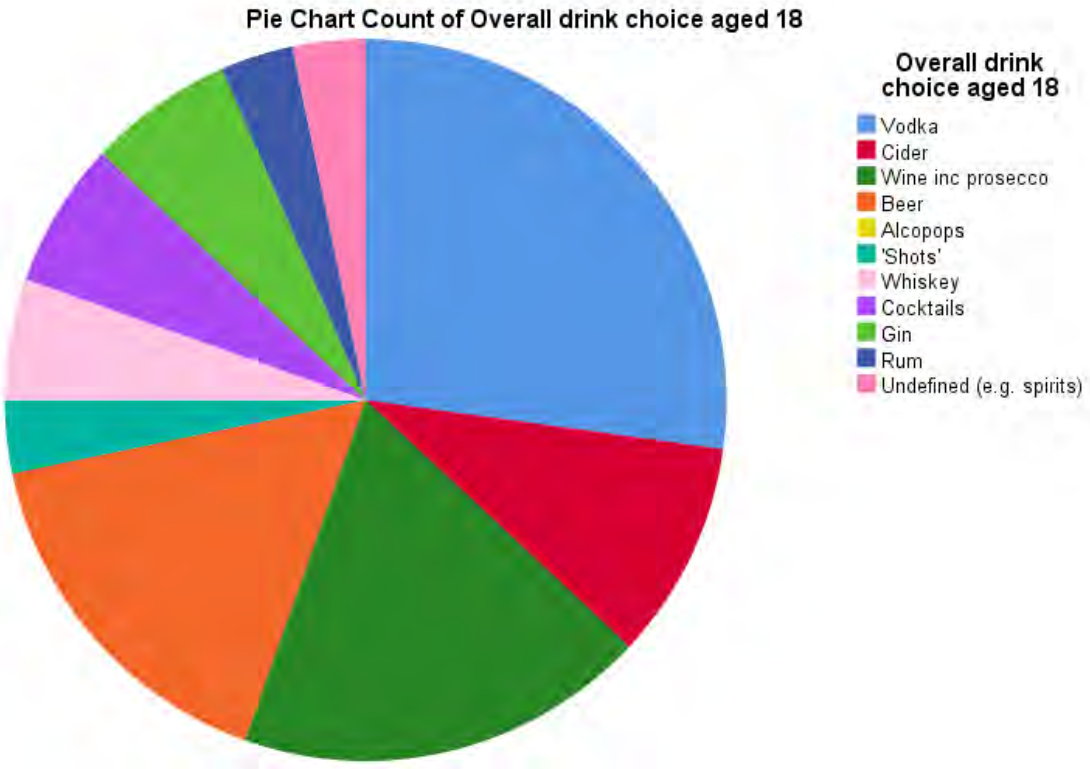
Optional response in question 2- *What was your choice of alcoholic drink*?

Table M (*n=74)*



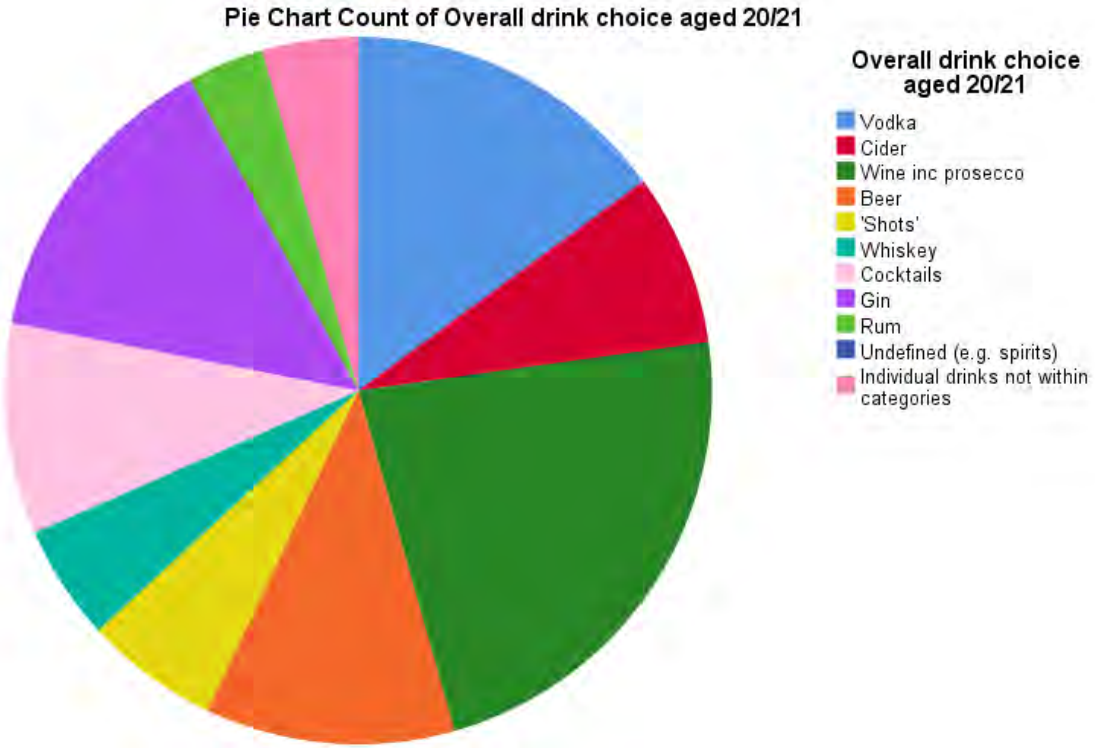
Optional response in question 3- *What was your choice of alcoholic drink*

Table N (*n=70)*



Optional response in question 4- *What was your choice of alcoholic drink*?

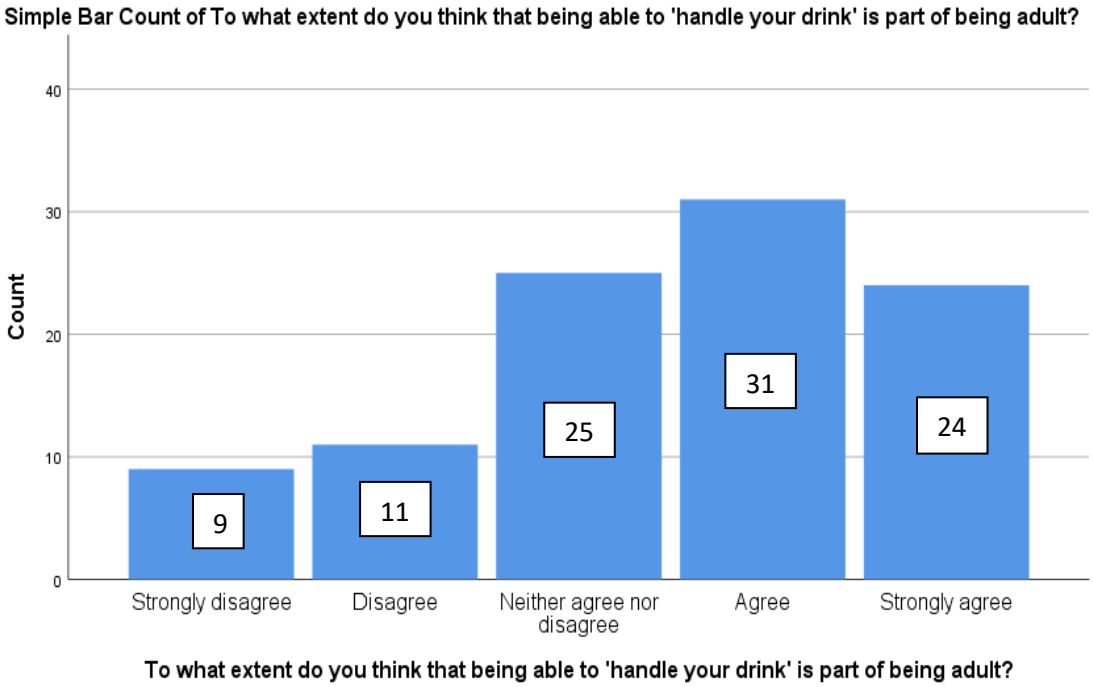
Table O ***(n=69)***



The role of alcohol in perceptions of adulthood.

With this considered, the role of intoxication in the journey to adulthood can be evaluated to understand how leisure choices may affect the life course. The final question in the survey used a Likert ranking and asked, '*To what extent do you think that being able to 'handle your drink' is part of being an adult?' Table P*. This question was inspired by Furlong's (2013) argument that the ability to drink to the point of intoxication without immediate negative consequences, i.e. handling your drink, is a transition to adulthood. The research showed:

Table P (*n=100)*



Thus, the results suggested a slight correlation to Furlong's thought which highlights the role of alcohol in maintaining perceptions of adulthood and the transitions to achieve it. These conclusions were further highlighted in the qualitative part of the question that asked, '*Would you say that you can handle your drink better than when you were 17?' (n=86)* Overall, 44.8% generally agreed and 20% generally disagreed whilst 8.6% felt that there was no difference *Appendix III*. Additionally, 9 of the respondents associated their answer explicitly to 'moderation' and limits. Recalling Van Wersch and Walker (2009), established drinkers aged 20 believe that knowing one's limits is important because it is not 'cool' to drink until one becomes ill. This further connotes a sense of Measham's 'controlled loss of control' where at aged 17 some individuals lack a sense of control that they have gained as they have aged. More specifically, some responses proved interesting for discussion, *'I'd say I drink less now than before because […] hangovers […] Not enjoying alcohol […] as [aged] 16-18'*. Similarly to Van Wersch and Walker (2009) and Mackintosh et al (1997), the change in drinking habits has biological ties as the novelty of a hangover has lessened. Furthermore, for this respondent, the pleasure in drinking has lessened therefore they drink less. As Bisogni et al (2007 in Sester et al,2012) describe, the emotional aspect in the 'moment of consumption' is eradicated due to the lack of positive emotions like pleasure and the increase of negative emotions like hangovers.

Differently, respondent 29 answered:

'No- the lack of behavioural restraints [I] have as an 'adult' has made me way more impulsive and careless with alcohol. I tend to get more drunk, more often, which I don't think is handling my drink at all because there's less control than when I was 17'.

This respondent contradicts other responses who state that independence and freedom are characteristics that establish adulthood and controlled drinking. Interestingly, respondent 29 does not consider themselves adult, yet they describe themselves as such in their response to Q9. This emphasises how this respondent acknowledges they are culturally understood as an adult (Côté and Bynner 2008), so they describe themselves as so regardless of their own opinion. Furthermore, they describe an adult as someone who can '*support themselves independent of family and friends'*. It is worth noting that respondent 29 relies solely on their family for funding, therefore one can assume they do not consider themselves an adult because they cannot financially support themselves independently. Recalling Blackman (2011), the transition to higher education has given individuals an increased income, that they direct toward alcohol-based leisure as a result of their lack of 'adult' responsibilities. Accordingly, this respondent contributes toward understanding the role alcohol plays in adulthood. They consider themselves a young person who was able to handle their drink better at age 17, prior to a decrease of behavioural restraints whilst remaining a non-adult. Therefore, for this respondent alcohol does not play a role in achieving 'adulthood'. Rather, alcohol plays a role in 'studenthood' that decreases the perception of adulthood as young people may have more access to economy that gets used on recreational leisure like drinking. Yet, these young people have not obtained these funds as a person who has earned it independently, hence their drinking patterns may not be similar.

To examine the extent of lifecycle influences explained by Hunt (2005) in drinking and adulthood, participants were asked to what extent the UK legal age of 18 influenced their drinking habits prior to aged 18. The possible statements available to the respondents were scaled by the extent of impact (*1= No impact) (4= Extreme impact) (n=100) Q8.* Conclusively, a small 4% did not drink alcohol prior to becoming the legal age, this highlights the lack of lifecycle legality in alcohol consumption, although 52% of the respondents had experienced some implications (Hunt,2005:35). Nevertheless, these results emphasise the disregard for government implications regarding alcohol use. Also, this could suggest that the relationship between intoxication and adulthood is not linear and more associable to the life course (Elchardus and Smit,2006). Rather, the

activity of drinking is not exclusive to 'adults' but the use of space, motive and 'handling' of the alcohol segregates the leisure into either adult or youth activities.

The impact of higher education on adulthood and intoxication

Question 6 and 7 in the survey were focused on intoxication whilst being a student to establish distinguishing features exclusive to higher education; as Benwick et al (2008) theorised that drinking is heightened during university attendance in the UK. An element of adulthood suggested by both the literature and the respondents is taking responsibility for oneself (Arnett, 2000). This is applicable to the statement '*I think more about my future than I did aged 18*' which was agreed by 65% of respondents; thinking ahead is part of constructing ones 'biographical project' (France, 2007) suggesting that the participation in higher education and the development of age contribute to the transition of responsibility and independence that is associated with adulthood. There was a total of 7 respondents who were not aged 20 yet, a total 6/7 (85.7%) of these individuals agree that they think about their future more than aged 18. This suggests the impact of higher education on a person's reflexivity for themselves, making thoughtful decisions and considerations in regards to their future wellbeing, which higher education may provide (Elchardus and Smits,2006:308).

As Webb et al (1996) explain, university is a high-stress environment for young people due to the transitional experience into the role of a student. With this in mind, respondents were able to indicate whether they drank for stress relief, 37% of the participants agreed with the statement. Although this is not a majority like Webb et al (1996) and Sester et al (2012) found, it is still a significant amount. By drinking as a method of relaxation or stress relief, it could be argued that motives behind drinking may change when attending university. However, this may vary with the level of education one has experienced. As Benwick et al (2008) finds, higher education may gradually influence an individual's independence in drinking decisions, in correlation to their course level. 44% of respondents believe they drank more in their first year of university to their higher levels. Assumedly, second-year students have settled into their student roles, therefore this could suggest that there may be a changing pattern in intoxication as the course's level increases (Webb et al, 1996). Perhaps, transitions of intoxication are specific to course level, and higher education cannot be generalised as a whole cohort. Furthermore, there is no relationship between a specific age and using alcohol as stress relief,

the respondents who used for relief varied across all the ages that they started university (17-27). Thus, motives in drinking are not due to age but rather because of commitments and a level of responsibility obtained as a university student. Correspondingly, experiences in higher education can be similar to all individuals, regardless of age. Therefore, the role of higher education contributes to changing the motives behind alcohol use as a consequence of a stress environment. As Kuntsche et al (2005) describe, one important situational factor for motives is to enhance one's mood and to attenuate negative emotions. Furthermore, in Q7 respondents were asked whether they do not drink in conjunction to their friends not drinking. But, only 29% of respondents agreed, therefore one's consumption on alcohol is not heavily influenced by the actions of those surrounding them. Rather, the range of motives behind alcohol consumption may be a result of the individualisation of transitions attuned with university.

As the life course stresses context, drinking habits whilst at university were established in the survey to explore university's impact on leisure. As Crosnoe, Kendig and Benner (2017) argue, higher education is a social context that encourages a drinking culture. Expectedly, 39% of respondents believed that their alcohol consumption had increased whilst attending higher education. This suggests a slight association with drinking and being a student, the relationship is not overt, nonetheless. Though, a culture of drinking may not associate with the amount of intoxicant consumed, but rather the contextual values in the activity (Van Wersch and Walker, 2009). Nevertheless, the change of environment with the transition to higher education transforms the context an individual is situated. Accordingly. Crosnoe, Kendig and Benner (2017) argue the university environment enables new societal norms and more opportunity for identity development. Thus, the culture of intoxication surrounding students may have become a meaningful mode of leisure described by Roberts (1978 in Hunt, 2005), due to the social and cultural aspect to it. With 38% of respondents looking forward to drinking more as a student, there is some evidence that drinking is a meaningful activity that students associate themselves with. Additionally, Benwick et al (2008) find that student drinking differs in the UK to the USA because of the legal age difference (21 USA, 18 UK). Since 71 of the respondents started university prior to age 21, they have been legally allowed to drink throughout their course, unlike students in America who start college aged 18 cannot legally buy alcohol. Thus, as Benwick et al (2008) explain, UK students obtain different social roles once they begin university because they are part of a different situational context. Drinking may have less of a novelty to British students hence the drinking culture may not be as strong.

Additionally, drinking in the university context can contribute toward maintaining a student's social role in wider society. As Kelly and Kelly (1994) theorise, context is important to understand how one chooses their leisure in reflection of the social role they currently obtain. As the role of a student surrounds education where their contribution to society is delayed, society could impose a different social role onto them in comparison with their non-student counterparts. Therefore, it may be the social role that enables the drinking culture because the students are not respectively perceived as 'adults' hence the leisure choice is restricted to intoxication. Various responses when defining an adult specified a level of maturity needed, as intoxication is often labelled as a risky activity (Furlong,2013, Measham, 2004, Webb et al, 1996) it could be assumed that the social role of a student is one who does not act in a rational manner. Accordingly, Benwick et al (2008) find that drinking is higher among students to non-students, this could also be due to the social role of being a student.

Divagating, respondents were offered a similar choice in space; pubs, clubs and friend's homes in the multiple response questions *Q6*. The study found that pubs were the most prevalent (40%) followed by friend's home (30%) and clubs were the least (23%). Thus, this highlights that the student culture of intoxication is evident to have transitioned into pubs, rather than clubs. This could suggest that the 'studentification' of pubs has led to a change in the pub itself, where establishments attempt to transform to student-friendly locations (Pratten, 2003). Also, the choice of pubs could correlate to the pub culture associated with British culture described by Van Wersch and Walker (2009). Likewise, due to the club's usually busy and loud atmosphere, quieter locations may be used by students to expand their socialisation in a new environment. Kuntsche et al's (2005) four situational factors can again be applied to this study to understand the contextual motives for drinking amongst students. The category of social rewards can highlight the socialisation process that derives from drinking amongst students.

Overall, it has become evident that a state of uncertainty arises for students, alongside living in a temporary environment. Swain (2017) use of Gramsci's interregnum discusses the contemporary age of uncertainty ever-growing for younger generations. Uncertainty is a derivate of the temporary, students have little control of their future, due to the uncertain society they live. Levels of the temporary are apparent in the study (45% of respondents have temporarily moved from home, 68% have part-time jobs) alongside the reliance on loans, a student may not be able to prepare for the future due to the level of uncertainty in their lifestyle,

disallowing them to prepare sufficiently. Therefore, students may participate in intoxicating leisure as an attempt to cope with the instability (Best,2010:15). It could be argued that drinking and leisure as a whole is used for the controlled loss of control by Measham (2004), the loss of control may be desirable to temporarily escape from the uncertainty they live; whilst maintaining some control to secure any stability they are able, because a complete loss of control could increase the level of risk in their life.

Furthermore, although 37% of respondents linked adulthood to age, they also differentiated themselves from those younger than them.

Table P

	Count
I do not go out to certain venues because the majority of people there are younger than me	41%
I do not go out to certain venues because the majority of people there are older than me	6%

When offered the above statement, 41% of respondents agreed, this suggests that respondents see themselves different from those younger than them, regardless of society perceiving them as the same. This may be another consequence of the 'cohort effect' upon university students. Due to the new social role acquired with attending higher education young people may assume those who are younger and/or non-students are more immature than them. Those have not attended university yet at aged 18 could be perceived as metaphorically 'younger' than 18 year-olds who are students. Differently, students and non-students may be part of a different cohort, regardless of sharing the same age. As higher education entails characteristics that are not experienced in lower education levels, non-students are isolated from this cohort. Upon the study there were no relationships between the student's age they started university and agreeing to the statement above. However, the opposite statement was only agreed by 6% of the respondents *Table P*. Therefore, students are not so concerned with mingling with those older than them. Students differentiate themselves more from those younger than those older, suggesting that student liken themselves more to the older population, whilst commonly being associated with the younger cohorts by wider society.

'Having your life together' and a sense of existential crisis.

The part of the survey that required a description of an adult raised a certain philosophical theme of having one's life together;

> '*Pretends to have their shit together'*
>
> *'[Someone who] has some sort of an idea [of] what they would like do or trying to figure out'*
>
> *''Someone who has their life figured out'*
>
> *'Someone who has their life together'*
>
> *'Knowing what one wants out of life'*

Although this theme was not presupposed to the study, it gives the opportunity to analyse the issues those aged 19-25 particularly experience. What is 'having your life together' and how does one accomplish this? Erikson's (1963 in Hunt,2005) lifecycle model of stages each with a determined 'crisis' could be applicable. Furlong's (2013) description of these individuals as invisible youth highlights that the crisis is associated with personal and social identity. Societal expectations from primary and secondary institutions impose that young people must know what their next steps are in life. What consists of having your life together is not defined, yet these young people believe they do not. Therefore, there may be pressure to get or have your life together to successfully be an adult. Whether this is a shared crisis across every generation is uncertain, however, it could be argued that this sense of existentialism arises with the fragmentation of contemporary society. Taking influence from Bauman's (in Swain, 2017) negative freedom, the increase of opportunities, pathways and identities may leave a young person with a sense of 'what do I do next?'. With the increase of freedom comes the disadvantage of the life course. Arguably, the dissolving of specific lifecycle stages has prohibited individuals from feeling stability, which they may crave in liquid modernity. Furthermore, Arnett's (2000) claim of uncertainty within adulthood can be applied also. As emerging adulthood is an unpredictable stage, in which individuals can become 'adult' at any point. Therefore, to correlate the different understandings of 'youth' across the government (13-19 in GOV.UK and 25 and under in British Youth Council) alongside the period of infrequency, it is evident that between the ages 19-25 young people must feel invisible, or uncertain of themselves.

Conclusion

To summarise, this study addressed multiple themes that were answered through the research. In addition to this, a variety of new, interesting themes developed from the empirical data. It has become evident that the use of some qualitative questions was imperative to use for certain themes, as said themes cannot be accurately represented through quantitative data.

To return to the aims of the study, the research suggests that there are transitions within intoxication, as the transitions in space, peers and intoxicant occur with age. Therefore, there is sustainable evidence that leisure can be associated with the lifecycle as some characteristics are specific to an age. Although, it must be acknowledged that there are elements that remain concrete throughout age, and various evidence is directed to the life course; the majority of participants drank before the legal age. Whereas, the increase of commitments, individuality and a developed identity convey the motif behind intoxication in leisure. Also, the choice of leisure remains across all ages, but noticeably changes with the development of responsibilities and 'adulthood'. Moreover, the transitions of intoxication can be associated with features of the life course. For example, the importance of context is highly represented in the study, intoxication and leisure is affected dependent on the current context. Context can attribute life transitions to transitions of intoxication, as the context of university can be strongly associated with stress and independence; evident with the variations within intoxication, where students increasingly drink for independent reasons. Regardless of statistical evidence, drinking is a common mode of leisure amongst British university students. A reason for the decrease in drinking can be a result of the increased uncertainty for young people in contemporary society. Nonetheless, drinking is still a prominent form of leisure that provides a stable mode of relaxation and pleasure, regardless of the individual's current social role, context and age.

The discourse of adulthood was a prevalent theme that emerged through the research, the perception of an adult role has proved complex for young people. There seems to be a tension between their perception of themselves versus society's perception of them, and as theorised, young people experience difficulty in situating themselves comfortably within society. Furthermore, the discourse of student, adult and youth contribute to one's understanding of their success and the need for clarity of one's

contribution to society connotes a sense of underappreciation for students.

This study has also provided an insight into higher education and whether it is applicable to the life course. Generally, the attendance of higher education connotes several defining features that may elude to specific social roles, life events and experiences that are distinguishable to university. By using intoxication in the study, the assumption of higher education in the life course can be applied. As illustrated in the research, there are specific characteristics with intoxication that develop alongside becoming a student. Similar to age, higher education provides new motives, venues and discursive influences in regards to intoxication and leisure. Arguably, these transitions are influenced by the socially defined events that emerge with university. As university can be a platform for increasing independence, individuality and identity, intoxication transforms in relation to this. However, with more time I would hope to use this study comparatively with non-students, to further our knowledge into student and non-student cohorts.

In regard to the empirical research, the biggest methodological limitation was the representativeness of the study. As a consequence of using a convenience sample, the university and course groups were not evenly distributed to analyse representatively. Therefore, the aim for comparing geography was not fulfilled, with 60% of the respondents attending the University of Westminster and only 8 of the participants studying outside of London. However, the study can be repeated easily, as it is an online survey and there are always students available to answer them. Additionally, the research has high accuracy, as no bias is presented in the research, another advantage of using online surveys. Also, this study promoted some validity, the answers are likely to correspond to answers by any other students of the same age and geography. Yet, the answers would be different across other societies and cultures, because the answers are context-dependent. However, using multiple response questions for most of the questions in the survey created no overt causations to be found, as respondents had too many options. Also, if this study were to be repeated there would be questions focusing exclusively on motive, as it wasn't addressed enough in the empirical research.

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Marital relationships and the effect of the values of patriarchal and traditional culture: A study of married Iraqi-Kurdish women in the UK

Sazkar Kaka Rhsh

Abstract

This study aims to understand the marital life experiences of Iraqi-Kurdish women in the UK in order to examine to what extent the marital relationships of these women are influenced by the values of patriarchal and traditional culture which their society of origin is based on (Bahar, 2014). It also seeks to establish whether their migration to the UK has had an effect on their relationships with their partners when the UK is recognised as a society attached to gender egalitarian attitude. Therefore, the study focused on the marital life experiences of eight Iraqi-Kurdish women in the UK and explored many aspects of their lives through their own narratives. This focus enabled the study to gather findings that covered many topics which in turn resulted in the emergence of common and relevant themes including marriage and women's perspectives, cultural expectation of women's roles and attitudes, patriarchal culture and men's power and the impact of living in in a society based on gender egalitarian attitude. Indeed, within each theme, there were indications of the significance of traditional and cultural values on the marital lives of the participants.

Introduction

According to the individualisation thesis, nowadays, individuals including both males and females have more agency and choice in lifestyle. This also affects the way current intimate relationships, including marital relationships, form and operate. It has been said that 'intimacy is being transformed from a set of social obligations and conventions to a new kind of democracy between couples' (Chambers, 2012, p35). This therefore explains the erosion of the role of traditional values and boundaries in the context of a couple's relationships while influencing the fading away of limited gender roles. However, this theory has been found to be 'culturally monochrome' due to its lack of consideration for family life and marital relationships in 'complex societies' (Smart and Shipman, 2004, p5). Within western societies there are groups with different cultural backgrounds with studies proving that these groups are attached to their own culture and traditions, particularly when it comes to family values and practices (Smart and Shipman, 2004). As a result, the role of tradition can still have a significant role within some groups' lifestyle despite them evolving in societies based more largely on individual choice.

Feminists have long viewed marriage as the practice that entails and maintains the values and attitudes of the patriarchal system. Their critical perspectives towards the institution of marriage is related to all the inequalities and challenges women face in the process of marriage (Chambers, 2017). However, the violation of women's rights within the process of marriage is believed to be more prominent among traditional societies and those nations that strictly uphold traditional and patriarchal values (Haj-Yahia, 2005). Therefore, this study has chosen to focus on the marital relationship of Iraqi-Kurdish women as they are also members of a society generally based on a patriarchal structure (Bahar, 2014). In general, 'patriarchal attitudes towards women's participation in social, political and economic life, honour killing, gender-based violence, and female genital mutilation' have been the most discussed women-related issues in Kurdish society (Kaya, 2016).This study intends to see to what extent Kurdish women's rights and roles in the process of marriage is disregarded due to the values of patriarchal culture. It is important to examine to what extent traditional gendered ideology can still affect women's lives in the country, particularly in the context of marital relationships.

Wright (2014) disclosed that Kurdish women's subordination within the process of marriage does not have to be related to their own typical setting, since the phenomenon of domestic violence and sexual violence was also

found among the marital lives of Kurdish women from the UK. The United Nation defined violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life' (United Nation Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2018).

There has been plenty of research on the impacts of patriarchal and traditional culture on immigrant women's lives in the developed countries, but they are mainly dedicated to groups including women from South Asian communities. However, there are limited studies which explore specifically the lives of Iraqi-Kurdish women in the UK, with only minimal research so far into the marital lives of women from this particular community. There has been little consideration of the way they are acted towards by their male partners in their marital lives, despite the fact that there is a considerable number of Iraqi-Kurdish families in the UK. Therefore, carrying out an in-depth investigation of these women's marital life experiences and examining whether the values of patriarchal culture and male-dominance have invaded their marital relationship is quite important. Indeed, this study seeks to gain an understanding of marriage experiences of Iraqi-Kurdish women and to examine to what extent their experiences are surrounded by patriarchal attitudes and values. I will also focus on the effect of their residency in the UK to see whether this has positively or negatively influenced their marital relationship due to the fact that the UK is known as a non-traditional society and it is more attached to the ideology of gender egalitarianism.

Literature Review

Women's status in KRG

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is 'an autonomous region of Iraq' located in Iraq's northern part. In general, Kurdish women are believed to have historically had an important role in many aspects of life, including performing the role of militant. Indeed, Kurds are still recognised globally for their courageous female 'guerrilla fighters' (Begikhani et al., 2018, p7). The history of Kurds proves its long suffering from colonialization and yet they had always been defensive of their right of nationalism, and Kurdish women's role in this matter is beyond words (al-Ali and Pratt, 2011, p5). The way Iraqi-Kurdistan reviews women's rights and roles has been regarded as being 'better off compared to their counterparts in the rest of Iraq' (Kaya, 2016; Alinia, 2013, p13). Adding to this, Wadie Jwaideh (1960) described the stats of Kurdish women as being highly liberated compared to the majority of Arab women (Home Office report, 2017). From 1991 onwards, women from the KRI have been able to access education more easily and now a vast number of females are educated and in professional positions in that region (King, 2013, p102). This demonstrates that Iraqi-Kurdistan women are believed to have their agency in most of their life circumstances. However, this is not the case for the majority of women when many gender-related issues are reported to be experienced by women. This is believed to be the result of Kurdish women's `exclusive concentration on attaining 'national rights' for Kurdish people instead of focusing on gender-related issues. Scholars have noted that 'Kurdish nationalism mobilized women without transforming the existing patriarchal relations of Kurdish society' (al-Ali and Pratt, 2011, p341).

A study was conducted by Joly and Bakawan in 2016 to look at the position of women in Iraqi-Kurdistan. They found the greater contribution of women in many significant sectors including law, journalism, medicine and humanitarian organisations. However, these women were found to still be concerned about the effects 'of traditional institutions, conservative Islam, the former Baathist and wider Iraqi inheritance, the nepotistic corruption among parties and the KRG' (p 973). This finding is also mentioned by a Kurdish social worker, Amineh Kakabaveh, from Sweden who confirmed the difficulty of being an empowered woman in a society that is known for being 'organised on the basis of feudal religious-capitalist patriarchal power structures' (2007, p125). Indeed, her critic is in accordance with the writers that have written about

Kurdish society. For example, King (2013) described the way Kurdish society reacts to 'gender roles' and equated it to 'the classic/sex archetype of the Mediterranean and Middle East' (p112). Indeed, Moghadam (2004) elaborated on the style that Mediterranean societies uphold when it comes to gender roles by listing a strong emphasis on 'manliness, women's sexual purity, and defence of family honour' (Moghadam, 2004, p141). Similarly, these values are also considered among Middle Eastern society or, as Moghadam (2004) explained, 'The Middle Eastern family has been long described as a patriarchal unit, and it has been noted that Muslim family laws have served to reinforce patriarchal gender relations and women's subordinate position within the family' (p137). This reinforces King's explanation of the prevalence of adhering to patriarchal values and attempts to women's subordination within Kurdish society and Kurdish culture.

The way Kurdish communities expect and assign the roles to both genders could be described as somehow discriminatory. For instance, 'idealised Kurdish women' are classified according to specific characteristics, including being able to carry out household maintenance properly, 'and with upholding the honour and purity of her and her husband's patrilineages through her proper behaviour' (King, 2013, p113). Despite the fact that Kurdish women historically have had a significant role in various fields, and despite the major improvement they have seen in the last decades, the main roles expected off them still include 'good motherhood, virtuous wives, and good housekeepers' (Wright, 2014). Kurdish women should always react respectfully and politely to their men otherwise they are blamed for being 'shameful and dishonouring' (Begikhani et al., 2010). Accordingly, these kinds of expectations sometimes prevent them from achieving what they demand for themselves. Karahan criticised this cultural belief and expectation by reporting that gaining the title of 'mothers and wives' is an only way of winning others' respect, and women without these titles are excluded and denied respect (van Bruinessen, 1993). Based on these cultural assumptions, Kurdish women are greatly dedicated to family and housework. King's (2013) work on Kurdish society reveals how women from Iraq-Kurdistan spent most of their daily hours on 'preparing food and cleaning their homes' (p113). However, these roles of women are often underestimated, or as Becker argued, they become 'invisible' within patriarchal culture (Becker, 1999, p29).

Patriarchal culture: A place that values only masculinity

Patriarchy's literal meaning is announced as 'the rule of the father' or it is the term that refers to the dominance of male power over all other household members (Sultana, 2011, p2). The term patriarchy is associated with many

contexts. For example, Waters (1989) identified four frameworks where the term patriarchy is used 'as a kinship-based system of government; as generalized masculine oppression; as a mechanism in the social reproduction of capitalism; and as a sex-class system' (p193). Patriarchy is further explained in Waters' study as not having a fixed 'scientific definition', which counted as one of the reasons for it being seen problematically in sociologists and feminists works (Waters, 1989, p193).

Patriarchal principles and values can be investigated in the context of relationships, and by observing the degree of governing element of the male members of that relationship. However, patriarchal practice does not only occur within 'interpersonal' relationships. Instead, it is also relatively found in 'macrostructure' relationships including 'the state-society relationships' (Akgul, 2017, p37). For example, Morrissey (2003) describes patriarchy as 'the structures of power in a society between the tsar and his servitors, the lord and his serfs, the husband and his wife, the master and his apprentice, the officer and his soldiers and so forth' (cited in Akgul, 2017, p37). As this definition suggests, patriarchy takes many forms but power is key to any patriarchal governance and to the survival of patriarchal principles and values. Indeed, within patriarchal culture power is attributed only to men, and as Yuval-Davis put it, 'in many cultural systems potency and masculinity seem to be synonymous' (1997). Therefore, it becomes challenging for women to take up significant social and political roles in a society that is based on patriarchal structure while they are assumed as powerless.

The term patriarchy is widely and commonly used in the context of male and female relationships when it indicates 'the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways' (Bhasin, 2006, cited in Sultana, 2011, p2). Adding to this, Walby interpreted patriarchy as 'a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women' (Walby, 2010, p30). Her description of patriarchy as a 'system' is more related to the assumption that contradicts the biological determinist explanation of bodies by which men and women's bodies are perceived as biologically different from each other (Sultana, 2011). Biological determinism supports the superiority of males over females and claims that 'something is lacking in females' naturally. This makes them satisfied with the biased treatment they receive (Ortner, 1996 p25). Ortner opposes the assumption that the inferior state of women is naturally formed. Her analysis of the devaluation of women evaluates it as a 'construct of culture', with the changes in this worldwide 'cultural view' is formed in 'the institutional base of society' (Ortner, 1996, p42). Indeed, the system of patriarchy is believed to function by uniting men and women around the ideology that women are there for the sake of

fulfilling men's necessities (Becker, 1999, p25) and if they somehow violate these norms, physical violence will be used against them (Smith, 1990).

Within patriarchal cultures there are specified qualities that are assigned to each gender differently. According to Becker (1999), 'Men are men to the extent they are not women: masculine, independent, invulnerable, tough, strong, aggressive, powerful, commanding, in control, rational, and non-emotional' (p27). By contrast, women's qualities were put as 'dependent, vulnerable, pliant, weak, supportive, nurturing, intuitive, emotional, and empathic' (Becker, 1999, p27). These ascribed qualities undoubtedly contribute to further male domination and more female subordination. Additionally, within the patriarchal setting women are viewed as 'less human' than men and therefore subject to the demand of males. Taking sexuality as an example reveals further devaluation of women in patriarchal culture where they are considered as sexual objects while men are 'sexual subjects' (Becker, 1999, p28). Based on that, women's sexual desire is immensely controlled under the patriarchal system, while men are known and expected for gaining pleasure from women.

It is a matter of discussion that adhering to patriarchal values in ways that lead to gender inequalities and women's oppression is present in every culture around the world. However, its prevalence in Middle Eastern cultures is notably emphasised by researchers and intellectuals (Moghadam, 2004). Kurdish society is part of Middle Eastern culture and adheres strongly to its traditional values and norms, with a culture known for being 'patriarchal' (Bahar, 2014, p75). The type of patriarchy that is practised among Kurdish communities is believed to be consistent with Kandiyoti's notion of 'classic patriarchy'. For Kandiyoti, classic patriarchy is the system that is practised predominantly by non-western countries, including 'North Africa, the Muslim Middle East (including Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran), and South and East Asia (specifically, India and China)' (Kandiyoti, 1988, p278). Under this system of 'classic patriarchy' women are believed to be mainly and unequally ruled by men. According to gender theorists, the way women are treated in a setting where classic patriarchy rules is an obvious violation of human rights. In the words of Moghadam, 'the patriarchal belt is characterized by extremely restrictive codes of behavior for women, rigid gender segregation, and a powerful ideology linking family honor to female virtue' (1993, p108). Thus, controlling women's lives and behaviours is an act performed by the male members of a society that follow the principles of classic patriarchy.

Other studies emphasise the importance of patriarchal values within Kurdish culture, and there is an assumption that in the context of relationships Kurdish males are the ones who have power and control (Wright, 2014). In general, studies indicate that within Kurdish society women are still considered as

inferior to men, and there is notable justification for women's subordination. It is the man within the family who is entitled to make decisions, which women have to abide by (Bahar, 2014, p75). This could be the result of the lineal tradition that this society has been attached to. Joly and Bakawan (2016) referred to the degree of significance of 'family allegiances and tribal structure' within the 'social organisation of Kurdistan' (p961). Thus, Kurdish society is based on tribal principles and is known for valuing the status of men within both society and family.

McDonald (2001) referred to Kurdish culture as being structurally patriarchal and exploiting women's lives in all its territories of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria (Wright, 2014). Through examining Kurdish 'language, music, tradition and history' Hassanpour (2001) found the greater impact of patriarchal values on the lives of Kurdish women. Honour is another significant matter within Kurdish society, which reinforces its patriarchal state (Begikhani et al., 2010). Honour is narrowly expressed to the extent that male members of the family become the strict guardian of the honour of all of their female members. This so-called honour is perceived to be broken when a woman makes 'sexually, physically, verbally, or even imaginary' contact with a man (Bahar, 2014, p75). It can then become men's priority to restore that honour by using punishment under the name of 'honour crime' or 'honour based violence' (Joly and Bakawan, 2016; Gill et al., 2012). The brutal practice within Iraqi-Kurdistan is assumed to be 'publicly accepted' as an act that will 'cleanse shame and dishonour' (Begikhani et al., 2010).

Marriage as a 'patriarchal institution'

In almost all societies marriage and family are counted as significant cultural institutions that provide primary socialisation to the members of society. Marriage is a traditional process that binds together a man and woman in an enduring relationship and despite the changes into the way the process is practised its importance still prevails in today's society. Through the process of marriage man and woman respectively receive the status of 'husband' and 'wife' (Uddin, 2009). This relationship is constructed on the basis of 'interpersonal trust, dependency, competence, mutuality, complement, love, sympathy, touch, fellow-feeling, obligation, commitment, evaluation, regard, self-exposure' (Uddin, 2009). Talcott Parsons also found that married people are generally more 'healthy' than their unmarried counterparts (Giddens and Griffiths, 2006). However, the social practice of marriage does not always have a positive effect as it does sometimes turns out to be conflicting interests within couples. Feminists have upheld a critical perspective towards the practice of marriage, regarding it as a cause of more oppression to

women rather than liberation (Chambers, 2017). According to their analysis, marriage is a violation of equality where most aspects of marital life are believed to serve one sex rather than benefiting both sexes (Chambers, 2017).

The way women have historically been treated within both society and the process of marriage is controversial. As Gayle Rubin (1975) stated, 'women are given in marriage, taken in battle, exchanged for favors, sent as tribute, traded, bought, and sold' (cited in Finlay and Clarke, 2003, p2). Marriage is seen to be only advantageous to 'men and capitalism' since it is regulated 'through the mechanisms of exclusivity, possessiveness and jealousy' (Robinson, 1997, cited in Finlay and Clarke, 2003, p2). As a result, women's status within marital relationships is concerning, particularly as it brings more boundaries for them than for men (Finlay and Clarke, 2003; Bernard, 1972, cited in Jackson and Scott, 2002). They are the ones who are constantly reminded to devote to the marital relationship and are also the ones subordinated by being economically dependent on their husbands (Finlay and Clarke, 2003). Hagan's description of marriage as an 'intimate colonisation' highlights the unfairness of marital relationships (Finlay and Clarke, 2003). Indeed, Women are believed to have different or even high expectation of marriage when they enter the process of marriage with the hopes of a secured love and romance. Nonetheless, this was assumed as somehow unrealistic due to the fact that 'intimacy could evaporate' throughout the marital relationship (Smart, 2007).

Among the Kurdish community, marriage is highly regarded as a symbol of 'adulthood' (Kurdish families: Kurdish Marriage Patterns). It is accepted practice for Kurdish women to enter the process of marriage at a very early age, 'preferably before the age of 25' with early marriage sometimes used for the survival of family or male honour (Wright, 2014). However, early marriage was seen as causing dissatisfaction throughout the process of marriage (Lee, 1997; Sweetman, 2003). Within Kurdish society is the norm for girls to remain sexually inexperienced before marriage. On the other hand it is accepted, or even encouraged, for boys to enter sexual relationships before marriage as it enhances their sense of manhood (Wright, 2014). Kurdish culture, like other Middle-Eastern cultures, values girls' virginity as it sees 'women's premarital virginity [as] an asset not only for the individual woman but also for her family because it is an ''index'' for masculine reputation' (Akpinar, 2003, p430).

Based on its gendered norm expectations, forced marriage is still practised within Kurdish society and this can take many forms, including child marriage, arranged marriage, bride exchanges and 'marriage as compensation for murder or other misdeeds' (Joly and Bakawan, 2016, p 960). A high degree of oppression and subordination is therefore expected in these kinds of

marriages when women's choice is entirely deprived. Joly and Bakawan (2016) revealed figures which referred to the presence of brutality and violence against women by the hands of their male partners in Iraq-Kurdistan. The predominance of violence against women in Iraqi-Kurdistan is counted as one of the visible characteristics of the presence of a high level of gender inequality practice (Osler and Yahya, 2013, p194). Wright's (2014) study among married Iraqi-Kurdish women observed the presence of sexual violence within marital relationship this therefore can be used as a verification of the arguments that refer to the bond between marriage and patriarchal values.

Migration, patriarchal values and cultural tradition

Western countries are generally known for gender egalitarian attitudes, described as an ideology that requires that 'men and women should participate equally in the public and private spheres' (Hofmann, 2014, p24). This particular ideology has attracted people from different cultural backgrounds to migrate to these countries where women have gained equal rights to the extent that their status is not less than men. There, women joined the labour force a long time ago and since then have contributed significantly in that field. However, the situation is thought to be different for women who have migrated as they still operate within a different set of cultural values (Roder and Muhlau; Chaudhuri et al., 2014, p143). Roder and Muhlau (2014) conducted a study among groups of people who were originally from 'less gender-egalitarian' countries and became migrants of developed countries well-known for their gender egalitarian attitudes. It became apparent that the gender inegalitarian attitude is still affecting migrants' behaviour in the hosted country. The study also found that migrants adapted to the hosted countries' gender attitudes with time, with women adapting to these values earlier than men (Roder and Muhlau, 2014). Franz's study (2003) reinforces these findings. Examining the lives of Bosnian refugee women and men in Vienna and New York City showed that women tend to have quicker compliance to 'the new socioeconomic environment' than their male counterparts. This therefore can explain the challenges that migrant women face when they come across the variations of attitudes and gender roles in the hosted country and they are still treated according to the gender ideology of their country of origin.

Kurds are amongst those nations whose population fled their homeland for various social, political, religious and economic reasons and migrated to European or American countries (Gill et al., 2012). There has been discussion around the degree of attachment among Kurdish migrants in Western

countries to their homeland. For example, Safran (1991) observed Kurdish migrants from the UK and perceived it as a community which 'remains culturally and politically connected and committed to the preservation of the Kurdish homeland' (Cited in Gill et al., 2012). Kurdish people are believed to have always revealed proudly their status as Kurds in the aim of maintaining their ethnic identity (Mojab and Gorman, 2007). Migration as a process can lead migrants to question themselves regarding their degree of attachment to their own culture and tradition, leading to a sense of uncertainty. As a result, migrants can become more 'defensive' of their 'ethnic identity', with this extensive sense of belonging recognised as a 'form of ethnic fundamentalism' (Mirza, 2012, p124-125). In these instances, women are often the main focus, and more pressurised to adherence to their homeland's cultural values. Yuval-Davis (1997) showed great insight into the way women are considered as the 'border guards' of their tradition and identity. She attributed this phenomenon to Middle Eastern culture where the focus on 'religion and tribes' in 'social practices'. She further argued that among nations that adhere to patriarchal culture 'women are often constructed as the cultural symbols of the collectivity, of its boundaries, as carriers of the collectivity's 'honour' and as its intergenerational reproducers of culture' (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

Cultural expectation can still influence women's lives even after migrating to a society that is removed from tribal principles and values. As previous studies revealed upholding cultural codes and traditional values is highly expected from women of minority ethnic groups to the extent that they are perceived as 'carriers and bearers of ethnic (group) identity' (Akpinar, 2003). Accordingly, women are mainly the ones who can be blamed for violating groups' norms and values. Although there are indications of Kurdish women's and girls' greater status within the migrated country, there are also practices such as marriage that need to be remain in accordance to tradition (Tas, 2014). As mentioned, in order to refer to the phenomenon of immigrant's extensive attachment to their cultural tradition in Europe, Stolcke (1995) forwarded an approach known as 'cultural fundamentalism' (Akpinar, 2003). This approach was assumed as 'a new construction of exclusion in Europe'. According to Stolcke, hosted countries' more recent promotion of 'racial differences' have allowed more freedom for each nation to practise its own culture (Akpinar, 2003). This, in turn, has created segregation among cultures and encouraged migrant families to maintain traditional cultural values.

Wright (2014) dedicated a study to explore the life experiences of Iraqi-Kurdish women in the UK and focused specifically on the factors that 'shaped and governed' their life experiences. Her findings referred to the significance of 'the women's own Kurdish community' in shaping and governing their lives.

Based on that, most of their acts and behaviours were constrained. Indeed, part of her analysis discussed these women's hope that the migration context would help the complete release of gender ideologies that were prevalent in Iraq, which they believed to not be achieved in the UK where they were instead 'reproduced' (p738). For example, their dress codes were supposed to be in accordance to the communities' expectations (Wright, 2014).Another important theme which was discussed within the Wright study was the change of Kurdish males' attitude towards their female partners in the UK. This was believed to be the impact of their migration experience and being resident of Western society, also for not being under the families and relatives pressures as it used to be in Iraqi-Kurdistan. It was found that Kurdish women felt more emancipated and 'able to access more rights and freedom'. However, accessing the definite rights and freedom was also assumed as 'complex' while there were still some restriction on their behaviours and movements in the Western context. The study concluded that for most Kurdish migrants, being released from 'patriarchal governance' and 'transgression from cultural norms' in the migrated country was not impossible. However, these sometimes had 'negative consequences' and challenging them was not worthwhile (Wright, 2014, p745).

Methodology

In this section, I delineate the methodological framework that is used to examine the research objectives and the way the research is designed. I also discuss the degree of research methods compliance to the aim of the research.

The research objective of this project was to investigate the extent of the influence of patriarchal and traditional culture on the marital lives of Iraqi-Kurdish women in the UK. It aims to gain an understanding of these women's experiences of the process of marriage and to see to what extent gender inequality and the values of male dominance are practised within their marital relationships despite living in a Westernised culture and society. This study relies on qualitative data that can only be gained through the narratives of participants. Indeed, an in-depth interview was selected as the most appropriate research method for investigating the research aim. Attaining detailed insight into the marriage experiences of the participants was the main aim of the study. My aim was in accordance to what Irving attributed as the main factor for choosing interview as a method when he stated that 'at the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth' (Irving, 2006, p9). Arkesy and Knight (1999) regarded in-depth interview as a research tool which is 'more exploratory and qualitative' (p3) so based on that description its use becomes both beneficial and essential for this study. Additionally, for Irving (2006) the 'purpose of an in-depth study is to understand the experience of those who are interviewed, not to predict or to control that experience' (p51). This again justifies the suitability of the chosen research approach for exploring the marital experiences of the study participants as in-depth interviews 'would capture the significance of individuals' experiences in their own words' (Marshall and Rossman, 2002, p2).

This research used convenience sampling, one of the techniques of non-probability sampling to select its participants (Etikan, 2016). The reason for choosing this technique is related to it being 'affordable, easy and the subjects … readily available' (Etikan et al., 2016, p2). Indeed, the researcher had easy access to the participants who were all known to her personally. This also helped the interview process go smoothly and put participants at ease while they were answering questions. However, this familiarity between the researcher and the participants sometimes affected the way the participants answered the questions as they were assuming that the researcher already knew the answer. For example, when asked about their age when they married some of them replied like 'as you know I was very young'. This was

also discussed by Irving (2006) and can be seen as a limitation of this type of sampling. The other limitation of this sampling strategy is generalisation, as it is not recommended to 'be taken to be representative of the population' (Etikan et al., 2016, p2). Despite that Bryman (2016) considered the data retrieved from this sampling strategy to 'provide a springboard for further research or allow links to be forged with existing findings in an area' (p187).

The study involved in-depth interviews with eight married Iraqi-Kurdish women in the UK aged between 26-40 and living in London. They all agreed to take part in this project and their agreement was further noted by signing the participant's information sheet. All of the participants were married to Kurdish males and five of the participants described their marriage experience in Iraqi-Kurdistan along with their experience in the UK as they were already married in Iraqi-Kurdistan before coming to the UK. To protecting maintain confidentiality, participants' names were not used. Five of the interviews were conducted at the researcher's home and the other three were conducted at the home of participants, a choice based on the participants' decision. Arrangements for the interviews were made through the phone. The interviews were conducted in Kurdish as this was the preferred language for the participants and due to the fact that the researcher was a Kurdish native speaker was able to translate the interviews to English. The researcher used a recording app to record participants' answers, which was later useful when translating and transcribing the interviews word by word to ensure that the findings were reported 'accurately and truthfully' (BSA statement of ethical practice, 1992, p703). While recording was useful, one of the participant did not agree for her voice to be recorded despite explaining that confidentiality was going to be kept safe by the researcher and the data is published only for academic purposes (Irving, 2006). In that case the researcher considered the BSA ethical guidance (1992) by accepting her decision and wrote down that particular interview word by word and this particular interview lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes while the rest took only 40-47 minutes.

The researcher followed an interview guide throughout the whole set of interviews to ensure that all the objectives of the research were covered (Bell, 2010). The aim of the study was kept in focus by applying relevant themes to the aim into the interview guide, as well as considering the themes that were explored within the literature review, for example, gender roles within marital relationships, women's perspectives of the marriage process, the importance of the country of origin's culture on women's marital lives in the migration context. Despite preparation, the interviews were not all conducted in the exact same way. In particular, the order of the questions in the interview guide was not always followed as participants replied differently to questions,

which made follow-up questions different. Many of the questions were open-ended to provide more opportunity to the participants to elaborate on their answers, as the participants' perspectives were the main data of this study. The transcribed data was analysed by using the coding process which Bryman (2016) viewed as 'the key process in grounded theory' (p573). Indeed, this process involves 'reviewing transcripts and /or field notes and giving labels (names) to component parts that seem to be of potential theoretical significance and/or that appear to be particularly salient within the social world of those being studied' (Bryman, 2016, p573).

Findings and analysis

The aim of this research was to understand Iraqi-Kurdish women's experience of marriage and to examine the impacts of patriarchal values and traditional culture on their marital lives in the UK. Throughout the process of interviews, justifications were made about the impact of traditional culture within the participants' marital lives and how this shaped their life experiences. The narratives of the eight participants of this study provided a detailed account of the difficulties and challenges women face in the process of marriage including: viewing marriage as an institution that upholds more for men than women, and how cultural expectations and traditional gender roles are still restraining the participants' lives in the UK. Despite the impact of cultural tradition and patriarchal ideology on their lives, there was an emphasis on the positive effect of their migration to the UK on their marital lives and how this influenced some of the husbands' attitudes towards their wives. Therefore, some important themes that emerged from the participants' responses will be analysed with the support of relevant studies and theories within this chapter.

Marriage and women's perspectives

The way the marriage process was considered among the majority of the participants was somehow in accordance with feminist perspective. In particular, the participants assume that marriage brings along oppression to women and is a great risk for women's independence (Chambers, 2017). All the participants were married and the majority of them regarded the process of marriage as 'problematic', with only two of them considering that it involves both 'great delight' and 'sorrow' for women (Participants 2 and 6). In an attempt to generally define the marriage process, one of the participant replied: 'all I can think of marriage right now is problems I wish that it would not have been like that but it is a life that involves so many complex issues especially for women' (Participant 3). The participant instantly attributed problems to marriage and she considered that it is mostly women who face the marital relationships challenges. This statement corresponds to Jessi Bernard's (1972) assumption of marriage when she ascertains that 'marriage is good for men' while it has the opposite effect on women, even stating it is 'worse' for them (Jackson and Scott, 2002, p208). This belief was also evidenced by the presence of a significant number of dissatisfactory reports of marital relationships that all mainly come from women (Bernard, 1972).

According to Atkinson (1974), marriage provides a 'subordinate role' for women (Finlay and Clarke, 2003). This issue is clearly expressed by participant 1 who constantly talked about her low status within her marital relationship, and she started to describe her early experience of marriage by commenting that:

'I could not bear all that unfairness and I was not myself I always had to be under the supervision of someone and ask my husband for permission for everything I was doing… from my own experience I give it zero. I have sometimes come to a decision that I do not ever let my daughter to get married because when she gets married of course she need to marry one from our own culture and this is more likely to be someone similar to her dad (her husband) and she will get through the same things I went through'

This participant talked about how being under the control of someone within her marital relationship affected her negatively, and she related her lost hope and all the problems of that relationship to the extensive subordination she was under. Due to all the struggles she faced within her own marital relationship she was concerned about her daughter's future, who she thought would be more protected if she did not get married. Such interpretation justifies the concept that Hagan (1993) employed to describe marital relationships as 'intimate colonisation' (Finlay and Clarke, 2003, p416).

Despite the negative perspectives on marriage, all participants considered that marriage as a fundamental practice, and that everyone should undergo that process. For example, participant 4 stated that 'I cannot say I regret being married because this is a must do thing in life for every girl'. Similarly, participant 8 referred to the importance of marriage within women's lives by admitting that 'when you get married then you have your own status as a good wife or a good mother, and women with these titles have better reputation in society'. In addition to these comments, participant 2 assessed marriage as involving both negative and positive aspects. The latter aspect was related to the opportunity that it provides for women to become mothers when she stated, 'I can say marriage has both negative and positive aspects and it presents you a great delight when you can have your own children' (Participant 2). All the responses signify that it is a social norm for every woman to get married in order to receive a socially acceptable status. This view can be supported by what de Beauvoir (1949) found as the main factors for the significance of girls and marriage, which included 'experiencing sex and motherhood without punishing social disapproval' (Chambers, 2017, p15). Moreover, the way society is structured informs its members that marriage is the most suitable choice for women when there is ongoing gender discrimination within the labour market, as well as the general perspectives towards the feminine body and the fear of protecting that body

pursue the idea that by entering into the marriage process women are no longer subject to such external risks (Chambers, 2017).

Throughout the whole set of interviews discussion were raised regarding the basis of the participants' marriage and how they selected their partners. There were two participants who related love to their decisions of getting married whereas the remaining participants' marriages were based on their families' decisions and the husbands' choice. Those who did not go through premarital relationships with their spouses were attributing most of their marital problems to this factor. For example, participant 7 admitted that 'sometimes I think that if we were in love before getting married I would have had a different life with him' and also when participant 1 was asked about the way her marriage was arranged, she responded: 'I wish it was through love'. Therefore, for them love was a significant feature that enables marriages to last long and be more settled. However, both participants 5 and 7 chose marriage for the sake of love and they deemed the marriage process to be 'very challenging' (participant 5) for women and 'full of responsibilities' (participant 7). When participant 5 was asked how her marriage process started she instantly laughed and commented 'it was assumed to be based on romantic love and now nothing is like that'. This finding has also been the focus of other empirical studies and women were regarded to have different anticipation of marriage compared to men. Indeed, women were regarded to start the marriage process with the aim of constant love and romance, which is not achievable as 'intimacy could evaporate' throughout time. This indeed is believed to affect women negatively and make them to feel they are 'emotionally abandoned' (Smart, 2007).

Cultural expectations of women's roles and attitudes

As the study was focused on women's marital life experiences within a particular community in the UK, the findings involve some specific cultural norms that shaped the majority of the participants' lives. The age of the participants when they wedded is relevant, for example as they were 17, 18 and 19 when they entered the marriage process, which was the main visible cultural norm of Kurdish society, as outlined within the literature review. Under the effect of their cultural practice and tradition these women agreed to marry at an early age to the extent that they were not respectively aware of the process. This is illustrated in the participant's comment 'I will say I was not that aware, now sometimes I am thinking about that feeling and saying why I got married if I had not had an idea about what is the meaning of marriage' (participant 1). Indeed, their own choice was not necessarily important as they were mostly following traditional values. For example, another respondent

stated that 'I got married at the age of 19 and this was the right age for a girl to get married in my community…you know when you get a bit older and not married people think another way' (participant 3). The rest of the participants offered similar explanations as the reason for their early marriage and they all emphasised the concepts of 'community expectation, tradition and culture'. Therefore, according to their cultural and community expectations, women should enter the process of marriage at a certain age as otherwise their reputation can be at risk of community disapproval (Wright, 2014). However, many of them talked about the impact of being young and getting married and how this affected their lives, and even their roles and rights as wives. The following responses all emphasise the negativity of marrying early in life:

'it is a reality that if I was not that young I would not have had the same life which I have now, well I am not saying that I was not getting married at all but with a more mature mind I might have chosen someone who really understands me and my profession not like this one' (participant 5).

'If I got married at my 30s, I would have all my wishes come true' (participant 2).

'As I said I don't regret being married because every women need to marry and have children but what I regret most is that I did not enjoy my youth and like having fun with friends at your age you know, when I say having fun I don't say misbehaving but I mean you are at an age that you like to do so many things but when you get married all that going to be limited. So I always say if times go back I will not marry till late 20 and early 30' (participant 4).

'for most of the time especially in the beginning of my marriage live I was blaming myself for getting married at that age for all the challenges I was facing' (participant 7).

'you know what, I was young and inexperienced and whatever my husband was telling me I accepted it and thought he was right all the time and now sometimes I can feel this affected our relationship because I cannot express exactly how I feel, and I think' (participant 3).

'I was a newlywed and very young and did not know exactly how to serve gusts… a very large number of guests arrived into our home… I did not know how they like their tea so I made all as the same and with sugar' (participant 1).

These statements inform the importance of age in terms of marital relationships and how early marriage affects 'marital satisfaction' (Lee, 1977). Indeed, Lee after conducting his study on the correlation between 'age at marriage and marital satisfaction' has accepted the theory that disclosed that 'people who marry young experience lower marital satisfaction because of

lack of preparation for marital role performance' (Lee, 1977, p502). Therefore, the women's realisation of the disadvantages of marrying early in their relationships is in accordance to research findings. Additionally, the responsibilities of marital life are problematic for younger wives when they have less skills, especially that they are under pressure and need to perform their roles as a wife and a mother (Sweetman, 2003).

The participants' narratives revealed that for most of the time wives feel their actions and attitudes should gain their community and families' approval as without this approval their role as 'good women' was not accomplished. This is particularly evident in the responses that were provided to the question regarding reasons for staying in dissatisfied relationships. This was a point where participant 1 explicitly mentioned that 'I was thinking about getting divorce and sometimes it was coming to my mind to make a decision and separate myself from him. But I was scared that people talk about me and I was afraid of this'. In general, all other participants somehow referred to the stigmatisation of divorce within Kurdish community. Another strong quote from participant 8 can be used as an evident of the stigmatisation of divorce. Indeed, she had been married for 14 years and she explained the reason behind her last long marriage as that 'I am accepting all the hardships of my marriage just to not get divorced and become a divorcee I can even accept that for him to get married again and having a second wife without divorcing me' (Participant 8). This again refers to the fears of being divorced and how she accepts any consequences from that marriage except divorce. With this being said, the endurance of any kinds of marital relationships is required from women of that community in order to keep 'family honour' and also to save woman from receiving repulsive titles (Moghadam, 2004). Indeed, the participant's comments correspond with other researches that describe the negative consequences of being a 'divorcee' in that particular community (Alinia, 2013). According to Begikhani et al. (2010) divorce's effect is so major on Kurdish women to the extent that 'even result in suicide and murder' (p25). Hence, it is the influence of cultural expectation that Kurdish women still think of divorce as a violation of community's values and anticipation and do not consider it even for the survival of an abusive and dissatisfied relationship.

Patriarchal culture and men's power

All the interviewers of this study referred to their husbands' choice when asked about how they got married. For example, participant 2 explained that 'my marriage was arranged, and I was not aware of that but my husband knew it and he told his family that he likes me then his family came forward for

asking my hand'. Similar responses were recorded from other participants and these somehow emphasised the higher status of men within the Kurdish community. Despite the marriage being arranged by families, the men's voices were considered significant, whereas women's choice in that matter was ignored. Therefore, it can be said that wherever men's status is valued, the power attributed to men is a signification of that society's attachment to patriarchal values (Joly and Bakawan, 2016; Smith 1990; Haj-Yahia and Moghadam, 2004).

Patriarchal culture is identified by the domination of men's power and women's subordination (Walby, 2010). Patriarchal culture has a negative influence on women's marital relationships when it imbeds some values within it which are all in the interest of men. Indeed, patriarchal values are exposed within marital relationships through various acts and using power in order to 'oppress and exploit women' is among those acts (Walby, 2010). Indeed, this is embodied in the following example provided by participant 1:

'After the guests left my husband came to me and shouted at me, blamed me for not knowing how to serve guests and his mother and his brother were there as well they were just listening doing nothing else. I swear I only said one thing I said we are not living in a village and this statement of mine made my mother and brother in law very angry, they did not say anything, but they looked at my husband in a way that I made a big mistake and need to be punished. My husband started hitting me and my in-laws said: let's leave. This was like a message to my husband that he needed to solve this by himself. They thought I deserved to be punished for saying something against them' (participant 1).

This quote displays the power of men and the significance of the husband's status within her marital relationship particularly with the use of physical violence against her when her performance was not according to his 'ideal' and 'expectation' (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, cited in Smith, 1990, p259). In addition to that, the family's reaction towards the situation suggests that the husband's behaviour was nothing unusual, instead his attitude was considered as conforming to cultural norms, and reinforced the common ideology between the husband and his family. Indeed, within patriarchal culture it is typical for men to use their power to oppress women (Smith, 1990) and according to Millett, it is the ideology that acts as 'the energy source' within 'familial patriarchy' and promotes 'patriarchal domination' (Smith, 1990, p258).

In an attempt to gauge to what extent the participants' marital lives was affected by patriarchal values the researcher asked the participants what they did for a living. This question allowed answers which referred to their

independence and the level of freedom they have within their lives. It also opened up discussions regarding their roles within society. It enables the researcher to examine whether their current roles were in accordance to expected cultural roles for women (van Bruinessen, 1993; King, 2013) or whether their roles had evolved according to the more gender egalitarian values of the new culture they were living in (Roder and Muhlau, 2014). Seven participants replied to this question that they were 'a housewife and a mother' while one of them identified herself as being a 'doctor' in Kurdistan (participant 5) but due to Home Office regulation issues could not currently work in the UK. When they were asked about their expectations of joining the labour market, all of the other seven participants related their jobless status to their husband's decision and treatment. The latter factor was mentioned by participant 1 when she discussed that the way the husbands treated her prevented her from attempting to find a job: 'I will still be under his control and he will control my finance as well. Even if I work I will still need to ask his permission for what I am spending my money on like telling him I am going to buy this and that' (participant 1). However, the other six participants showed their desire to join the labour force and have some economic independency, but they admitted their husbands did not want this. This particular finding is based on the following quotes:

'I have been thinking about working but it is something that is not always possible because there are so many factors and the main thing is my man does not like that…he himself has a shop and I have told him to take me with him to work for himself but he says people will talk about us and they will say he makes his wife to work as well to make money' (participant 4).

'I gained a diploma in education in Kurdistan and before having my job I got married and since I come to this country I wished to go back to education and have my own profession but in the beginning he was telling me that we can go back to Kurdistan for good and you can continue your study but now he says that I do not need to work because we need to give priority to children I am working and you should look after the children' (participant 3).

'He does not like me to work and I think all of that because he is jealous or he thinks that women should stay at home and do the housework' (participant 7).

This suggests that the respondent's lives are controlled by their husbands, and that women working outside of the home and family context is still regarded critically among men of that particular community (Kaya, 2010). It is clear from the above quotes that traditional gendered roles are still enforced by men (King, 2013), despite living in a new cultural environment where the labour force consists of a large number of women. Other studies found the correlation between the culture and females' participation in the labour force.

A quantitative study conducted by Diwan and Vartanova (2017) showed that cultural norms and values have more superiority than an 'individual's values', particularly within societies that uphold patriarchal values (Diwan and Vartanova, 2017). This strong adherence to cultural norms and values still applies to Kurds who migrated to the western environments. Safran (1991)'s investigation of Kurdish migrants in the UK backed up this assumption as he described the Kurdish community in the UK as being always 'culturally and politically connected' to their 'homeland' (Gill et al., 2012). Therefore, it can be said that the influence of the culture of the country of origin shapes the attitudes of the husbands in the new country and this sometimes prevents wives from exercising their rights freely. This finding is consistent with the study of Roder and Muhlau (2014) which found men as less conforming to 'egalitarian gender attitude' than women.

Becker (1999) identified some specific 'qualities' that can be attributed to both men and women within patriarchal culture, and some of these qualities were constantly discussed by the participants of this study. The most described characteristics of the husbands by the wives were 'commanding, independent and in control' while the wives needed to be more 'empathetic' and 'nurturing'. In answering who makes most of the family decisions the respondents brought up the theme of the commanding quality of the husbands, which made the wives 'dependent' and unable to decide for themselves. For example, participant 7 found it very irritating to have to 'inform him [husband] wherever I go and I do' and she thought this related to the 'culture' he was brought up into as she further commented 'he does not prevent me from going to somewhere I want but I have to tell him and ask his permission first and this is for what' (participant 7). This displays the husband's attachment to the patriarchal values, particularly when the wife mentions the impact of his place of birth on his attitude. The other commanding behaviour of husbands was visibly mentioned by participants 2, 3, 4,, 7 and 8 when they explained their clothing and appearance when going out was very much dependent on the husbands' decisions. For example, participant 3 recalled one situation when she had to 'change the clothes for three times' before going out 'because he thought they were not appropriate' (participant 3). The appropriateness of women's clothing has always been emphasised within Kurdish society when 'women's bodies' were thought to be 'the embodiment of family honour' (Wright, 2014, p739). Additionally, with regards to dress code, participant 7 brought up a theme investigated within Wright's 2014 research as she stated that:

'I have problems with dressing when we go to some places like our Kurdish friends and family's homes because I do not know which one is appropriate

and my husband cares about that too much. He does not really care when we go out together to shopping or having coffee together' (participant 7).

This is a very interesting point because it reveals the significance of the cultural and community norms over individual norms as the man only strictly upheld the cultural dress code when they, as a family, came into contact with people from their own community. This is consistent with Wright's (2014) findings that Kurdish communities were regarded as 'governing' women's behaviour and appearance, in a way that shaped women's life experience in the UK.

The impact of living in a society based on gender egalitarian attitude

The other important theme to emerge from participants' answers was the effect that residing in the UK had had on their marital relationship. All the participants, except participant 1 who experienced her life differently in the UK, touched upon the more positive attitude of their partners, which they believed was the result of living in the UK. They admitted that they were better treated as a wife and a mother in the UK than in Iraq-Kurdistan. For example, participant 4 talked about how her husband's attitude towards her changed when they visited their homeland. She stated that 'he helps me here with household chores especially when we have a guest he lays the table with me, yeah he values my hard work every time we have a guest but this is not the case when we are in Kurdistan, he becomes someone else and sometimes shout at me in front of people for not doing the chores properly' (participant 4). Additionally, participant 2 viewed her marital live positively compared to that of married women in Kurdistan by saying 'I can say my marital life is fine if I compare it to those women who are married in Kurdistan…here husbands have more respect to wives' (participant 2). Additionally, participant 5 noticed the changes in her husband's attitude while they gathered with people from other communities, including European and English families. She explained that 'his attitudes towards me change when we go the Community Link and he talks more politely to me and even he sits more closer to me without feeling ashamed' (participant 5). Furthermore, participant 3 thought that husbands here were more attached to their wives than when in Iraq-Kurdistan, something she attributed that to the effects of in-law families. She described that 'here he always tells me where he goes and calls me so often during the day time even when he is at work, but when we were in Kurdistan he was not like that because if he did his family would have thought he was afraid of me' (participant 3).

To summarise, the participants of this study analysed the positivity and negativity of their husbands' attitude according to the setting they lived in. and their statements demonstrate that the way men act towards their wives is related to the environment and the culture they live in. This finding is consistent with other studies such as Wright (2014) and Roder and Muhalu (2014), who found a society that upholds a gender egalitarian attitude is influences male migrants in terms of instilling positive gender attitudes and ideology among them. In particular, Wright (2014) study mentioned women's realisation of a change in their husbands' attitude towards them in the UK which they connected to them being away from family and relatives that might usually intervene within marital relationships. Indeed, the effect of family intervention on a man's negative attitude towards his wife was clearly mentioned by participant 3 who thought that in-law families were capable of attributing law status to those males who treats their wives fairly.

Despite the majority of participants expressing the positive impact that being migrants of western society had had on their marital relationship, one of the participants depicted a different and more negative experience, which she described as 'different and difficult' (Participant 1). She mentioned facing more emotional abuse caused by her husband's cheating she believed would not have occurred in Kurdistan. The participant was keen to detail her frustration towards her husband's cheating, and to include this into the description of her marital life experience, despite the researcher not seeking to attain this information. She started that topic by saying that 'he was still on his path, his path of cheating' (participant 1) and confirmed that it had started after their migration to the UK and had largely impacted her migration experience. She further elaborated on this matter by retelling her argument with her husband and saying:

'one time I told my husband what would you do if I was the one who cheat and are you not afraid of that if I do the same to you… he was very angry and screamed at me by saying you do not have the right to talk to me like that… He said I am a man and I can do whatever I want but you cannot in your life talk about something like that' (participant 1).

This particular statement by the participant has many layers of meaning, and the contrast between male power and female subordinate role is obvious one. It expresses the right of men to do whatever they like within their marital relationship, whereas women have to uphold their role and act as a good wife. As he is a man he can cheat and violate the values of tradition and family while his wife is forced to be the 'border guard' of 'tradition and identity' (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

Conclusion

The findings of this particular project fulfil the aims of the study since its emerging themes reveal the impact of traditional values and patriarchal culture on the selected group of women's marital life experiences. Indeed, it became apparent that the effects of these factors overshadowed the marital life experiences of the subjects of this study as many aspects of their lives are ruled and governed by their culture of origin. For example, controlling women's lives by not allowing them to work and devaluing their roles within marital relationships show adherence to the values of patriarchal culture and an attempt to secure men's authoritative status within marital relationships. The attitudes of the husbands that partake of patriarchal culture included 'commanding, independent and in control' whereas for the wives being 'empathetic and nurturing' was seen as suitable. Accordingly, attributing such gender discriminatory attitudes to the wives played a significant role in the way all the women of this study regarded and conceived the marriage process. Overall, the women's negative perspectives towards marital life was also related to their unawareness of the process due to their early age they married at, which again was driven by their culture and tradition. It was also found that no matter how tough their marital lives were they would endure their relationships for the sake of their own and their family's 'honour' (Moghadam, 2004), rather than consider the idea of divorce. This again emphasises the role of traditional and cultural values.

Throughout the majority of the participants' narratives, there were also indications of the positive influence of their current place of living on their husbands' gender attitudes. It was expressed by the majority of them that living in the UK was benefited their marital relationships, as their husbands' attitude towards them in the UK seemed preferable compared to the way they acted in Iraqi-Kurdistan. Nonetheless, this was not the case for one of the participants of this study who found her marital relationship in the migration context more complex due to the liberties her husband was taking in the migrated country, which were at odds with traditional boundaries. Therefore, it could be admitted that the sample size is influential in gaining a balanced data of the participants. Employing a larger sample size is more appropriate when seeking to understand the life experiences of a particular group in society as it makes the result more generalizable of the wider population.

On the whole, the participants' narratives were quite explanatory and relevant to the objectives that the researcher sought to examine in this study. This indeed provided the detailed data to this research while it made the research

objectives clearer and more understandable, and choosing in-depth interviews in the first place was based on that reason. The other point worth mentioning regarding the attained data of this study is the researcher's and study participant's well elaboration on the matters and points raised throughout this research project. This collaboration was supported by the researcher's preparation before conducting the interviews and using the interview guide throughout the interviews (Bell, 2010), as well as the researcher's clarification of the research aims and interest to the participants which had a role in gaining 'good data' (Jones, 2004, p259). However, the result of this research might suffer from a replication issue and this is assumed to be a limitation of conducting an interview while it cannot provide the same result when it is repeated (Jones, 2004). However, the attained results of this study should be treated as valuable due to its relevance to the aim of the research, along with being based solely on the narratives of those who genuinely experienced both marriage and migration, and whose experiences undoubtedly involved the features of patriarchal and traditional culture. Therefore, the researcher was able to produce coherent findings by abridging the narratives of the participants into some prevailing themes.

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